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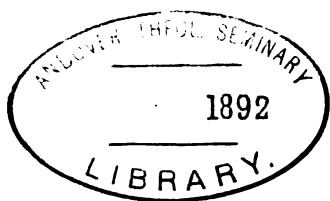
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THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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I. THE QUESTION OF INSPIRATION IN ITS BEARING ON THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

HOWEVER Christian men may differ respecting the nature and extent of inspiration, they are all agreed in regard to its importance. In the estimate of all it is looked upon as presenting the gravest question the church has ever encountered. Nor is this estimate of its importance to be wondered at when we consider the relation which this question sustains to all the doctrines of revelation. There is no question respecting the being and attributes of God, the mode of the divine subsistence in three persons, the origin and original state of man, the fall and the state into which it brought mankind, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, the atonement and intercession of Christ, the office of the Holy Spirit, the nature and prerogatives of the church and her unity as the one body of Christ, the doom and destiny of the finally impenitent—there is not one of these questions whose solution does not depend absolutely upon the testimony of the Bible. Within the sacred volume, and there alone, have we any reliable information on any of these subjects.

It must, therefore, be manifest that all questions in regard to the trustworthiness of the sacred record are questions in regard to the very foundation of Christianity. When a passage from this record is adduced in support of a particular view on any of these subjects, the question arises, of necessity, on what ground is it brought into court, and why should it have any weight in determining the issue? As the ultimate authority on

III. METHODS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.

RECENT discussions on the floor of synods, and through the columns of the religious press, have tended to give additional prominence to a question that has long engaged the attention of leaders and thinkers in our church, the question whether there is not needed some radical change in our method of training candidates for the gospel ministry. As far back as 1869 we find Dr. Dabney, in a memorial addressed to the General Assembly's Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries (*Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 46 ff.), calling attention to what, from his long experience as an instructor, he regarded as serious defects in our present system of theological education, and pointing out various modifications which he thought could be made with advantage. In addition to this and a number of similar voices coming from those who look at the question from the point of view of experienced educators, there have been multitudes of voices, coming up from the rank and file of the church, making themselves heard through overtures from church courts, recommendations of committees, and communications in newspapers and reviews. With the latter class of writers the moving cause seems to have been a sense of the inadequacy of the present and prospective supply of ministers in view of our great and growing destitutions, and a desire to find some method of facilitating the introduction of candidates into the ministry, and the supply of our vacant churches.

Very numerous and very varied have been the expedients suggested to meet this laudable end. We have had, for instance, suggestions as radical as that of dispensing with the qualifications for licensure and ordination prescribed in our Book of Church Order, and putting men into the ministry who have had no thorough training in the classics and in philosophy. Another, and less radical recommendation has been to shorten the term of theological study, making it a two years' course instead of three, so as to gain one year in active work. Still another has been to con-

tinne the three years' course, but to make the annual sessions only six months long, allowing the alternate six months to be spent in the field, in the performance of such practical work of an evangelistic character, and in the supply of vacant churches, under the oversight of pastors, church sessions and evangelists, as Presbytery may in each specific case deem advisable.

The latest of these propositions looking to economy of time in the introduction of men into the ministry, one whose claims are being most strenuously urged by its advocates, contemplates the substitution of theological departments in literary institutions for separate and independent theological seminaries, and the combining of academic and theological courses of study so that they may be carried on simultaneously by the student. It is claimed for the method of education by theological departments, not only that it saves time in the work of preparation for the ministry, but that by bringing the theological professor into closer connection with instructors in the literary and scientific departments of the institution, it guards against the danger of these theologians becoming locked up in their own specialties, and thus, isolated in thought, drifting into heresies, or into mischievous speculations which have tendency to positive error. Indeed, the charge has been boldly made upon the floor of more than one of our synods, that our theological seminaries are fast becoming a serious menace to the peace and welfare of the church; that nearly every heresy has its origin in these schools, both in this country and in Europe; that they are in danger of becoming in this respect the scourge and terror of the church, and that our only safety lies in the breaking up of our body of theological students into small detachments, to be, by means of theological departments, educated at many and widely distant centres, where the dangers incident to theological life in our regular seminaries may be avoided.

