

some previous years. Five students have this year completed their course, and will be soon ready for license.

In commencing his address, Principal Willis said he would invite the attention of the audience to some discussions on points of Theological interpretation of great practical moment. The course of Dr. Willis' observations may be understood from the announcement of his subject, which he put in the form of queries, thus:—How do we explain the precepts of non-resistance in the New Testament, so as to vindicate the adoption of free constitutions by States? How do we limit the indefinite precepts given in the apostolic writings to wives, to children, to servants, to obey in all things? Thirdly,—How do we justify the rights and duty of States to base their legislation on the Christian law, seeing the New Testament addresses itself, apparently, only to individuals and churches? These, he said, were no mere abstract questions, but concerned the affairs of life, the rights of men, and the relations of society. He must also say, that he thought some of the principles he was to advocate were imperfectly understood; though it was a happy thing that in the codes of most enlightened nations, they were practically recognized. But it became public instructors to be well versant in them; for it was of injurious influence to human progress, when the professional student lagged behind the common intelligence of mankind. It occasioned, that if society did not retrograde, at least great principles were not urged on the public mind with the frequency necessary to their being fully carried out, where their application was yet to be desiderated. On the first head, he took as an example of his principle, the British Revolution. He referred to the slavish adulation of tyrants which characterized certain classes of learned men in the days of the Charleses and Jameses—especially a fulsome address from the University of Oxford to King James; a style of eulogy which he was sure our own beloved and constitutional Sovereign would nauseate not less than any of her subjects. Happy for mankind, and for Britain, its people and its princes had long been used to a theory of limited monarchy, which seated the governing authority in the consent of the people. The doctrine of "lex rex"—the doctrine of a George Buchanan, and of the homely but holy Rutherford, prevailed over the slavish fancies of a Filmer and a Hobbes. Dr. Willis referred to the command not to resist, and explained this of resistance to magistracy as being an ordinance of God for good, but which did not preclude resistance to an authority which became the engine of oppression and injustice—the very thing which magistracy was ordained to protect against. It ceased therefore to be the ordinance of God, when it sanctified tyranny and legalized crime. The resistance of Englishmen to such a Prince as James, could not be called rebellion. The English Government was a limited monarchy, and how could a government be said to be limited, if force is never to be employed, even in the last resort, for the purpose of maintaining the limitations? It was, therefore, James who was mutinying against that legitimate authority, to which he ought to be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. It was James who was resisting the ordi-

nance of God; who, in the true sense of the words of Jesus, was withholding from 'Caesar the things which were Caesar's.' The reverend lecturer advancing to his second point—that touching the solution of questions of domestic right,—said he had often found the same verse above quoted, of great use in reducing to absurdity the sophistical arguments by which the apologist for slavery seeks to turn the word of God to the service of that oppression. The precept only means, "do not retaliate." But because a man is not to return stroke for stroke, has the other a right to smite his neighbour? Because I am to cultivate the spirit, in which I would rather suffer the smiting of my cheek than indulge in wrath and revenge, does this decide the right of the other to offer me violence? Here lay the solution of other passages quoted, as if forbidding agitation, or any claim to a fair definition of the domestic relations by the rule of just and equal. Be it that the servant is to obey even the froward master. Admitted that they who are under the yoke are required to count their own masters worthy of all honour. Question: Does this justify the yoke? Does it sanctify the frowardness? Does it forbid the oppressed to call his oppressor to reckoning? Does it forbid the servant to ask who is his master—and how? Either with contract or without it, it must be. If without contract—the law of superior force, or the mere fact of possession of power, being the ground of right,—then, how can the right be denied to the other party, should he be able to overpower his master, not only to free himself from his exactions, but to impose the yoke on the exactor in his turn; and to claim his services by the same law? How much more unreasonable to infer from such passages that the subject party may not agitate quietly to have wrong redressed; nor others agitate in his behalf, impelled by human sympathy, and by Christian principle, to seek the redress of intolerable grievance. There were many who thus agitated in no spirit of violence. But it is all the same. Unreasoning force is as little tolerant of arguments as of arms. To the tyrant, the entrance of the light of truth is as hateful and more feared than the brandishing of the sword, or the flash of the gunpowder. Dr. Willis entered into a searching examination of the doctrine laid down by Dr. Spring, of New York, who asserts that Christianity recognises the relation of the slave-holder and the slave; yet inconsistently admits in the same sentence, that to every yoke of oppression the spirit of Christianity stands opposed. The Rev. Principal exposed the contradiction, and pointed out the fallacy in Dr. Spring's argument, of confounding a thing with its abuses; while slavery, Dr. Willis contends, is the abuse. He regretted the existence of the curse which rested on their neighbours, a people enterprising and estimable. He was happy to except from his animadversions some divines in the United States. He eulogised Dr. Cheever's bold and martyr-like course in denouncing his country's shame. He also quoted Dr. Sprague of Albany, as numbering slavery, persisted in, among the crimes provocative of divine judgments upon the land. This was in a sermon preached on the occasion of a fast, nearly twenty years ago. Yet matters were little better, if not worse; a fact which Dr. Willis turned against another

position of Dr. Spring's—that the Bible is no agitator, that Christianity is just to be left, by its secret gradual influence, to undermine all social evils. It was overlooked in this reasoning that Christianity claimed social as well as individual subjection from men and communities; and why were its rules of action given but to influence men in all their spheres and capacities, to mould their very constitutions by them, and to redress the wrong of vicious relationships as well as correct the abuses of legitimate ones? He believed with the Rev. Albert Barnes, that while the State had to do with this adjustment of relations by the Christian law, the Church had a large responsibility; nay, that no power without the Church could have long upheld slavery had it not been upheld by a power within it. No hearer of Principal Willis on Wednesday could impute to him any narrow, national feeling, who listened to his invective against some of his own countrymen who had volunteered apologies for the slaveholder, and in effect endorsed the ideas of the Americans. And he appeared to carry with him the sympathies of the highly intelligent auditory, as he refuted some trifling argumentation from Scripture words and Scripture analogies. The Rev. Dr. referred to a recent letter of Dr. Guthrie to a newspaper at Philadelphia, which, by his bold denunciation of oppression, presented a refreshing contrast to the apologetic tone of too many of their Presbyterian brethren, both in the new world and the old.

Dr. Willis said he would not at that advanced hour enter into a full discussion of his third query, which, however, he would notice in brief. The New Testament recognizes the Old, and it proceeds, as already argued, on the law of God already given, and on the law of nature. Though directly addressing itself to individuals and churches, it no more supersedes the right of social action, or relieves of national responsibility, than it sets aside the right of self-defence, and the duty of individuals provided for by the law of nature. The newer revelation presupposes the revelation already given, and this both in respect of great principles of duty, and the modes of recognizing them. Refuse this, and it will be difficult to establish from the New Testament alone, some of our primary moral obligations. He might instance the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath, also the law of marriage affinities. True, while reconciling the Bible with itself, and one Testament with the other, we are permitted to distinguish between what was peculiar and temporary, and what manifests itself to be an eternal principle of law. But we may not arbitrarily limit the morale of the earlier code of duty; nor confine the obligation of recognizing it to a narrower sphere than the God of heaven has assigned. Christianity in its earliest addresses, deals with the motives of men, the principles of obedience, rather than with modes of formally acknowledging them. Christianity gives forth the law chiefly for the individual man; and if it regulates church organizations more immediately than civil, it is because this was the new, the additional element of knowledge at least for the Gentiles. But it presupposes civil society, and leaves untouched men's social privileges, as it confirms the obligation to use these religiously. If the Bible be not the rule of social action for man, what other rule shall come in its