

THE  
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MAGAZINE.

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“Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.”  
*Psalm cxxii. 9.*

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*For the Lit. and Evan. Magazine.*

REMARKS ON MR OWEN'S LETTER.

THE letter of Mr Owen, addressed to the Citizens of the United States, dated, At Sea, New York Packet, Oct. 1825, is now before the public. On this singular communication we would offer a few remarks. The perusal of it has excited surprise, astonishment and grief.

Mr Owen informs us that he has "devoted many years to acquire a knowledge" of the subject on which he writes; and yet, who can observe, without surprise, that want of accuracy which this letter displays? He states it as a fact that there are among us a large portion of errors and prejudices; and that the "greatest and most lamentable of these are the notions that human nature has been so formed as to be able to believe and disbelieve, and to love and hate, at pleasure." It is true, that a great portion of the people of this country have been precluded from opportunities of mental improvement, they are engaged in occupations of a different kind, labouring to gain an honest subsistence for themselves and their families; they are not versed in metaphysical disquisitions. If these, therefore, should be found unable to decide the point involved in the remarks now quoted; or if they should give a wrong decision; this, in either case, can be accounted for without ascribing it to "errors and prejudices." If one of our industrious, though unlettered mechanics was asked, whether the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, it is most probable he would be unable to answer; or if he did, his answer might be incorrect. But who would think of ascribing this to prejudice, or even to error? The man has not had the opportunity of gaining a knowledge of the subject to which the question relates; he is not, therefore, prejudiced, nor is he even in error: for error is the belief of falsehood instead of truth. But this man believes neither

would lead to the destruction of all order in the church of Christ, to permit unauthorized verbal testimony to set aside an authenticated written document."

By referring to the Minutes of the Assembly we find that there were three members of the Assembly from the Presbytery of Rochester besides Mr Bissell ; and that one of these three " informed the Assembly that Mr Bissell had not been set apart as an elder." This gentleman, we suppose, was a member of the Assembly. The Assembly undoubtedly has the right to examine and decide on the constitutionality of all the commissions submitted to its consideration. Here, then, is a member exercising an undoubted right, by questioning the regularity of a commission, claiming for another individual a seat in that body. How it would be " a dangerous precedent ;" and how it would " lead to the destruction of all order in the church of Christ," for a member to exercise an undoubted right, secured to him by the constitution, in the discharge of an important duty ; does not appear. Nor does it appear in what sense his observations on this subject can be called " unauthorized." If members are not authorized to speak, who are? If individual members are not authorized to act, the Assembly can do no business; for it has no existence but as constituted of individuals. True, his remarks on this subject were " verbal," and not written. They might not be, however, on this account, the less true, or the less important. The General Assembly is not a court of chancery, when the business is chiefly, if not entirely done by written documents, signed, and sealed, and perhaps witnessed. That which is not true and important when spoken, does not become so when written. It is believed to be a very rare thing for members of the Assembly to write their speeches.

While we offer these remarks, we feel a very sincere respect and esteem for the General Assembly; and therefore, regret that, in our best judgment, this decision is not calculated to support and even increase that respect and esteem.

A PRESBYTER.

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#### THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN PRINCE EDWARD.

SOME misapprehensions respecting this Institution have arisen, which it is important should be corrected.

1. It is supposed by many, that it is connected with the Literary Institution, which goes under the name of Hampden Sydney College. But this is entirely a mistake. The Seminary has no connexion, in any way whatever, with other Institutions ; but is, in every respect separate and independent, having no more to do with the College in the neighbourhood, than with the University of Virginia, or of North Carolina. The College is under the control of a Board of Trustees, who

derive their authority entirely from the Legislature of Virginia: the Seminary is under the management of the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina, who appoint members of their own body as Directors of the Institution.

