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## I. Literary.

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### WILLIAM WALLACE SPENCE.

By PROF. W. W. MOORE, D. D., LL. D.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that has been said about our age as an era of young men, it is undeniable that much of the world's best work is still done by men who are well advanced in years. The adage, "Old men for counsel, young men for war," while true in general, cannot be taken literally, as many of our most useful men of action are old men. Longfellow, in his *Morituri Salutamus*, recognized this fact in his catalogue of literary achievements by the elderly:

"Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles  
Wrote his grand Œdipus, and Simonides  
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,  
When each had numbered more than fourscore years,  
And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,  
Had but begun his Characters of Men;  
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,  
At sixty wrote the Canterbury Tales;  
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,  
Completed Faust when eighty years were past."

Von Moltke, Bismarck, Gladstone, Hannibal Hamlin, Justin Morrill, John Hall, Moses Hoge, William Henry Green, John I. Blair, of New Jersey, and Charles Reid, of Norfolk, are examples of immensely active old age from the recent past, while we still have with us such leaders in public life as Lord Salisbury, such preëminent soldiers as Lord Roberts, such teachers as Pro-

## THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN A THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

BY PROF. J. ROSS STEVENSON, D. D.

SPIRITUAL growth and Christian zeal may be regarded as objects of primary importance in the work of a theological seminary. The Presbyterian Church has long recognized this, and when the General Assembly proposed to found our first theological seminary in 1811, one of the chief aims had in mind was devotion and improvement in practical piety on the part of candidates for the ministry. In many of our seminaries this object is specified in the constitution, and to promote a high grade of personal godliness, is made obligatory upon both professors and students. The church expects those who instruct her candidates for the ministry to encourage and cherish in their pupils by all proper means the life and power of true godliness, and unreserved consecration of themselves to God, as essential qualifications for usefulness in the service of Christ. Since the student's personal piety is a matter between his own soul and God, his improvement here must of necessity be left in large measure with himself. But while emphasizing the duties of professors, and of students themselves in their private life, our forefathers urged the importance of "associations" in which the seminary as a body might seek to promote growth in grace and consecration to the service of Christ.

In nearly every theological school some kind of an association has been formed to promote these objects of primary importance in a seminary's life. And not only so, but to make these objects still more prominent and real there was organized twenty years ago the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance which did a great work in quickening the devotion of students and in rallying them to the world-wide extension of Christ's kingdom. When it was felt that this organization had served its day, and that something more complete and effective should be planned, it was decided to adapt the Young Men's Christian Association idea to seminary life. This idea has been taken hold of by a large number of seminaries, and is giving increasing satisfaction. The plan is to

organize in every seminary an association similar to those which have been doing such effective work in the colleges, and to interrelate them by a general committee known as the theological section of the Intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Association. Some of the advantages to be derived from such a plan of organization are the following:

1. It emphasizes objects which as has been stated have always been regarded as of prime importance, and which professors and students should consider as a body. The association aims to stimulate and develop the religious life of the seminary, and in keeping with the requirement of unreserved consecration to the work of the Lord seeks to promote among theological students intelligent and active interest in the cause of missions—city, home and foreign. No one will contend that these objects do not need emphasis in a school of the prophets. While there has been a great deal of unjust criticism heaped upon our seminaries, a careful inquiry has proved that there is much ground for the complaint that theological students are often not as spiritually-minded as they should be, do not take the interest in devotional meetings and the study of the Bible for personal growth which one would expect them to, and that it is hard to induce them to engage in work of a purely missionary character. The association endeavors to remove the ground of this criticism, and it ought to be cause for gratitude that it is being used by the Spirit of God to accomplish this end.

2. This particular form of organization seeks to enlist the whole student body, without exceptions. There have been societies formed which have accomplished great good by interesting a number of students. Societies of religious inquiry, for example, have been potent factors in promoting the life of true godliness in many candidates for the ministry, and various missionary societies have done much to awaken interest in the world's evangelization. But, as a rule, these have not had a moulding influence upon the whole student body. They have affected those already interested and have failed to reach the young men whose religious life and interest in missions needed quickening the most. The Association, on the other hand, seeks to bring every student into its membership, so that the whole seminary may give proper consideration to the matters of such great moment.

3. The Association employs methods which have proved help-

ful to students everywhere, methods which the candidate for the ministry as a college student has employed advantageously, and which he ought to continue using. These methods are not novel, nor are they peculiar to the Association, but this form of seminary organization insists upon them. To quote again from the action of the General Assembly in 1811, "It is expected that every student in the theological seminary will spend a portion of time every morning and evening in devout meditation and self-recollection and examination: in reading the Holy Scriptures with a view to a personal and practical application of the passage read to his own heart, character and circumstances, and in humble, fervent prayer and praise to God in secret." This secret prayer and devout meditation upon the word of God, which is too often neglected in our seminaries, the association urges in a sensible, practical way, and in addition, calls attention to the need of personal work for souls, in order to keep the spirit fresh and the religious life warm.

4. Another advantage of this Association movement in seminaries is that it enables each seminary to profit by the experience of other institutions. This was one of the aims of the old Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance, and it proved a helpful medium for the interchange of views on practical topics between students from different seminaries. The plan now of having conferences rather than conventions gives larger opportunity for seminary representatives to compare views and plans, and numerous instances could be given where already seminaries have profited greatly by the actual experience of sister institutions.

5. The Association plan brings theological students into sympathetic and helpful touch with the Christian student body of America. The work that is being accomplished for Christ in our colleges and institutions of higher learning should lead every one interested in the advancement of the kingdom to thank God and take courage. When we think what the intercollegiate department of the Young Men's Christian Association has done and is doing to lead students to Christ, deepen their spiritual life, and enlist them in the work of extending Christ's kingdom, our hearts should be filled with gratitude and hope. In other countries theological students are the leaders in this intercollegiate work. In America, seminary students are not only fitted for leadership, but their affiliation with the Christian work in the colleges would

not only be helpful to the work itself, but would react in blessing upon the seminaries. In becoming thus a part of the intercollegiate movement theological seminaries are affiliated with the World's Student Christian Federation, which represents fifteen national movements and a student Christian brotherhood of sixty-five thousand. The inspiration which comes from standing shoulder to shoulder with this advancing army of young men is something which the theological students of America cannot afford to lose.

6. Besides all this, it should be stated that this Association movement earnestly seeks to exclude any features that might be objectionable to the individual seminaries. The autonomy of each seminary cannot be interfered with, and the methods and work of the Association should have the entire approval of professors as well as students. To secure this end, it is recommended that professors should not only be members of the Association, but should take an active part in the work, either by serving as officers or as members of committees. This will insure wise leadership and will prevent the introduction of any peculiar tenets which the seminary authorities might not approve of. Furthermore, the Association seeks to conserve whatever has proved valuable in a seminary's experience, making only such changes in existing organizations as will make them more helpful and effective. This whole movement has been introduced in a conservative way, and after years of prayerful thought on the part of those who have had the religious welfare of the seminaries at heart, and the hope has been that the movement may be honored by God's Spirit in helping to train up a devout and missionary ministry. Shall we not pray that it shall be used of God to this end?