CHAPTER VI

EARLIER ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH

The Reformed Church was a comparatively small body in 1838. The Rev. John Philip Boehm rendered his first report to the Synod of North and South Holland in 1734, but as an organized body in the form of the Coetus the history of the church begins in 1747. The Coetus continued its meetings and reported its proceedings to the Synod of Holland until 1793 when by the preparation and adoption of a constitution of its own the Coetus became the Synod and thus became an independent body. The Synod accordingly was forty-five years old and the church as an ecclesiastical body four years more than a century. Very substantial progress had been made during this century; some foundations had been laid; and the way was now opening for larger activity and growth.

In 1838 the church had one hundred and eighty-three ministers. The old synod, known as the Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States of America, had seven classes, namely, Philadelphia, East Pennsylvania, Zion’s, Lebanon, Susquehanna, Maryland and North Carolina. There was another known as the Classis of the West which covered the territory of Indiana and Illinois, but the
minutes of the succeeding years no longer make mention of this classis. The Synod of the German Reformed Church of Ohio and adjacent States was made up of six classes, namely, Miami, Westmoreland, Sandusky, Erie, Columbiana and Lancaster. These two synods then formed the bodies under whose jurisdiction and supervision the work of the church was carried forward.

There were some well-established congregations and charges, but the entire territory of the church was largely missionary ground. The Home Missionary work was carried forward with some degree of zeal, because there was opportunity everywhere, and whilst the church did not contribute large amounts for home missions, much heroic and self-sacrificing labor was bestowed upon this work by the ministry. The receipts for home missions in this year were $1,000. In 1840 the treasurer's report of the Home Mission work shows a total sum of $556.06½. Of this amount, $173.46 represented a balance from the preceding year, so that in that year the actual contributions amounted to only $382.60½. At the meeting of the Synod in 1838 the Foreign Mission Board was organized. It carried on its missionary operations through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for many years. The receipts for foreign missions in 1840 were $1,166.06.

The Theological Seminary was established in 1825. Much interest was manifested in this institution, for its need was keenly felt by the church.
The seminary had already rendered valuable service to the church in preparing a number of earnest and efficient pastors, but because of two removals, from Carlisle to York, and later from York to Mercersburg, and because of financial and other difficulties, it had not become a strong institution. The first year after its removal to Mercersburg, the seminary had only one professor, Dr. Rauch, who also served as president of Marshall College, and three students. Of these one had to withdraw on account of sickness, another because of lack of funds, leaving only one (J. H. A. Bomberger) at the end of the year. An attempt was made about this time to establish a theological seminary at Canton, Ohio, but this effort proved abortive and the western seminary was not established until twelve years later. Marshall College had developed out of the Classical School in York. It was founded in 1836 and had sent out Dr. Bomberger as its first graduate in 1837. The college had a small faculty, was hampered by a lack of funds, and the achieving of the splendid record which the college made for itself yet lay in the future. The church had no publication board and there was as yet no denominational literature, a very necessary factor to create a Reformed consciousness. The Messenger was being published and had a subscription list of 2,000.

It will be seen from this brief survey that there was ample opportunity for a young man of thorough education, active mind and warm heart to enter into the activities of the church, outside of the duties of
the pastorate. Pastors who were willing to make great sacrifice, serve the small and scattered congregations at low salaries were, indeed, needed. But, in addition to this, there was not only great opportunity for men to take hold of work outside of their immediate parishes, but there was an urgent call for such men. Dr. Bomberger, from the very beginning of his ministry in 1838, began to take an active interest in all the activities of his church, and because of this interest and because of his ability he early took a prominent place in the synod, in all the interests of the church, and as time permitted in work that was not directly under the supervision of the church, but germane to it.

The educational interests of the church claimed the earnest attention of the pastors and of the churches during the early ministry of Dr. Bomberger. The institutions of the church were in their incipiency, many of the congregations were unable to give much support to these institutions, and the number of individual benefactors was as yet small. It devolved, therefore, upon the graduates of the college and seminary, who, by reason of their recent connection with these schools, had great interest in them, to do all they could in arousing interest in their congregations, to get the support of their membership and to make such contributions as they themselves could. This they did and displayed not a little zeal in the maintenance and support of their college and seminary. Dr. Bomberger was among this number and from the first mani-
fested a deep and vital interest in the life and support of the educational work of the church. The seminary was in great need and there were times when its very life was in question because of a lack of financial support. In 1845 Dr. E. V. Gerhart, in a letter to Dr. Bomberger, makes this statement: “During the last classical year I raised about $170 for different benevolent purposes. This year I may do the same. . . . \textit{The seminary must be sustained}, and if it be by private contributions of ministers, I will do as much as I can through my people; if that is not enough I am willing to be one of a certain number of ministers to give $5 or $10 annually out of my pocket.” This spirit of self-sacrifice was shared by Dr. Bomberger and a number of the other early graduates of the seminary, as the minutes of the synod show. The congregations served by Dr. Bomberger made relatively large contributions to this cause, an indication that the pastor was heart and soul in the work.

This interest lay not only in securing contributions and making personal ones, but also in the moral and spiritual support given to the work. The relation maintained with the college and seminary was very close during the first twenty-five years of his ministry. This is indicated by the letters exchanged with students and professors and by the frequent visits to the institutions. Dr. Bomberger was a member of the Board of Visitors of the Theological Seminary from 1842-45. The latter year he changed his classical relation, moving from Waynes-
boro to Easton. He was now farther removed from the seminary and could not, because of the distance visit as frequently, but his interest remained unabated. The college likewise lay near his heart which was but natural, since he was the eldest son of the college. He took a keen interest in the removal of Marshall College to Lancaster and its union with Franklin College. He became a member of the first Board of Trustees and remained on the Board until 1869. He was the chairman of the synodical finance committee which directed the work of raising the $17,000 necessary to buy the interest which the Lutheran Church owned in Franklin College. The securing of this amount dragged through several years and entailed a considerable amount of labor and vexation upon the chairman of the committee.

When Franklin and Marshall College was organized in 1853 discussion was rife as to who should become president of the institution. The men whose names actually came before the Board of Trustees were at first, Drs. Nevin and Mesick. Dr. Nevin was elected and declined the office. Then the names of Drs. Mesick and Schaff were considered. Dr. Schaff was elected, but after some delay the Synod declined to release him from his theological professorship, so that the presidency was again open. It was then that the Rev. E. V. Gerhart was elected. Before all this had taken place the discussion among the alumni of Marshall College had brought out sentiment in favor of an alumnus of the college for the
presidency. It is of historical interest to quote here from a letter written by Dr. Gerhart to Dr. Bomberger from Tiffin, Ohio, March 15, 1854.

