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Princeton Theological Seminary

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SKETCH

OF THE

RISE, PROGRESS AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED,

A COPY

OF THE

CONSTITUTION OF THE SEMINARY.



Published by Order of the Board of Directors.



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Princeton Theological Seminary

ELIZABETH-TOWN:

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SKETCH

OF THE

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, &c.

THE importance of the union of piety and learning in the Holy Ministry, is one of those radical principles of ecclesiastical wisdom which the experience of ages has served more and more to confirm. If the *Priest's lips were, of old, to keep knowledge*; if the Ministers of the Gospel are bound to *feed the people with knowledge and with understanding*; then nothing can be plainer than that ignorance, or small and indigested knowledge is, next to the want of piety, one of the most serious defects in a candidate for the sacred office. And it is equally plain, that no church which neglects the proper education of her ministry, can be considered as faithful, either to her own most precious interests, or to the honour of her divine Head and Lord.

Impressed with these solemn convictions, a number of the Ministers and other Members of the Presbyterian Church, long before the establishment of their Seminary, now so happily in operation, deeply lamented the want of such an Institution, and saw, with much pain, the extreme disadvantages under which candidates for the Ministry laboured, in pursuing their Theological Studies.— They saw young men, after devoting only twelve or eighteen months, and, in some instances, much less, to the study of Theology; and even, for that time, almost wholly without suitable helps, taking on themselves the most weighty and responsible of all offices.

They saw the "Reformed Dutch Church," the "Associate Reformed Church," and the Descendants of the venerable Puritans in New-England, all going before them in an honourable and successful career of exertion, to remove these disadvantages, and to establish Seminaries for the Instruction of their Candidates for the Ministry; and they perceived, that unless the Presbyterian Church should imitate their examples, while other denominations rose and flourished, they would inevitably decline, and fall into a state of discouraging weakness and inferiority.

Accordingly, after long waiting, and after much counsel and prayer, the proposal to establish a Theological Seminary in the Presbyterian Church, was first introduced into the General Assembly, during the sessions of that body in May, 1809. It was so far countenanced, that an overture on the subject was sent down to all the Presbyteries for their consideration and judgment. The opinions of the Presbyteries were so far received by the General Assembly which sat the next year, that the following Resolution, after mature deliberation, was adopted by a nearly unanimous vote, viz.—

Resolved, That the General Assembly will, in the name of the Great Head of the Church, immediately attempt to establish a Seminary for securing to Candidates for the Ministry more extensive and efficient Theological Instruction, than they have heretofore enjoyed."

This measure was followed by the appointment of a large Committee, to draft a Constitution for the proposed Seminary; who, at the meeting of the next Assembly, May, 1811, reported their draft, which, after considerable amendment, was adopted. This Constitution has been for some years before the public; but for the sake of those who may not have had an opportunity of inspecting it, it

will be subjoined, at full length, to the present Sketch: The friends of the Seminary, it is confidently hoped, will see in every clause of that instrument, an earnest solicitude to render the Institution a nursery of vital godliness as well as of theological learning; and thus make it, what it can never otherwise be hoped to prove, a blessing to the Church of God.

At the meeting of the next Assembly, in May, 1812, the location of the Seminary was fixed at Princeton, in New-Jersey; a Board of Directors was elected, and the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander was appointed Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology. On the last Tuesday of June following, the Board of Directors held their first meeting. On the 12th day of August, of the same year, the Board of Directors met again, and Dr. Alexander was solemnly inaugurated, and entered on the duties of his office. The number of Students, at the opening of the Institution, was three.

At the meeting of the Assembly in May, 1813, the number of Students had increased to eight. By this Assembly the Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller was elected Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, and was inaugurated by the Board of Directors on the 29th of September following. The number of Students has been gradually increasing from the first opening of the Seminary until the present time. The highest number, at any one time, has been forty-nine.

