

be forgiven, and especially, I entreat you, observe that I have not been guilty of so gross an impropriety and absurdity as to institute the most distant comparison between myself and my late excellent and revered instructor Dr. Dick. Neither have I insinuated that our Hall here will bear comparison with the Hall which the Church now has at home. With reference to it we certainly follow at a very humble distance. Let us, however, be humbly and devoutly thankful for what we enjoy; let us turn our advantages, such as they are, to the best account; let us implore the Divine blessing on our undertaking, and let us hope that, as has proved to be the case at home, better things may be in store for us.

This topic should not be dismissed without remarking that the difference between the circumstances of the students at home when entering their Hall and those of our students here, namely, that the one have received a general University education, while the other for the most part have not, this requires a difference in our mode of procedure; and this difference of procedure is further recommended by the fact that we hold our Session at the time when University College also holds its Session, and when, accordingly, there is an opportunity for students pursuing their literary and philosophical studies at the same time that they attend our Hall; whereas the Session of the Hall at home is at a season of the year when all other academical institutions are in vacation. The students at home are expected to give their whole time to theology; ours have other studies at the same time to prosecute; and to overburden them with employment would just be to prevent success altogether. It was wise, therefore, in our Synod, to arrange at the period when we commenced holding our Session in winter, that the work required in our Hall should be of such moderate extent as to afford opportunity of attending, advantageously, classes in the University. It is impossible indeed to contrive any public scheme so as to be the most suitable for every individual; the general good must be consulted. To such as have made considerable progress in their preparatory studies, before they enter with us, a somewhat different method might be more appropriate; but for the great body of the students, our scheme seems to be the best adapted; and those most advanced when they come to us, need not spend their time in listlessness nor idleness. They have arrived at such years that they may profitably engage in private study, and the more one has already learned, generally he is the more sensible of his need for further progress.\* It is the chief fault of many institutions, I humbly conceive, that an attempt is made to accomplish too much, and the consequence is that far less is really achieved than if less had been undertaken. Our aim is during our four Sessions to give the elements of a Theological Education—to bring the simple outline before the mind of the student, to qualify him for making a sort of fair start as a Preacher, but certainly leaving it to him to fill up the outline in a course of

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\* It is generally admitted, we believe, that one chief disadvantage attending the scheme of education on this side of the Atlantic, is that the student is driven too rapidly through his course. As an illustration, a student in our Church in Scotland entering the University, cannot present himself before a Presbytery for license till after a period of seven years. Here, one entering our hall with much about the attainments that would fit him for the University, may apply for license after three years and a half. The consequence of this greater speed is that our students have little time for general reading or meditation. They find in fact that the mastery of their text books is almost all they can accomplish. This tends to give a hard, dry, bare, *skeletony* character to the mind. Provided that a student has sense and principle (and if he want these, we had better want him,) it is of great advantage that his time should not be fully occupied in mere preparation for classes.