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TEMPORALITIES vs. SPIRITUALITIES.

So far as our ecclesiastical government is representative in its nature, the people are the broad base on which the whole system rests. To the people belongs the choice of their own officers, absolutely as to two classes (Deacons and Elders), and subject to the approval of the Presbytery as to the third class (Pastors). In this right, as we shall show, is involved every thing that pertains to the vitals of doctrine and practice. Now let the question be carried round among even intelligent Presbyterians—where are the metes and boundaries of *The Congregation*? who are the constitutionally enfranchised Presbyterian voters?—and the variety of answers given will reveal the need of attention to the whole subject.

The practical commentary on the law in the case among the churches opposes the interpretation that the Congregation includes only communing members, and those who submit to discipline. We have heard an ungodly rum-seller haranguing a congregational meeting against raising the minister's salary, and we have known to be appended to the pastor's call the names of men who tasted of every vice, and who would have spurned the idea of submitting themselves to sessional supervision. To say that there is no regularity of practice on the subject, is only to admit the existence in our system of a governmental anomaly. Civil governments have always found it necessary to define the privileges of each and every class within its jurisdiction. Order and purity would be impossible where matters of right and privilege were left to be decided according to the fancy of neighborhoods. Are the issues presented to congregations of less moment than the election of a constable or the question of a railroad tax? Shall commissioners stand with falcon eyes at the ballot-box to maintain its purity, whilst bewildered tellers in a church meeting dawdle about in a miscellaneous assembly and receive all votes that may be proffered, while at the same time many a retiring Christian will not vote for the want of knowledge or of right?

persons as voters, who have no semblance of a right in the eye of our constitution. And as well might you take from the Church the management of her alms, and all her Missionary, Publication, Church Extension, and Educational concerns, and put them in the hands of State-appointed, irresponsible committees, as to make this disposition of her other temporal affairs. The church edifice is as much a donation to the cause of God as a collection raised for foreign missions, or as those goods, in primitive times, which were laid at the Apostles' feet for the use of the Church.

There is very much need for bringing our ideas as to the character of worldly goods in relation to religion more into conformity with reason and Scripture. Property, in all its forms, is as truly a talent as any gift or grace whatsoever. And instead of being regarded as a contraband article proscribed by religion, on the one hand, or as a Moloch to whom we must sacrifice the dearest treasures of the soul, on the other, it should be regarded as the humble and useful servant of religion, indispensable to the Church, as it is to man individually, to enable her to accomplish her mission on earth. And the Church, in her wise and faithful management of her wealth, should stand as a perpetual model to her individual members in the management of their wealth. She should give a practical commentary on the text, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," by avoiding a vain extravagance in matters pertaining to her own convenience, and bestowing with a cheerful liberality all her additional means for the good of the needy.

(To be concluded in next No.)

RELATIONS OF THE SEMINARIES TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE Church seems now to be awakened, in some measure, to the vast importance of Ministerial Education. This fact must be our justification for asking the attention of our readers to another subject connected with our Seminaries, notwithstanding the large place which they occupied in our last number.

There are now three Seminaries under the care of the General Assembly immediately. This increase of their number may be safely explained as showing, that it is now the settled conviction of our Denomination, that our whole interests should not be committed to one central Seminary. There is, indeed, every thing to enforce such a conviction. It is most imprudent to give the supreme control of our orthodoxy to any one human institution; when we take into account the fallibility of all things human; the danger of awakening

arrogance in the teachers and students of an institution so great and overshadowing, and controlling the whole literature of the Church; the known tendency of scholastic institutions to perversion, illustrated by the history of almost every such school in former days; and the power which able teachers have over the *esprit du corps* of their students, for evil as well as for good;—we may then consider it as the settled policy of our Denomination that we shall have, not one Seminary, but several.