“As regards the Presidency of the College,” says Dr. Gerhart, “my voice goes for a son of the College. Dependence upon foreigners I have all along regarded as a necessary evil. But we have outlived that period. The college no less than the seminary should be the exponent of our church life. It should be in living sympathy with our genius and history, and with our national character. How else can it subserve the end of a college of our church? How else can it be the organ through which our life may not only exist, but also expand and perfect itself? With such a design and such relations, it is a great inconsistency to man our institutions with strangers, or more than this, to give the chief office, the most influential chair to one, whose character and education, no matter how good and commendable in itself, places him in a different category. True, he may study and seek to imbibe the German Philosophy and Theology, and develop another character, but it will be most likely to be a caricature. Some months ago I learned Bro. Kieffer or Bro. Bomberger and Dr. Yeomans were spoken of. All my influence has since been put forth for a man of the Church. The office is unenviable, I admit. Yet it must be filled. If the Board unite upon you or Bro. Kieffer what right has either one to say, no? Intellectual ability is indeed a valuable qualification; but so is the possession in a natural way of our genius and life. For sixteen years Marshall has been sending forth her graduates, at a cost of thousands of dollars to the Church. Among all these is there not one who is fit or willing to be President!”
The same feeling as to the choice of a man for the presidency, and the consideration of Dr. Bomberger as an eligible man is shown in the following letter from the Rev. F. W. Kremer to Dr. Bomberger:

"LEBANON, Nov. 7, 1853.

"Rev. and Dear Brother:—

"Immediately on my return from Synod, Dr. J. W. Gloninger, one of the trustees of Franklin and Marshall College, called on me to learn particularly the action of Synod in relation to Dr. Schaff. He appeared satisfied that the Dr. was retained in the Seminary and observed that the other three trustees residing in this place and neighborhood were pleased with the decision, as for several reasons they are of the opinion that the College would not be likely to prosper much under the presidency of Dr. Schaff.

"The question now came up, but whom can we find in our own Church who would be suitable for that station? and allow me to say that I mentioned you the first graduate of our College. For this proposal, the Dr. seemed prepared, as a number of persons interested in the matter had mentioned your name before.

"The only objection that was supposed might be mentioned, was that Lancaster is your native place and that you might feel reluctant on that ground. Yet on the other hand, if your appointment would meet with the approval of the Church, as we feel satisfied it would, you would doubtless be willing for the good of the Church to waive the supposed difficulty alluded to, as well as your preference for the strictly ministerial or pastoral life to which you are so cordially devoted. For my own part, dear brother, I would be highly gratified, did Providence
direct you to the post in question. I am daily becoming more fully satisfied that if our Institutions, both theological and literary, are to prosper as they might and should, and as the interests of our beloved Church demand, we must have at their head our own native sons. And as one simple proof, I would only refer to our western institutions. I would say more on this whole subject but my crowded engagements, especially this week, forbid it. And now to the particular object of my letter. Dr. Gloninger desired me to address you with the view of ascertaining whether you would allow your name to be mentioned in connection with the presidency of the College. As I am not a member of the Board of Trustees I wished to be excused from addressing you on so delicate a subject, but he desiring it very much, I promised him to comply with his request. And I have no doubt, care will be taken to make only such use of your reply as would be agreeable to yourself. I do hope, whatever may be your difficulties in the case, you will not positively decline your name as desired.

"May God in mercy, direct in this, and in all the interests of (our) needy but beloved Church. Please answer soon.

"Your brother as ever

"F. W. Kremer."

"Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger."

In a postscript to this letter Mr. Kremer said that all the trustees in Lebanon, namely, Messrs. Gloninger, Krause, Killinger and Heilman were decidedly favorable to the appointment of Dr. Bomberger to the presidency of the college.

Unfortunately the reply of Dr. Bomberger to 167
this letter is not at hand and we do not know what his disposition toward this matter was. It seems justifiable, however, from the tenor of both letters, Dr. Gerhart's and Dr. Kremer's, to draw the inference that he was not favorably inclined toward permitting his name to be considered.

Franklin and Marshall College held its first commencement on August 31, 1853. At this commencement the college honored the Rev. Mr. Bomberger by conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He was then a young man of thirty-six years, and the youngest of the coterie of prominent men in the church at that time to be so honored. He received the first Bachelor's degree conferred by Marshall College and the first Doctor's degree conferred by Franklin and Marshall College.

The work of Home Missions called forth the best energies of the members of the synod. The congregations were not able to make the large contributions which the later period saw, but the pastors zealously presented the cause of missions and the reports of the treasurer of the Board of Domestic Missions indicate commendable effort and encouraging contributions from the congregations. Dr. Bomberger was an earnest advocate of the missionary cause from the beginning of his ministry. The treasurer's reports indicate very considerable contributions from the congregations served by him. This is the very best indication that the pastor of those flocks possessed a missionary spirit in his own
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heart and that he succeeded in imbuing the hearts of his parishioners with the same spirit, which bore fruit in the efforts put forth to support the work of missions.

Upon his removal to Easton in 1845 to become the English pastor of the First Reformed Church, he was elected a member of the Board of Domestic Missions. At that time this board was composed of two members from each classis and in addition to these, of seven members chosen from the church at large. He remained a member of the board until, in 1865, it was merged into the General Synod’s Board of Home Missions. The General Synod’s Board was elected at the organization of General Synod in 1863 and Dr. Bomberger then became a member of that board, but the actual transfer of the work was not made until 1865. He served on the General Synod’s Board of Home Missions until 1869, thus rendering continuous service for a period of twenty-four years.

After the retirement of the Rev. Isaac Gerhart as President of the Board of Domestic Missions in 1860, Dr. Bomberger succeeded him in this office, serving as President of the Synod’s Board until it was dissolved. He also became the first President of the General Synod’s Board and served until his retirement in 1869. It is to be remembered that in those days there were no secretaries and superintendents who devoted all their time and attention to the work of the different boards, but that the work had to be undertaken by the officers. To be sure the
J. H. A. Bomberger

work was not by any means as large as it has since become and, therefore, did not require the same amount of attention, nevertheless the duties of the President of the Board were not inconsiderable. Because there was no field secretary there was much correspondence required and this was not done by the aid of a stenographer, but by the president himself. The reports to synod during Dr. Bomberger's presidency show how well he had the work in hand and how carefully and solicitously he watched every part of the Home Mission field.