The General Assembly, in 1815, taking into consideration the great inconveniences resulting to the Institution, from the want of suitable apartments for the recitations, and other exercises of the Seminary; and more especially the numerous privations, and even dangers to their health, to which the students were subjected by the want of convenient places of lodging; determined to erect a Public Edi-

fice in Princeton, which should contain all the public apartments indispensably necessary for the present, and also lodging rooms for the comfortable accommodation of all the pupils. Accordingly this edifice was commenced in the autumn of that year, and is now in such forwardness that it is hoped the Institution may without much difficulty be accommodated in it, from and after the commencement of the next session. This building is of stone, one hundred and fifty feet in length, fifty in breadth, and four stories high, including the basement story. The estimated cost, before the work was actually begun, was between forty-seven and forty-eight thousand dollars; and it is now reduced to a certainty, that it cannot exceed much, if any, fifty thousand dollars. This edifice has been admired by all who have seen it, as a model of neat and even elegant; and, at the same time, of plain economical, and remarkably solid workmanship. When finished, it will be at once an honour and a blessing to the church. The erection of it thus far has already nearly exhausted the funds hitherto collected—to finish it will require a vigorous exertion.—That this exertion will be made, and that it will be crowned with success, cannot for a moment be doubted. Our confidence in a happy result is unshaken. The tokens of Divine favour toward the Institution forbid us to fear. The hearts of men are in the hands of Zion's King; and the silver and the gold will not be withheld from a work, which we are persuaded he delights to prosper.

Although this "School of the Prophets" has existed but little more than five years; and although it has constantly laboured under serious disadvantages, from the want of funds, of a suitable library, and of other important accommodations; it has exhibited results of the most gratifying and animated kind. The students who have been in the Institution from its commencement, including those who now belong to it, amount to ninety-seven. Of

these, forty-seven have been licensed to preach the Gospel. Twenty-four are settled Pastors, some of them in congregations among the most important within our bounds; and the labours of several of them have been blessed with *special revivals* of religion. Twenty have been engaged, or are now engaged, in Missionary labours, or have accepted Missionary appointments. The labours of several of them on Missionary ground, have been signally owned and blessed by the Great Head of the church. Congregations in very important situations have been formed through the instrumentality of their labours:—And the pouring out of the Holy Spirit has, in several instances, remarkably followed them. The field of labour into which many of them have gone, or are going, is exceedingly important. Through the last year the students of the Seminary have been actively engaged on Missionary ground in the states of New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio and Indiana, and the Michigan and Illinois Territories—And appointments have now been accepted, in addition to other regions, for the Missouri Territory, the Mississippi Territory, and Mobile and the city of New Orleans.

The students have been actively and successfully engaged in the vicinity of the Seminary in promoting the interests of religion—And there is now existing among them, a “Society of Inquiry respecting Missions;” this society was instituted in the spring of 1814. It meets once a month. Its object is to store the minds of the students with knowledge on Missionary subjects, to ascertain the situation and wants of destitute regions of the world, and the best means of spreading the Gospel among them; and to enkindle and cherish the spirit of Missionaries in their own souls—It is especially to this institution, under God, that the Missionary spirit is to be ascribed, which has

lately been excited among the students of the Seminary, and which promises to be extensively useful to the Redeemer's Kingdom.

These facts speak a language in favour of the Seminary which cannot be mistaken. If any thing can animate its friends, and reconcile to its support those who have hitherto regarded it with aversion or indifference, it is the extensive benefits which it has already procured to the church. However Christians may differ as to the means of doing good, they must rejoice in all those efforts which promote the glory of God, and accomplish the designs of his grace, in the salvation of men. The claims of the Theological Seminary at Princeton do not rest on the *promises* of usefulness, but on the actual advantages which it has *furnished*. Already it has sent forth able and faithful labourers into the harvest; workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The prayers of the church are answered. The borders of our country are pressed with the feet of Missionaries, who have been educated in this Institution. Sinners are now listening to the Gospel from lips that have drunk deeply at the fountain of sacred truth. The student has exchanged his place at the feet of his teachers, to engage in the active labours of the cross, and to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. In various parts of the church, desolated by the death of the fathers, have risen the children; and it is a most gratifying circumstance, one which we consider as a peculiar manifestation of divine favour, that in some congregation, where the pastor was chosen from among the Students of our Seminary, there have been extensive revivals. In proportion as this Institution shall be known, it will gain on the affection of the churches. Its importance must be felt in every section of our community. It is a fountain which enjoys, it is believed, the favour and protection of Zion's King. His own right hand is throwing

into it the salt of grace, and its streams are already flowing to revive the desert. To protect it; to give it the full advantages of the cordial exertions and prayers of the church, are duties which the indications of Providence and palpable events have placed beyond the reach of doubt or question. It requires the prompt and prayerful aid of its friends. This is a season of deep interest to its welfare. Every day its importance and respectability are rising.—The hopes of its friends are more than realized. The practicability of its design is reduced to demonstration. We call upon our churches to contribute to its funds; to redeem their pledge; to give it all the ardour of their supplication, and so much of their substance as shall enable it to do all the good of which it is capable.

