ADDITIONAL PROFESSORSHIPS

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OF THE

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES,

LANCASTER, PENN'A.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSORSHIPS

IN

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OF THE

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES,

LANCASTER, PENN'A.

BY

PROFESSOR E. V. GERHART, D. D.

00<u>11---</u>,

LANCASTER, PA.
INQUIRER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY.
1884.

NOTE.

THE following statement of facts in the history of the Theological Seminary, and of motives for the founding of additional Trofessorships, was written at the request of the Chairmen of the Committees appointed by the Pittsburg Synod, the Mother Synod, and the Potomac Synod; and is issued for general distribution among the members of the Reformed Church.

DEAR BROTHER:—You are doubtless aware that at the late meeting of the Pittsburgh Synod, Revs. A. E. Truxal, J. W. Love, D. S. Dieffenbacher, J. W. Pontius, S. R. Bridenbaugh and J. H. Prugh, were appointed a committee to secure funds for the endowment of a Pittsburgh Professorship in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, at Lancaster, Pa.

With a view of bringing the matter before you for your consideration, we send you the accompanying tract, which we trust you will read and consider prayerfully. We appeal to you in the name of Christ, and ask you to do for this cause as the Spirit of the Lord may prompt you.

Some member of the committee will in the near future call upon you to have a personal conference with you on the subject.

Yours, in the name of the Church,

J. W. Love, See'y, A. E. Truxal, Chairman, Greensburg, Pa. Irwin, Pa.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSORSHIPS

IN THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

ORGANIZATION IN 1825.

The Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States was organized at Philadelphia in September, 1747, five ministers being in attendance. From that time onward to the end of the last century, the supply of ministers came from the mother country through the Classis of Amsterdam, consisting generally of well educated men. A number obtained a partial education under the private tuition of pastors. But the increase was slow. During a period of seventy-seven years, from 1747 to 1824, according to the minutes of the Synod of that year, the ministry of the German Reformed Church had reached the number of only sixty-four.

In 1817 the Synod adopted positive measures looking toward the founding of a Theological Seminary;

but these measures were ineffectual for seven years. Not until 1824, at Bedford, was definite action taken. This resulted in the organization of a Theological Seminary, at Carlisle, in April 1825, by the Rev. Lewis Mayer, D. D., who had previously been chosen professor of systematic theology.

According to the records, the Synod then had 5 Classes, 233 congregations, and about 14,000 members. The statistics are not complete; but, though incomplete, yet, as the German Reformed Church had been in existence and organized in America for more than three-quarters of a century, they indicate how slow had been her progress during that long period, and reveal her comparative weakness at that epoch in her history.

According to a published report of a missionary made about that time, there were 150 vacant congregations.

FRUITS OF THE SEMINARY.

As the fruit of the work done, directly and indirectly, by this school of theology, founded in 1824, during a period of sixty years, the German Reformed Church has now a General Synod, three Germanspeaking and four English-speaking Synods, fifty-two classes, fourteen hundred and sixty-seven congregations, one hundred and seventy-three thousand members, and seven hundred and eighty-three ministers.

Of this Seminary, all the educational institutions, classical and theological, of our Church in America, are the fruit. The high school at York, which was opened in 1820, and afterwards developed into Marshall College at Mercersburg, 1835-36, was founded mainly to furnish to students of theology a preliminary literary and classical training. So soon as these institutions were in operation and had given young men a full classical and theological education, the graduates of the college and seminary went forth in different directions as missionaries, and founded other classical and theological schools. Thus, for example, were begun Heidelberg College and the Theological Seminary at Tiffin, Ohio, also Catawaba College at Newton, N. C. The daughter institutions have in turn trained and sent forth their own students, who have planted other schools in other places. All the academies, colleges, and theological schools now engaged in educating young men for the service of the Reformed Church, are due to the activity and zeal of the sons of the mother institution, or to the zeal and activity of the men whom they have educated.

But I neither forget nor ignore the valuable cooperation in the work of establishing Reformed institutions in the west by some German ministers who obtained their education in Germany.