The report offered to the Synod of 1862 reviews comprehensively the work of the board, and because of the condition then existing in the country is, in part, reproduced here. It reads:

"Intimately related as the Church in this country, through its members, stands to the State, it cannot escape the depressing influences of a National tribulation. Though formally separated from civil institutions, and theoretically independent of them, ecclesiastical life is so interwoven with our political life that whatever seriously assails the latter must, more or less, disturb the functions of the former. It is no wonder, therefore, that a year of violent political tumults and sanguinary intestine civil feuds, like the past, should be a year also of deep sorrow and of rare trial to the Church—a year of distraction, and of embarrassment to all benevolent operations. Humbled by the fearful, devastating judgments visited upon the nation for its sins; perplexed by alarming apprehension, lest our folly and impenitency, even under such visitations, should provoke the infliction of still greater woes; astonished by the
display of a stubborn spirit of rebellion, which persists in its course with the vigor of despair; brought low by the personal sufferings and losses to which that rebellion has subjected us,—how could the proper work of the Church, in toiling for the spread of the kingdom of grace, be otherwise than hindered, and made to languish!"

The report then shows that the receipts were not what had been anticipated and that instead of extending the work it had become necessary to decline important applications from different parts of the field. The entire number of Missions decreased from thirty-two to twenty-six. The report continues:

"Gladly would we pass over such facts or strive to exhibit them in such colorings as would soften the shadows of the picture. But fidelity to ourselves, to the Church, and above all, to Him whose chastising sword is smiting the Church through the State, demands a candid and unreserved delineation of our real condition. Why should we represent the garden as flourishing with unwonted beauty, when its hedges are broken down, and its glory is trodden under foot? Why should we say that the vintage is more abundant than ever, when portions of the vineyard are overrun with desolation, and the branches of its vines are yielding but scanty stunted clusters? To cheer ourselves with such deceitful consolations, could only serve to keep us from the keen sense of our affliction which the Lord designs us to feel, and from that deep humiliation and repentance to which His chastishments are ever intended to lead. Let the world, if it will, thus daub its broken walls with untempered
mortar, and make light of the troubles sent upon it,—but let not the Church thus falsely soothe the hurt inflicted upon her, and sing a mirthful song of peace, peace amidst the woeful desolation of a time of war. The present lamentable state of the country is a heavy burden on the Church, a burden which is sadly palsyng her moral energies, and seriously retarding her proper work. And the sooner and the more deeply this is felt, the sooner and the more deeply, and, therefore, also, the more effectually, will she prostrate herself in the dust, and so pray for the restoration of the peace of Jerusalem, that God will in mercy interpose, and for Zion's sake, put forth His arm and save us."

After giving a survey of the work of the Board, giving a report and statistics of every Mission under its care separately, speaking of their failures and successes, their discouragements and hopes, the report concludes in these words:

"Then let us pray to the Lord to revive His work, in our own hearts and congregations, that a spirit of missions may be awakened among us, which shall constrain us to make some efforts and sacrifices commensurate with our duty and our opportunities. But this good work must, of course, begin with us who are members of this Board and Synod. We are chosen from different parts of the Church, in order that we may keep up and spread a proper interest in our great work. If we are callous we cannot expect the Classes and Churches we represent to be cordial in their co-operation and support. Let us, therefore, be careful to keep up in our hearts the liveliest sympathy with the cause entrusted to our care. Let us carry with us, wherever we go, a glow-
ing zeal for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, and for the speedy supply of our numerous spiritual destitutions. Then may we expect to see a corresponding flame kindled throughout the Church, and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ so constraining the hearts of our members, that they will cheerfully supply all the pecuniary means needed to carry on our great work, and continually offer up their fervent prayers to the Chief Shepherd that he may abundantly bless our efforts to gather the scattered and lost sheep of the house of Israel into the green pastures of His grace and the fold of His salvation."

During the year 1863 the Tercentenary Celebration of the Heidelberg Catechism was observed. This was made the occasion for special gifts from congregations and individuals, so that the receipts for Mission work were largely increased during this year. The Race Street Church of Philadelphia, of which Dr. Bomberger was then pastor, contributed through its treasurer, and the gifts of individuals, over $1,400.00. These Tercentenary offerings continued to flow into the treasury during the year 1864, so that a new impetus was given to the work and the reports of these years are much more encouraging.

There were, however, three difficult problems to contend with in the work of the Board during Dr. Bomberger's incumbency as president. The first of these was that it covered the period of the Civil War when the country was convulsed in a great struggle. This has already been referred to in the report quoted. The second of these problems was,
that incident to the organization of the General Synod there followed a reorganization of the Board and a new and larger policy was adopted. A secretary who devoted his time to visiting the Missions and stimulating the work and the giving of contributions was put in the field. The third difficulty was caused by the controversy which was then going on in the church and in which Dr. Bomberger was a prominent participant. The interest aroused by the Tercentenary Celebration had somewhat abated and in 1868 the Board came before the synod with a deficit of over $4,000.00. This was not a large deficit, but it looked large at that time. The Executive Committee had requested the Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Home Missions to give a statement of the status of the work. In his statement this official said that the church was not less liberal than before, but that she was really doing more. However, the money was diverted into other channels and did not reach the treasury of the Home Board. This the Corresponding Secretary attributed to the fact that there seemed to be a lack of confidence in the minds of many, justly or unjustly, in the head of the Board. He claimed that in collecting funds he had a "continual struggle against the current." Dr. Bomberger in his report to General Synod in 1869 calls the attention of that body to this statement and claims that it is "an unwarranted reflection upon the President of the Board, whether so designed or not."

The General Synod of 1869 did not re-elect Dr. 174
Bomberger and his connection with the Board consequently ceased. The minutes of that synod state that the retiring President "transferred all the books, documents and papers in possession of the Board to the new Board, accompanied with a few appropriate remarks." The synod subsequently adopted the following action:

Resolved, That the thanks of the General Synod be tendered to the Rev. John H. A. Bomberger, D. D., for the faithful and efficient discharge of his duties as President of the Board of Home Missions.

Thus ended his long period of service in an official way in the cause of Home Missions.

At the General Synod of 1872 Dr. Bomberger was elected a member of the Board of Foreign Missions. He served on the Foreign Board during that triennium. He was again elected in 1878 and served until 1887, making a period of twelve years' service on the Foreign Board. It will be seen, therefore, that his service on the two Boards covered a period of thirty-six years, a long period and a noble service, especially when considered in view of the distracted state of the church during that period.