From what has been done we may anticipate what this institution is designed to do. It requires not the spirit of prophesy to foresee, that by its instrumentality, under the favour of God, the waste places of Zion will be rebuilt; sinners will be converted to Jesus; his children strengthened, comforted and confirmed. To this generation it is *vastly important*; to the next it is *STILL MORE SO*; and we cannot but believe that the millennial morn will be spread upon it, as upon the mountains; that it is one of the precursors of the season of righteousness, and many have a deep instrumentality in promoting its reign. This Institution cannot be suffered to languish without involving the character and interests of our church deeply and vitally. It was established with prayer. Its resources are in the hearts of the churches. Its income, and its prosperity, under God, must come from a spirit excited to do good, and that will “NOT BE WEARY IN WELL DOING.”

That the friends of this Institution may be the better able to judge of its wants, and of the various ways in which the wealthy and the pious may contribute to its

benefit, it is judged proper to exhibit, in detail, the following items, with a distinct explanation connected with each.



I. *The Support of the Professors.*

This is mentioned first, because it is the most vital and indispensable part of the whole. A Theological Seminary, without adequate Instructors, would, of course, be a name without a reality. And it is equally evident, that capable Instructors cannot be expected to quit other important stations, and devote themselves, for life, to this object, without some good prospect of a comfortable and permanent support. It has been a painful circumstance, both to the General Assembly, and to the Board of Directors, that the present Professors, with respect to this point, have had no other human dependence, than what was very precarious, and which has repeatedly threatened to fall utterly short of what was necessary for the payment of their salaries. It is earnestly desired that some permanent establishments might be formed for this purpose; in other words, that wealthy and pious individuals would *endow Professorships*; that is, give to the Trustees of the General Assembly a principal sum, *not less* than \$25,000, in each case, the annual interest of which might be devoted for ever to the support of a Professor. This has been done in some sister institutions, with a liberality which reflects the highest honour on a number of distinguished individuals. The names of *Hollis* and *Boylston*, of *Hancock*, *Hersey* and *Erving*, designating so many different Professorships in the University of *Cambridge*, in *Massachusetts*, have long been monuments of splendid munificence, and in will be transmitted with honour to the end of time: And

the Theological Seminary at *Andover*, the *Professorships of Christian Theology*, of *Sacred Rhetoric*, and of *Sacred Literature*, confer on the names of *Bartlett* and *Abbot*, of *Brown* and *Norris* an illustrious immortality.—Can the thought be admitted that there is less enlightened attachment to the Church of Christ, or less disposition to exercise munificence in the best of all causes, in the bosom of the Presbyterian Church, than among our Congregational Brethren of New-England? No, it cannot. We rather cherish the hope, that when the object is fairly presented, and the urgent necessities of the Institution whose cause we are pleading, are fully made known, there will also be found among us an amount of christian liberality, in some degree commensurate with the demand for its exercise.

It will be observed, that the Constitution of the Seminary provides, “That if any person or persons, not exceeding three, shall, by will, or during his or their lives, found or endow a Professorship, or Professorships, said Professorship, or Professorships, shall for ever afterwards be called and known by the name or names of those who founded or endowed them.”—As no Professorship, as yet, has thus been endowed, any one of the three mentioned in Section 1st, Article 3d, of the Constitution may be selected as the object of such endowment: But as the Professorship of *Oriental and Biblical Literature* is still vacant, for want of the means of supporting a third Professor, it would be conferring a peculiar favour on the Institution if *that* Professorship could be adequately endowed, as a third Professor is much needed.

The General Assembly of 1815, resolved, “That a sum *not less than twenty-five thousand dollars* should be considered as requisite to endow a Professorship.”