THE NUMBER OF PROFESSORS,

Now, however, I have to pass to a less gratifying aspect of the Seminary. As regards the number of professors and teachers, the mother institution has been stationary for the last forty years. Other schools have been multiplied; other Faculties created and enlarged; but, as to numerical strength, the Theological Seminary, now located at Lancaster, has made no progress. In 1844 it had three teachers; it has only three teachers now. For nearly half a century this Seminary has directly and indirectly been strengthening, enlarging, and enriching the congregations and membership of the Reformed Church, but the Church has not in the same proportion been strengthening and enlarging the Seminary.

A little reflection will show that for this want of increase in the number of the teachers of the mother institution, the Reformed Church has put herself at a disadvantage, especially when her oldest Seminary is in this respect compared with the oldest Seminaries of other denominations.

Forty years ago, the Seminary at Princeton, the oldest Theological School of the Presbyterian Church, had three professors. The Seminary at Andover, Mass., the oldest Theological School of the Congregational Church, had three professors. The Seminary at New Brunswick, N. J., the Theological School of

the Reformed Dutch Church, and the oldest Seminary in the United States, had three professors. *Then*, as to numerical strength, the Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States was not at a disadvantage. In point both of ability and number, the faculty of our Seminary was as well equipped as the faculties of other theological seminaries. Neither New Brunswick, nor Andover, nor Princeton, had a larger teaching force. But since that time theological seminaries of other leading denominations have not been stationary. They have been steadily advancing.

There has been much progress in the theological culture of our country. The principal stimulus to this progress has come from the land of our forefathers; the theologians and the theological faculties of the Universities of Germany. England, and Scotland have felt the force of the new impulse; and the churches of America, sympathizing with the progress of Christian education in Great Britain and Germany, have deeply felt the force of the same impulse. branches of theological knowledge, not recognized when our Seminary was founded, have arisen. The general course of study, in consequence, has been enlarged. Hence, in thoroughly educating men for the ministry more work has to be done. To conduct students over this enlarged field of study, either a professor must teach more branches of knowledge, or the number of professorships must be increased.

To meet the demand arising from the progress of theological knowledge, all the older seminaries of our country have increased the number of theological studies. In this respect the Seminary at Lancaster has not been lagging behind. The course of study is as full here as it is in the theological schools generally; and the time required to pursue the full course, here as elsewhere, is three years.

Other seminaries, instead of multiplying the branches of knowledge committed to each professor, have multiplied the number of professorships, and have distributed the various departments of the course among six, eight, and even ten different chairs. In the oldest seminaries, each professor now has in hand not more, but fewer departments. As a rule, he gives his attention to one branch only, or at most to two branches; and he lectures or teaches from six to eight hours a week. The number of branches and the hours of teaching for each chair have been reduced, in order that professors may have sufficient time to devote themselves each to the thorough investigation and study of his own department. Every professor has an opportunity not only to keep abreast with the great activity and rapid progress of our times, but also according to his ability to work with his pen in the interest of practical religion and theological culture. Thus, as representatives of their denomination and of their institution, all are able

to do their part, both in the service of their own denomination and in the service of our common evangelical Christianity, in advancing the kingdom of Christ by training men for the ministry and by making contributions to religious literature.

But our church has thus far pursued the opposite method. Instead of endowing additional professorships and reducing the departments committed to each professor and his number of hours of teaching, we have added new departments of study and extended the course from two to three years, thus increasing the work of the Faculty without increasing its numerical strength. Our course of instruction has more departments, and our students have a more extended period of training and discipline. respect our Seminary has advanced with the other seminaries of our country, and it offers the same advantages to her students. But the professors have less time for original investigation and study, and less time for literary labor. In consequence of this disadvantage, the Reformed Church has suffered, and is suffering, by comparison with other churches.

For the information of the reader I furnish some facts. The Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church, located at New Brunswick, has five professors, one lecturer on Exegesis, and an instructor in Hebrew, a total of *seven* teachers. The last year

it had thirty-eight students. The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton has ten professors. Last year there were 134 students. The Theological Seminary of the Congregational Church at Andover, has *nine* professors, five lecturers. and a librarian. Last year it had twenty-seven students. The Divinity School at New Haven, also Congregational, has seven professors. The Seminary at Hartford, Conn., has seven professors. The Union Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, has eight professors; and the Western Seminary of the same Church at Allegheny, nine pro-The Drew Theological Seminary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at Madison, N. J., has six professors. The Seminaries of the Baptist Church and of the Protestant Episcopal Church are provided as to number with a Faculty according to the same conception of the needs of a theological school.