Inasmuch, then, as the subject is thus prominently before the public mind, it seems a fitting occasion to make a calm and thoughtful review of our methods of theological education, especially in the light which the history of the past throws upon them.

The first thought which will suggest itself to one who makes

such an impartial review of the history of theological education for the last century, will, we doubt not, be that the experience of the past is not of such a character as to make us very hopeful in reference to the method of education in theological departments of institutions of academic and professional learning. This is the method of theological training that has been pursued constantly in Germany, and the theological departments of the German Universities have been for a century hot-beds of transcendental and rationalistic speculation. One has but to read Dr. Dabney's masterly article in *The Southern Presbyterian Review* of April 1881 (*Discussions*, Vol. I., pp. 440 ff.), on The Influence of the German University System on Theological Literature, to see the causes of that rationalism which has made the atmosphere of these theological departments so baleful. This is the method of theological education also in the Established Church or Kirk of Scotland, each of its great universities having a theological department, whilst the Free Church, and the United Presbyterian Church, educate their candidates in schools of theology, theological halls, which are separate and independent institutions. The comparative freedom from heterodoxy of the ministry of the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church will be admitted by all.

Coming now to our own country, the history of theological education is equally instructive. The earliest of all our institutions of learning was Harvard College, founded in 1636, only sixteen years after the landing at Plymouth Rock. It began its course distinctly as a seminary for the training of young men for the ministry, with combined academical and theological courses of instruction. It began under the most orthodox and conservative influences. Its first professorship was that of divinity, and was endowed by an orthodox layman of the Baptist Church in England. The first professorship endowed by a native New Englander was that of Hebrew and other Oriental languages, endowed by an orthodox Congregationalist. And yet, for nearly a century, all the chairs in this divinity school have been filled by Unitarians, and when Prof. C. H. Toy, carried away by German rationalistic criticism, was forced to give up his position in the Southern Bap-

tist Theological Seminary, an institution organized on the plan that is represented to be so dangerous, it was within the walls of Harvard, with its theological department, that he found congenial companionship and remunerative employment.

Following the current of history of theological education under the auspices of the Congregational Church, we find that Bangor Seminary, in Maine, began with combined academic and theological courses, but in 1827, finding that the arrangement was not satisfactory, the academic department was given up, and the institution became a regular theological seminary, and has been, we believe, comparatively free from heresy. Yale, which has a theological school as one of its university departments, has certainly nothing to boast of in the way of freedom from heresies and mischievous speculations. Andover was organized as a department or branch of Phillips Academy, and has always continued in that relation, being governed by the board of Trustees of the Academy, though having a special board of Visitors to whom questions of orthodoxy, etc., are referred. It is only necessary to refer to the term, "Andover Theology," and to the recent troubles which the American Board of Commissioners Foreign Missions have had with the institution to see to what extent the combining of theological and academic training under the same corporate management and control, has been a safeguard against the dangers incident to separate and isolated theological schools. Hartford Theological Seminary was founded in 1834, was originally organized as a separate institution, and has so continued, being one of the soundest of all the New England theological schools. Oberlin Theological Seminary, Ohio, was originally organized and still continues a department of Oberlin College. The name of Charles G. Finney, so prominently associated with it, and also the term "Oberlin Theology," show how little its freedom from the isolation of a regular theological seminary has kept it from the taint of heresy.

In the Protestant Episcopal Church, the only attempt of which we have information to make trial of the system of education in theological departments, was in the case of the Berkeley Divinity School of Connecticut, which was virtually a department of Trinity College Hartford until 1854, when it became a separate and inde-

pendent school. Concerning the arrangement in the University of the South at Sewanee, Tenn., we are not able to speak, but if the method of training in a theological department is being tried in that institution, it is too early as yet to forecast the result of the experiment.

In the Lutheran Church a single experiment in this direction, and the only one of which we have information, was made in 1839, when the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis was founded. This school of theology originally included an academic department, or gymnasium; but in 1861 the two were separated, the gymnasium being removed to Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the theological school being placed upon the same independent basis with the other seminaries of the church.

In the Baptist Church the leading schools of theology have been and are upon the plan of separate theological seminaries, including Hamilton and Rochester Seminaries, New York; Newton, Mass.; Southern Baptist, Louisville; Morgan Park, Chicago; and Crozier, Pa. Theological departments have been tried in various institutions, and, as at Georgetown College and other places, abandoned for regular theological seminaries. The same is true to a considerable extent in the Methodist Church, although at Vanderbilt University there is now, as we understand, a very flourishing theological department.

