CHAPTER VIII

TWENTY YEARS AS COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Three months after his election as president of Ursinus College, Dr. Bomberger was still undecided as to whether he should accept the call. He had been foremost in the movement that had led up to the founding of the college, and, because of his natural position as leader, his associates doubtless had thought of no other when, on June 7, 1869, they unanimously chose him as president. Yet in September of the same year he notified the Board that he could not give a definite answer as to his acceptance.

During the summer months his mind had been much preoccupied with other matters. His "Editor's Desk" notes and monthly summaries in the Reformed Church Monthly are almost devoid of any reference to Ursinus College. The pages of this magazine during this period are witnesses to extensive studies in church history and to exhaustive argumentative essays and editorials relative to the theological controversy in the church which was most intense at this time. Besides the work on the Monthly there were also the manifold duties of his large pastorate.

Yet, at times, his thought must have turned
with much concern to the incipient college. At the beginning of the year the incorporators had secured a site and equipment by taking title to the buildings and grounds of Freeland Seminary, twenty-four miles out of the city, at Freeland, in Montgomery County. In the purchase of this place he had taken a deep interest. He had proposed the name for the new institution, had gone into such important details as the suggestion of the device for the corporate seal, had helped to work out the provisions of the charter, drafted the constitution on which the Board was organized, had recommended the titles of the several chairs for the faculty, and had even engaged in the work of helping to finance the new enterprise, for at the meeting in September he reported pledges aggregating more than twenty-five thousand dollars. But he had done all this as pastor of the Race Street Church. Here he had been happily located for nearly sixteen years. Associations had been formed which could not easily be given up. As a citizen of Philadelphia he had personal attachments running into many lines of intercourse, the loss of which he would keenly feel on leaving the city, even though it should be to take up his residence in a nearby community.

More perplexing than the change of location and the consequent interference with numerous happy relationships, however, must have been the proposition that he change his profession. To a man past fifty, this presents itself as an exceedingly difficult step. The college presidency, it should be observed,
was not so sharply defined as a profession in those days, and it was the rule, especially in denominational colleges, for this office to be filled by a minister of the gospel. The duties were relatively few and simple. The president of a small college was the head of the faculty and was not called upon to engage himself in duties far afield from that of the teaching function. This being the case, it was comparatively easy for a pastor, provided he possessed the necessary scholarship, to step into a college faculty as president. In this instance, however, the problem was far more difficult. The college itself had to be formed, no faculty as yet existed, there was no established patronage, no endowment; nothing was felt to be certain save the necessity for the institution itself as viewed from the standpoint of the church's welfare. But this was compelling, and indeed the die had been cast as far as the founding of the college was concerned.

Aside from all other considerations, it took unusual courage for one with a large family, whose requirements, owing to the fact that the children were growing up, were increasing from year to year, to forego a fixed salary and a comfortable home only to face uncertainty of support and no established abode. This difficulty was partly met a few months later when St. Luke's Reformed Church of Trappe invited Dr. Bomberger to become its pastor. This congregation, which had suffered through internal dissensions, was at the time without a pastor, and apparently welcomed the opportunity which their
call, by supplementing that of the college, would afford in securing for them the services of so distinguished and experienced a minister as Dr. J. H. A. Bomberger.

The following petition to the consistory, signed by ninety members of the congregation, constitutes one of the highly prized documents in the archives of this church:

“To the Consistory of the St. Luke’s German Reformed Church at Trappe.

“BRETHREN: As members of said church, being desirous for a restoration of peace and order among us, and feeling that it can best be accomplished by having a suitable and satisfactory Pastor who should be chosen at the earliest day in order to preserve and maintain the interest and welfare of the Church, and, believing that Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger from his position and vast Church experience would bring about harmony in feeling and action; and would thereby restore the desired Christian unity which should always prevail among the membership, and would signally promote the growth and prosperity of the Church, we earnestly and sincerely pray you to hold an election at as early a day as practicable for the Rev. Dr. J. H. A. Bomberger as pastor of our Church.”

The call was tendered in due time, and Dr. Bomberger accepted, taking charge of the congregation on April 1, 1870. This arrangement secured two results that were especially acceptable to Dr. Bomberger: It provided in part the means of living, and it opened the way for him to continue in pastoral
Willing to accept whatever issue might be in store, he stood ready to follow the path of duty according to God's purpose as this became clear to him. The people were already calling the institution "Dr. Bomberger's College," and not without reason. His position in the institution as its head was as much a logical necessity as was the establishment of the college itself. No record of his formal acceptance was ever made in the minutes of the Board, but from this time forth his relation as president is assumed, and along with it the professorship of "Moral and Mental Philosophy and Evidences of Christianity," as was proposed at the time of his election.