It is not necessary that I express an opinion respecting the number of professors which our own Seminary at Lancaster ought to have. It serves a better purpose to let others speak. The facts just recited respecting the numerical strength of the Faculties of other theological schools, represent the judgment of the ablest men in other churches. The approved standard for an effective Theological Seminary, in the opinion of all the leading denominations of our

land, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, and other evangelical bodies, requires a Faculty consisting of from *six* to *ten* professors. No leading theological school is now equipped with less than that number.

The painful fact therefore stares us in the face, that, during the last forty years, the Reformed Church, as regards the numerical strength of her theological Faculty, has not kept pace with the progress made by other denominations. Judged in this respect by the standard established in other American churches, our Faculty, however thoroughly qualified each professor may be for his own department, and however effective the theological instruction and discipline of the students, yet, for lack of the requisite number of men, is unable to meet all the demands made by the culture of our age.

STATEMENT OF REV. DR. N. C. SCHAEFFER.

Here I deem it in place to quote the words of a former student who has been ten or twelve years in the ministry. When at the Saturday morning session of the mother Synod at Pottstown, the discussion on the importance of additional professorships was in progress, the Rev. Nathan C. Schaeffer, Ph. D., Principal of the Keystone State Normal School, Kutztown, Pa., in the course of an able and earnest speech, used the following language:

"I got my theological training partly at our own Seminary and partly at three of the largest universities of the Fatherland (Berlin, Tübingen, and Leipsic). I have no hesitation in saying that the instruction which I received at home was not inferior in quality to anything which I heard abroad. But on my return a glimpse at the Seminary library, so deficient in the best theological literature which this age has produced, caused my heart to sink within me. The needs of the Seminary may be stated still more strongly than was done by the speaker who opened the discussion. When students live under one roof, as was the case at Mercersburg, they catch zeal and inspiration from one another. When they live scattered over a city like Lancaster, they lose much of the moulding influence which students of theology should mutually exert and receive. Our Seminary needs more professors, a better library, and suitable buildings for the accommodation of its students"

THREE ADDITIONAL PROFESSORSHIPS.

In view of these comparative deficiencies, the needs of the mother Seminary were fully discussed at the last annual meeting of the three Eastern English-speaking Synods of the Reformed Church. Much time was given to the subject. After it had been seriously considered, the necessity of a forward movement was seen and felt

by all, ministers and elders; and each Synod without a dissenting voice resolved to endow an additional professorship. That the nature of the action taken by each body may be rightly understood. I quote the language in full: following the order of time in which the three annual meetings were held.

THE PITTSBURG SYNOD.

The Pittsburg Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States, in general convention assembled at Mount Pleasant, Pa., September 17th, 1884, adopted the following preamble and resolutions:

WHEREAS, Under articles of agreement entered into between the Pittsburg Synod and the Synod of United States in 1872, this Synod began the endowment of a professorship in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at Lancaster, Pa., by raising the sum of nearly Two Thousand Dollars; and

Whereas, In the judgment of this Synod, the number of professorships ought to be increased; therefore

Resolved 1. That a committee be appointed to complete the endowment of the processorship of the Pittsburg Synod in said Theological Seminary, by raising the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars from the wealthier members of this Synod; the committee to consist of one member representing the Synod and one member for each of the Classes, to be chosen or appointed by the Synod.

Resolved 2, That the department of study assigned

to this professorship be determined by the Board of Visitors, conjointly with the Faculty, subject to the approval of Synod.

THE MOTHER SYNOD.

The action taken by the Synod of the Reformed church in the United States during the 138th annual session, convened in Trinity Reformed church, Pottstown, October 8, 1884, is as follows:

WHEREAS, The Theological Seminary, opened at Carlisle, Pa., in the spring of 1825, and now located at Lancaster, is the mother institution of all the schools of classical and theological learning of the Reformed church in the United States; and

Whereas, This Seminary has been stationary as regards the numerical strength of the Faculty for the last thirty years or more; and,

Whereas. During this period there has been much progress in the theological culture of the American churches, and in the equipment of the theological seminaries generally; and in consequence the demand now made by the Church on the Seminary is greater than when the Faculty was organized, and

Whereas. The membership of the congregations, of this Synod have the financial ability, and, as is believed, the latent willingness, to furnish the funds for the more adequate endowment of the Institution, and the enlargement of the Faculty; therefore, in reliance upon the support and benediction of Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the Church, be it

Resolved 1, That a committee be appointed consist-

ing of one minister representing this Synod, and one person, either minister or elder, in each Classis, to obtain, by application to the wealthier members of the congregations, the sum of fifty thousand dollars, for the better endowment of the Theological Seminary.