During the earlier years of his ministry Dr. Bomberger engaged in extended correspondence with a number of ministers of the Reformed Church. Among his papers are found letters from all the men who were prominent in the church, as well as from many who served in their pastorates, but whose names do not appear prominently in the proceedings.
of the synod. Among the ministers with whom he carried on a regular correspondence for a longer or shorter period were Drs. B. C. Wolff, E. V. Gerhart, F. W. Kremer, J. H. Good, W. A. Helffrich, G. W. Williard, H. Rust, P. Greding and George Wolff. Unfortunately the editors of this volume were unable to secure any considerable number of the letters which he wrote. All these correspondents have passed to their eternal reward, and the letters, if preserved by them, have in all probability, since been destroyed. For this reason it becomes necessary to quote somewhat more freely and fully from the letters written to him than would be necessary if the letters written by him were to be had. The letters received by him give us the subjects with which the correspondence dealt and often give us hints of what he had written. In reading them one is reminded of a third person listening to a conversation over the telephone by two other persons; he can hear what the man at one end of the line is saying, but must conjecture what the person at the other end is saying.

The most important, and in many ways the most interesting of these correspondences is that with the Rev. E. V. Gerhart. This correspondence began in 1843 and was continued more or less regularly until 1864. Dr. Bomberger and Dr. Gerhart were then young men serving in the pastorate. They were both earnest, serious, studious, and filled with a zeal for the extension and prosperity of their church and of the Kingdom of God. The bonds of friendship
between them were close and beautiful, as is shown by the letters. The correspondence in those early years was largely a discussion of theological subjects and many of the letters, which are long, read like theological essays, for this is what they really are. A number of these letters have been preserved by Dr. Bomberger, not only the letters received from Dr. Gerhart, but those written by himself to Dr. Gerhart. These letters with the replies are serially numbered and marked "The B. G. Correspondence on religious and theological subjects." Here are discussed subjects like Moral Ability, Baptism, Mystical Presence, Mystical Union, etc. Sometimes there occurs the outline of a sermon and frequently there is a criticism of each other's articles in the religious papers. During the earlier period of the controversy in the church that subject weighed heaviest upon their hearts and was uppermost in their minds. It receives considerable attention in these letters.

Referring to the friendship existing between the two young pastors we quote from Dr. Gerhart's letter written while he was pastor in Gettysburg. The letter is dated March 2, 1847.

"Dear Bro. Bomberger.—

"Glad to find you so prompt. The pleasure I feel in renewing our correspondence is equal to what you express. In our previous letters there was much of the understanding at work; perhaps not enough of the heart, for our own spiritual good. Whilst I should be sorry to see less careful exercise of thinking, I am at the same time pleased to know that you
feel disposed to develop and discuss, the more hidden workings of our souls, with the view, if possible, mutually to advance each other in the divine life. My heart responds to your proposal confidingly. Assured that you will not misinterpret my freedom or misjudge the sacred exercise of my struggling soul, I am willing to reveal myself to you without restraint. I sometimes long for the ear of a ministerial brother, in whose judgment, honesty and kindness I could confide with all my heart, to whom I might unbosom my thoughts and feelings and receive such counsel as I need. And let me say that I am willing to speak to you as I would be to but very few others. I believe that you have too much wisdom at any time to flatter me for what you approve, and too much sincere love to ridicule me for what you condemn. My confidence in, and attachment to you, is strong. I feel a kind of fraternal nearness to you which indeed I have never tried to conceal, but to an extent perhaps that you have never suspected. Hence you have always had much influence over me, and I have learned much both from the bad and the good traits in your character."

The letter then continues in a discussion of theological topics. It closes with this significant sentence, "I have been very free this time, but there was so much heart in your last letter that I was drawn out. I pray that we may mutually be a source of profit to each other."

In an earlier letter, written December 31, 1845, the question of the theological positions held by the professors in the seminary was discussed. The brief passage from Dr. Gerhart’s letter indicates that neither of the two correspondents was in hearty accord with the views held and particularly with the
manner in which the professors expressed themselves. Dr. Gerhart writes, "I am not prepared sincerely to defend our Professors at all points. Their expressions I can by no means always adopt. In the main I concur with them and do so without materially changing my theological opinions. But I cannot say with you that I have any 'perplexing difficulties.'"

This same topic continues to claim the attention of the correspondents. While Dr. Gerhart was laboring as a home missionary in Cincinnati and later as President of Heidelberg College, he was removed from the immediate circle of the controversy going on in the church and viewed it as an onlooker rather than as a participant. In his letters he asks Dr. Bomberger to give him the proceedings of synod at first hand, which was more satisfactory than the reports in the papers. Both men were deeply solicitous for the welfare and good name of the church and both of them were reluctant to assume an attitude of opposition toward the professors in the seminary. As time went on and the evil results of the controversy became more and more manifest and the church was being maligned from without, they gradually came to the point in their thinking when it seemed imperative that some one should rise up in defense of the Reformed doctrine, so that a reaction might be brought about within the church, and that the church might be set right in the eyes of the other Protestant denominations. In a letter written from Tiffin, O., October 14, 1852, Dr. Gerhart carefully
sets forth his views of the situation as he saw it at that time. The letter was, of course, confidential, inasmuch as Dr. Gerhart was president of the college and a teacher in the Theological Seminary at Tiffin and, therefore, very properly wished to keep aloof from the difficulties in the eastern section of the church. All the men engaged in the discussions of that day have passed away and the letter is here reproduced in the interest of history.


“Dear Brother Bomberger.

“. . . I am willing to give my ‘impression’ to yourself. From the nature of my position it is necessary that all I say to you on this delicate and painful topic, must be regarded as strictly confidential. And they will be impressions, not positions that I would hold myself fully prepared to maintain.

“1. The decided friends of Mercersburg, with but few exceptions, regard Drs. Nevin and Schaff as sound and firm Protestants in the sense of the Heidelberg Catechism. As such they are defended. They are regarded as setting forth the evils of Protestantism with a view to remove them, and thus advance the cause of Christ, in opposition to the haughty claims of Rome. The favor with which Drs. Nevin and Schaff meet is therefore no reason to believe that our Church as such has become untrue to its own standards.

“2. There is a noiseless but growing dissatisfaction among ministers and intelligent laymen with Mercersburg developments. It is deep and strong. Men are beginning to realize that Dr. Nevin, particularly, no longer occupies Protestant ground; but that just as far as his one-sided and unfair mode of
argumentation has any force, it sweeps away all the foundations of Protestantism. There is consequently a growing determination, firmly to resist these errors and abide by the faith delivered to the saints.