Meanwhile the work of perfecting the organization of the college went forward. The disinclination of Adam H. Fetterolf, A.M., principal of Freeland Seminary, to continue as head of the old school, which was now to become the academic department of the college, precipitated the question of manning the faculty. Consequently this became the chief item of business at a special meeting of the directors on February 10, 1870. The attempt was wisely made to preserve as close a relation as possible with the institution to whose estate the college succeeded. Thus the Rev. Abraham Hunsicker, to whom Freeland Seminary owed its existence, was made a member of the new board. The connecting link in the faculty was Professor J. Shelly Weinberger, A.M., who had been instructor in ancient and modern languages in the Seminary and who now became "Ad-
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junct Professor of the Latin and Greek Languages” in the college. A Yale man of ’59, being at the time thirty-eight years of age, and having had ten years’ experience as a teacher in the school, Professor Weinberger was chosen at once for the chair of the classics in the new faculty. His complete familiarity with the place, his wide acquaintance among the constituents of the old school, his characteristic enthusiasm for progress and his unrestrained loyalty to whatever cause he chose to espouse made him a valuable associate to Dr. Bomberger in the work of setting up and starting the college.

To a position ranking above that of Professor Weinberger, however, the board elected an older man who was both a teacher and a minister of the Reformed Church, the Rev. Henry William Super, A.M., who was made “Vice President and Professor of Mathematics, Mechanics, the Harmony of Science and Revealed Religion, etc.” Professor Super, now forty-six years of age, was a graduate of Marshall College and the Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, where he spent seven years as a student in the earlier days of Doctors Nevin and Schaff. For some years he had been in the active ministry, serving for a time the Waynesboro charge, a former field of Dr. Bomberger; but, having a physical constitution unsuited to the rigors of the pastoral life and having a natural predilection for teaching, he later accepted a position as instructor in mathematics in the Keystone State Normal School at Kutztown, Pennsylvania. He, therefore, brought to Ursinus College 224
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qualifications and experience which especially fitted him for holding up the hands of his chief both in the college and in the church.

Another helpful aid in setting up the college and in the guidance of its affairs for a number of years afterward was Dr. J. Warrenne Sunderland, a trained educator, who was Dr. Bomberger's senior by three years. This man, who at the time was principal of Pennsylvania Female College, a flourishing institution founded, as was Freeland Seminary, by Abraham Hunsicker, and located in the same village, possessed a knowledge of educational institutions and of the technique of college administration which made him an excellent adviser. He was graduated from Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Connecticut, in 1836. For nearly twelve years he had been a college professor in McKendree College, in Illinois, and in Kemper College, in Missouri. He had just entered upon a position in what is now Washington University, at St. Louis, when, in 1848, he came east and associated himself with Abraham Hunsicker in the educational work at Freeland. Dr. Sunderland was both a director and a member of the faculty from the very beginning of the new institution. As director he lent valuable aid in framing the charter. He also prepared the by-laws for the institution. As a member of the faculty he took charge of the chair of Natural Sciences, and conducted the work of this department for five years.

Another professor who took major rank in the original faculty was the Rev. John Van Haagen,
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A.M., a brother of Anthony Van Haagen, a member of the Board of Directors. He had been educated at Mercersburg, and had subsequently studied in Germany. After some correspondence with Dr. Bomberger, he accepted the professorship of the "German Language and Literature, History, the History and Philosophy of Language, etc."

This coterie of scholarly and experienced men deservedly commanded respect and confidence. They took up their labors together with enthusiasm and set the gauge for serious work and high standards of scholarship from the beginning. While Dr. Bomberger himself had not previously taught in college class rooms except as an instructor while pursuing his theological course at Mercersburg and possibly still earlier at York, nevertheless he was at no time in his career out of touch with college work. In organizing the new college he was not without more or less intimate knowledge of the ways of similar institutions elsewhere. In the first place, there were the recollections of the setting up of old Marshall, in which, as the first and only senior in the initial year, he took peculiar part as a student. During the nine years of his pastorate in Easton, he undoubtedly became quite familiar with Lafayette College, and, as a director of Franklin and Marshall College from 1853 until 1869, when he became the founder of Ursinus, he had full knowledge of that institution. As a long time resident of Philadelphia, he doubtless knew very well the ways and workings of the University of Pennsylvania.

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Thus it becomes apparent that the men who stood for the educational work in the new college were not novices. The early catalogues bear witness to this fact. There is nothing amateurish in their composition or appearance, a single exception being, perhaps, a reference to the students residing in the college dormitories as "inmates." A notable addition to the faculty was made in 1872 by the election of Samuel Vernon Ruby, Esq., A.M., as "Professor of Natural Sciences and Belles Lettres." In the latter capacity especially Professor Ruby rendered valuable service in helping to edit the publications of the college.