This fact must inevitably work out, at some day, an important change in the management of those Seminaries which are now immediately in the hands of the General Assembly. And the writer is one of those who do not care how soon this change may be made. It is this: that the Assembly surrender the details of the management of these Seminaries, including the appointment of teachers, to the Synods immediately concerned in them, reserving a general review and control over all their government, and a right of veto over all important measures. Such is the control which it now exercises over Union Seminary, Va. And here a fact may be, in a word, asserted, which no one will venture to dispute, and which contains an important argument for the proposed change;—that this control of the Assembly is just as efficient to secure fidelity and orthodoxy in this Seminary as in any other. Not only has the supreme Judiciary a fuller control over the Board of Directors than over any Synod; it has also its customary powers of review and control over the Synods which appoint Professors and Directors; by which it could require those Synods to cite, try, and punish any unfaithful or erroneous officer of the Institution. Our brethren at large have not been blind to the necessity of such a change. At the close of the Assembly of 1853, Dr. Murray, of Elizabethtown, proposed to the Assembly that it should relinquish the election of Professors; but it was judged too late in the Sessions to introduce so important a question. In the Assembly of 1854 the same measure was moved, in a broader shape, but was successfully opposed by an objection which seemed conclusive, but which we will attempt to remove in the course of these remarks.

We do not fear that any person, after a moment's consideration, will impute to the advocates of this change an invidious desire to degrade from a pre-eminent position any of the three Seminaries of the Assembly; for, by the showing of their friends themselves, such pre-eminence has already become impossible for any of them. It has been distinctly claimed in the General Assembly, that the new Seminary at Danville was as much *the Seminary* of the Assembly as Princeton, that it should enjoy the same fostering care, and share the same intimate connexion with its elder sister. Nor were the friends of Alleghany less urgent in claiming that theirs also was the equal daughter of the Assembly. Now, if the three are co-ordinate, and equally entitled to the favor of the Assembly, as the two younger eagerly assert, and as the elder does not deny, it is very clear that

each of them must henceforth depend mainly on sectional patronage. Neither of them is any longer a national Seminary—the pre-eminent Institution of our whole Denomination. It is the Assembly itself which has said so. Any one of them may fairly enjoy whatever pre-eminence its own superiority would give it. This it would be both a wrong and a folly to resist. A change from the present mode of superintendence to the synodical would not, therefore, cause any one of them to descend from a national to a sectional position; for that national position has already ceased to exist. We believe that, so far from the older Seminaries' considering such a change invidious to themselves, the time will come when their own friends will demand it, as essential to their prosperity. The change would be in a direction contrary to the late action of the Assembly, and the policy of the Western Synods, in establishing another Assembly's Seminary. But let the reader weigh the reasons for it.

First: It may be made to conduce to the prosperity of these Seminaries themselves. While either of them may, by a superior reputation, draw a partial patronage from the whole Church, they must all henceforth be, in the main, sectional institutions—in no bad sense of the word, but as intended chiefly to benefit a part of the Church, and to draw their chief support from that part. Now that support will surely be more cheerfully given, when the section of the Church which is relied upon to give it, feels that it can have its own way with its own institution. The supposed *prestige* which is derived from the nominal direction and patronage of the whole Church, assembled in its highest court, will be soon found to be illusive henceforward. When the section of our Denomination appropriate to the support of Alleghany, for instance, finds that, after all, it has the burden to bear, the money to pay, the students to furnish, they will begin to feel that they ought to have the first voice in the control of the Institution. Why should strangers to Alleghany; from distant sections—strangers pledged to the support of other, and even rival institutions—have equal control with themselves over their money and labors? The merely nominal support of the supreme Judicatory of the Church will be purchased at too high a price, when obvious natural right is thus sacrificed for it. Since the substantial support of each of our Seminaries must henceforth be sectional, the way to call it forth heartily and cheerfully will be to give the management to those sections where it justly belongs. Let the Assembly resign the immediate control of them to those Synods to which they must naturally look for support. Let it give each Synod, which honestly sustains them with funds and men, a potential voice in their government, by the appointment of one or more directors responsible directly to that Synod. Let this Directory, in each case, manage its own Institution, while the Assembly reserves a general right of review and control, and a veto over all acts of such importance as might decide the orthodoxy or fidelity of the Seminary. Through this threefold rein—a direct veto on its fundamental acts, a review

of the records of the directory, and a general control over the Synods by which this directory is appointed and instructed—the Assembly would have as strong a virtual hold upon such a Seminary as it has on Princeton, and as strong as it can have, in the nature of our government. Thus, we are convinced, a more hearty interest would be awakened for each Seminary in the Synods of its own section; and to those sections the Seminaries must look, after all.