“3. There is, paradoxical as it may seem, more energy, spirit and life, more hearty and earnest cooperation in our Church, East, than I have ever seen. This argues an actual advance, brought about by the activity and zeal of the ministers educated in our Sem’y., and, in a great measure, by the earlier writings of Dr. Nevin. There is more prospect now that our Church may accomplish something for the cause of Christ among Am. and For. Germans than at any previous period. A cloud, it is true, to my eye, overhangs our Church. I cannot see beyond it, yet I believe that the Captain of our Salvation will lead forth this branch of his sacramental host into a large place.

“4. In my opinion Dr. Schaff and Dr. Nevin, particularly, are no longer true Protestants. Dr. Nevin regards Rome with more favor than Protestantism; considers the reigning Theology entirely wrong, stands in doubt of the Reformation; and has been drawn into such a strong current of Romish thought and feeling, that he seems to hang only as by a slender twig to the Protestant shore. I respect him as highly as ever; perhaps, more so; he is conscientious and in solemn earnest; and has no inclination to conceal the fact that he has ‘no position.’ Yet I can not see with what consistency he can occupy the place even of Pres’t. of Marshall College—an institution established by decidedly Reformed with no other object than to afford the necessary preparatory education to young men who would enter our Sem’y with a view to become ministers in a church that is most determined in her opposition to all the errors of Rome.

“5. Dr. Schaff is not far in the rear of Dr.
Nevin. He feels free to start every imaginable difficulty against Protestantism, whilst he is not certain that they can be met satisfactorily; at least he does not meet them manfully nor to the satisfaction of the students as I judge; on the other hand he extols and magnifies all the advantages and claims of the Roman Catholic Church. To yield passively to the natural effect of his church teaching, must make one doubt or despair of the legitimate birth and the certain growth of the Ref'd. Ch. whilst one would admire the Romish Hierarchy, and give a docile ear to her exclusive demands. I admire his learning, his intellectual ability; and for different reasons am warmly attached to him personally; yet, holding and teaching views so favorable to Rome and so unfavorable to Prot'm., I can not understand with what propriety he, who has sworn to teach cordially and defend firmly the Heid. Cat., can occupy the chair of Professor in our Theol. Sem'y.

"6. The Sem'y or Institutions at Mercersburg at present in my opinion do not fulfil their design, but just the reverse. The natural effect of such teachings must be to cause young men to doubt the validity of Prot'm and of the Ref. Ch.—to destroy the spirit and pleasure with which they ought to engage in the work of the ministry. The ham-strings are cut. The training, so far as it moulds and produces its legitimate result, must unfit young men for entering with confidence, comfort, decision and joy on their work. Indeed, if I could believe all Dr. Nevin's and Dr. Schaff's teachings—should I yield passively to their influence, I would become a Romanist or an infidel. Hence I would not send a son or a brother to Mercersburg. So far as I am acquainted with Mercersburg students, on whom these teachings have produced, what I believe to be, their natural effect, their painful state of mind corrobo-
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rates my views. Would Dr. Schaff start as many difficulties against Christianity and take as much pains to represent the arguments of infidelity in their most favorable light, and continue for three or four years, his pupils would just as naturally doubt Christianity.

"7. I did not converse with you respecting Bro. Schneck's resignation of his Editorship to the Ch. nor of Bro. Miller's appointment by Kieffer & Co. Had not time to converse with Schneck himself. Has Synod given up the control of Messenger's columns? Bro. Miller's name even is already emblazoned as Editor. I shall wait with anxiety to see if Synod will allow its free choice of an editor thus to be forestalled. For my part I desire to see a man of higher and different qualifications in the editorial chair.

"8. To my mind the time has come when you and others should take up the pen against these Romish innovations, and in favor of the Reformed character of the Reformed Church and of the Heidelberg Catechism. The one-sided and unfair and inconsistent reasonings of Drs. and the opposition of the Heidelberg Catechism to Romishness, should be set forth. It does not become us. Our hands are full of other work. There are no such tendencies in the Western Synod. Yet you and others should proceed in a very mild, calm and kind tone and spirit. The present state of things loudly calls for something.

"9. I have thus spoken freely to you. Do not make any use of my name. I wish to keep entirely aloof. If my opinions are worth anything to you, you are very welcome to them. I cannot see beyond this crisis. Yet God will certainly deliver us the Romish whore. Give me an account of the Coblenz affair and the Board. Indeed I shall be obliged to you
for all those proceedings and movements at Synod, that one cannot get through the papers. And if Dr. Heiner publishes the proceedings in a Baltimore daily please send me the numbers. May God direct you. We have 75 students on the ground.

"Your Brother in Christ our Lord,
"E. V. Gerhart."

So much confidence had these two men in each other's judgment that they constantly sought advice from each other. Thus Dr. Gerhart puts before Dr. Bomberger the question of his removal to Cincinnati to take charge of the mission in that city and asks his advice in the matter. Likewise when he accepted the work in the institutions in Tiffin and later when he accepted the presidency of Franklin and Marshall College, he counseled with his tried and true friend.

When Dr. Bomberger resigned the pastorate of the church in Easton to accept a call to the Race Street Church, in Philadelphia, he suggested to Dr. Gerhart that he should become his successor in Easton, but the latter did not see his way clear to sever his relation with the educational interests in Ohio at that time.

During the early history of the Reformed Church in this country various liturgies were used by the pastors in the observance of the ordinances of the church. Many of the older ministers who had been educated in Europe, had brought with them the liturgies in use in the church from whence they came. Dr. Mayer, the first professor of Theology in the
Theological Seminary had prepared a liturgy which came into use in a number of the congregations, but as there was neither uniformity in the use of liturgies nor entire satisfaction with any of those at hand, there developed a feeling that the church should prepare a liturgy for its use. In 1847 the East Pennsylvania Classis made the request of synod that the Palatinate Liturgy which was more extensively used than any other should be issued in a new edition, or a new liturgy should be prepared. Other classes expressed a similar desire. The Synod accordingly took the following action: "Resolved, That this whole subject, with the action of the several classes upon it, be referred to a special committee to report at the next annual meeting of Synod. The committee consists of the Rev. John H. A. Bomberger, Daniel Zacharias, D.D., John F. Mesick, and elders George Besore and William Cameron."

At the Synod of 1849, held in Norristown, Pa., this committee offered a report in which were recited the object of Christian worship, the manner of worship in the Jewish Church, in the early Christian Church, together with a brief statement of the mode of worship in the Protestant Church, showing that in all these centuries suitable provision has been made in books of worship. The committee, therefore, suggested:

"1. That the use of Liturgical forms of church worship, as recognized by our forefathers, has the clear sanction of the practice and peculiar genius of
the original Protestant churches.