Coming to the Presbyterian Church, in which, of course, we are most interested, it is a well-known fact that in our earlier history, and up to the year 1748, we had no theological schools of any kind. Young men preparing for the ministry studied under some approved divine, and upon his recommendation, after full examination in open Presbytery, were licensed and ordained. At Princeton in 1748 the first theological school was opened. It was in the form of a theological department of the College of New Jersey, under an action of the Synod, in which the board of trustees of the college are required to provide, either in the person of the president of the college, or of one of its professors, a professor of theology. It is highly probable that in this case at first, as Dr. Howe, in his semi-centennial sketch of the history of Columbia Seminary, has shown in reference to other institutions, this

professor of theology sustained to the body of students little more than the relation of chaplain, and to the theological students that of the approved divine under whom they might carry on their theological studies simultaneously with their academic; but it involved the principle now so strenuously recommended, of combined academic and theological education. Whatever the merits or defects of the method, it was, after long and thorough trial, abandoned; for we find that in 1812 a regular seminary, with a separate board of trustees and a distinct organic life, was substituted.

The second in age of our Presbyterian seminaries is Union, in Virginia. It began its existence in 1812 as a department of Hampden-Sidney College, Dr. Rice, the president of the college, being *ex officio* professor of theology. This relation continued until 1824, when the friends of theological education were so much impressed with the importance of having a separate and independent school of theology, that the relation between the college and the theological department was dissolved, and Union Seminary projected, though it had to begin its separate organic life without either buildings or endowments.

The next three seminaries organized under the patronage and control of the Presbyterian Church seem to have been Auburn, in New York, which was founded in 1819; Western, at Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1827; and Columbia, South Carolina, in 1828. These were all organized as independent schools, and have so continued through their history. Of one or more of them we shall have occasion to speak later. Lane Seminary comes next, having been organized in 1829. It began its course, says Dr. E. D. Morris, one of its professors, "as an academic and collegiate as well as theological institution"; but he adds that, "after an experiment of five years, the academic and collegiate departments were finally closed."

McCormick Seminary, Chicago, comes next in order. It also began its career as a theological department, having been organized in 1830, as a department of Hanover College, Ind. It remained in this relation ten years, but in 1840, the relation was dissolved, the theological school removed to New Albany, Ind., and reorganized upon the Seminary basis. Here it remained

until removed to Chicago, where first as the Northwestern, and since as the McCormick Seminary, it has been doing its splendid work.

Union Seminary in New York was organized in 1835, as an independent school of theology, and has so continued. It will be referred to more in detail a little further on.

Danville Seminary in Kentucky was founded in 1853, being the outgrowth of a "Theological Fund of the Synod of Kentucky," an endowment originally intended to maintain a "Kentucky Professorship" in the Theological Seminary at New Albany, Ind.

As to the more recently established schools of theology, that of the Northern Church at San Francisco, and that of the Southern Church at Austin, Texas, as also the theological departments of the Southwestern Presbyterian University at Clarksville, Tenn., and of Arkansas College at Batesville, Ark., it is not necessary to speak, as owing to their recent origin, the facts in their history are familiar to the readers of the QUARTERLY. It may be proper in this connection, however, to say that the same conviction in Kentucky and the adjoining states, of the need of a well endowed and equipped theological seminary for the Southwest, which led to the founding of Danville Seminary in 1853, has been pressing upon the minds and hearts of Kentucky Presbyterians ever since Danville Seminary was lost to the Southern Presbyterian Church. So soon as it was found that neither any property rights in Danville Seminary, nor any interest in its endowments could be secured by our branch of the church, the minds of our leaders in Kentucky were turned to the necessity of laying new foundations and creating new endowments for that work of theological education for the Southwest, which the founders of Danville Seminary had designed it to do. This movement first assumed the form of the establishment of a university on a broad and liberal basis, with a fully endowed and well equipped theological school as a department of it. Long before the convention was called, which led to the formation of the Southwestern Presbyterian University, this movement in Kentucky had taken definite shape, and when that convention met, Dr. Breck, who had been made chancellor of the projected university, had already secured munificent endowments.