It is stated by persons who were students in the institution in the early days, that Dr. Bomberger was relieved of much routine by other members of the faculty. Several of the professors were unmarried and lived among the students in the college buildings. Their influence was felt directly in the dormitories and the refectory as well as in the classrooms. The somewhat rigorous regime to which professors and students alike were subject is indicated in the following sketch from the pen of Dr. Bomberger in the Ursinus College Reportory:

"MONDAY IN UR SINUS COLLEGE.

"Believing that it will be gratifying to our numerous patrons, who have sons and relatives in Ursinus, and to the still larger number of friends who take a lively interest in the institution, we shall attempt a pencil sketch of a day's doings in the
school. The first day of the working week is selected, as being a fair specimen of what takes place on all the others, except Saturday, when, according to general custom, there are no recitations or lectures.

"We start, then, with 5.30 A. M., on Monday, when the large bell rings, rousing the inmates of the building from their slumbers, and summoning them to preparation for the work of the day and week. To new-comers, the loud, clear peals of the early bell are at first quite startling. In most cases, unused to such sounds at that hour, when, during the fall and winter months, it is still dark, they leap at a bound from their couches, and, half-scared, hurry through their preparations for breakfast. Soon, however, the ear becomes accustomed to the sound, and the sleeper wakens slowly to the call, rises reluctantly from his rest, and barely manages to reach the dining-hall before "the door is shut."

"At 6 A. M. the steward's bell rings for breakfast. All the students in the house meet in the large recitation-room, and at the tap of a small desk-bell pass, bench after bench, in due order to the dining-hall. Each boarder has his proper place. At present two long tables accommodate them, by a little close packing. One of the professors, residing in the building, occupies a seat at the head, another at the foot of each table, so far as they may be said to have a head or foot. About twenty minutes are occupied at the meal. When all have finished, they are dismissed in order, by a stroke of the tap-bell.

"Then follows an hour of study in their respective rooms. From half past seven until the time for morning prayer and roll-call, they are at liberty for recreation. If the weather allows, this time is mostly given to walking, base ball, or some other amusement involving bodily exercise and the exer-
cise of the respiratory and vocal organs in mirthful ways.

"At 8.45 A. M. the large bell again rings, summoning professors and students to the large recitation-room (now yet used as a chapel) for morning prayer and roll-call. After calling the roll, a chapter is read from the Bible, a hymn sung, and prayer offered. These devotions are conducted in strict accordance with the simple usage of the Reformed Church. Any requisite statements or announcements are then made by the faculty.

"The students are then dismissed in classes, by a stroke of the tap-bell, to their respective recitation-rooms in the following order: first bell, the Theological Class, and Prof. Super's class in Elementary Algebra. Second tap, Prof. Weinberger's, the Junior Class (Agamemnon, or Tacitus' Agricola). Third tap, Prof. Van Haagen's, Freshman Class (Latin). Fourth tap, Prof. Bowers, a Preparatory Class, Reading. Fifth tap, Prof. Snyder's, Reading and Orthography. The Theological Class is occupied an hour and a half, the other classes three-fourths of an hour.

"At 9.45 a large tap-bell strikes the second recitation hour, and at 10.30 sounds the signal for the third series of recitations.

"At 12 M. the large bell announces the close of the morning's work, and the boarders meet in the chapel, ready for the call of the steward's bell to dinner.

"After dinner follows an hour of recreation and exercise for those who choose to take it. At 1.30 the afternoon's work begins, the large bell again summoning all the students into the chapel, to be dismissed to their several class rooms, in the order already indicated.
“At 4 P. M. the large bell rings for roll-call and evening prayer, with which the public duties of the day close.
“In addition to the above, Prof. Sunderland attends to Chemistry.
“Immediately after evening prayer the steward’s signal calls to supper. This over, the students have about two hours for exercise and recreation.
“At 7 P. M. the large bell calls all the boarding students into their rooms for study, for which they are allowed time until 9.30, when the large bell rings the signal to prepare for bed; and by 10 o’clock all lights are required to be extinguished.”

