

marvellously spread, with so few outward advantages, and notwithstanding obstacles and hindrances so numerous and so powerful—that a religion new to the Gentiles and deemed by the Jews a gross perversion and imposture—one teaching such humiliating and self-abasing doctrine, and requiring so pure and holy living—should, without wealth, without political influence, and with little learning or distinguished talent on its side so extend and prosper in spite of Heathen philosophy, Jewish rancour, priestly self-interested opposition, and the virulent persecution of the powers that were, till, in less than three centuries, the Roman Emperor avowed himself a Christian, and no small portion of his subjects professed the faith. This has ever, and justly, been held decisive evidence that the God of truth was on the side of the Gospel, and caused it always to triumph. Further, to what quarter can we look for examples of heroic steadfastness in the faith, so well as to the first ages, when such multitudes of disciples, many of them sensitive and shrinking women, rather than sprinkle a few grains of incense on a heathen altar, welcomed death in forms the most appalling? Painful, too, as it is to witness the introduction and progress of error in the Church, yet even that is exceedingly instructive. The real history of heresies is a valuable part of Theological learning. To trace an error to its source, it has been said, is half its refutation.* And hence it is that a thorough acquaintance with the Ecclesiastical History of the first five Centuries is altogether no mean element in the efficient training of a Minister of the Gospel.

In the Greek New Testament we have read, with considerable care, the history of Jesus Christ as given by the four Evangelists, including I think, all the facts recorded respecting his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension, omitting only his Miracles and his Teaching, and some comparatively subordinate incidental details. To this department of the course, I have always attached special importance, and have been anxious to habituate the Students to a strict and exact consideration of the inspired word of God, as the only genuine source of Christian Theology. And I know no part of Scripture more proper to be placed at the commencement of a course than that acquainting us with the facts respecting our blessed Redeemer. No foundation seems so natural for the doctrines afterwards communicated by the Apostles, when the Church was prepared to receive them, by the out-pouring of the Spirit.

In Hebrew we have read the 16th, 17th, 18th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, and 23rd Chapters of Genesis, and a few selected Messianic passages from other parts of the Bible; along with all which, we have read the corresponding portions of the Septuagint. Respecting Hebrew, I confess I feel a degree of uneasiness. In the way of Biblical Criticism there plainly remains far more to be done in the Old Testament than in the New; and I do not think that our Students are peculiarly deficient in Hebrew. Indeed, I am sure that their attainments in that

* The language is here accommodated, yet the sentiment expressed is just.