The location of the institution had been fixed, grounds purchased, and every necessary step taken for carrying out the plans in detail and without delay. Although, as has been already said, the original plan contemplated a theological department, and although the facilities are easily in reach of the Board of Curators for opening a theological department, with suitable buildings and grounds, and large endowments, so that it should at once be thoroughly furnished for its work, yet the conviction has been so steadily and strongly growing in the minds of those most interested in the scheme, that no mere theological departments of literary institutions can meet the wants of the Southwest, that the friends of Central University have been willing to forego, for the present at least, any advantage which a theological department with its additional students and endowments might give. They are willing to wait at least until it shall be determined if the way is not open for uniting the Synods of the Southwest in the founding and maintenance of a great seminary of the first class, at some suitable point, a seminary not organically connected with any literary institution, but sustaining the same relations to all the universities and colleges under the patronage of our church. It is believed that such an institution, located as every theological seminary should be, in some large city, with a broad and liberal course of study, and a corps of professors in whose orthodoxy and piety the church has confidence, would do for Presbyteranism in the Southwest a work similar to that which is being done for the Baptist denomination by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville.

Returning from this, however, which is of the nature of a digression, let us resume the consideration of methods of theological education in the light of the history of the past. The hasty review we have made of theological education, for the main facts of which we are indebted to articles in the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopædia* will, we think, fully warrant the following conclusions.

First, The plan of "combining academic and theological education," which is proposed as an expedient for meeting, and to some extent at least relieving the present exigencies of the church, is not by any means a new one. It is not, in so far as we can see,

in any of its essential features, as has been claimed, a "new departure." There may have been important modifications and changes. Some of these may be great improvements, but the methods in their essential features have been in operation, both in this country and in Europe, through the whole history of seminary training.

Second, The method of educating in theological departments, under the forms in which it has heretofore been tried, does not seem to have been successful. In most instances in which this method has been introduced and faithfully tried, it has at last been abandoned, and the method of education in separate theological schools adopted in its stead. So far, therefore, as the testimony of experience goes, it seems to favor the method which it is now proposed to abandon, rather than that which it is proposed to substitute for it. Nor does it seem difficult to recognize the advantages of the method of training by instruction in separate and independent theological seminaries. In the first place, in the selection of members of the official boards which are to govern these institutions, the distinctly theological schools have this great advantage, that men may be selected simply with a view to their acquaintance with theological subjects and with the best modes of teaching them; whilst in the government of a great university, you must choose as curators or directors men who have large acquaintance with literature and science, and the best methods of teaching them, even though they may not be well versed in theology, or properly alive to the demands of the day in theological training. It also stands to reason that men whose sole duty as curators is to have the oversight of a theological school and its interests, can devote to it more time, thought and prayer, than those who are charged also with the management of schools of law, medicine, engineering, etc. The school in which men are being trained for the ministry, with the spiritual atmosphere that should gather about it, is very different from the school of medicine or of law. Schools of mere professional learning may very properly be grouped in universities. Schools of theology should have their own corporate life, their own distinct regimen, and whilst it will be of advantage to them to have the proximity of a

university, to the libraries, museums, etc., of which the theological students may, under proper restrictions, have access, the history both of German and of British universities exhibits but too plainly the tendency of university life to secularize theological study, to make it purely professional, to lead men to study Isaiah and Paul precisely in the same spirit in which they would study Homer and Plato, and to look upon the ministry as they do upon any other learned profession.

Third, As far as our investigation has proceeded, the burden of proof goes to show that, so far from the regular theological seminaries being hot-beds of heresy, they have been throughout their whole history, and almost without exception, strongholds of orthodoxy and conservatism, whilst the theological departments of literary institutions have been the fountains from which in most cases the mischievous speculations have come that have troubled the church. Let any man take our two oldest seminaries, Princeton, New Jersey, and Union, Virginia, which through all their career have never had a taint of heresy, and let him compare their influence and their work with Harvard, or Yale, or Andover, or any of those institutions that have maintained theological departments. Or let him go back over the whole list of institutions, putting on one side those which are departments, and on the other those which are separate schools, and then let him judge for himself.

