

4-29-1859

Theron Baldwin Letter to S.H. Marsh - Apr. 29, 1859

Theron Baldwin

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Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon
Transcriber: Erin Weninger, November 2009

New York April 29th 1859
Rev S. H. Marsh

Dear Sir

Your of the 27th inst came duly to hand but it was impossible to reply to it yesterday in consequence of the pressure of other engagements I was relying upon a final conversation & adjustment of matters so that we should understand one another before you left & was intending to recommend to our Treasurer to furnish you cash sufficient to meet present liabilities here – if you failed to realize it in time from other quarters – for several days I was at a loss to know whether you had left the city or not – Had I known that there was any probability of you visiting Boston before your contemplated return to this city to attend the anniversaries I should have been doubly desirous of the “final conversation” alluded to above – as it is we must do the best we can by correspondence.

I have just been looking over the copy of a letter which I wrote you on the 20th of Sept. 1858 – after alluding to the fact that I had once written you that I thought favorably of your coming East & suggesting that you defer starting till after the then approaching annual meeting of the Board I said – “a scheme is coming up in my own mind which if matured & then sanctioned by the Board will lead to important modifications” – then after giving the outlines of the plan I add – “Suppose you were to come on & work till you had secured subscriptions amounting to \$1200 a year & running through three years at the shortest having it understood that if the subscriptions, any of them die in the mean time their subscription shall be null & also that they have the privilege of discontinuing the subscription any year – in such a case it would be the work of the society to get some other persons to fill the vacancy. It is easy to see that in this way you would make the most of your agency while here & you would if successful create the very “certainty” that Prof L wants & you want. I hope he will hold on”

At the annual meeting the Board unanimously approved of the “Scheme” above alluded to & you have yourself been acting upon it and since your arrival -- More over, ever since the decision of the Board in 1856 to undertake the “final effort” in behalf of Institutions in States East of the Mississippi – it has been the settled policy of the Society to give a specific character to efforts on behalf of their several Institutions – Whenever their officers have come on to cooperate with the society the understanding has been that the entire avails of their agency would go to the benefit of the particular Institutions which they represented – you will see therefore that the policy which you support as in your judgment “the true policy of the society” is its policy, & so far as Institutions East of the Mississippi are concerned has been its policy for years—

But now, when we come to apply this policy we find that there are limitations – No one Institution at any particular time can have the entire range on the field – for there are nine or ten others upon the Society’s list which put in their claim How shall all their interests be adjusted so that no one college shall be benefited, at the expense of another

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having equal claims – this I confess is no easy matter – but surely I have not myself as a representative of the society – nor have the Board any [illegible text] to gratify—

I do not understand you as complaining that Pacific University is not fairly dealt by & I fully concede that it is both right and proper that you should be rigidly faithful to the interests which you represent still there is no question in mind that Pacific University occupies at the present moment a much more favorable position, in respect to Eastern aid, than either the College of California – or Webster or the [Ger Eu. Mo. Or] or Iowa or Yellow Spring College.

It will be obvious from the above excerpt from my letter of Sept 20th that I had at that time no reference to the pursuing of endowments. And this leads me to say, that the Society has never been disposed to put any restrictions whatever upon the representatives of any particular College in reference to any influence which they could exert upon individuals with a view of securing sooner or later liberal donations – endowing if you please --~~the future~~ – in this sense, all have, at all things, entire sweep of the field – No officer of the Society would object, but rather rejoice if you should succeed in finding some good friend or friends who would at any time give by the \$10,000 to Pacific University –

When however you ask for a portion of the Society's field for the purpose of procuring Endowments at the present time the case is altered & I must question the expediency of it – because 1. It would seriously interfere with the “final effort” of the Society in behalf of Institutions in States East of the Mississippi – it is for the interest of Pacific University & of every other Institution West of the Mississippi that this work should be speedily accomplished – The Society is mapping out the field & brings its machinery to bear on that point. 2. The prospect is fair that you can make up \$1,200 for three years & very likely enough in addition to make up the deficiency of the Society for the last year – which is in reality providing for four years – 3. If you can do anything in addition you must secure the means of financing an apparatus & such addition to your Library as might be especially important – Then your Institution would have the means of living for this period & the tools to work with – 4. Your next want would be a Building – in respect to which it might be said 1) That the wisdom of expanding very much for buildings at this stage of your history might be very questionable – 2) If you are not entirely sure that you have the best location – you ought not to make large expenditures for this purpose, even if you had the means – but should wait for the future developments of Oregon – 3) If you should decide upon a removal there would be every prospect that you could secure the requisite buildings for the time being – as a condition of your removal – 4) If by your present agency you secure the requisite support for Institutions for three or four years, together with their tools – it is a serious question whether Oregon itself ought not to furnish the comparatively limited accommodations which you will need in the mean time – 5) If you have support for Institutions, apparatus, library & Building endowments in the shape of vested funds, are not an absolute present necessity

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Work on then I should say through your three years, in the mean time let the Society finish up its work East of the Mississippi – you need not fear that Pacific University will fail of adequate support – provided it proves itself worthy of public confidence –

As to Boston – I long ago made arrangements with Pres Chapin of Beloit College – in the absence of the Mr. Edgell to spend the month of June there with a view of making a special effort on behalf of Beloit College in case it should meet the approbations of the Pastors – He did make such effort two or three years since in Park Street Church & I do not know whether they would be disposed to make much addition to what they have already done. Very likely after all – by consultation & arrangement you might use up the specialties to which you allude as well as to some of the congregations without serious interference with the movements of Pres Chapin.

My expectation is that he will be at the Boston Anniversaries & I expect to be there & I hope you will be & I think we can together so arrange the matter that the several interests in question shall be subserved without collision.

Sincerely Yours

Theron Baldwin

Sidney Harper Marsh Papers

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