"2. That there is nothing in the present circumstances of our Church in this country to call for or justify the total departure from this ancient and long-established usage.

"3. That the Liturgy now authorized and partially used by the Church, is inadequate to our wants, inasmuch as apart from other deficiencies which may be found in it, it makes no provision for ordinary occasions of public worship.

"4. That whilst the older Liturgies of the Church, and especially that of the Palatinate, are of such a character as to commend the greater portion of them for adoption, there is still need of various modifications in order to adapt them fully to our wants and circumstances.

"5. That the present would be as favorable a time for making the requisite provision in the case, as any which may be anticipated in the future.

"6. That Synod therefore proceed to make such arrangements as it may in its wisdom think best for the securing of this object."

This report was signed by John H. A. Bomberger, Chairman of the committee. After considerable debate in the synod this report was adopted and a committee was appointed to whom the whole subject of the proposed Liturgy was referred. This was the committee which, after several changes in its membership had been made, prepared the Provisional Liturgy. Of this committee Dr. Bomberger was a member and in its work he took an active part.

The history of the preparation of the Provisional Liturgy is written elsewhere and need not be repeated
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here, but it should be stated here that Dr. Bomberger was vitally interested in the project, that he made a careful study of the liturgies in use in the church in Europe, that he was educationally, temperamentally and religiously well qualified to prepare liturgical material. It was about this time that he translated a large part of the Palatinate Liturgy and published it in the "Mercersburg Review," in the issues of January and May, 1850, and March, 1851. In one of these articles he answers a number of objections to the use of Liturgies which had been issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. Some of his theological opponents later charged Dr. Bomberger with having completely reversed his position and having become anti-liturgical. This charge he denied and both his teaching as a theological professor and his practice in the ministrations of the church are sufficient evidence that he was not opposed to the moderate use of liturgical forms. In the debate at the Synod of 1849, the question was asked what the character of the proposed liturgy should be, whether it should be high or low. Dr. Bomberger, who was chairman of the committee, replied that it should be a medium liturgy. To this position he held all through his ministry. Whilst he plead for freedom in the stated worship of the sanctuary, he used the liturgy and commended the use of it on the part of others in all such services as the administration of the sacraments, the marriage service, the burial service, etc.

The Church in the West was not in sympathy
J. H. A. Bomberger

with the liturgical movement as developed in the East. The Provisional Liturgy did not meet with the approval of the ministry and the congregations in the Ohio Synod, yet that part of the church was in need of a liturgy for use in its congregations, and therefore took steps to provide one that would suit their needs. The committee appointed by the synod to prepare a suitable liturgy through Dr. Herman Rust appealed to Dr. Bomberger to assist them in preparing the forms for the different services and invited him to sit with their committee. They recognized his preparation and fitness for this work and consequently wished to avail themselves of his services. A number of letters from Dr. Rust are at hand in which he requests Dr. Bomberger to prepare certain formulas, and others in which he thanks him for having sent material to be presented to the committee. One letter which contains so much bearing on the state of the church is here reproduced, so that it may be preserved. It will be of interest to readers of the present day in that it sets forth the state of things as the earnest men of that day saw it.

"Tiffin, Febr. 6, 1864.

"Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger:

"My Dear Brother: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and all yours. Accept of my sincere thanks for the heartfelt and encouraging sentiments of your last letter, which fell like refreshing dewdrops on my languishing spirits. The Lord has blessed you with the gift of administering comfort and encouragement, as well as instruction per
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letter, which you ought to make use of with all your might. It would be well if you would write friendly letters to all our ministers, or at least to those with whom you are personally acquainted. For it is high time for every true son of the church to bring all his power and influence to bear against the dangerous tendency of that modern scholasticism, which is now actively at work to gain a permanent foothold, and which, if not checked, will, sooner or later, sweep away the entire system of our fathers. I am glad that you have commenced again to write for the Messenger, and trust you will give the warning in such a manner that the church will be aroused from her slumbers and duly awakened to her imminent danger. Be not afraid of men, dear Bro., but speak your convictions freely, with a voice of thunder, in the name of God and his church. Thousands of anxious eyes are daily turned toward you, expecting light and help in this trying season of our church.

"Harbaugh has announced himself, in his answer to the students, as the champion of the Mercersburg System of Theology. The Lord have mercy upon our poor Zion! To show you how some of our ministers feel on this subject, let me give you an extract from a letter received night before last: 'I am now, and have been for some time, in trouble about certain things in our church. My head is swimming and my foot is faltering. Indeed I have been to such an extent perplexed, as to render me unfit for anything but pacing my sanctum. I feel unhappy and know not but that the staff may yet fall from my hand. I need not particularize. Mercersburg has become a pestilence to our once peaceful church, the native simplicity and glory of which it has well nigh brought into the dust. There is clearly a full determination to impose upon us all that Nevin and Schaff so fondly dream of. In a single article on the
Heidelberg Catechism, in his Evangelische Zeugnisse Dr. Schaff faults not less than five questions in it. (I have not seen that article, not having the paper.) Knowing that both are laboring day and night in their self-constituted Mission, and that many little satellites are trying to reflect their light, I feel pretty sure that it will not be many years until but little will be left us of all we once held as the distinguishing doctrines and principles of the German Reformed Church. I am not willing that my name shall stand on a formula that espouses a counterfeit Heidelberg Catechism, I must have the genuine thing or none. Can't subscribe to sacramental grace, etc., as set forth at Mercersburg. I love the German Reformed Church, as it came down from the fathers, above all others, but just as soon as she ceases to be what she was, and what she, thank God, measurably is, how can I, true to my vows and convictions, continue to regard her thus. My prayer to God is that you may have grace manfully to stand up for the truth, and that the threatening wave of Jesuitical intrigue and folly may yet be rolled back upon Rome and Oxford, from whence mainly Mercersburg started it, &c.'