To the rule which favors separate seminaries there are, however, two apparent exceptions. There are two of the institutions of the Presbyterian Church that are, and always have been, regular seminaries, that have recently given the church much trouble. The first of these is Union Seminary, New York, whose action in the election and inauguration of Professor Briggs has occasioned such great disturbance in the Northern Church. Union Seminary has never, we believe, had organic connection with any literary institution, but rests upon its own distinct and separate foundation. Its course, however, cannot be considered as typical, on account of the peculiar circumstances under which, and the distinctive principles upon which, it was projected by its founders. It had its origin in connection with the New School controversy, and in a reactionary movement against the orthodoxy and conservatism

of Princeton. The distinct principle, therefore, upon which the institution was founded was that of a large and liberal construction of the Westminster Standards. Thus, Dr. Hatfield, one of the professors of the seminary, in his article upon its history, in the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopædia*, gives as its *raison d' être* that the "other schools of sacred learning were to some extent committed to partisan views of existing conflicts," and that a seminary was to be "established on an independent basis, not subject to the control of accidental majorities in the General Assembly, committed to no theological school in the church, and to no ecclesiastical party." To one familiar with the controversies of the hour it is easy to read between the lines in Dr. Hatfield's article, and to see that the real purpose in the founding of the seminary was to educate young men under the auspices of that principle of lax construction of the standards of the church, which in the New School movement was far more ominous of evil than any positively erroneous form of doctrine which the advocates of the movement at that time held. Nothing is more natural than that, having given up the safeguard of a strict construction of our doctrinal standards, the institution should drift away from its conservative moorings, and become the congenial dwelling-place of one who is adrift upon the open sea of theological speculation, like Professor Briggs.

The other apparent exception is that presented by our own Seminary at Columbia, S. C., in the recent troubles in connection with the Chair of Natural Science in its relations to Revelation. It would be altogether alien to the purpose of this article, as it would lie entirely beyond its proper scope, to enter in any way into the details of this unhappy controversy or to pronounce any opinion upon its merits. It is sufficient to say that whatever may have been the nature or the extent of the speculations arising in the conduct of this chair, they cannot be laid to the charge of the regular seminary system with its isolation of the theological professor, for in this, the only instance in which any charge of dangerous speculation was ever laid at the door of a professor in that seminary, the much-dreaded walls of isolation had been broken down. A special arrangement had been made by which the professor in the Seminary was also

professor in the University, and the students of the Seminary in regular attendance upon the lectures of the University, and so academic and theological education were being combined. Dismissing these two cases as only apparent and not real exceptions, we renew the statement that the verdict of history is in favor of separate and independent schools of theology with all their dreaded isolation of the theological professor, rather than the one now proposed of theological departments in institutions of literary and professional learning.

Turning for a moment from considerations growing out of the experience of the past, and looking at the matter in the light simply of economic and prudential principles of education we can see no real advantage to be gained and much to be lost by the proposed change. As to economy of time, we are unable to see how, where a certain course of academic study is to be gone over, and also a certain course of theological study, the combining of the two courses, so as to carry them on simultaneously, can enable the student to master them in less time than he could if he carried them on successively. We say to *master* these courses, for it must be considered that such a conspectus of church history, for instance, as could be consistently combined in the class-room with the ordinary course of secular history for university students, falls immeasurably short of that thorough mastery of church history in its underlying principles and in its outworking details which is indispensable to the student of theology. If his classes in the study of secular history are carried as thoroughly through its principles and details as they should be, he will find every moment of his time occupied with history in its secular relations. He will have no time to master the principles and developments of church history as he goes along. Or if the professor seeks to indoctrinate them thoroughly in these principles in the class-room, that portion of the class which is not engaged in distinctly theological study must be carried far more into the details of church history than is consistent with the limited time to be given to the study of history in the institution. When we find, for instance, that in our academic institutions every moment of the four years course is crowded with work, none of which can without disadvantage be omitted,

and when we find in our theological seminaries that the students are kept on a strain through the whole three years' course, and have difficulty even with their utmost exertions to master a course, no part of which, in the present stage of theological research and inquiry, can without serious loss be omitted, to speak of accomplishing the same work in one year less of time by combining the two courses is to speak of that which seems in the very nature of the case impossible. The ground may be gone over, but it must be, in some of its parts at least, cursorily gone over, for there is only so much that flesh and blood can accomplish.