The first catalogue announces that the discipline of the institution “will be Christian and parental.” After stating that every proper liberty will be allowed and no arbitrary or oppressive restraints imposed, it is declared that “violations of decorum will incur prompt and decisive penalties.” A penalty not infrequently imposed by the faculty was that of a public reprimand by the President. In administering this the offender was bidden to stand up at the close of the chapel service, whereupon Dr. Bomberger, with withering severity, pictured to him the viciousness of his offense, and with equal earnestness counseled him to mend his ways. Few forms of punishment were regarded as more severe than the public reprimand by the President. In his annual report to the Directors at the end of the third year, the President stated that two students had been expelled for “contumacious insubordination,” a penalty inflicted, as he said, “with reluctance and sorrow.”
During the first five years in Collegeville, or Freeland, as the village was then called, Dr. Bomberger and his family occupied the old-fashioned homestead directly opposite the college grounds, long since the home of Captain H. H. Fetterolf. To provide an office he erected a frame building in the yard west of the main structure. Here, according to the minutes of the Board, the meetings of the Executive Committee were held regularly after the spring of 1870. The quiet and charm of the country, after many years spent in the city, lent enjoyment to his new home. His descriptions of the locality which appeared in the catalogues and circulars, we may well believe, were inspired by a genuine love for the place.

On the last day of January, 1876, he reported to the Executive Committee of the Board that he had purchased of Abram Grater a lot of ground opposite the college, and asked the members for counsel as to the erection of a house. The Secretary's minute states that they "encouraged the President to build a good house suitable for the President of the college; and said that they thought the college would buy the property on equitable terms if ever it would be for sale." Then was built "Zwingli Hof," not only the pleasant home of the President, but the hospitable lodge of many a visitor as well. Perhaps no minister in the Reformed Church had a larger circle of friends, and to all of these "Zwingli Hof" bade hearty welcome. Here his study found place within the walls of the home, although the house was
so planned as to give the large room designed for this purpose a degree of privacy. The premises were acquired by the college after his death, in accordance with the belief expressed by his colleagues when he first sought their advice with regard to building. The house, afterwards enlarged and slightly remodeled, is now used for college purposes and is known as "Shreiner Hall."

About the same time, perhaps a year or two later, Dr. Super also built a beautiful home a few rods distant on a lot adjoining the grounds of Trinity Church. Into this new home he brought his bride, Mrs. Sarah H. Detwiler, of Trappe, and henceforth the home of the Vice President shared with that of the President in entertaining students, returning alumni and visiting friends. These premises, by bequest of Dr. Super, became the property of the college at the death of Mrs. Super in 1914, and this place is now the home of the President.

The visits of ministerial brethren were usually paid back by Dr. Bomberger on their own invitation, for nearly every Sunday found him in some distant parish, called thither to assist in the ministrations of the Lord's Day before always eager audiences. There were probably no churches that were sympathetic with Ursinus College in which his distinguished form was not familiar. Then, too, there were the trips of vacation times. The summer numbers of the Reformed Church Monthly are rich in narratives of journeys hither and thither, now
into the manors of the Lehigh, now into the Lebanon Valley, this week to York County and next week into the ever welcoming Cumberland Valley—and the accounts never fail to tell of the "substantial interest" shown in Ursinus College.

The financial management of the college gave the President no little concern. There was not a year during his administration of twenty years in which this problem was not prominent among the concerns of his office. And no wonder! The financial history of Ursinus College constitutes a magnificent monument to faith and endurance on the part of the men who assumed the responsibility for the institution. Only the supreme faith in Providence which abounded in the heart of the heroic founder could have enabled him to meet successfully the disappointment and discouragement which all too frequently attended his worthy endeavors, and which would have blasted the hopes of a less courageous leader.

Reference has been made to the uncertainty of support with respect to salary which he was obliged to face on accepting the presidency. But this was only a minor part of the hazard he was assuming. He had already witnessed the founding of the institution, and well knew that, contrary to the avowed policy for starting institutions of higher learning, Ursinus was founded on debt instead of on endowment. Of the $20,000 offered as the purchase price of the Freeland Seminary property, only $2,500 cash
was specified, and this was not really paid until the first day of April following the date of agreement, February 3, 1869. However, the directors addressed themselves to the financial problem with due courage and promptness. Steps were taken without hesitation to provide an endowment of the presidency amounting to $40,000, and a movement was organized to provide $50,000, through the sale of stock, to be used in the purchase of the property and the erection of additional buildings. The original Finance Committee of the Board of Directors consisted of John Wiest, A. W. Myers and A. Kline, who, backed by personal means, offered welcome encouragement to the cause. The subscriptions made by these and others to the endowment fund gave inspiration to the movement and warranted the belief that the new institution would be taken care of financially from the beginning.

