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NO. I.

THE DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGE

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IT is said that a student once began an essay on "Snakes in Ireland" with the sentence: "There are no snakes in Ireland." I may answer the question, Why should we have denominational colleges? with the statement, Because we have them. Such an answer might be regarded as conclusive. That is, denominational colleges live because there is a demand for them. A farmer will not year after year cultivate any commodity which he fails every year to dispose of. A merchant who notices upon his shelves a certain class of goods unsold, will, when he gives his order for the next season, be far from ordering another lot of the same kind of goods. No, farmers cultivate what they are reasonably sure of being able to use with profit. Merchants keep in stock goods for which there is a demand. When the demand ceases, the supply also ceases. The same principle holds good regarding denominational schools. If the demand should cease, the schools would disappear. But, so far from disappearing, they are increasing in number, as well as in influence and power. The people of our churches recognize their colleges as powerful auxiliaries in increasing the efficiency of the workers, in spreading the truth, in advancing the interests of the Kingdom of Christ. They show their interest in the establishment and maintenance of these schools by contributing of their substance to their support; they prove their confidence in the management of these institutions by enrolling their children among the students; they manifest their faith in God's purpose concerning these schools by praying constantly for His blessing to rest upon them. De-

nominal schools have come to stay, and, as long as there exists in our land a desire for higher education, as long as there are in our churches and communities young men and young women who thirst for knowledge, so long will denominational schools flourish. But, it may be asked,

WHY THE COLLEGE?

There are in existence in this country two systems of education, which we may call the compulsory and the voluntary. The first is under the control of the State, and is maintained by the State for her own safety. It is necessary for the security of our government and the stability of her institutions that she have an intelligent citizenship, but, when the pupil is fitted for the proper performance of the duties of the citizen and of practical life, the work of the State ceases, and that of the voluntary system of education begins. Its function is to develop and to train leaders, and the demand for this training, which is generally admitted to begin at the close of the common school course, is found in the condition of society. A country with no instruction above that taught in the common schools would be retrograde in its tendency. Instruction in the elementary branches is not sufficient. A knowledge of other times, of other customs, of what other men have tried and what other men have accomplished, of existing and changing relations among men and places and things—a breadth of ability to understand the complications which are constantly arising in society and in government, to apply the proper remedies to defects wherever found, to make work easier, to make men better, to make life happier—these are increasingly necessary as the world grows older.

The demand for collegiate training exists also in the nature of man. All right-minded young men and young women have at some time in their lives a desire for something better and higher, a desire to do more and to be more. And this desire is a commendable one. The ambition to excel, to be a leader, is one which, within proper limits, ought to be encouraged. It is not necessary, in order to be a leader, that one become a member of one of the so-called

learned professions. Educated and broad-minded farmers, mechanics and tradesmen are needed, and are just as useful and valuable members of society as the physician, the lawyer, the minister, the editor, or the teacher. It is not necessary to argue, for the readers of this article, that the educated man or woman, in whatever position in life, will perform the duties of that position with much greater ease and satisfaction than if the education were lacking. Both boys and girls, therefore, whatever may be their ambitions for life, should be encouraged to seek the breadth of culture which is furnished by our colleges.

Another question which is often asked is,

WHY THE SMALL COLLEGE ?

The small colleges, scattered here and there over the land, reach large numbers of young men and women who would never think of attending college if the opportunities were not afforded them by institutions near their homes. We have in our own state, for example, about fifteen so-called small colleges and one state university. These colleges enrolled last year more than ten times as many students as the university in all departments, including all in the professional courses. Is it not a reasonable statement that not one-fourth of this vast number of young people would have gone to college at all had it not been for the existence of the small colleges ?

Again, the smaller institutions are free from the demoralizing effects, both intellectual and moral, to which in large classes there is an undoubted tendency. Not only this, but the intimate and always desirable personal relation between the professor and each of his students, which is almost inevitable in the small college, is impossible where the classes are so large that the individual is lost in the mass. As the primary purpose of education is to make men and women, this purpose must be largely lost sight of in the larger classes.