It might, perhaps, be sneeringly objected, that the facts declare the contrary,—that, while the three Seminaries under the direct control of the Assembly differ among themselves, according to their age, in prosperity, they are, upon the whole, in advance of the other three which are under the direct control of Synods. The proposal of this change may be imputed, perhaps, to the same envious motive which actuated the well-known fox, who, having incurred an abbreviation of his caudal appendage, meanly desired to bring all other foxes into the same misfortune. Seeming appeals to fact are usually effective arguments; but this objection will influence none except those who take up with the sound in place of sense. Of the three Assembly's Seminaries, which seem to present a superior prosperity, these are the facts:—Princeton was founded, and built up to an assured prosperity, when the direction and patronage of the Assembly did confer a national status—when this was the national Seminary—when there was no sister to divide with it the regards of its foster-mother. Now the case is directly opposite. As to Alleghany, we will venture to affirm that, if the question be submitted to the old and experienced friends to whose enlightened and persevering zeal it owes its all, they will tell us, that it is the Synods of Pittsburg, Wheeling, and Ohio, which have given the men and money, have done the working and praying; and that all they have ever received from the Assembly which they could not have as well gotten without it, was some very pretty Resolutions, and an occasional blunder in management, thwarting some of their best interests, or depriving them of some of their best men. They will tell us that, in its earlier days, the Assembly's support of Alleghany was, in fact, a Carlyleian "unreality, a sham;" that it did languish with this support; and that its present prosperity is owing to efforts purely sectional. As to Danville, it is too young, and its success is not enough assured, to be a basis of argument. So much, only, has been proved by the event thus far: that the name of an Assembly's Seminary has not procured for it that united support, which were hoped for from it.

Second: It has been said, that justice requires that the effective management of every Seminary shall be shared with those who bear the burden of its support. Both the friends of the several Seminaries and the Assembly feel this. How often have not members of late Assemblies candidly acknowledged, that in legislating—and especially in electing Professors for the Seminaries—they consulted chiefly the wishes of the special friends of each institution? "We

voted," say they, "to place a certain brother in this Seminary, not because we knew him, but because its friends desired him." Nor are they to be reproached for this. They could not properly have done otherwise. There would otherwise have been no answer to such complaints as these, uttered by the friends of any given Seminary:—"It is we who have the money to pay, the work to do, the loss to suffer, and the failure to repair, if there is a failure. Why, then, have you, coming from Georgia, coming from Louisiana, refused us the man of our own section, whom *we knew* to be the right one, because he was not personally known to you, when it was not to be expected that he should be known to you in your distant section?" Upon the present plan, the recommendation of the friends of each Seminary must and should have a potential influence in the Assembly.

But, now, how shall that recommendation be made? Who shall be recognized as the authorized exponent to the Assembly of the wishes of those parts of the Church? There is no safe answer; and the truth is just this: That the present mongrel plan introduces into the management of these Seminaries an influence which common justice demands shall be weighty, and which yet has no constitutional and declared mode for expressing itself. It is a mode of election liable to all the vilest abuses of the *Caucus system*! When we consider of what poor human nature is capable, and what ambitions, plots, and rivalries have been seen in the Church, it is plain that the continuance of such a system is liable to produce results the most deplorable and disgusting. He who needs to have them suggested must be short-sighted indeed. There must be some declared and legalized form in which the part of the Church interested may give that potential advice which justice entitles it to give. In other words, the elections and other important measures must be virtually left to be initiated by the sectional friends of each school. Let them be formally resigned. This alone is honest or safe.

Some one may suggest that, if the Board of Directors be permitted to nominate to the Assembly, as was done last spring, in an important case, the difficulty will be relieved. But, who nominates the Directors? The Assembly. So that, after all, the responsibility and the power run in a vicious circle. There is no warrant that the Directors will truly represent the wishes of the section interested; because they are not its representatives, but the Assembly's. And again: if the Directory is the proper body to which to intrust this effective and potential nomination, why may we not just call it in name what it becomes in fact—an election, with a right of veto in the Assembly?