The details of financial failures and lost fortunes which constituted the bitter experience of many prosperous citizens in the “Panic of ’73” need not be related here. It was a lamentable fact, however, that among those whose fortunes were drawn down in this maelstrom were those of some of Dr. Bomberger’s most ardent supporters, and ere these subscriptions were paid, the substance out of which the original endowment of the college was to have been gathered had dissolved into nothingness. The men who had entered the Board at the beginning with strongest assurances of financial aid to the college became less and less prominent in its counsels,
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and ere five years had passed they had dropped out entirely. Meanwhile, with undaunted zeal, the President and his associates, reconciled to the necessary hardships and sacrifices, turned to the people of the church, whose devotion to the cause of which the college had now become the exponent had given much encouragement in the work of the institution. The "irregularity" of the college from the point of view of the High Churchmen made support through the regular channels of benevolence in the church impracticable, so that the securing of funds for the maintenance of Ursinus College among the churches, however sympathetic the latter might have been, became doubly difficult. Pastors had not only to raise the money among their people, but in classes and synods, had to meet the charge of diverting these moneys into extra-ecclesiastical channels, the college not being under synodical or classical control. Technicalities, however, in these instances, as in all cases in which burning issues are at stake, were with more or less hardship set aside, and the task of maintaining the college through the private gifts of church members and the offerings of congregations was carried on. In order to give encouragement and a degree of system to this work the pastors of congregations affiliated with the college banded themselves together in the Ursinus Union. The annual meeting of the Union on commencement occasions had almost as much significance for a time as the meetings of the Directors. The fact that the college had definitely faced about and now looked not to a
few benefactors, but to the churches for support, is seen in the change of personnel in the Finance Committee of the Board. Whereas this committee was originally composed of three supposedly prosperous laymen, it was now made up of prominent ministers. In 1875 this committee was constituted by the appointment of the Rev. George Wolff, D.D., the Rev. H. H. W. Hibshman and Dr. Bomberger. One of the results of this appeal to the churches for maintenance was that the college became a center of interest for great numbers of people of the Reformed Church. The church also came to assume a sort of proprietary interest in the institution. It was no longer called "Dr. Bomberger's College," but was given a place in the list of institutions of the Reformed Church.

In 1871 the problem of providing more room had to be met. The alternative of purchasing the adjoining premises of James Palmer or of erecting a new building was met by the choice of the latter. In this matter Abraham Hunsicker took the initiative. He moved that the college "build a wing adjoining the east end of the college, the same to be built of stone, four stories in height, corresponding in position with the other wing." The last distinctive service which he performed in behalf of the cause of education in Freeland, to which he had devoted much of his energy and means, was the preparation of the plans for this building. He died on January 12, 1872. The building was dedicated on October 1, 1872. The money for meeting the
"ZWINGLI HOF"

Home in Collegeville, Commencement Day, 1877
cost of its erection was raised largely by Henry Leonard ("The Fisherman"), who had been the successful financial agent of Heidelberg College in Ohio. His services were deeply appreciated by Dr. Bomberger, and the Board voted that it had "heard with emotions of thankfulness to the Lord" of the success of its "esteemed agent, Henry Leonard, Esq."

While the Board was fortunate in its choice of a Secretary in the person of Henry W. Kratz, Esq., due to whose care the early records of the institution were kept with scrupulous accuracy, the corporation was not so highly favored with reference to the other offices. A number of persons were elected to the presidency of the Board and also to the treasurership before these offices became efficiently filled. This was accomplished at the annual meeting in 1873, when Henry W. Kratz was elected President, and Frank M. Hobson, Secretary and Treasurer. From this time forth these officials were always in their places when meetings were held. They assumed responsibilities freely, and attended to duties laid upon them with excellent judgment and commendable promptness. In these officials of the Board the President had faithful support and ready assistance through all the succeeding years of his administration. And yet as business men they were much occupied with their own affairs.

After the first five years of the institution's history there seems to have been for a time a falling off in interest. The financial support became more slender and the number of students grew less.
In November, 1879, a proposal was made by persons interested in Palatinate College, at Myerstown, Pa., that a union be effected between Ursinus College and that institution. The proposal was given consideration but finally declined on recommendation of Dr. Bomberger. The effect of the discussion was bad, both within the institution and without. Reports were put in circulation that Ursinus College was to be discontinued, and prospective students turned their faces in other directions. The whole situation was full of discouragement, and steps looking toward retrenchment, some of which were painful to take, were put forward by the Board. On the other hand, however, there came about a better safeguarding of the institution’s financial interests. An effort was made to collect moneys remitted to former students as beneficiaries who had gone into secular pursuits, and greater care was exercised in admitting beneficiary students to make sure that funds for their support should be provided.