"The author of this was formerly so completely carried away by Nevin that his name had to be perpetuated in his family. How he has changed. But he has turned back, there are others striving to follow the boasting crowd. One prominent Brother near me is fast getting onto the high horse. He even tries to surpass the transcendental points of the provisional Liturgy. The Lord help us to stem the flood. I have been looking for documents from you, or have you not got my last letter per Bro. Samuel Giesy? Please send without delay your revision of the Provisional liturgy, and the Palatinate liturgy, and whatever else you have of value and use for us.
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Please do not refuse nor delay to prepare formulas, as many as you can. And be sure to come to the meeting of the Committee on the 16th of March. You know, Dear Brother, we stand in need of your counsel and assistance, and the work is of incalculable importance. If we are successful, the Church will be saved, but if we fail, all is gone. O the Lord be merciful unto us, poor sinners! Please let me hear from you by return of mail. When you send your revision of the Provisional Liturgy and other documents, please enclose a copy of Dr. Nevin's report. All these documents were lost with my trunk. Remember me to your family and to all the friends. Have you a Hermeneutics? Please ask Schaeffer and Koradi whether they have Lutz, Clausen or Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics. I prefer to get Lutz's. Let them send me a copy forthwith. Must use it now. Tell them also to send me a copy of Ebrard's Kirchengeschichte, including Dogmengeschichte, now being published. If suitable I shall introduce it as a textbook. Ask them also whether they have copies of Goethe's Faust on hand, and how many. I know you will do me this favor, for you are too kind to refuse. Don't say now: "I have taken a wife, therefore I can't work on the Liturgy."

"God bless you all richly.
"Your Humble Bro.,
"H. Rust."

Dr. Bomberger was not only a ready speaker, but he was a ready and versatile writer, as well. He began early in his ministerial career to contribute articles to the religious periodicals and it was not long before he wrote more extended articles. His contributions to the Mercersburg Review begin with the very first issue of that periodical in Jan-
uary, 1849. The first article of the first number was from the pen of Dr. J. W. Nevin, who was the editor. The second article came from the pen of Dr. Bomberger on the subject, The Rule of Faith. This was followed by a second article on the same subject in the July issue of the same year. Two important articles which he wrote for this Review were printed in the issues of January and April, 1853. The subject of these articles was, Dr. Nevin and his Antagonists. Dr. Nevin resigned the professorship in the Theological Seminary in 1851. The Synod of Baltimore in October, 1852, elected the Rev. B. C. Wolff, D.D., professor of Theology. Dr. Nevin had now retired to private life and Dr. Bomberger hoped for a cessation of the attacks on Dr. Nevin, whose friend and admirer he was, and also on the synod of the church, whose good name he wished to defend. There had been five specific charges made against the orthodoxy of Dr. Nevin and attacks had been repeatedly made against the synod for permitting a man who was unsound in doctrine to hold the position of professor of Theology. In the two articles aggregating about seventy pages, Dr. Bomberger took up the charges separately and by argument and quotations from the writings of Dr. Nevin concluded that the charges could not be sustained. It was afterward charged against Dr. Bomberger that he had written in Dr. Nevin's defense, had stood with him and later had shifted his own position. But whilst Dr. Bomberger in these articles in the main defended Dr. Nevin's position in 1853, he
expressed a decided dissent on some points. The Reformed Church *Messenger* of April 3, 1853, makes special mention of this fact. Dr. Bomberger later admitted that he had allowed himself to be misled, and to make a few statements in these articles as in accord with the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism, which the Catechism did not teach. It is of interest to have in Dr. Bomberger's own words his purpose in writing what he did on this subject. "My main objects in writing these articles were: (1) To vindicate our Synod and Church against the charge of endorsing and countenancing the errors of which Dr. Nevin and his associates were accused, by showing (2) that upon his own earnest repudiation of those errors, and on interpretation of his language of which it was susceptible he did not hold them. (3) A third object was a moral one; to bind, as it were, Dr. Nevin by regard for the confidence of the Church and personal friends, to an honest, faithful maintenance of doctrinal integrity."

Dr. Bomberger's contributions to the *Mercersburg Review* continued until 1860. The *Review* was discontinued in 1861. In 1867 it was revived, but Dr. Bomberger no longer contributed to it. In 1868 *The Reformed Church Monthly* was started. Dr. Bomberger became editor of this publication, and was its chief contributor. It continued for nine years and after the publication of the *Monthly* was discontinued, a department continuing the work of the *Monthly* was maintained in the *Christian*
World for six years. During all these years the pen of Dr. Bomberger was kept busy producing articles month after month and week after week. Prior to the publication of the Monthly, the Messenger was the organ through which he spoke. A number of sermons and pamphlets, doctrinal and controversial, were published by him. These are mentioned elsewhere in this volume, and need not be repeated here.

Two works of importance in which his literary skill manifested itself should be mentioned here. These were translations, but they were of such magnitude and character that it is proper to speak of them. The first was a new edition of “Kurtz’s Text-book of Church History.” This was partly a new translation, a revision and to some extent a reconstruction of the Edinburg translation. This translation had omitted parts of the original and had, as Dr. Bomberger claimed, in many instances failed to convey the author’s sense, because of imperfect translation. Wherever this occurred, a new translation was made. For this work the latest German edition was used, whereas the Edinburg translation has been made from the third German edition. This work, in two volumes, aggregated about a thousand pages. The first edition was issued from the press of Smith, English & Co., and the later editions from that of the J. B. Lippincott Company. The work was extensively used as a text-book of Church History.

A work of still greater importance was “The
Protestant Theological and Ecclesiastical Encyclopaedia.” This was a condensed translation of Herzog’s “Real Encyclopaedia,” with additions from other sources. In this enterprise Dr. Bomberger had associated with him in the work of translation a number of professors and clergymen from the Reformed Church and from several other Protestant churches, but the management of the entire undertaking devolved upon him, and a large proportion of the papers were from his pen. Of this work Dr. Nevin says, in the October number, 1856, of the Mercersburg Review: “The translations read smoothly for the most part, and bear evidence of having been executed with judgment and care. Altogether the work bids fair to reflect lasting honor on those by whose diligence it is in the way of being offered to the American public, and we may already very safely assign it a place among the most important contributions yet made to the theological literature of our country.” Of this same work Dr. Gerhart writes in The Mercersburg Review, October, 1857: “We are much gratified at the regular issue of the successive numbers of Dr. Bomberger’s translation of Herzog’s Encyclopedia—the most extensive, thoroughly scientific and trustworthy theological publication of the kind that has proceeded from the American press.”

