

*M. Bogue*  
X

# ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

SOME PASSAGES OF A PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

## LAY-PREACHING INDEFENSIBLE ON SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLES,

BY MR. JOHN ROBERTSON,  
ASSISTANT MINISTER, CAMBUSLANG.

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BY  
*GREVILLE EWING,*  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, TABERNACLE,  
GLASGOW.

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“Suffer me that I may speak, and after that I have spoken, mock on.”  
—JOB.

“Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but confidest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”—JESUS.

“I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.”—PAUL.

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GLASGOW,

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1800.

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## ANIMADVERSIONS, &c.

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IT is not the object of these papers to vindicate what is called Lay-Preaching. The question, Who have a right to preach the Gospel, when fairly stated, and seriously considered, may be safely left to the common sense of every intelligent reader of the Word of God. Extravagant suppositions, however qualified by peradventures, gilded with epithets of high probability, and rendered dazzling by the pageantry of affected literature, will make little impression on the mind of him whose faith is yielded only to the Holy Scriptures. Mr. Robertson professes to have no inclination for entering into farther controversy; nor does his performance, considered as a piece of reasoning, appear to me to make it in the least necessary, that any one should call upon him to take the trouble. Granting however that the case were otherwise, it is possible for a Disputant so to behave, as to render it dishonourable for his opponents to answer his challenge.\*

How far Mr. R.'s behaviour, as a disputant, has been of this description, a few quotations from his recent publication will abundantly shew.

\* Such as wish to see what may be said further in favour of Lay-Preaching may consult Mr. Rowland Hill's Answer to Dr. Jamieson; or if modern writers are all to be suspected, let them have recourse to the writings of Mr. John Glas.

“ WHEN the subject of Lay-Preaching began of late to  
 “ be discussed, many believed it to be a temporary breach  
 “ of order, with the view of attaining ends which seemed  
 “ important. This they more naturally believed, because  
 “ that doctrine was known to be patronized by a Gentle-  
 “ man, who then *officially* acted under a solemn engage-  
 “ ment to maintain the Discipline of the Church of Scot-  
 “ land; and because they did not in charity think, that he  
 “ would have attempted to undermine any radical princi-  
 “ ple in the constitution of that Church, while he remain-  
 “ ed in her connection, or till he had judicially withdrawn  
 “ his subscription from her Formula. Upon a closer re-  
 “ view, however, of the sentiments which that professed  
 “ Presbyterian then published, they will be found to ter-  
 “ minate, not in a temporary dereliction of order, but in  
 “ the adoption of a system entirely different. The doc-  
 “ trine there held forth plainly is, that *any* man thinking  
 “ himself qualified to instruct others, may, without con-  
 “ sulting the Church of which he professes himself a  
 “ member, and in whose communion he seems willing to  
 “ remain, take upon him the office of an Evangelist, or  
 “ Itinerant Preacher of the Word.”

THIS passage, unaccompanied as it is with so much as  
 the pretext of evidence, I conceive to be replete with  
 slanderous insinuation. The softest part of it implies a  
 charge, of breaking, at least for a time, the beautiful order  
 of the church of Christ. This temporary breach of order  
 is of course a known and a wilful one, because it is sup-  
 posed to have been attempted with the view of attaining  
 certain ends. What these ends are, though stated to be  
 important, he does not say. Allowing them however to  
 be of the most excellent kind, it is in effect declared, that  
 as soon as Lay-Preaching began to be discussed, it was  
 the belief of many that the advocates for the practice,



were saying in their hearts, "Let us do evil that good may come." Does it not obviously follow, "their damnation is just?" and yet Mr. R. immediately after having professed it to be his own opinion, that the motives of many of them were pure\*, accounts for the awful opinion entertained of them by many others as arising from "a natural belief," and even ascribes it to "a charitable thought."

THIS natural belief was rendered, it seems, "more natural," because the doctrine of Lay-Preaching was known to be patronized by a Gentleman, who then *officially* acted under a solemn engagement to maintain the Discipline of the Church of Scotland. That Gentleman has yet to learn, the inconsistency between the Discipline of the Church of Scotland, and the doctrine of Lay-Preaching, as pleaded for by those advocates whom he patronized. They have always contended, that their doctrine interfered not with the discipline of any church. Let it be supposed, (though it is not granted) that this notion should turn out to be erroneous; it is nevertheless manifest that, while a man entertains it, he may with perfect integrity both patronize and avow the doctrine in question, even while he *officially* acts under a solemn engagement to maintain the discipline of the church to which he then belongs. In the case before us, Mr. R. has presumed to insinuate the very reverse. Not content with mentioning the official situation, and the solemn engagements of the person alluded to, as inconsistent with his patronage of Lay-Preaching, he adds, "they did not in charity think, that he would have attempted to undermine any radical principle in the constitution of that Church, while he remained in her connection, or till he had judicially withdrawn his subscription from her

\* Page 5.