In 1880 Dr. Bomberger was enabled to begin his annual report with an expression of thanksgiving for “revived prosperity of the school in the vitally important respect of an increased number of students.” The receipts from tuition had increased fifty per cent. over those of the previous year. However, there was great need of larger income through gifts, and, after fruitless efforts on the part of the Board to procure the services of a financial agent, action was finally taken at the annual meeting in 1883 asking Dr. Bomberger himself to lay aside his other
work and take the field in a campaign to raise a sufficient sum to clear the college of all indebtedness "and as much more as possible." He acceded to the request, but having been chosen by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States as a delegate to the meeting of the Reformed and Presbyterian Alliance at Belfast, Ireland, the Directors granted him leave to attend. He was thus absent on a trip to Europe during several months in the year 1884. This visit abroad gave him not only a well-earned vacation, but filled him with renewed energy for the resumption of his labors on his return. Prior to his leaving he had raised nearly $9,000, and in his absence two things had happened which were of signal importance in promoting the welfare of the college—Robert Patterson had made a donation of $5,000, and Henry T. Spangler had been made a member of the Board.

Mr. Patterson, an elder in Trinity Reformed Church, Philadelphia, was elected a member of the Board in 1887. He made the first donation of which recognition was made by the Board in June, 1883, when he gave $500 to repair and paint the buildings. That he should follow the next year with a gift of $5,000 was gratifying indeed. Due to his benevolent action the college premises from this time forth were kept in excellent order.

Henry T. Spangler, who was graduated in 1873, had become pastor of St. Luke's Reformed Church at Trappe on April 1, 1884. His election to the Board of Directors of the college took place on
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June 25th following, at which time he was also made a member of the Executive Committee. Within a year he was appointed on a committee with Frank M. Hobson to carry out the program undertaken by Dr. Bomberger to wipe out the debt and accumulate a working fund for the college. A month later this committee had already in hand new subscriptions amounting to over $3,000. At the next commencement Robert Patterson offered another gift of $5,000, provided $5,000 additional would be raised among the friends of the college. The offer was promptly accepted, and by September following Mr. Spangler reported $6,000 raised with which to meet the condition of Mr. Patterson's gift. Thus the story of the college's better days runs on. A generous benefactor on the one hand offering large personal gifts, and a director who had the energy and ability to draw contributions from the people, on the other, constituted a combination within the Board which not only brought substantial help in the financial affairs, but inspired new life and ambition throughout the whole institution.

Thus did the President now feel the financial burdens lifting from his shoulders. Taking account of the help now coming, and looking back over the many hard experiences to the days of the beginnings which were bright with hopes of material support, he could count full fifteen years which had to be passed in sacrifice and toil before those hopes, so soon blasted, could be made good in the generous deeds of other men. But now, with the hostility
within the church largely allayed, and the college thriving as never before, he was relatively free from the burdening care which no night's rest nor any day's vacation could remove through all the busy years. His greatest gratification of all came at commencement in June, 1890, when his now bosom friend, Mr. Patterson, made his unprecedented offer of $25,000 toward a new administration building for the college. Thus the history of his administration on the financial side reached its successful climax.

As an educator, J. H. A. Bomberger was in theory and in practice a "doctor of the old school," an appellation which he doubtless would have accepted with satisfaction. As a defender of a faith already defined, he relied much on authority, although he was an original thinker. Consequently his mental processes were for the most part deductive. His mind was familiar with the forms of logic. Like the Schoolmen of old he could argue with wonderful effect. Quick to detect a fallacy and skilled in the art of reasoning, he was a conspicuous instance of an a priori thinker. This characteristic practically fixed his position as an educator. The genetic psychology was uncongenial to his type of mind. He proceeded with the work of education under the view that students should be "moulded" rather than that they should be permitted to "grow." To him, education was a formative process in which the function of the teacher received especial emphasis. However, he did not overlook the facts of growth and of self-
activity on the part of youth. His nearest approach to a discussion of this matter is perhaps the following:

The first thing to be done evidently is, to prepare the mind itself for the effective acquisition of knowledge, and the heart for the proper exercise of its affections. Spiritual powers no less than those of the body, must be drawn out and trained to healthy activity. And to stir them up and lead them on in such activity demands the teacher's primary attention and often his highest skill. The work of every young man's education, intellectually considered, must start with inciting and teaching him to think. To crowd his memory with facts and rules in geography, grammar, arithmetic, history, the mathematics, the languages, may indeed satisfy him for the time, and deceive others by a display of mechanical scholarship; but all is at the expense of his true education.

The master-mechanic never puts a beginner to the more difficult and delicate work of the trade. He must first learn to use his hands and manage his tools. The teacher of music keeps his young pupil at simple exercises until he has been taught the elements of the art, and has acquired, by practice, the proper use of his fingers in touching or striking the chord or key. And so the true instructor in the usual branches of a literary education devotes his first and chief attention to drawing out those faculties which are as the hands and fingers of the mind in apprehending what is to be learned.

