

A

MEMOIR

OF THE

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First Professor of Christian Theology in Union Theological Seminary, Virginia.

BY WILLIAM MAXWELL.



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form and authority to the project as we can, and report it both to the Presbytery and the Synod. It is my purpose to lay the paper with a full statement of all the facts that may transpire before the Presbytery, and get the Presbytery to include it in their report to the Synod of Virginia. I am inclined to think that our Synod will readily agree to take the place of the Presbytery of Hanover. I have mentioned the project to several members of the Presbytery, and all are willing to give up our part to Synod; and I have been seeking information from other Presbyteries, so that I have good hope that one part of my plan will succeed. And if the brethren of North Carolina will but drop local feelings, and come into the plan, we may have a Seminary that will do honour to the Southern churches, and exert a mighty influence in building up the kingdom of the Redeemer.

TO THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

*Theological Seminary, Nov. 14th, 1826.*

MY DEAR SIR,

On Saturday evening I arrived at home from a tour in North Carolina, as far as Fayetteville. Your letter of the 31st October had come to hand some days before my arrival.

I am more encouraged about our Seminary than I ever have been. We are now prepared to fix the style of it, and the next General Assembly will be requested so to modify the terms proposed to the Presbytery of Hanover, as to denominate the Institution, the *Union Seminary of the General Assembly, under the care of the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina*. This is the plan which I had proposed; and I was resolved to make a fair experiment to secure its adoption. Should it fail, I was determined to resign my place. Success, I thought, would repay every effort. The proposition made to the Synod of Virginia was unanimously adopted; as I hear, with great good feeling. That to North Carolina had several difficulties to encounter.

Dr. Caldwell, who has more influence than any other man in the state, had set his heart very much on having a Seminary in North Carolina. He is a very able opponent. The subject was debated for two days. At length the Doctor yielded. Mr. Roy can tell you all about it; but I mention the subject for the sake of observing that when Dr. Caldwell found that the majority was against him, and felt that he was totally defeated, instead of showing offended pride, he yielded with all the grace of a gentleman and a christian. He certainly raised himself much in my estimation and affection. The vote was well nigh unanimous. I think now that the South Carolina plan will in all probability fail—that the institution, when fairly under way, will receive the Southern and Southwestern students—that the Western and Northwestern will chiefly go to Princeton, and that the scheme which caused so much trouble last Assembly will be dormant for years to come. Any who try the experiment, will find that to build up a Seminary is not so *easy a job*, and experience of the difficulties will change views and inclinations of many who have set out with high hopes, and great ardour.

But whi'e thus encouraged there is one point which makes trouble for me. My labours are excessive, and I feel that I am sinking under them. I did hope that vacation would recruit me; but although I have travelled 700 miles, I have had to labour as severely as though I had been in the study, and I come home no better. My principal distress is in the head. I suffer much from pain; but much more from nervous irritability. I can scarcely bear the sound made by my pen. The *click* of a penknife, or the crackling of the fire, is like the stroke of a hammer on my head, and I feel the sensation through every part of my frame, to the extremities of my toes. It is certain that unless I can get help, I cannot hold out much longer. The Presbytery directed that a young man who can teach Hebrew should be employed immediately. But in my absence nothing has been done; and

now the seminary has opened, and the whole labour has fallen on me alone. It is indispensably necessary that some help should be obtained speedily. Will you not speak or write to Goodrich on the subject immediately; and ascertain whether he will come, and on what terms for the present? If I knew where he was I would write myself. But you can tell him that the Presbytery unanimously authorized the employment of some person, and that his name was mentioned. If we cannot get him, we must look some where else. But I had much rather get a Princetonian than any other. Pray excuse my urgency on this subject, for I feel it to be a case of necessity.

TO MR. KNOWLES TAYLOR.

*Theological Seminary, Nov. 14th, 1826.*

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN BROTHER,

I have for a long time been kept so busy with the affairs of our seminary, that it was impossible for me to write to you, or to any other, except on indispensable business. You would scarcely credit the statement, if I were to tell you all I have had to do since the first of June. But I thank God, who has afforded greater success than I expected to the poor labours which I have performed. The prospect of building up a valuable institution here becomes more encouraging. The great difficulty heretofore has been to waken up an interest in Southern Presbyterians, and induce them to co-operate. All saw the wants of the country, and lamented the deplorable state of the church, but they seemed to sink in a hopeless despondency, and said that nothing could be done. When I left Richmond to come to this place only the Presbytery of Hanover took any interest in our institution; but at present we have the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina pledged to support the Seminary. I have just got home from the most fatiguing and laborious excursion that I ever made in my life; and at this moment, when