“Formula.” These words can have no meaning, unless they be understood as a judgment of the heart. Mr. R.’s charitable friends are evidently represented as misled by their charity, which necessarily implies the following assertions: that the object of their charity was *conscious*, that to renounce the heresy of Lay-Preaching was a radical principle in the constitution of the Church of Scotland; that with this *conviction in his bosom* he remained for a time in her connection, and did not judicially withdraw his subscription from her formula, even while he thought proper to embrace that heresy; that in addition to the *consciousness* of this inconsistency, he formed the *design* of overthrowing a radical principle in the constitution of his Church; that not daring to make the attack openly, he mingled treachery with rebellion, and *devised* a scheme for *undermining* it; and that this dastardly and dark *conspiracy*, at the expence of *perjury* itself, he actually attempted to put in execution. Must we ascribe to Mr. R. the divine perfection of Omniscience? Yet a knowledge of the heart, at least of one individual, is the only conceivable supposition which will justify his dread insinuations.

I HAVE not forgotten, that a man’s designs may be detected by his conduct. In the case before us, let the facts be produced. Greville Ewing was once an ordained Minister in the Church of Scotland. While in that situation, he was for some time Editor of The Missionary Magazine, a periodical monthly publication, intended as a Repository of Discussion and Intelligence respecting the progress of the Gospel throughout the World. In these plain terms, the design of the work was avowed on its title page, and to this day stands uncondemned even by its bitterest enemies. The origin, as well as the nature of the undertaking, had been previously explained to the public in a prospectus; and the defects of the execution, of which the

Editor was conscious, were frankly confessed in the prefaces to the successive volumes. In the course of the work, a correspondent proposed to institute the Inquiry, "Who have a right to preach the Gospel?" This question appeared to the Editor perfectly suitable, for a "Repository of *discussion* respecting the progress of the "Gospel throughout the world;" more especially as what is called Lay-Preaching was notoriously countenanced by some of the most celebrated and successful Missionary Societies. He perceived moreover in his correspondent's paper, every feature which he thought characteristic of upright intention, serious temper, candour, and modesty, and desire of information\*. These features will be found in every page that has appeared in the Missionary Magazine under that correspondent's signature†; nor can want of candour be charged upon any of the writers, who followed him in that work, on the same side of the question. In admitting such papers on such a subject, the Editor acted simply in the spirit of his original plan. Had he excluded performances on the other side, there might indeed have been ground of suspicion and censure. So far, however, was this from being the case, that in the Missionary Magazine will be found, what Mr. R. has not once acknowledged, papers on the other side of that question, both from Dissenters and Churchmen, *Clergymen* and *Laymen*, at least as able and as convincing, as any thing that has since been presented to the public‡. When the discussion had proceeded as far as the Editor thought due to its merits, he signified his wish that it should terminate§, which it accordingly did.—These are the facts, respecting the patronage of the discussion of Lay-Preaching by a Gentleman, who then *officially* acted under a

\* Miss. Mag. vol. II. p. 317. † Vol. II. p. 408.

‡ Vol. II. p. 399, 451. Vol. III. p. 11. § Vol. III. p. 79. note.

solemn engagement to maintain the Discipline of the Church of Scotland. If they can be counted as the small dust of the balance, in substantiating the momentous charges of conspiracy and perjury, let the accuser, by all means that are honest, or by any means whatever, make the most of them he can.

BUT turn thee yet again, says Mr. R. and thou shalt see greater abominations. “ Upon a closer review of the  
 “ sentiments which that professed Presbyterian then pub-  
 “ lished, they will be found to terminate, not in a tem-  
 “ porary dereliction of order, but in the adoption of a  
 “ system entirely different. The doctrine there held forth  
 “ plainly is, that *any* man thinking himself qualified to  
 “ instruct others, may, without consulting the Church of  
 “ which he professes himself a member, and in whose  
 “ communion he seems willing to remain, take upon him  
 “ the office of an Evangelist, or Itinerant Preacher of the  
 “ Word.”—Here, absurdity itself is not refused, if it may  
 but serve the purpose of exciting prejudice. That the sentiments in question might be received as evidence that the professed Presbyterian who published them, was guilty of attempting *to undermine* Presbytery, it was necessary to speak of them as being *artfully concealed*. The doctrine which they teach, however, is *plainly held forth*. But that *plain exhibition* is not to be seen, until it be viewed, and reviewed, and *more closely* reviewed. After all these elaborate, and repeated surveys of an object, at once so artfully concealed, and so plainly held forth, it has at last been found possible to misrepresent it. Never was it for a moment supposed, far less hinted, by the most zealous advocates for Lay-Preaching, that *any* man might preach the Gospel of Christ. Without real Christianity, and a degree of ability for the service, *no man whatever*, let his opinion of himself be ever so good, let him profess ad-

