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
OF THE

REV. JOHN H. RICE, D.D.

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

BY WILLIAM MAXWELL.



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addressed a long letter to that gentleman from which we give the following part in point.

TO THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.

*Hampden Sydney, March 18th, 1825.*

MY DEAR SIR,

The state of things here is such that I have every thing to discourage me. The other Presbyteries have avowedly thrown off all interest in our Seminary. The elder brethren of Hanover Presbytery have kept themselves so insulated, and are so far behind the progress of things in this country, and the general state of the world, that they think of nothing beyond the old plans and fashions, which prevailed seventy years ago. In fact, there is nothing like united, active exertion to build up this institution, and I often fear that the effort will fail. Had I known what I know now, I certainly would not have accepted the office which I hold. But now I have put my hand to the plough, and am not accustomed to look back. There is, however, a sea before me, the depth of which I cannot fathom, and the width such that I cannot see over it.

Some say one thing, and some another, but in many parts of our Synod there is a talk about this Seminary being hostile and injurious to Princeton, and I do from my heart wish that it could be silenced. If I thought it was so, I would resign to-morrow. For I can truly say, that no institution in the country is as dear to me as the Seminary of Princeton, because I think it more important to the well being of the Church than any other.

But now for the application. I have given you this dismal account of Virginia, to convince you that you *must* come to this state during your next vacation. I do think that it is a duty which you owe to your native land. The *only* way to drive out all these bad feelings of which I have spoken, is to excite others of a contrary char-

acter. It cannot be expected according to human probabilities, that the brethren here can do it. Many uncomfortable feelings are associated with them. But all love you with unabated affection, and regard you with peculiar reverence. Your presence would awaken a new set of feelings. A few sermons from you would do more, at this time, for the real good of the church here, than any human means that I can think of. And I am sure that you would hear and see little, if any thing, of the complaints and troubles that exist; for the people would be ashamed to let you know how they feel.

If you could but have witnessed the universal burst of joy, when it was understood that you were coming, and the deep disappointment expressed by every one, on hearing that probably you would not come, you would then know what influence, under the divine blessing, you could exert here. I do deliberately and conscientiously believe that it is your duty to come.

You can with the greatest ease get to Petersburg by stages and steamboats. There are more carriages now in this neighbourhood than I ever saw in any country place; and several people say that they would think it a privilege to send for you to Petersburg, and after having you here for a while, afford you facilities for getting over the mountains. You could thence find a conveyance to Fredericksburg, and so on to Princeton. Now do, my dear sir, think of these things seriously; before you make up your mind that you cannot come. And let me hear from you on the subject as soon as possible.

Our University has just gone into operation with about forty or fifty students. It may be regarded as a comet, which has for the first time just made its appearance; the orbit of which of course is not determined. The aspect, however, is portentous; and I have no doubt that we shall feel the effects of the prodigy in all parts of the state.\*

\* The first appearance of this new luminary in our firmament *was* indeed rather alarming, and seemed to bode no good. He continued,

TO WILLIAM MAXWELL, ESQ.

*Goochland, April 2d, 1825.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Have I not good reason to justify my love of the good people of Norfolk—the good ladies I mean?

Your letter came to hand, as you may suppose from this introduction; and I return thanks to you for your kind attention; and to your good ladies for their promptitude in executing the business committed to them.

I certainly shall like our Seminary the better for having “Norfolk” in it. Indeed as we are to have both “Richmond” and “Petersburg” there too, I begin to think that we shall make out to live with tolerable comfort.

I have been sent for to organize a little church in Powhatan—having a day to spare, I slipt over to Goochland to see my friends, and have happened to meet with a gentleman going to Richmond, by whom I send this note. He is in a hurry, and that hurries me.

Give my love to your mother, and to all my dear friends. I have been long absent from Norfolk; but I am conscious of no weakening of affection for the brethren and sisters there. And do you tell them, that it is feeble love which absence destroys; but strong, (such as mine) is rather increased than diminished. Do we not love for eternity?

Most truly yours,

J. H. RICE.

however, to regard it with hope as well as fear, and most devoutly prayed that it might prove a “happy constellation,” and “shed its selectest influence” upon the state and country. Nor was his prayer without effect; for its present aspect is certainly auspicious. Without a figure, the establishment of public worship in the University, and of a Bible Society among the students, together with a visible improvement in the whole order of the institution, appear to authorize the hope which we indulge that its future radiations will be not only brilliant but benign,