2. That two-fifths of this amount, or twenty thousand dollars, be raised for the two-fold purpose, first, of securing a sufficient annual income to defray the annual regular and incidental expenses of the Institution as now organized, and second, of completing the endowment of the Chair of Flebrew and Old Testament Theology.

3. That the other three-fifths, or thirty thousand dollars, be raised for the purpose of founding a new or additional Professorship.

4. That the department of instruction to be assigned to the proposed new Chair be determined by the Board of Visitors, in conjunction with the Faculty, subject, however, to the approval of this Synod.

THE POTOMAC SYNOD.

The Potomac Synod assembled in general convention at Hanover, in the first Reformed church, on Wednesday, October 15th.

The matter of the Seminary was formally brought before this body through a request from the Gettysburg Classis. That item was referred to the Standing Committee on Education. This Committee in its report says:

"As regards the request of the Gettysburg Classis,

your Committee is of the opinion that it should be acceded to. The present endowment, as is evident from the Treasurer's report, is not sufficient to meet the current expenses of the institution. Besides, the time has come when the number of instructors in our Seminary should be increased, in order that our ministry may be more fully equipped for their great work. The following action is therefore recommended:

Resolved. That the Finance Committee be instructed to apportion the sum of \$300.00 among the Classes of this Synod for the use of the Theological Seminary during the ensuing year.

Resolved, That this Synod raise an endowment of \$35,000.00 for a new professorship in the Theological Seminary, to be filled by this Synod.

Then follows the action, appointing a Superintendent, with a member from each Classis represented on the floor of Synod, as Counsellors, "to raise this endowment fund by appealing to the wealthier members of the Church within our bounds, to contribute the money necessary for this purpose."

THE FUNDS.

This action expresses the deep conviction and the mature judgment of three Reformed Synods, not only of ministers, but of ministers and elders. No one opposed the movement. All either decidedly supported it by earnest speeches, elders included, or, if silent

during the discussion, heartily acquiesced in the affirmative vote.

Moreover, the opinion was general that if the necessity and importance of additional professorships were properly understood and duly weighed, the wealthier members of the Reformed Church would be willing to furnish the required amount of funds. No Synod proposes to constrain any one. The claims of theological education are presented to the hearts and consciences of members who have the willingness and the ability to give the needed sums of money. The church will thankfully accept any gifts, however small. But in order to maintain and enlarge her educational institutions, she approaches especially her wealthier members.

There are some, perhaps many, in each synod, who can give \$500 or \$1000 or \$5000, and even larger sums, without incurring financial embarrassment, or curtailing the comforts of home. It is to these classes of her membership, to whom God has entrusted earthly substance, that the Church comes, believing that after prayerful consideration of the actual needs of the Seminary, they will respond—not only respond, but do it cheerfully. Many members of the Reformed Church possessing comparative wealth, love the church of Christ as much, and desire to have a fully-equipped Theological Seminary as cordially, as members of

the Presbyterian or Congregational or Methodist churches.

The three synods have embarked in this Christian enterprise with the confidence that, guided by the wisdom and sustained by the grace of the Master, it may be consummated within the coming year.

PARTICULAR MOTIVES.

The present needs of the Seminary, and the importance of a well-equipped theological school, constitute the principal motive to a liberal support of the endowment measures adopted by the three synods. But there are some subordinate points which, if duly weighed, will give emphasis to this principal motive—emphasis especially in relation to the present generation of our middle-aged membership.

The existing organization and endowment is mainly an inheritance received from a previous generation of Reformed people. The endowment as it now stands, was the gift of men and women of faith, the majority of whom have gone to their heavenly reward. The Church of to-day has entered into their labors. They sowed, and we are reaping their harvest. Excepting a gift of \$5,000, five or six years ago, from a donor who withheld his name, and two or three much smaller sums, no important additions have been made to the fund for more than twenty years. The large

majority of the membership in middle life, have never been directly asked to endow or assist in endowing a professorship in the Seminary.