2. A second misapprehension is that the Seminary has a large productive fund, and that it is growing rich; when, in fact, it is greatly straitened, and most urgently needs assistance from its friends. The mistake has arisen from a careless inspection of a statement made not long ago in the *Richmond Family Visitor*. The amount of that statement was indeed nearly sixty thousand dollars. But of this, \$16,000 were in *Buildings* and *Books*, neither of which produce money: \$25,000 were in uncollected subscriptions; and of the rest, not \$15,000 produce at present any income. So that the permanent funds of the Institution are not near sufficient for the support of one professor. And at this moment, severe embarrassments are felt on this very ground. But to place this *Southern Seminary* on any thing like an equality with Northern Institutions, it is necessary that three professors should be employed, to give instruction in the various departments of Theological learning.

3. It is taken for granted, that, as there is but one professor in this Seminary, students have no greater advantages than they would enjoy when pursuing their studies privately with the pastor of a church. But it is not considered 1. That the professor devotes his whole time to the business of instruction. 2. That the young men have free access to a large, well selected library. 3. That a number of them associated together in the same studies, produce a mutual excitement greatly subservient to improvement; and become prepared for a much more complete co-operation in their future labours of love, than could be expected in other circumstances.

But to these remarks, permit me to add that recently an addition has been made to the means of instruction, afforded in the Seminary, in a manner most evidently providential; and at a time as opportune as could be. The present professor was sinking under the severity of his labours, and it had become evident that, without some relief, he would, in a short time, be utterly incapacitated for any service whatsoever. The permanent fund, as was said, is inadequate for his support, the contingent fund arising from Congregational collections, was almost nothing during the last year, and it did not appear by what means an assistant teacher could be procured. In this embarrassing situation, a few friends of the Seminary in New York agreed to afford support to a young man,\* well

\* Rev. H. P. Goodrich.

qualified for this office, for two years. It was so ordered that the person selected for this service was at the time, unemployed; on being spoken to, he consented to engage in the work, and is now at the Institution, discharging his appropriate duties.\*

In several remarkable instances, providence has manifestly favoured the design of building up this Seminary: and its friends, throughout the country, may now be assured that the Institution has fair prospects of final and complete success. There seems to be sufficient assurance that nothing contributed to it will be lost; and most assuredly, under the favour of Heaven, zealous co-operation will make it a great blessing to the southern country.

\* It ought to be added, to prevent misapprehension, that this gentleman had before been sought out, his name, character and qualifications presented to the Presbytery of Hanover, and the Board of Managers of the Seminary had been directed to employ him as an Assistant to the professor. This was known by the excellent friends of the Seminary in New York, who united in providing the means of support, which the Presbytery, in present circumstances were unable to provide.

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*For the Lit. and Evan. Mag.*

#### THE PRESBYTERY OF WINCHESTER.

The Presbytery of Winchester met, agreeably to adjournment, on Thursday the 28th ult. at Gerardstown; and after a sermon by the Moderator, the Rev. William Henry Foote was constituted with prayer. The Rev. Samuel B. Wilson was chosen Moderator, and the Rev. Robert H. Chapman, D.D. was appointed Clerk. All the members were present except three; one of whom, the Rev. A. Welton, has removed to the State of New York, and was, at his own request, dismissed to connect himself with the Presbytery, in the bounds of which he expects to reside. Presbytery had again reason to lament that so few Ruling Elders, the Representatives of the churches were present at this meeting. The person who will devise a plan that will secure the attendance of these brethren on our ecclesiastical judicatories, will very much promote the interests of the church.

Mr James M. Brown, a licentiate belonging to Presbytery, having received calls from the congregations of Gerardstown, Tuscarora and Falling Water, and having been examined to the satisfaction of Presbytery, was, on Saturday, ordained to the full work of the Gospel Ministry, and installed in the Pastoral office. The ordination sermon was preached, according to appointment, by the Rev. J. Matthews; the Rev. S. B. Wilson presided, and the charges were delivered by the Rev. Dr Hill to the pastor and the people. Committees were appointed to install Mr Brown in the congregations of Tuscarora and Falling Water.

Five Candidates attended, some of whom were examined on Theology, Ecclesiastical History, and the form of Government; some of them on Languages and Science; and all of them had pieces of trial on subjects assigned at a former meeting. These examinations and trials were all sustained. Mr William Lowrey, one of these candidates, having completed his course of Theological Studies, was licensed to preach the gospel as a probationer for the pastoral office; and was engaged as a Missionary for six months