

during the season of our dispersion, a like experience now calls for yet deeper gratitude. What changes have not these few months witnessed in the cities, and among the families of the land! how many a dwelling has been darkened by the shadow of death! how many a purpose, and scheme, and hopeful calculation of future enjoyment and usefulness, has been abruptly arrested by the appalling visitation of the destroyer.

"Avoiding"—he added—"all self-righteous explanation of the fact, that we have survived while others have fallen, let us believe that the long-suffering of God is to us salvation. Let us be open to the inquiry, what God doth require of us,—let us confess our unprofitableness—let us double our diligence: the voice of our Lord, in his Providence, as well as in his word, addresses us—'Occupy till I come.'"

The Rev. Doctor next adverted to certain modifications which were contemplated in the arrangements of Knox's College. It was naturally to be expected that they should avail themselves of the Provincial University, now understood to be accessible to the country at large, without denominational distinctions. Their own Presbyterian Synod had accordingly appointed a Committee to put itself in communication with the Commissioners, on whom it devolved to carry out the new arrangements, as soon as it should be understood that the Government had appointed such Commissioners. Up to this date, Dr. Willis mentioned, nothing on the part of the Government had yet been announced as done.

The blame, therefore, rested not with this Synod or its College, if the adjustments of King's College should be for this season, in a good measure, practically inoperative. [At a subsequent meeting on Friday, it was notified to the Students, that some of the Professors of Knox's College were now contemplating other fields of usefulness, but so as that, nevertheless, the College should have, at least during a part of the present session, the benefit of their valuable labours.]

The Professor devoted the greater part of his introductory Lecture to a brief account of the various branches of learning usually embraced in a College curriculum, and an estimate of their comparative value. *Classical literature*, he said, could not be dispensed with, although he admitted that, in the plans of the old Universities of England, and those formed on their model, the proportion of time devoted to such studies, hardly consisted with a just appreciation of the claims of science, of natural and civil history, and of metaphysics; nor was he insensible to the danger of anything like an exclusive converse with the ethics of Pagan philosophers and poets, and to the necessity of counteracting this by the lessons of a purer school: But he still assented to the opinion of those who hold that the cause of Christianity could not be served by a neglect of the classics. An acquaintance with the languages of Greece and Rome had so long entered into the basis of a refined education, and seemed so certainly destined to retain this rank in the intellectual culture of the general world, that Theologians would be placed at an immense disadvantage who should leave such studies out of account. Be-

sides, it was much to say, that a large portion of revealed religion, was contained in books written in one of these languages, and that into both, the sacred writings had been rendered in some of the most ancient and valuable versions still extant.

Natural history and physical science not only supplied the student with the richest proofs of Theism or of Natural Theology, but the advocates of revealed religion could turn the analogies of nature in a thousand ways to the service of establishing the Christian faith. The alarms of well-meaning friends of religion, lest the discoveries of science should bring out conclusions contradictory to the Bible, had proved as groundless as the expected triumph of scolasticism had been demonstrated to be premature. Astronomy, in its very latest discoveries, had removed the foundation on which even some good men and divines too, had been resting exegetical schemes derogatory to the sovereignty, or, at least, to the immediate creative agency of the First Cause. [Dr. Willis alluded here to the abandonment of the nebular hypothesis.] He also regarded geology and the history of civilisation as having confirmed the inspired history both of the world and of man. He proceeded to shew how both metaphysics and mathematics served to exercise and enlarge the mind; and how logic, if not as an instrument of discovery, yet by its discriminating principles, and rhetorical canons, supplied the means of detecting and confuting error, and of communicating, as well as vindicating, truth with the best effect.

[Dr. Willis expressed his gratification at the considerate liberality of the Free Church of Scotland, which had supplied the means of supporting the logical chair of this College: so that considerations of economy need not be pleaded for unsettling that part of their present arrangements; for that without burden to our Canadian Church, we could still avail ourselves of the valuable service rendered from this chair.]

Last of all, he urged the importance of Biblical literature—paying a tribute to the philologists of Germany, but cautioning against a hermeneutical school, which he contended had been praised far beyond its merits. It was well, therefore, while taking the help which students might doubtless derive from German scholarship, and from the fruits of that patient philological research in which they had set so praiseworthy an example—it was well to know that they were not safe guides in every department. In a harmonious and systematic view of scripture truth, German divines were very defective, and in depth and breadth, fell far behind those of Holland, and Germany itself in an earlier age. Even the doctrine of a personal Christ, which it was the merit of Neander, Ullman, and Hengstenberg to have placed in so clear a light, had been anticipated fully in the writings of the puritan age. The rationalism of Germany had sown the seeds, of which the infidelity, and also the Pantheism too prevalent in the continental nations, were the natural fruit—and its criticism was almost universally characterised by a spirit of lax speculation on the canon of scripture and its inspired authority. Even Neander indulges occasionally in interpretations of scripture,

better befitting Semler and Strauss—those fathers of the mythical scheme.

The conclusion of the Lecture was practical—consisting of suitable exhortations to the students, in respect of their department to one another, to their teachers, and to the world generally. The high standard of life and character, applicable to ministers of the word, attached by the consent of mankind, even to aspirants to the sacred office. Men who knew nothing either of Latin or Greek, still knew what to expect of propriety and circumspection of demeanour in those who were training for the holy ministry.

He affectionately encouraged them by the assurance, that the Master to whose service they were devoting themselves, would not fail to open up before them spheres of usefulness, and, he trusted, even of support too. He invited them to count their teachers as friends—to take in good part their admonitions—and to avail themselves of their advice. "Our libraries,"—he said—"our houses, and our hearts, are open to you."

COMMISSION OF SYNOD.

The Commission of Synod met in Toronto, on the 17th October. The principal subject which occupied its attention was, the case of the Rev. Dr. Ferrier. A letter was received from him, assigning the reason for his absence. The Report of the Committee appointed to confer with him was read. After lengthened discussion, the following deliverance was adopted:—

"The Commission regret to find that a more thorough understanding and agreement in sentiment had not been arrived at, as the result of the communications held by the Committee at Hamilton with Dr. Ferrier; but finding that in his letter now on the table, he expresses his desire to respect the unity of the body, by avoiding an offensive obtrusion of his peculiar views, in opposition to the principles and testimony of the Church with which he desires to walk in fellowship—the Commission, willing to hope that he will keep this pledge in good faith, agrees to waive further proceedings in the meantime: it being understood, as it is hereby declared, that the departure from this understanding, on which the Commission rests, will subject him to the discipline of the Church."

From this decision Mr. Robb dissented, and craved liberty to give his reasons at the next meeting, and to have these reasons inserted in the minutes, which was granted.

The Commission met again on the 18th. After reading the minutes, a motion was made to have the following clause appended to the deliverance in Dr. Ferrier's case:—

"And, in order to full mutual confidence, the Commission requires of the Presbytery of Hamilton, that they satisfy themselves of Dr. Ferrier's obtemperating this decision: empowering them, if he declines, to proceed with him by libel, in reference to the whole case, as if this interim decision had never passed."

After discussion, it was decided that the clause should not be added, three voting for it, and four against it.

Mr. Robb gave in his reasons of dissent, which are as follows:—

"1st. Because the deliverance proceeds on the assumption that Dr. Ferrier pledges himself that for the future he will cease to maintain and propagate the principles he has avowed, in opposition to those held by this Church, on the subject