Third: The purity, unity, and comfort of the Assembly itself, and, through it, of all the Churches which it represents, will demand this change. It now has three Seminaries to manage, all co-ordinate, each the Assembly's own, all embarked in an honorable competition against each other. They will cause too much legislation for the

Assembly, which will interfere with its other duties, all rapidly increasing with our growing Denomination. In three Seminaries, there will be at least twelve professorships. What year can the Assembly hope to meet without one or more elections? Take the short experience of the past. At St. Louis, the Assembly was agitated with professorial arrangements for Alleghany, and had two elections to make for Princeton. In Philadelphia it had this election to make over again, and six others besides. In Buffalo, it still had the Princeton election to make over the third time, and two others besides! And in this connection it may be noted, that, as the Assembly can meet but once in a year, in the frequent cases of non-acceptance, the Seminaries are left to struggle on with deficient faculties a whole year. The Directories could meet more promptly.

But, worse: The questions thus raised are unfit to be introduced into the court of the whole Church. They involve personal emoluments and promotions—they awaken too many selfish and partizan feelings. These Seminaries, being all under the immediate care of the Assembly, meet on its floor as competitors for its favor and fostering care. Their competitions are there brought to a focus. If they were, each one, under the management of independent, co-ordinate, and separate bodies, though there might be still a competition for public favor, there could not be this collision of claims. It is between children of the same family that the complaint of partiality may arise. Between two daughters of two separate families no such charge is ever made; because it is natural and right that each family shall favor its own daughter. Nobody dreams of complaining of it. As long as these Seminaries are daughters of the same family, complaints of partiality will be heard, as they have been heard. Prominent men will be allured by one from another; and the act of the Assembly in effecting the transference will be felt as a wrong; because the hand that takes away is the same that gave, and because it ought to feel as much bound to give to one as to another.

But, worse still: The management of these complex personal and partizan interests in the Assembly will give rise to those corrupt combinations known in the political slang of the day as log-rollings. The condition will, before long, be intimated from one side of the house to the other,—“Promote my measure, and I will promote yours.” The threat will be hinted,—“Dare to oppose mine, and I will thwart yours.” And when members of our Church courts are so lost to public virtue and purity of principle, that they will permit motives of personal or partizan concernment thus to dictate their decision on measures of general interest, the days of Simony and clerical bribery will not be distant. Why should all these matters, personal and sectional, with all their heats, intrigues, plots and complications, be thrust upon the whole Church, to embroil, alienate and corrupt it? Let them be kept where they belong. Let each Seminary be governed by its own section.

The objections which might be made to such a change are the following:—That it is best the assembled wisdom of the whole Church should be invoked in matters so important as the management of the schools where our preachers are trained. That the direct support of the Assembly gives a breadth to the foundation of its Seminaries, and a strength of patronage which they could not otherwise enjoy. And that the right to the funds set apart for their support would be forfeited by such a change; because they were given to Seminaries *under the care of the Assembly*. The last seems to have been the operative objection at Buffalo. The answer suggested already seems to us all-sufficient. The change can be so made as not to subtract the Seminaries from the care of the Assembly. Its control would still be virtually as strong as the nature of the case permits. It would restrain the institutions from perversion of trust, or infidelity to Presbyterianism, as securely as is possible by any invention of political sagacity. The second objection is illusory. To each of these three Seminaries we can say: “Two others have as much right as you to this peculiar favor and all its advantages. You can only enjoy any advantage over them from this source at the expense of infidelity and injustice in the Assembly towards both your sisters.” Surely it is not the interest of any one to depend directly on a treacherous and partial parent. To the first objection we answer: The assembled wisdom of the Denomination is inapplicable to a local or sectional object, except for its negative control; because it must either hearken, in the main, to local wishes and advice, or must run the risk of committing outrageous injustice to local rights in overriding those wishes.

A GLANCE AT THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE ELDERSHIP OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

ANY one, who is at all capable of getting beneath the outside of things, will often discover that the current of their real tendencies is bearing many precious interests in a direction very different from what appears on the surface—that semblances are not always verities—that the features of the outside body do not necessarily correspond with those of the inside spirit. As a matter of experience, we find that no man can keep up a proper acquaintance with himself or with any institution in which he is deeply concerned, unless he keeps daily knocking upon those externalities which catch and may deceive the outward eye, to know whether the echos from the hidden interior maintain their true responses. History informs us that even evangelical church organizations are not always what they seem to be—