He sets forth with characteristic clearness the older and more strictly disciplinary college course in contrast with the newer vocational type of cur-
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riculum. The latter was not then conceived in the radical form in which it is being advocated to-day. Yet his discussion of the merits of the two systems written almost fifty years ago, sounds like a present day treatise:

Two methods, chiefly, are advocated. One, by far the older of the two and prevalent in most of the long established European and American colleges, rests upon the principle that a certain course, embracing what are deemed needful proportions of the ancient Greek and Roman Classics, the Mathematics, the Physical and Psychical Sciences, must be closely adhered to and pursued by every student from the beginning to the end of an academic course. This method is not only regarded as being the most liberal, and suited to produce the largest amount of erudition and general culture. It is also claimed for it, that it is the best calculated to secure the fullest development of all the mental powers, and to form the most vigorous and richly furnished scholarship. Starting the pupil with the elements of language, and the first principles of the exact sciences, it is believed that under this method he receives the most encouraging stimulus to study, and the most wholesome discipline in the prosecution of his studies.

The method has, in all main features, both the advantage and the disadvantage of being an old one. There has, therefore, been abundant opportunity of proving its merits, or of exposing its defects. Open for generations to criticism, and challenging whatever tests might be applied to it, it is not surprising that censors should be found who have tried and condemned it. It seems especially in keeping with the literary characteristics of the present period and our own country, that a scheme so ancient and staid
should be subjected to renewed investigation, and this in no friendly spirit. In the judgment of not a few warm friends of educational progress, this investigation has resulted in the condemnation of the old method, as superannuated, and incompetent to meet the wants of the age. It might train literary giants a century or two ago, but the present times do not want such prodigies, it is contended; they require men of great practical sense and power. Of what value the learning which can write or speak Greek like that of Plato and Demosthenes, or Latin like that of Cicero and Livy, when the time required to acquire such power might be much more advantageously employed in the study of some useful science. To this the friends of the traditional method reply, and it must be confessed with considerable force, that their system can appeal to its fruits in vindication of its superior claims. It is not conceded that the old course is stiff and rigid in an objectionable sense; or that, so far as it is at all successful in its line, it produces only book-worms, men of great learning, but unfitted for practical work. From the past it cites, as illustrations of its power to lead each generation in every form of progressive civilization, numerous achievements in the various spheres of practical life. Nay, it retorts upon some of its most zealous opponents, by demanding of them where they acquired the skill which they display in their controversy with them, and where their great masters of what are styled the more useful sciences learned their first lessons, and received their training. It urges the injustice of using the weapons forged in its shops against the method by which such effective armor has been produced, and complains that children, whose intellectual power proves them to have been fed on the choicest aliment, and reared to a most vigorous maturity, should denounce the system
under which such strength of mental muscle and sinew has been developed.

The other method starts upon the assumption that *practical utility for immediate work* is the true end of education. Hence the ancient classics are discarded as dead languages and unworthy of being disinterred, excepting perhaps to gratify the antiquarian's taste, or to furnish employment to some literary geologist. Time on them is wasted and the acquisition of those languages costs far more toil than they are worth. For mental discipline the modern languages, German or French, serve the purpose fully as well as Greek and Latin, and when learned supply the student with what may be turned to profitable account. The natural sciences, physics and the mathematics, it is contended, will more effectually improve the mental faculties and equip young men for the proper work of life, than the studies which they have been usually required to pursue. Trained by these they can be prepared at once to go forth and engage in some useful and lucrative avocation.

It would be unjust to charge this plan with utterly ignoring the importance of disciplining the mental powers as a proper part of education. But its advocates contend that this object may be quite as fully secured by their method as by the other. How false or correct their theory is, remains to be seen. As yet it is in its first trial. And although it may seem to run counter to well established principles, time and experience may justify the revolution it is striving to accomplish in the sphere of education. That its utilitarian and seemingly materialistic features should excite suspicion against it, is altogether natural. The present tendency to level all things to the plane of secular usefulness and material interests, undoubtedly seems rather to
need curbing than the stimulus of educational appliances to encourage and urge it on. And if our higher schools lower the aim and standard of education to suit the taste and temper of popular sentiment, how shall the most unhappy results be prevented?

But without following this point further, time forbidding it, we may say that our preferences are for the older theory and its method. Some modifications of it may of course be allowed, in accommodation to individual circumstances. At the same time we adhere to the old doctrine, that the first purpose of all academic education is thorough mental culture, the development of the latent strength of the faculties to disciplined activity. And we are of the old persuasion, that, in the main, the course and method which has usually been pursued, is the best for the attainment of this end.

Knowing the exalted position which he took respecting the matter of personal religion, special interest will be felt in what he had to say on the influences which the college should exert in this direction.