herence to any Church he pleases, *let him even consult that Church, and obtain her highest sanction*, can have the most distant title to preach the Gospel. I would, these prerequisites were more attended to, both by Lay, and by Clerical preachers; and wherever they are found, I shall rejoice in the Labourer, whether he be classed among the one, or the other. If *such* a Labourer be not recognised by the Church to which he belongs, there may be indeed a fault somewhere, but a question occurs, which has not yet been determined, whether shall we blame the Labourer, who, thrust forth from obscurity by the Lord of the harvest, has burst unhallowed fetters, or the Church, which is ignorant of the gifts and graces of her members, indifferent to them when they are known, and more ready to restrain than to encourage their exertion? If, on the other hand, any man go forth to preach, who has no Christianity, or no gifts for the work; unless he be protected by clerical privilege, the flaw in his right will speedily appear. Whatever indeed be the character under which a preacher presents himself, he will soon be discovered by the infallible test of our Saviour's touchstone. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matt. vii. 15. 16.

UPON a closer review of the paragraph before us, there seems to be something, which though not indeed *plainly held forth*, may nevertheless be intended to produce an effect. This Lay-Preaching patron, "then *officially* acted under a solemn engagement to maintain the Discipline of the Church of Scotland." It was not in charity thought, "that he would have attempted to undermine any radical principle in the constitution of that Church, while he remained in her connection, or till he had ju-



“ dicially withdrawn his subscription from her Formula.” Are these phrases contrived for the suggestion of injurious inference? They are certainly not unfit for answering the dishonourable purpose. The Gentleman acted *officially*. This may mean simply that he acted as a Minister; but it will also suggest, especially in its present connection, and with its typographical dress, that his having acted in that capacity is to be considered, rather as the ostensible attendance upon the necessary business of Office, than the hearty and conscientious regard for its functions. Again, “ he *then* acted” in this way. This also has the advantage of serving a double use. It may simply allude to the fact, that the Gentleman has left the Church of Scotland, or to the absurd doctrine which seemed to be gravely maintained by certain Clergymen in last General Assembly, that if a man did once take upon him the vows of ordination, and afterwards leave the Church which had imposed them, no pretext of conscientious change of sentiment could redeem him from the tremendous accusation of perjury. Finally, from what, it is said, was not thought he would do, *while* he remained in the connection of the Church of Scotland, or *till* he had withdrawn his subscription from her formula; it seems to be taken for granted, not only, that he was found to be doing so before, but that *now* he is confessedly, or rather professedly, attempting to undermine her constitution. If Mr. R. should disavow these inferences, I would allow it possible, that he never intended they should be drawn; but since it cannot be doubted that his words suggest them, they must not pass without remark.

WHEN we appeal to God for our sincerity in any solemn transaction, or for our faithfulness in the discharge of important duty, it becomes us to speak with humility and awe; and to acknowledge that mixture of guilt, and

imperfection, which mars all the imaginations and efforts of man. Under a trembling sense of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of my heart, and with shame and confusion of face upon reviewing my past life, especially the more serious and impressive scenes of it; I come forward reluctantly to make a protestation, which necessity alone can ever justify, which necessity alone has been able to produce. I was not conscious of insincerity when I took upon me the vows of Presbyterian ordination, or of designed transgression, or neglect of duty while I acted officially as a Minister of the Church of Scotland. Upon a change of sentiment I resigned my situation; and until I learn the means of human immutability on the one hand, or the holiness of official hypocrisy on the other, I will maintain the lawfulness and the duty of that which I did, my vows of ordination notwithstanding. The change I have spoken of was a gradual event. Had it been instantaneous or sudden, it might well have been imputed to rashness and levity. While my scruples were growing, the state of my mind might no doubt appear, both from my public discourses, my public writings, and my private conversation. To have avoided this, would have deprived me of the aid of friendly advice, as well as have required a faculty of dissimulation, which I pray to God I may never possess. But I can truly say, that to the hour of my resignation I did not once, to my knowledge, violate a single obligation, to which I was subjected by the vows that were upon me.