There are, in the minds of many, serious objections to the system of combining academic and theological education. It is an admirable system for men advanced in life when they receive a call to the ministry, and for others who for good and sufficient reasons are to enter the ministry under the rule for "extraordinary cases," but for one entering upon his academic course at the usual immature age, it projects him into actual professional study for the ministry before he has reached that maturity of judgment in which he is prepared to give a deliberate and final settlement of the question as to the reality of his call of God to the work. It also brings him forward prominently before the minds of his fellow students as a theological student, at a time when it would be best, both for him and for them, in most cases, that he should occupy the more modest position in their eyes simply of an earnest, consecrated Christian youth, seeking his own intellectual and religious education, and seeking to be helpful in promoting the welfare of others around him.

In the judgment of the writer of this article that which is needed as a reform in our methods of theological education is a thorough recasting of our system of instruction within the institution itself. According to the method that has been handed down from the days of Dr. Archibald Alexander, we have in each of our seminaries a fixed curriculum of study, to which every student is expected to conform, no matter what may have been his previous studies, or what may be the bent of his mind, or what the kind of labor to which he proposes to devote himself in the ministry of the Word. Now instead of this fixed curriculum of study, let the

course be upon what is usually called the university plan of distinct and independent schools, of Theology, Church History, Hebrew, etc. Let each professor be selected as a specialist in his own particular department, and let every student pursue his studies in such of these schools, and so many of them, as in the judgment of the faculty and with the advice of Presbytery, through its Committee of Education, may in each specific case be thought best. Where the candidate is advanced in years when he enters upon his studies, and is without previous academic training, let the Presbytery, with a view to his admission to the ministry, at the proper time as an extraordinary case, prescribe such limited course of study as may meet the exigencies of his case, and particularly let there be in every seminary a chair of the English Bible in which candidates of this character may have as thorough training in Bible study as can be given without a knowledge of the original tongues of Scripture. Where the candidate is to be licensed and ordained as usual, let him be required to take a full course in all the schools, or so many of them as shall be necessary to meet the requirements of our Form of Government. Let the schools be so arranged that more or less time may be devoted to each one, as the special gifts and bent of mind of the student may indicate. Let there be special courses of study for men who feel that they have a special call to evangelistic work in foreign lands, or in the waste places at home. Let special courses be arranged for such ruling elders and educated laymen of the church as may have gifts qualifying them to teach, and yet may not feel called to the ministry of the Word. Let them have such thorough training in Bible study and in practical methods of church work as shall fit the laymen to be in the highest sense lay helpers, and the ruling elders to be in the truest sense pastors of the flock. Let scholarships be provided, by means of which young men of superior talents and fondness for linguistic studies may be supported whilst they make thorough study of Oriental languages and literature, archæology, philology, and all that will enable them to throw additional light upon the Word of God and defend it from the assaults of rationalistic criticism.

The general plan of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

at Louisville, Ky., with such modifications as would adapt it to the conditions and usages of our own church, would give us such an institution as we need.

With such a seminary, eligibly located in one of our large commercial centres, where the students have advantages that cannot be obtained except in a large city, with an endowment sufficient to support a full corps of professors, with a fund from which to aid indigent young men seeking the ministry, and with a liberal use, on the part of the Presbyteries, of the rule for extraordinary cases, a new impetus would be given to theological education in the Southwest, and a great step taken towards the supply of the ministry in the waste places about us, and towards the evangelization of the heathen world.

Such an institution is contemplated in the memorial to the Synods of the Southwest, recently adopted by the Synod of Kentucky. The need of such an institution is imperative, as attested by the number of young men of our church now going beyond our bounds to secure advantages which it would happily supply. The wealth with which to endow such an institution is in the hands of our people. The time is opportune. It will be a profound pity if interests that are purely local shall prevent the realization of so important a scheme. Presbyterians of Kentucky are so interested in it that they are willing to forego all merely local interests and to join heart and hand with the other Synods of the Southwest in building up an institution of the kind in any one of a number of great commercial centres that have been named in connection with it. May the day soon come when we shall see its massive foundations laid and its stately superstructure rise!

T. D. WITHERSPOON.