More than this, very many who receive a partial education at a small college, are inspired with a desire for more knowledge, and step from the smaller into the larger insti-

tution, to increase an education which, but for the existence of the smaller, would never have been commenced. Thus the smaller colleges act as feeders for the larger ones. Many also who are in the learned professions would have taken a short cut to professional life if it had not been for the existence of small colleges, because they would have considered it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to acquire a collegiate education. Thus the standard of our professions is elevated as well as the standard of education among the masses. Further, after pursuing a course in a small college, many, who would otherwise have become farmers or mechanics, conceive a desire to enter professional life, and to this class belong some of the most eminent men in every profession.

There is one other point which I wish to mention. We have been talking almost as if the only use of the small colleges were to furnish facilities for education. There is a power which they possess, and in the event of their abolition would be lost because it would be impossible to transfer it. I refer to their local power. Public spirited citizens and shrewd heads of families, are quick to see that the small towns which grow up about colleges are places of more refinement than others. They see that society is more cultivated and morals are on a higher plane. They see that superior men are attracted to these towns with their families, and that the recognized leaders of society are men of better character. They see, in short, that all the influences exerted in such towns are a higher scale and have a healthier tone. If a college be ever so small, it exerts an enlightening and refining influence upon all the surrounding country, and is powerful in counteracting the selfish and sordid tendencies which are continually operating upon men in pursuit of wealth and earthly advancement.

Too much stress in choosing a college may be placed upon the equipment. We can use only what we need. A recent editorial dwells upon this thought. The very wealth of equipment is sometimes oppressive. To a thirsty man the clear, rippling brook or the cool, quiet spring is more refreshing than the boundless Atlantic or the rushing Niag-

ara. It is not necessary to the student of physiology that he have access to a fully equipped biological laboratory, nor to him who is just learning the scales that he be provided with the opportunity for advanced technical work.

I have been answering some auxiliary questions in order to lead up to the larger one which forms the caption of this article. I have realized anew the necessity of more time and space than these conditions allow to answer these questions with any adequacy. It has been impossible, indeed, much more than simply to answer them without discussion. Now the question is,

WHY THE DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGE?

and the emphasis of the question is on the adjective. Denominational schools are the contribution of Christian men and women to the forces that tend to the development of civilized nations. That they are, and have been, a source of unmeasured good in our country is beyond question. We, as a people, wield our strong influence among the great powers of the earth today because of the character of those who nearly three hundred years ago planted their banner in the new soil. When they established churches, they also established schools. These are natural and logical associates. The leaders in religious thought have recognized this association in the development of right thinking and right doing. It is claimed by some that it is not the province of educational institutions to teach religion. Is this true? The young tendrils of faith reach out and fasten to something during the process of growth. Shall it be truth? The plastic mind of youth will receive an indelible stamp from the institutions which have developed its faculties. What shall that impression be?

A man's associates make his moral atmosphere. "He that walketh with wise men shall himself be wise." So he that walks with men of high ideals will himself develop high ideals. Under even the most favorable circumstances one's associations are not always elevating. The little insinuating evils are about us in the purest earthly environment. We cannot hope to be wholly free from the con-

tagion of sin, and yet, if the student is not benefited by the associations of a Christian college, it is frequently the fault of the individual rather than of the surroundings. It is generally conceded that a devotion to the development of the intellectual faculties is at best enervating to the spiritual life; that, during the process of gaining the greatest mental acumen, the religious fire burns low. If this is true in an institution where the student is surrounded by all possible religious influences, how much more must it follow in the broad, free atmosphere of the large university, where individuality, religious conviction, and strict morality are too often matters of indifference?

When the boy or girl begins to realize that he has a mind worth cultivating, it is well that knowledge pure and simple be not over-estimated. High places are demanding more and more high excellence in character. The question is not so much, is he brilliant? or, how much does he know? as, what kind of a man is he? We need, it is true, culture; but much more, we need the true conception of God and right-living. True learning has always been the adjuster of religious thought. The all-important element in the unfolding of life is the spiritual. Christ's teachings are clear and definite. We can place nothing before our duty to Him who is Himself knowledge and truth; so all truth should be studied with reverence.

Thus briefly, and in a measure unsatisfactorily, I have tried to answer the question with which I began. The small denominational college is one of the most efficient agencies in the faithful carrying out of the Great Commission that the churches possess, and I hope the day is far distant when institutions of the class represented by the one for which I am proud to stand shall find their mission outgrown.