THE above declaration is of such a nature, that for evidence of the greater part of it, the public can be presented only with my bare word. An impartial public will readily allow, that a bare word is sufficient for defence, while a bare word, or an oblique hint, is all that

can be used for accusation. Nor will internal evidence be found wanting, in the simple, unlaboured narrative of truth. But if indeed my behaviour must be called so criminal, and my resignation itself a very act of perjury, how came it to pass, that the Presbytery of Edinburgh were so pacific and harmonious in allowing me to escape their reprobation? I simply informed them that I deemed it my duty to withdraw, and respectfully asked them to accept my resignation. I did not come forward with a Manifesto of defiance: as little did I deprecate their inquiries, or their vengeance. My resignation however was accepted, apparently as a matter of course; for aught I know, without hesitation, and without a single dissenting voice. Here there is surely something at least like a negative testimony in my favour. I had no quarrel with the Presbytery, and the Presbytery had no quarrel with me. What a contrast is there between this fact, and the hostility that has been since so strongly manifested by other individuals, and other courts of the same Church! Was I better known by Mr. R. at Cambuslang, or any of my accusers before him, than by the aggregate body of that radical court under whose immediate inspection I then lived? Will Mr. R. say, that the Presbytery of Edinburgh were partial to Lay-preaching, or to the crime of patronising it? Were those *regular judges* so deficient in their duty, that he must rise up from afar, in all the innovating and restless spirit of the age, *self authorised*, and *merely because he thought himself qualified for the business*, to assume their jurisdiction, to revise their proceedings, to correct their errors, and to pronounce a merited, but neglected decision? Or will he force upon us the harsh conclusion, either that they so despised a weak brother, of whom they had charge, as to think him unworthy their notice; or considered it the policy of prudence to let him quietly go, that the pastoral admonition which was me-

ditated, in a higher judicatory, together with all the invectives which should there be pronounced, might be fulminated against him, without giving him a proper opportunity of defending himself, or of so much as demanding the production of that pretended evidence, which they knew would not bear to be publicly seen.

BUT whatever I was before, it seems to be taken for granted, that *now* I am confessedly attempting to undermine the Church of Scotland. Most certainly I avow myself a decided Dissenter. If I did not, I should be self-condemned for my departure from a National Church, which, so far as I know, is as good as any institution of the kind, in all the world. I am a Dissenter, because I think Christianity suffers, when civil privileges are claimed by any denomination of Christians, in their Church capacity: I am moreover a Dissenter from the Church of Scotland, because I am not convinced of the divine right of Presbytery. A Dissenter, however, and an *undermining* Dissenter, are as different, as a Churchman, and a *persecuting* Churchman. If I am accused of exercising private judgment, of acting according to the dictates of my own conscience, of preaching Christianity to those who choose to hear me, referring to the Scriptures as my authority and the standard of my faith, and to the testimony of my neighbours for the character of my morals; if these things constitute guilt, or infer ground of suspicion; “I am not careful to answer in this matter. If  
 “it be so, my God whom I serve is able to deliver me  
 “from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver  
 “me out of my accusers’ hands. But if not, be it known  
 “unto them, that I will not serve their gods, nor wor-  
 “ship the golden image which they have set up.” Any farther charge, with whatever solemnity it be made, must recoil with infamy on their own heads, while I answer

with Paul, “ Neither can they prove the things where-  
 “ of they now accuse me. But this I confess, that after  
 “ the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God  
 “ of my fathers, believing all things which are written  
 “ in the law and the prophets. And have hope towards  
 “ God, which they themselves also allow, that there  
 “ shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and  
 “ unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have al-  
 “ ways a conscience void of offence toward God, and  
 “ toward men.” Acts xxiv. 13. When I hear of plots  
 and conspiracies against the Church and the State, of  
 engines to sap the foundation of the one, and attempts  
 to undermine the constitution of the other; and when  
 these diabolical works of darkness are imputed to me,  
 either directly or consequentially, not by the irreligious,  
 but by men who profess to be the disciples of Christ,  
 and of some of whom I have been accustomed to hope  
 better things; then indeed it is only in the history of  
 my blessed Saviour, that I can find at once a parallel to  
 my injury, and an effectual relief from my excruciating  
 pain. “ Remember,” saith he, “ the word that I said  
 “ unto you, the servant is not greater than the Lord.  
 “ If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute  
 “ you\*. False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my  
 “ charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me  
 “ evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul†.” For it was  
 “ not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have  
 “ borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did  
 “ magnify himself against me, then I would have hid  
 “ myself from him. But it was thou, a man, mine  
 “ equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance, we took  
 “ sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house  
 “ of God in company‡. Blessed are ye when men  
 “ shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall speak all

\* John xv. 20. † Psal. lxxv. 11. 12. ‡ Psal. lv. 13. 14.