As regards the organization, the only change introduced for a quarter of a century is this—that the tutorship established about the year 1858 was in 1871 erected into the professorship of Hebrew and Old Testament Theology; the professor however has been receiving but little more than a tutor's salary.

The aggregate membership of these three Synods is nearly twice as large now as it was in 1863, when the Tercentenary Jubilee was celebrated. At that time the classes of the Pittsburg Synod and of the Potomac Synod belonged to the territory of the old mother Synod, the Classis of Westmoreland excepted. Then the total Reformed membership on this territory was 80,041. This included the congregations composed of foreign Germans, which have since been organized into German Classes, and into German Synods. Now the aggregate membership of the Reformed Churches on this territory, not including the congregations composed of foreign Germans, is 114,545.

It is however to be remembered that the growth in the number of members does not represent the progress in aggregate wealth. The wealth of the people in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, has greatly increased during the last twenty-five years. This increase it is difficult to estimate; nor is it necessary. Common consent sustains the opinion that the financial resources of our wealthier members are now on an average much greater than they were then. Regarding the financial ability of the Reformed Church, it is far less difficult now, and requires far less self sacrifice, for each of the three English-speaking Synods east, to endow an additional professorship, than was imposed when the whole Reformed Church east in 1844 undertook to complete the endowment of the chair of Church History. No elder at Mt. Pleasant, or Pottstown, or Hanover, expressed the opinion, in public or private, that there was any lack of ability to accomplish within a comparatively short time the purpose which each Synod solemnly put on record.

Should we not build on the foundation laid by the self-denial of our fathers? Should not the legacy bequeathed to us by former generations be not only accepted, but by us enlarged? All our churches in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, not to speak now of other states, are enjoying the spiritual blessings of the Christian religion, bestowed directly or indirectly by this mother institution. Is it not our duty and our privilege to apply some of our funds to its support, that by enlarging the foundation, and enlarging the Faculty, it may become still more efficient and confer more extended blessings on our children?

The Reformed Church is worthy of a Seminary which, in point of the numerical strength of its Faculty, shall be equal to the Faculties of the Seminaries belonging to other denominations. The origin and history of the Reformed Church, her celebrated Catechism, her fidelity to Christ, her conservative and procressive spirit in theology and practical religion, her sufferings in the service of Christian truth, her attitude and mission as a branch of Evangelical Christianity, all prove her entitled to the confidence and support of her membership. When you give funds to endow a new chair, you do an act of service to a theological school which, through its whole history, has proved itself worthy of the devotion of those who have gone before us, and by its continued faithfulness to the gospel of Christ, is now showing itself worthy of your liberal gifts.

Has not the time come when the Reformed Church of German origin should undertake great things? Is it not the duty of her Synods to set before their members a project which is an honor to them personally, and which answers somewhat to the financial resources with which God has blessed them?

This question concerning the duty of the synods may, however, be represented under a different aspect.

Christian people also can justly make their demands. Have not our wealthier members the right to consecrate large sums to the work of Christ's kingdom? Is it not due to them that the Synods fix their attention on a grand and an ennobling Christian enterprise?

If the three Synods, when the Seminary proposition engaged their consideration, had failed to take affirmative action, would not such hesitation have shown a want of due confidence in the faith and love of her membership? Spiritually considered, would it not have betrayed indifference to the Christian rights of her people? In view of the ineffable rewards awaiting Christ's faithful co-workers, have not rich men the right to use their money, no less than all their other gifts, for the progress of God's kingdom, as truly as poor men have to use their manual labor? Is it not becoming in the Church to afford them an opportunity to perform deeds in the service of Christ that are worthy of themselves?

Brethren, let us move to the front. The Captain of our salvation pronounces the word of command. We are a strong brigade of the sacramental host. The conflict with sin and error, with unbelief and false philosophy, is waxing hotter. The foe is numerous, learned, boastful, defiant. Our spiritual interests are identical with the interests of the denominations who are in advance of us. The Reformed Church will go forward or go backward as the common evangelical Christianity of our country prospers or suffers. The

command of the Prince of life binds us as it binds others. Let us move to the front; and in the excellence of our equipments and the discipline of our men, let us stand abreast with the best brigades of the spiritual army of our Lord Jesus Christ.