II. *The Support of Students.*

A number of the students belonging to the Seminary are unable to provide the means of their own support ; and unless these means were furnished from other sources, would be obliged to withdraw from the Institution, and from all the advantages which it affords. This generally has been, and is now the case, with about one third of the whole number. But after all that has been done in this way, many pious and promising young men in different parts of our church, who desired to come to the Seminary, have been prevented from enjoying the privilege, because no encouragement to hope for support could be held out to them ; and in some cases, it is feared the church has been altogether deprived of the services of precious youth, who might have adorned her ministry ; but who saw no door open for pursuing the studies necessary to qualify them for the sacred office.

It is of the utmost importance, then, that funds be furnished for the support of indigent students, or to afford a partial aid to those whose means are too scanty to furnish an entire support. Indeed the Seminary cannot be considered as accomplishing all that it is intended to accomplish, until it shall be able freely to open its doors to all the youth of piety and talents, who may desire the holy Ministry, whether in possession or destitute of the means of support, and gratuitously to afford them boarding, as well as tuition.

For this purpose, it will be observed, that the Constitution of the Seminary provides for the endowment of *Scholarships*, that is, devoting a principal sum, the interest of

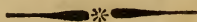
which shall be sacredly applied, for ever, to the support of an indigent student. These Scholarships, it is further provided, shall for ever bear the name of their founders respectively. Three Scholarships have been already founded by distinguished friends of the Seminary ; and it is earnestly hoped that their number will be increased. Can a christian of wealth and public spirit devote a portion of his property to a more interesting purpose ? To provide for the education of one minister of the gospel after another, in an unbroken succession, perhaps to the end of time, is surely one of the most desirable achievements of christian charity which a truly pious mind can contemplate : and this is to be done by so small a sum as twenty-five hundred dollars. To what other object can such a sum be appropriated, that will be likely so extensively to promote the glory of God, the good of souls, and the eternal reward of the pious donor ?

The General Assembly have determined that a sum *not less than two thousand five hundred dollars* shall be considered as requisite to endow a *Scholarship*.

The greater part, however, of the support which has been hitherto furnished to indigent students, has been derived from the contributions of *Female Cent Societies*, in different districts of our church. It is highly gratifying, and nothing more than justice, to state, that by the liberality of pious females, *sixteen students*, in the course of a single year, have been either in whole or in part, supported in the prosecution of their studies. It is very much to be wished, not only that the Societies already formed, may be maintained and extended, but also that new ones may be formed in those portions of the church, in which nothing of this kind has been done. A few pious females, by associating, and contributing annually two or three dollars each, may become the happy instruments of furn-

ishing funds which will nearly, if not entirely, carry through the Seminary, a youth, who may be long an eminent herald of the cross, and a means of blessing to thousands.

The funds furnished by the Female Cent Societies have been generally placed at the disposal of the Professors, who deposit them in the hands of the Treasurer of the Board of Directors, subject to their drafts: and of the manner in which they are appropriated, an exact report is annually made by the Professors to the Board of Directors, and an account of the monies received from the several Cent Societies, published in the annual report of the Board, for the information of the Churches.



III. *The Purchase of an adequate Library.*

A good library is an article of the first necessity in a Theological Seminary. Without it, students are subjected to privations and embarrassments of the most serious kind, at every step of their course. The Library at present possessed by the Seminary is very small and imperfect. It contains comparatively few of the books which are most important to the Theological students. And of the few valuable ones which it does contain, there are, in most cases, only *single copies*; whereas with respect to a number of books, it is highly desirable, and almost indispensable, that there should be a considerable number of copies. The friends of the Seminary in every part of the United States are respectfully informed, that donations in books, of almost every kind, will be gratefully received; but that the Institution *especially* needs

works on *Biblical Criticism*, both Hebrew and Greek, approved *Lexicons*, works on *Systematic Theology*, in all languages, works on *Ecclesiastical History* and *Church Government*; and, in short, all those books which are more immediately connected with the actual studies of the Institution. But, besides donations in books, any friend of the Seminary disposed to contribute to its funds, may, if he think proper, direct that, whatever he shall contribute, shall be devoted to the increase of the Library.



IV. *The necessary Buildings for the Use of the Seminary.*

The present state and the urgent demands of the principal public Edifice, for the accommodation of the Students, were before represented. It will probably, in a few weeks, be in a situation, with some crowding and inconvenience, to serve the purposes of the Institution, during the ensuing session. But a variety of circumstances render it highly desirable that the whole of it should be finished as soon as funds can be obtained for the purpose, especially as there appears to be a prospect that the whole of it will, at an early period, be wanted.