"manner of evil against you FALSELY for my sake.  
 "Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your re-  
 "ward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets  
 "which were before you." Matt. v. 11. 12.

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ANOTHER specimen of Mr. R.'s mode of attack,  
 combined with a very awkward attempt at defence, will  
 be found in a note, p. 24. "See Missionary Magazine,  
 "Vol. III. No. XXI. Pages 69 and 70, published at  
 "Edinburgh, Feb. 1798. As I will have occasion to  
 "allude to this work, it is certainly proper to state what  
 "the Editors have, I believe, declared, that it was never  
 "published under the authority of any Missionary Society  
 "in this country, but by a certain individual or more  
 "who were connected with them. Those Societies  
 "allow no Missionary to go forth to Heathen lands, as  
 "from them, or with their approbation, without exami-  
 "nation by Ministers of the Gospel and other Managers.  
 "The Glasgow Missionary Society, in particular, prescribe  
 "a course of special study to those who offer themselves  
 "as Catechists for the Heathen. But how far that work,  
 "bearing a name so popular, and published as it was  
 "under the inspection of a Minister then in connection  
 "with the Church of Scotland, may have, eventually, or  
 "designedly, prepared the way for a new Sect in the land,  
 "I acknowledge I have not information sufficient to  
 "determine."

I INQUIRE not into the propriety of stating anew what  
 was explicitly declared, once and again, by the Editors  
 of the Missionary Magazine. But I question the con-  
 sistency of attempting to condemn *Lay-Preaching*, and at  
 the same time, to justify *Missionary Societies*. On Mr.

R.'s principles, they must both be condemned. It is in vain to plead that those Societies allow no Missionary to go forth to Heathen lands, as from them, or with their approbation, without examination, and that by Ministers of the Gospel, as well as other Managers. It is equally in vain to claim for the Glasgow Missionary Society, in particular, the merit of a practice, by no means peculiar to them, that of prescribing a course of special study to those who offer themselves as Missionaries. Nor will it at all mend the matter to give those Missionaries the guarded title of Catechists to the Heathen. Pleas like these will be regarded as a very slender subterfuge, by consistent High Church-men of any denomination; and Mr. R. has been taking a vast deal of pains, to deprive himself, and his friends, of the benefit of their shelter. The first question with him should be, What are these Missionary Societies? I suppose, it will be allowed, that I answer precisely in the spirit of his Pamphlet, when I say, 'They are self-constituted and self-authorized Associations, which can scarcely fail to unite with the innovating spirit of the age, consisting of Clergymen, Laymen, Elders, Deacons, Probationers, Lay-Preachers, Vagrant Teachers of Sunday Schools, Private Christians, Members of the Established Church, Members of the Secession, Members of the Relief Church, and—horrible! O horrible!—Members even of the disorderly Tabernacles. The next question is, What do these Missionary Societies take it upon them to do? Mr. R. admits, They “*allow*” “*Missionaries to go forth to Heathen lands, as from them,*” “*or with their approbation:*” a clumsy circumlocution, intended seemingly to be a cautious way of acknowledging the fact, that the Missionary Societies send Missionaries abroad, and set them solemnly apart to their work. Well, but do these Societies do any thing more than send Missionaries? Yes, it is admitted, nay pleaded in their

defence, that they allow no Missionary to go forth to Heathen lands, as from them, or with their approbation, without examination by Ministers of the Gospel, and *other Managers*: that is, (for the passage does need a commentary) these Societies, besides referring Missionaries to the respective Churches to which they may belong, for ordination, (a plan which was at least projected) insist upon it as indispensable, that their Missionaries shall be examined *by other Managers*, by men, whether Clergymen or Laymen, of one Church or another, appointed for the purpose from among their own mixture, and that by the self-constituted authority of their multifarious association. Emboldened perhaps by the supposed strength of this general apology, Mr. R. now becomes somewhat communicative. He tells us, that one of the Missionary Societies, in particular, goes even a step farther, at least with regard to Catechist Missionaries: they “*prescribe a course of special study* to those who offer themselves as “Catechists for the Heathen.” If, in addition to the above information, Mr. R. will have the goodness to tell us what we ought to think of a *Catechist*, we shall be able in return to tell him, what he ought to think of the whole missionary system. “Catechists,” says Mr. R.\* “*are Ecclesiastics. They possess delegated, but limited authority.*” These conclusions he deduces from the doctrine, that they can be ordained by none but Ministers of the word, in their regular, ecclesiastical, judicial capacity. And I should suppose, he will not deny that the same power, which alone can *delegate*, is that alone which can *limit* the authority of this subordinate “ecclesiastical character,” or even prescribe for it the previous course of special studies.—Let any man now read Mr. R.’s Pamphlet, and then say, whether, instead of attempting to defend

\* Page 72.



the Missionary Societies, *he* ought not, even from *his own* account of them, to brand their general procedure, and their very constitution, as being fraught with disorder, and sacrilegious usurpation.

