

## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.—KNOX'S COLLEGE.

The following is the substance of the Rev. Dr. WILLIS' introductory address (on 1st Nov.) to the Students of Knox's College:—

In addressing you at the commencement of another academic session, I have thought it may be in season to make a few remarks on the call to the ministry:—This concerns the warrant and encouragement to undertake preparatory studies for the sacred office:—And next to insist upon the preparation required.

It has been usual to treat as a thesis of polemical theology, the question with whom lies the right of call—not using that term only of the invitation to a pastoral charge, but as descriptive of the acceptance and recognition of a divine call. Our Reformers, though they did not altogether despise the imposition of hands, or the transmission of spiritual authority from an existing ministry within the mediæval church to their successors, held the great test of an authorised clergy to lie in the tokens of the divine commission discernible by the church at large, of which it is said, they know the shepherd's voice. They disowned the alleged sacramental virtue connected with the imposition of hands, and valued far above any alleged token of ecclesiastical descent, the conformity to the written word, and true apostolic doctrine, of the professed messengers of Christ. The argument advanced by the Sacramentarians is altogether invalidated even by the kind of data or proofs to which it appeals: for it has been proved again and again, that there exist flaws in the succession—that links are wanting in the genealogical chain.

And were it otherwise, what value can attach to the ecclesiastical acts of not a few of the occupants of Episcopal or Pontifical seats, who have been monsters of wickedness, and, being devoid of every sign of Christ's communion, and pillars rather of the anti-Christian interest, could convey to none a spiritual character and function which they themselves never possessed? The fathers of our reformatory churches, and among them enlightened Episcopal as well as Presbyterian ministers, looked to a higher test of the sacred calling. They held as our elder theological writers express it—*ecclesiam non pendere a ministerio, sed ministerium ab ecclesia*. They connected the reviving church, with its ancient apostolic paternity, not by a lineage doubtful, and despicable had it not been doubtful, but by the tokens of heaven-bestowed gifts and graces of men whom the Holy Spirit raised up in the dilapidated state of Christendom, to build again Zion's walls, to rally the scattered flock of Christ, and rebuke those who as wolves, and not shepherds, were only spoiling the heritage of God.

Hence the answer of our Luthers, and Calvins, and Turretines, to the above question is, that the *jus vocationis* (right of call) lies with the church, including the clergy, but not depending on it for the essence of its constitution. It is necessary, said Luther, to confess that "the keys" belong not to the person of one man, but to the church. "And where the Church is, there is the right of administering the Gospel; and hence the necessity—that the church retain to itself the right of calling, choosing, and ordaining its ministers."

This does not imply, continued the Rev. professor, that in an organised state of the church, the call belongs alone to the people,—it involves various elements. The office is of divine appointment. The ministry is a standing ordinance, though depending on the continued presence of the Spirit in the church more than on personal succession. Presbyterians recognise the distinction of rulers and ruled, and yield to none in their value for a thorough education in the case of those who assume the office of religious teachers. They therefore disclaim the idea that men may in ordinary cases, of their own impulse alone, undertake the sacred calling; and, reserving the final right to try the spirits of those whose sub-

mission to their authority is not absolute, but as in the Lord, they assign its proper place also to ecclesiastical judicatories in taking proof of the gifts, and superintending the training, of the aspirants to this momentous trust.

Dr. Willis introduced the second division of his lecture by an interesting reference to the autobiography of James Melville, in which a very graphic account is given of the great variety of studies, embraced in the curriculum of Glasgow University, when the elder Melville acted as regent and principal. Dr. Willis took occasion from this to say that they who fancy a far shorter course of preparation sufficient than that which we exact, may see that they run against the authority and the practice of revered fathers and masters of the early Reformed Presbyterian church.

The inventory of the departments of learning was very multitudinous, and we give the following as a specimen of the quaintness of Melville's style:—speaking of his uncle, the truly accomplished Andrew—"We came to Glasgow about the end of November, 1574, Mr. Andrew setting himself to teach things nocht heard of in this country before, wherein he travelled exceeding diligently, as his delight was therein allanearly. So falling to work with a few number of capable hearers, sic as might be instructors of others thereafter, he teacht them the Greik grammar, the Dialectics of Ramus, the Rhetoric of Toleus, with the practise thereof in Greek and Latin authors, namely, Homer, Hesiod, Pindarus, &c. From that he entered to the Mathematicks, and treated the Elements of Euclid, the Arithmetick and Geometry of Ramus, &c. From that to the Moral Philosophy; he teacht the Ethics of Aristotle, the offices of Cicero, his Tusculanes, certain of Plato's Dialogues, &c. From that to the Natural Philosophy, he teacht the books of the Physics, De Ortu, De Coelo, &c.—also of Plato and Fernelius; with this he joined the History, Scedan, Melancthon, &c. And all this by and attome (over and above, his awin ordinary profession, the Holie tongues and Theologie; he teacht the Hebrew grammar, first Chortlie, and syn mor accurately; thereafter the Chaldeic and Syriac dialects. He passed throw the hault common places of Theologie very exactly and accurately; also throw all the Auld and New Testament. And all this in the space of six years; during the quhilk he teacht everie day, customablie, twyse, Sabbath and other day; with an ordinar conference with sic as war present after dinner and supper."