In the prospectus of Ursinus College, issued in 1869, he states that “the institution owes its establishment to the lively interest felt by its founders in the advancement of education in the higher branches of learning, upon the basis of Christianity, and with chief regard to religious ends.” He further emphasizes the fact that it is the desire of the founders to secure these ends in full harmony with evangelical Protestant principles. In his inaugural address, delivered at the opening of the college on September 246
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6, 1870, from which the above excerpts are taken, he sets forth at length his view of the original and inherent character of the religious nature in human life:

The moral and religious nature of man needs as earnest and diligent cultivation as his intellectual powers. Indeed where this is neglected there can be no true mental culture. The neglect will prove an insuperable hindrance in the way of thorough intellectual development, and will lead to a warped and ungainly result. For a wholly exclusive development of the rational powers, considered apart from morality and religion, and unaffected by moral (or immoral) and religious (or irreligious) influences, is hardly conceivable. The eye is not more susceptible of light, nor the ear of sound, than the soul of man is of moral and religious facts, truths and principles.

This susceptibility or capacity is as innate in the mind as any of its other capacities, and pertains to all its faculties, is a rational quality of each. In being endowed with reason and personality, or a personal intelligent will, man was necessarily invested with a moral and religious nature, and placed under the responsibilities, divine and human, involved in the possession of such a nature. The inner activities of such a nature will accordingly reach after things moral and religious, after what may serve to satisfy this element of its being. And its longings in this respect must be met by the nurturing influences and aids of education, or they will go wandering in false and dangerous directions. Think, feel and act truly or falsely, wisely or foolishly, man will. The moral and religious elements in him cannot be separated, abstractly or practically, from what is as natural to him as thought and as unavoidable as observation.
J. H. A. Bomberger

To state the case of religious education is not difficult, but to propose effective methods by which education can be conducted with chief reference to religious ends is another matter. In contemplating this problem, Dr. Bomberger laid down two principles: First, the possession of a moral and religious nature is a sure guaranty of the capacity of man for high and noble culture; and Secondly, a system of education fully conformed to man's nature as religious and moral, surrounds the student with an atmosphere that is exhilarating to the intellect as well as sanctifying to the heart. "Such a system consistently carried out," he says, "will constantly inspire the student yielding to its benign influence with motives to diligence and faithfulness which will make duty easy and mental efforts a delight." Thus, with foresight as to the probable failure of the system to achieve fully such beneficent ends, he wisely conditions its success on the attitude and receptivity of the student. And so education in religion and morals, as in memory and reason, succeeds only as the student yields to the educative process itself. He had no charmed panacea for wickedness. The work of the teacher in this direction he stated briefly, thus:

This part of the educator's work, is not to be something superseded only, in a formal way, to other parts of a prescribed course of study. It must be judiciously blended with every branch of learning. And whatever may be done in a special, separate way, must simply serve to promote and confirm the general influence thus constantly operative. Pupils
will then find it impossible to escape that influence, and will often be found, unconsciously almost, imbibing wholesome, moral principles, and sound religious convictions, which mould their character, and fit them for the highest usefulness for life.

The students of the institution did not come under the President’s instruction until in the junior year and in the theological department. Here he employed the lecture and quiz method supplemented by assignments in text books and outside reading. The work of his classroom was conducted with a degree of dignity that possibly amounted to austerity for the more diffident students. There was a seriousness in the Professor which brooked no horseplay. His instruction was often “over the heads” of some students, to whom, of course, his courses seemed difficult. To these, however, he showed considerate mercy in assigning marks and recommending promotions. The younger students had little opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the President, and yet his influence along moral and religious lines was strongly felt throughout the institution. The pervasiveness and intensity of this influence is touchingly referred to in a student editorial which appeared in the Bulletin after his death:

For twenty years Dr. Bomberger stood as a tower of strength at the head of Ursinus College. To the public he was the most conspicuous exponent of its life and character. In the internal work of the institution he was equally impressive. His superior intellectual endowments, his generous sympathies,
and his graces of manner enabled him to fill a large place with dignity and power.

His response to the exactions of daily duty was singularly faithful. At all seasons and under all circumstances his familiar figure would be seen emerging from Zwingli-hof at the first tap of the morning call to prayers, and with rapid step hastening up the avenue, first to escort the young ladies to their place in chapel, and then, with a fervor and unction which few men possess, to lead the devotions. His devout reading of the inspired Word, his sonorous voice in song, and the warmth and inspiration of his prayers seemed to have become a part of the very life of the institution. One could not have imagined in advance how the college could gather for worship and repair to its daily tasks without his leadership.

GEORGE LESLIE OMWAKE.