I WILL yield to no man living, in concern for the cause of Missions, or in joy at the success of the Missionary Societies. I am sensible, however, that a Church of Christ, is, strictly speaking, the proper, the legitimate Missionary Society. Individual Christians stand related to the Heathen world; by a tie, which, I trust in God, they will never disown; but Christian Churches have the most immediate right to claim for their Master the redemption of the purchased possession. When individual Christians hear the cry of the Heathen, and are called upon to separate, or associated exertion, in their favour, they will naturally say, as Boaz to Ruth, “It is true, “ that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kins-  
 “ man nearer than I. If he will perform unto thee the  
 “ part of a kinsman, well, let him do the kinsman’s part;  
 “ but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee,  
 “ then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the  
 “ Lord liveth.” When the proposal is made, were not the practical answer of the kinsman, in question, too similar to the first part of the answer of the kinsman alluded to, Missionary Societies, in their present form, had never been known. But if the nearer kinsman will say of the possession “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar  
 “ mine own inheritance,” why is he willing that it should utterly perish? why does he not add to the near kinsman who is after him, and who is willing to comply, “Re-  
 “ deem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it?”  
 —On such grounds we may apologise for the Missionary Societies, and in doing so, we shall cover the multitude of sins, which are so industriously alleged against Lay-Preaching.

It is not a little curious to observe a zealous champion for ecclesiastical regularity, so willing to flur a scheme, in which perhaps he happens to be personally concerned, although on his professed system an intolerable enormity; while the object of his slander, the Patron, and example of disorganisation and anarchy, has, with all his partiality for the same scheme, confessed from the very beginning, its anomalous character, and its secondary merits. In proof of this fact, let me be indulged with a quotation from my Sermon in Defence of Missions, which was preached before the Edinburgh Missionary Society in February 1797, and published in the course of the same year.

“ To cure them of bigotry, and to produce humilia-  
 “ tion, let every religious community observe, that the  
 “ very existence of societies for propagating the gospel,  
 “ is an evidence of the deficiency of constituted churches.  
 “ Had they not all been wanting in zeal, or in abilities,  
 “ or both, such self-created institutions would not have  
 “ taken place. It is indeed very remarkable, that while  
 “ all churches have professed to imitate the primitive  
 “ model, they have almost all agreed to neglect a very  
 “ conspicuous part of it, the destination of a proportion  
 “ of ministers to the labours of itinerancy. This cer-  
 “ tainly should not be neglected so long as the diffusion  
 “ of the gospel remains incomplete; and yet, while ec-  
 “ clesiastical judicatories are busied every day about the  
 “ settlement of ministers in formed congregations, and  
 “ where a temporal provision for their maintenance is  
 “ secured, the sending of Missionaries is almost unknown;  
 “ when it does happen, it originates, not so much in the  
 “ zeal of the constituted authorities of the church, as in  
 “ that of individuals who associate for the purpose of  
 “ prompting them to their duty; and the office of a

“ Missionary itself is so seldom recommended, and so easily  
 “ given away, that the men who venture to undertake it,  
 “ are generally regarded as wild enthusiasts, and are some-  
 “ times, in fact, very ill qualified for the important task.  
 “ It cannot be pleaded, that there is a want of preachers;  
 “ for where proper means are used, there will always be  
 “ a supply proportioned to the demand. Neither can  
 “ want of resources be pleaded; for certainly a church  
 “ has the same resources which a society has. Experi-  
 “ ence has always shewn that Christians are willing to  
 “ contribute towards the propagation of the gospel; and  
 “ contributions might, in general, be raised with greater  
 “ advantage by a church than by any other body of men.  
 “ Let us confess, then, that the zeal of individuals has  
 “ often surpassed the zeal of the churches of Christ in  
 “ their collective capacity; and let those churches beware  
 “ of preferring cumbersome and lifeless forms of pro-  
 “ cedure to duties of real importance, which have been  
 “ much neglected. Missionary Societies were called for  
 “ by the commanding voice of necessity. Let them be  
 “ countenanced by the lovers of Jesus and of souls, until  
 “ the churches be restored to primitive harmony and  
 “ vigour. And let it not be unnoticed, that by the same  
 “ principle upon which we justify a Missionary Society,  
 “ we must approve of other voluntary missionary under-  
 “ takings. “ Would God! that all the Lord’s people  
 “ were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit  
 “ upon them.” Many, it is said, shall run to and fro,  
 “ and knowledge shall be increased. But hitherto our  
 “ itinerant evangelists seem to be neither sufficiently nu-  
 “ merous nor respectable. “ The harvest truly is plen-  
 “ teous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore,  
 “ the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers  
 “ into his harvest.” Matt. ix. 37. 38.\*