It may be seen how nearly this order of study, or number of departments, agrees with the requisitions of the most approved modern curriculum. All knowledge may be divided into what relates to man himself, and objects external to himself. That which relates to man embraces the study of his mind (not to speak of the body at present) the analysis of its faculties and ideas—this is metaphysics; the analysis of the processes of his reason—this is logic; and the analysis of language the instrument which he employs in these processes—this is grammar. Grammar, Dr. Willis remarked, often received too limited a definition; the grammaticus corresponds with the French *litterateur*, and both, according to etymology and the original European application of the word to grammar schools, embraces the culture of literature in the widest extent, as distinguished from schools for teaching mechanic arts. Then, under the study of man comes his moral, as well as intellectual, character. Hence, metaphysics has to do with his emotions, and ethics with his duties; christian ethics as a part of theology, with his duties as a subject of divine revelation. Indeed, though ethics may be still taught abstractly as a science, it has no definiteness abstractly from the Christian law. Our duty to man, and still more our duty to God, can only be learned fully from the Bible; and the allegation that man either individually or socially can prescribe a law for him-

self—I mean for his full guidance, I do not mean for his conviction of responsibility,—is futile. It is disposed of by the simple reply that nature's light itself, or natural religion, necessarily imposes on man the duty of recognising revelation where it shines, or every available communication from God. Thus Theism, disowned wantonly from Christianity, is indirect Atheism.

History, too, ranks under the head of the knowledge of man,—his history,—natural, social, civil, sacred.

If the objects of knowledge, without himself, be considered, how large the field!—highest of all, the objects of theology might be included here; but, among created beings, the three kingdoms invite the serious investigation, the animal, the vegetable, the mineral; and when we would not only know the objects, to enumerate and to classify them, within this wide circle, then natural history gives place to natural philosophy, or physical science—taking account of the many affinities and changes obtaining throughout nature's wide domain, and converting this knowledge of causes and effects to the practical services of Art.

Every student should prosecute his studies in reference to his highest end in the knowledge and service of Him of whom and unto whom all things are; but especially he who proposes theology as his ulterior study, should not only give himself to such learning for its own sake, but with the higher aim of thereby qualifying himself for the sacred service.

With this view, he continued, students should beware of undervaluing mere abstract studies, or those which pertain to their accomplishment and refinement in holding communication with mankind. Under these heads he ranked mathematics, logic with its syllogistic rules, even the ancient logic, and the Baconian, with its provisions against fallacies, and helps for sound reasoning and judgments; and finally rhetoric. Certain of these studies were regarded by many young men as what might be in a great measure dispensed with; no doubt the more abstract of the rules were repulsive, demanding great application. But the labour would be well repaid. Mathematics, as an exact science, disciplined the mind to accurate observation and cautious deduction. And leaving in abeyance the more scholastic parts of the ancient logic, he would still commend that the syllogistic formulae were of value, in the detection of sophistry, or spurious argumentation. He would be glad if every student, before entering theological study, mastered the Aristotelic doctrine of subjects and predicates, and propositions affirmative and negative, general and particular. This would be found to be of no mean service in Biblical interpretation, as well as in combining and analysing the elements of our reasonings and judgments. Still more indispensable however were the principles of the inductive logic; and the world was under great obligations both to Bacon and to Locke for the rules they have communicated for the guidance of the human understanding. Both had assigned due value to the lessons of experience and practice as compared with intuition and demonstration; yet it was unfair to oppose the authority of Locke to the ancient dialectic rules as long as his famous words are remembered,—“If you would have your son to reason well, let him read Chillingworth.” He agreed with an admirer of Locke, in holding that had he regarded the study of logic as useless, he would not have remitted his pupil to the acutest reasoner of his age, who in innumerable places of his excellent book, makes the happiest application of the rules of logic, for unravelling the sophistical reasoning of his antagonist.

Dr. Willis next exhorted to the study of language, especially the study of our own vernacular, or that in which we may be called to address our fellow men. He consented to the views of an enlightened educationist, Dr. Arnold, that