

of this virtue, I fear, has mainly occasioned the failure of some Ministers, and perhaps, the ruin of some Congregations.

As to our subjects of study, having this Session commenced our four years' course, we proceeded in Systematic Divinity, from the beginning of our Text-book, Dr. Dick's Theology, and went over the first twenty-seven Lectures, fully one-fourth of the whole. We were thus occupied with some preliminary considerations respecting Theology in general,—with the Evidences of Christianity—the Inspiration of the Scriptures—the state of the Text—the principles of interpreting the Word of God—the Dispensations of Religion under the Old and New Testaments—and then with the Existence, the Unity, and the Perfections of the Divine Being. These subjects are plainly fundamental and of the highest conceivable importance. They are generally placed at the commencement of a course; and, logically considered, they seem entitled to the precedence usually given them. They are unquestionably, however, of a very difficult, some of them of a very mysterious, and indeed incomprehensible nature. We cannot by searching find out God, we cannot find out the Almighty unto perfection. It has always seemed to me, that while there is some inconvenience necessarily connected with a course embracing more Sessions than one, and while Students entering not at the first Session, are exposed to some confusion by being precipitated into discussions already so far advanced, yet upon the whole, it is rather an advantage, not to be called to the consideration of such subjects as have this Session occupied our attention, till the mind is considerably trained and matured. Our young friends, I hope, have learned at least, some lessons of humility, and are impressed with the conviction that on these mysterious, abstruse, and awfully sublime and momentous subjects they have not attained, neither are already perfect. It will, I trust, be their concern, by earnest study and fervent prayer, to follow on to know the Lord, especially to know him as the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and as our God and Father in Him.

In Church History also we began at the beginning, and have gone over the first five Centuries in Mosheim's work. No competent judge will hesitate for a moment to allow that this is at once the most interesting, and the most instructive portion of Ecclesiastical History. Indeed there is none which will admit of comparison with it, except, perhaps, the period of the Reformation from Popery, and even that occupies quite a secondary place. It is to primitive, apostolic times that we must turn for right views respecting many religious observances and ecclesiastical institutions. The Scriptures themselves are, doubtless, our infallible rule; but when differences of opinion arise as to what they import or enjoin, all parties regard it as no inconsiderable argument to be able to produce the example of the age nearest to that of the Apostles. Then again no small part of the evidence of Christianity is embodied in the fact that the Gospel, at first, so