\* Pages 34.—37.

AT the end of his abortive attempt to defend the Missionary Societies, Mr. R. comes round with a back stroke upon the Missionary Magazine. "How far that work, bearing a name so popular, and published as it was under the inspection of a Minister then in connection with the Church of Scotland, may have, eventually, or designedly, prepared the way for a new Sect in the land, I acknowledge I have not information sufficient to determine." Here nothing is asserted, but room is left for supposing any thing, at least any thing that is bad. Great and manifold are the advantages of this kind of management. In the first place, the assailant, whatever reception he may meet with from his adversary, is sure of an easy and a safe retreat. He does not commit himself. In the next place, he avoids the odium of seeming to exaggerate, and leads his readers to believe, that whatever he does positively assert, must be demonstrably true, since he seems so conscientious in distinguishing between his testimony, and his conjectures. Nor will his apparent diffidence, be readily ascribed to the uncertainty of his suggestion, but rather to the meekness and modesty of his nature. Thus, a hint will with many go farther than a libel, and be caught at, as a clue, which is to lead them through the labyrinths of a mystery of iniquity.

THE publication of the Missionary Magazine, by a Minister then of the Church of Scotland has already been explained. Its popular name is nothing to its prejudice, unless it can be shewn, that it was used for a cover. Thus there is no sin in the popular name of a Preacher, if he can say that he has not sought popularity to gratify ambition, or to obtain a benefice. But a name can never be called a pretext or a cover, in a work that is absolutely free from concealment. In all the volumes of the Missionary Magazine, it will be difficult to collect as

much shifting and craft, as are concentrated in the single note before us. The unpardonable sin, indeed, of that publication has been, that it is uniformly open and explicit.

BUT, “it may have so far, eventually, or designedly, “prepared the way for a new Sect in the land.” When we have attended to the nature of the consequence here suggested as imputable to the Missionary Magazine, we shall be better able to judge, both of the probability of the suggestion, and of the manner in which it should affect the character of that work. The fair meaning of the word Sect, is, “A body of men following some particular Master, or united in some tenets.” No Sect, I apprehend, of Protestant professed Christians will ever acknowledge that they call any one Master, except Jesus Christ. The only just idea then of Christian Sect, among Protestants, while the term is used simply, without appreciating the specific merits of a given Sect, is that of a “body of men united in some tenets.” In this sense the word Sect is perfectly harmless, and may be applied with equal propriety and respect to every distinct society of Christians, whether at home, or abroad, whether established by civil law, and constituting what is called a National Church, or arranged under the comprehensive title of Dissenters. Thus, Mr. R. belongs to one Sect, and I belong to another. Neither of us on this account, deserves either praise, or blame; at least not till it be ascertained which Sect is preferable. It is true, indeed, that the existence of Sects in the Church of Christ, which is one, although often overruled by him for good, is a striking proof of our ignorance and depravity; it calls for general humility and mutual forbearance; and should quicken our desire for that blessed world where we shall be made perfect in love, and shall see face to face, know-

ing even as we are known. If, therefore, by using the word Sect, Mr. R. meant merely to state the fact that a certain distinct Christian Society had been formed; his language would have been innocent, if not even edifying. But the spirit of the passage brooks not the interpretation. It seems, indeed, to be a prevailing fault among the members of his Sect; that, because they are the majority, the claimants, and the possessors of civil privilege, they often apply the term Sect exclusively to others, and avowedly as a term of condemnation and reproach.

BUT this is “a *novu* sect.” So croaked the Papists at the time of the Reformation; and to this hour, they persist in demanding of the Protestant, “where was his religion before Luther?” I frankly confess, however, that a new sect is a remarkable circumstance. It naturally excites inquiry, and even jealousy; and it ought to be improved by every Christian, as a call in Providence for great searchings of heart. But if all this commotion be at once ascribed to the occasion of it, the conclusion is hasty and unwarrantable. A previous question should be patiently and impartially considered, Whether does the blame lie with the new Sect, or with one or more of the old ones?