A letter from Dr. Herzog to Dr. Bomberger on this subject has historical interest. For this reason it is here reproduced:

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"Rev. and Dear Sir:—

"First of all I owe you an apology for my long delay in answering your cordial and flattering letter. New obstacles constantly came in my way, besides my absence from home on a vacation tour. "You must allow me to render my thanks for the kind and indulgent reception with which you and your friend have honored my Encyclopedia. I feel myself greatly encouraged by such kind appreciations of my labors, and incited to press onward with my difficult task, and use every exertion to prove myself not wholly unworthy of such confidence. Such encouragements are truly a balm to the spirit under the manifold heavy toils, perplexities, vexations, and cares of all sorts, which the writing of a work like this involves. What chiefly supports me under all this, is the thought that I have undertaken a work which may somewhat subserve the interests of Protestant Theology, and the Protestant Church. That eminent men in America so regard my work, and that it has found so many friends in that country, who sympathize with its true catholic spirit, is for me an important consideration. May God enable me in carrying forward the work, to develop those characteristics more and more, which have won for it so much confidence. In reference to your condensed translation, I must confess that it has my full approval, as have also the principles you have adopted, as communicated to me in your welcome letter, and which I find carried out in the first part of your translation sent to me, and I must express my gratification that the work has been undertaken by such competent hands. If such a translation should be attempted—and it is very natural that the matter should be thought of—it would necessarily assume the form which you are giving to it; that is, on the one hand it must be an abridgement, and on the other
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include additions of many articles which I have omitted. In regard to the former point, you remark with perfect correctness, that many articles may be condensed without injury to their integrity. In this respect you are much more at liberty than I can be.

"In regard to the second point, you could hardly avoid introducing some articles which I have omitted, especially from Weiner's Real Lexicon. Moreover, you will find occasion to take up some English names which I have not noticed; neither should I be surprised at your omission of some names which I have taken up, but which are of less importance for your readers. In this respect again I must fully approve of your plan, as one that necessarily calls for the exercise of personal discretion.

"I conclude with the prayer that the blessing of God may rest upon your undertaking, that it may accomplish much good, and prove a new bond of union between the Protestant churches of America and Europe. I repeat my thanks for your grateful letter, &c., &c.

"Respectfully yours, "HERZOG.

"To the Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger, Editor, &c., &c."

A few extracts from a letter written April 13, 1857, by Dr. Bomberger to Dr. Herzog, throw some light upon this project and the favor with which the work was received:

"The great diversity of style necessarily belonging to the original work, renders it peculiarly difficult to secure in all cases a perfectly accurate translation. And some of my coadjutors who are best versed in the German language complain of the occa-
sional ambiguity of a few of the writers. And among the most difficult for us are Rettberg and Jacobson. Thus far I have been much encouraged in my undertaking. The work in its English dress elicits approbation in this country and even in England, where they test everything American with microscopic scrutiny. Competent critics, of the most impartial character, have pronounced the translation, as such, superior to the translations of the Foreign Theological series of the Messrs. Clarke of Edinburgh. And I am conscious, without entertaining a too exalted opinion of the ability of my respected assistants, much less of my own, that this judgment is correct.” . . . “In conclusion, Rev. Sir, allow me to congratulate you upon the increasing favor with which your noble work meets. As you will see by the commendatory notices published on the cover of the translation, the Encyclopedia is hailed as constituting an era in the literature of the Evangelical Protestant Church. Even Baptists and Independents (Congregationalists), though by nature hostile to its Churchly standpoint and spirit, commend it in the highest terms. The notices taken by the Episcopal press of this country and England, have been especially flattering.”

This work was issued from the press of Lindsay & Blakiston, and came out in parts. These parts were later combined into volumes. Unfortunately the work was never completed. The original work became much more extensive than was at first intended and the translation, after two large volumes had been completed, was abandoned.

A study of the minutes of the synod from 1840.
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to 1870 at once reveals the fact that Dr. Bomberger had a very prominent part in the proceedings of the annual meetings. Such a study further shows not only that he had the qualities of leadership, but also that he was looked to as a leader by his brethren in the ministry. This is further shown by the extensive correspondence which he had with ministers and elders of the church. These letters received from these correspondents are at hand. They show that he was asked for advice, that he was asked to formulate plans of action for classes and synod, that he was placed on committees where difficulties were to be adjusted. The fact that he occupied prominent pulpits, of course, gave him a certain prestige, but also laid responsibility upon him, a responsibility that weighed heavily upon his shoulders.

The fact that he became the leader in a long and bitter controversy does not by any means prove that he was polemic in his nature. It must have caused him the keenest regret to be obliged to lead an opposition against those who were his warm personal friends. But to him it became a duty which conscience pressed upon him, that he defend the faith as he understood and conceived it. To him men older and younger, from the ministry and the laity, appealed that he should lead them in the defense of what they conceived to be the truth. The number of letters and appeals of this character are too numerous to be reproduced here. In addition to the letter from Dr. Gerhart and the one from Dr. Rust bearing upon this, we quote here from a
letter by Dr. B. S. Schneck. Dr. Schneck was for many years editor of the Reformed Church Messenger, and for sometime editor of the Reformirte Kirchenzeitung. He was himself looked upon as a leader and was by more than ten years Dr. Bomberger’s senior. Yet the older minister appeals to the younger brother in what appears to him a great crisis.

“Chambersburg, Aug. 29, 1853.

“Dear Brother Bomberger:—

“. . . . May I also add a few other words. I have just returned from a three months absence in Western Pennsylvania, and therefore know little or nothing new. But I left with a heavy heart, and it has not yet been relieved. I allude of course to the State of our Church. I found that Dr. Nevin is still full of his antipathies to Protestantism and full of laudations of Romanism (private letters to his special friends in West Pennsylvania, who had written to him inquiringly—he tells them, he received much more edification from Romish than from Protestant Devotional Books and sneeringly asks: Where is the Catholic that ever on his dying bed became a Protestant?)

“When I look at the Messenger and see, how Dr. Nevin is held up as the only sufficient exponent of the German Reformed Church—who is both able and willing to stand by her, and then bear in mind, that he himself must, of course, smile at such nonsense, in short, when I look around and see how the church keeps quiet, because she trusts that all will come right—and yet find many of our ministers—if not most of them, at unrest, I hardly know what to do. Sometimes I felt like taking an
It may be said then that it was Dr. Bomberger's ability, his qualities of leadership, his love for the truth as he conceived it, and the numerous appeals from his brethren in the ministry, that drew him into the long and bitter controversy in the church. Personal ambition was not the motive. There is sufficient evidence at hand to show that his predilections were for the pastoral office for which his
native gifts so well fitted him, and in which he met with continued success. It was what appeared to him an imperative duty that took him from the work of the pastorate, and after he took up educational work he still served for thirteen years as pastor of St. Luke’s Church, Trappe, Pa. It was only when increasing years made the double burden too heavy to carry, that he finally gave us the pastorate.

CALVIN D. YOST.