

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION—PROSPECTIVE.

There are few subjects, I conceive, on which it is of greater importance that the United church, about to be organized, should make judicious arrangements, than the training of its future ministers. Experience seems to show that a supply of Preachers might be obtained from Scotland, and probably at a less pecuniary expense, than they can be educated here. But surely if suitable men could be reared in the Province, they would, in many respects, be greatly preferable to those imported from any other land. This topic will be a legitimate one for discussion, at all events till the new Synod shall have made some enactment respecting it; and it seems to be especially seasonable at present, when, I believe, the Joint-Committee, appointed by the existing Synods for considering the matter, have not yet had a meeting. I have thought of the following, as some of the leading features of a scheme which I have submitted to some of my brethren, who expressed a considerable degree of approval. I shall endeavor briefly to present a few points, scarcely at all arguing for their adoption.

One of the first questions to be determined is, I think, shall Knox College continue to be an institution for preparatory education, as well as theology, or shall it be limited entirely to the latter—turned, in fact, into a Divinity Hall? I decidedly prefer that it be simply a school for theology. A very good general education may now be got in University College, Toronto, and also, I believe, in McGill College, Montreal, not to speak of other institutions. Or, if any modifications were considered desirable, I cannot doubt that a body furnishing so large a proportion of the students as the United church will do, might have any reasonable suggestions attended to, by properly submitting them to those possessed of authority. Then, again, public opinion, right or wrong, will be found to estimate more highly those educated at a provincial college than those reared at a denominational seminary. Further, it is of some consequence that our youths should be brought into contact with those from other sections of the church. Academical association, competition and conflict, have a salutary effect in expanding the mind, and expelling sectarianism and illiberality. And finally, if we confine ourselves to the teaching of theology, a smaller staff of Professors will suffice, and a saving of money will be effected, which, in its own place, is not to be overlooked.

A second very important subject of consideration will be the amount of preparatory education to be required before admission to the study of Divinity. I cannot but regard it as of great consequence, that this somewhat difficult point should be judiciously settled. It would be no small matter, even to secure a degree of equality in the attainments of intrants, up to a certain point, of course, permitting, and encouraging as many as can, to go far beyond the mark. I fear there may be a diversity of opinion on this head, but shall take the