Such is the state, and such are the claims and the wants of an Institution which, it is presumed, is second to none in importance to the American Church. For its support we have no human dependence but the liberality of the wealthy and pious. Whether it shall proceed with vigour and effect, or with langour and comparative inutility, depends, under God, on the patronage it shall receive. We call, then, on the friends of religion, to consider the importance, and the critical situation of the object which we present to their view. You acknowledge that *you are not*

your own, but that you are bought with a price, and are bound to glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are his. If it be so, your silver and your gold are the Lord's; and you are under obligations to employ them, in such a manner as will most effectually promote the glory of Him by whose bounty they were given you. With this great principle in view, consider the pressing calls of large and flourishing churches, who solicit in vain for Ministers to break to them the bread of life. Consider the necessities of many pious and ingenuous youth, who are at present either discouraged from making the attempt to gain an education for the ministry; or going forth very imperfectly qualified for their arduous work. Consider the honour of the church with which you are connected; the interests of religion for which you profess to feel; the infinite value of immortal souls who are perishing for lack of knowledge; the authority of that God who commands you to compassionate them. And we entreat you to reflect on what will probably be your feelings and wishes in regard to the disposition of any property of which God has made you stewards, at that solemn period when you shall appear with an assembled universe, at the tribunal of the great Judge of quick and dead.—We entreat you to reflect on these things; and then say, whether you can consent to withhold a portion of your substance, when called upon to aid in one of the most important concerns ever presented to your consideration.

The following are legal forms of a bequest of personal property, and a devise of real estate to the Theological Seminary, viz.

IN CASES OF PERSONAL PROPERTY.

I give and bequeath to the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of

America, and to their Successors and Assigns, the sum of or shares in the Bank of
 (or any other personal property, as the case may be) *to be applied to the use of the Theological Seminary of said Church, and now located at Princeton, in the state of New-Jersey; or, to the support of students in indigent circumstances in said Seminary; or, to such other uses as the testator may think proper to express.*

IN CASES OF REAL ESTATE.

I give and devise to the Trustees, &c. (as above) all that tract or lot of land or tenement, messuage or other real estate, (as the case may be) situate in, &c. for the use, &c. (as above.)

The above forms may be used by a testator residing in the state of Pennsylvania, where the Trustees of the General Assembly have been incorporated; but in the other states of the union the following forms are recommended, viz:

IN CASES OF REAL ESTATE.

I give and devise unto A, B, & C, and the survivors and survivor of them, and the heirs of such survivor, (describe the real estate,) for the use of, and in trust for, the directors of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, now located at Princeton, in the state of New-Jersey.*

IN CASES OF PERSONAL ESTATE.

I give and bequeath, (as above, excepting instead of "the heirs of such survivor," say,) the executors, administrators and assigns of such survivor.

* The testator may appoint but one or two trustees, if he thinks proper.

The Professors of the Seminary are :

Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D. Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology.

Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D. Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government.

Three Scholarships have been founded, viz.

The _____ Scholarship, } Both founded by an un-
 The _____ Scholarship, } known individual N. York.
 The Lenox Scholarship, founded by Robert Lenox, esq.
 of New-York.

The Officers of the Board of Directors are :

Ashbel Green, D. D. President.

John Woodhull, D. D. Vice-President.

John M^cDowell, Secretary.

The present Directors of the Seminary are :

MINISTERS.

ELDERS.

Samuel Blatchford, D. D.

Divie Bethune,

Francis Herron,

Robert Lenox,

James Hall, D. D.

John M^cMullin.

John Johnston,

Robert G. Wilson,

David Comfort,

John E. Latta.

John Woodhull, D. D.

Zechariah Lewis,

Eliphalet Nott, D. D.

Joseph C. Hornblower,

James Blythe, D. D.

John Van Cleave.

James Inglis, D. D.

Asa Hillyer,

Jonathan Freeman,

John Chester.

Ashbel Green, D. D.
William Neill, D. D.
John M'Dowell,
James Richards, D. D.
John B. Romeyn, D. D.
Robert Finley, D. D.
Jacob J. Janeway, D. D.

Robert Ralston,
John R. B. Rodgers,
Samuel Bayard.