IN no case, perhaps, of this nature, will the solution of so complicated a question be easy. On the one hand, many are given to novelty and change: on the other, many are bigottedly attached to existing usage. With ignorance may be found obstinacy and pride, no less frequently and strongly than fickleness and vanity. The calls of self-interest may also lead both ways. Nor should conscience be excluded from either side. In addition to these things, there are the yearnings of affection, the paroxysms of wrath, the heavy trials of meekness

and charity, which, in the painful struggles of separation, are borne even by the pious with various success. In short, it is likely there will be faults on both sides. Instead therefore of prejudging the question by a contemptuous appellation, the Christian should consider it as a subject of extreme delicacy, requiring the utmost possible tenderness of inquiry, the utmost gentleness and modesty of decision.

A NEW Sect has a claim on the generosity even of its enemies. Its disadvantages exceed the powers of calculation. Having every thing to arrange, and unaccustomed as yet with their new situation, the most sanguine members of it can hardly hope to avoid many faults at least of inexperience; yet the eyes of malignant perspicacity fasten keenly upon them; many arts are used to multiply the manifold occasions of variance, and to increase the animosity even of strife; at all events, they have not had time to shew themselves to the world, and to establish their character by the fruits of their practice. In a situation so critical, the whisper of jealousy may be fatal as the poniard of the deadly assassin. Never was the danger of what is new greater than in the eventful period of the present times. Some novelties have lately been pernicious and alarming; of course suspicion readily falls upon novelty of every kind. Mr. R. and many of his clerical brethren have been eager to seize this extraneous advantage of the day, and to mingle it with the merits of theological discussion. The policy of this management is as powerful as apparent. While Mr. R.'s criticisms are perhaps scarcely read, his oblique charges of conspiracy, sedition, or mere innovation, however unwarrantable, uncandid, or ambiguous, will at least have the tendency to disparage the character, to mar the comfort, to injure the circumstances, and to abridge the liberty of

his suspected opponents. Alas, Mr. Robertson!—  
 “Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth  
 “not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth  
 “not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is  
 “not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in  
 “iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things,  
 “believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all  
 “things.”

BUT this is “a new Sect in the land.” Aye, there’s the rub! Would Mr. R. have denounced this heretical party, if they had lived in another country? Would he have strained so hard to confute one of their subordinate opinions, if their exertions were confined to a distant part of his own country? A fair attack upon their principles might indeed be the duty of a conscientious opposer, whose situation enabled him to observe their progress; but dark insinuations against their sincerity are the offspring of rivalry, the resources of rancour. The trial of our love is the love of our neighbour. If we cannot endure to dwell with sects in the land, we shall in vain profess to regard them with charity in any other quarter.

THE charge of preparing the way for this new Sect in the land, is pushed home upon the Editors of the Missionary Magazine, with the horns of a dilemma. Their work has had this effect, “eventually, or designedly.” The design of the Editors has already been explained. The eventual effect of their performance is very likely such as Mr. R. supposes. Nor will the Editors be sorry at this eventual circumstance, until facts be produced which will prove it an evil.

BUT the point which Mr. R. is at a loss to determine,



is, *How far* the Magazine has prepared the way for the Sect. Here, I must candidly own I am at a loss too, and that for the following reasons. I am not only ignorant what number of men, women, and children may have read the Missionary Magazine, and what degree of credit, its readers may have given it; but I am confident that that Magazine has not had the honour, or the guilt, exclusively, of preparing the way. Other causes certainly have co-operated to the same effect, and it is difficult to estimate the influence of each. For example, I have not information sufficient to determine how far this way may have been prepared, by the existence of different Sects in the same Church, and sometimes in the same Collegiate charge; by the discordant principles of the wild and moderate parties in the Church of Scotland; by their frequent squabbles and their occasional harmony; by the increasing violence of the professedly moderate, and the increasing tameness of their misnamed opponents; by ministers acting under the law of patronage while they affect to disapprove of it; by the incessant occasion of triumph which this inconsistency affords to their merciless moderate brethren; by the avowed maxim of many modern ecclesiastical leaders, "better have Seceders out of the church than in the church," with the various measures to which it gives rise; by the regulations relative to Chapels of Ease; by wresting from ministers the command of their pulpits; by the late Pastoral Admonition; by the unanimity of that Admonition; and by the Resolutions respecting Vagrant Teachers and Sunday Schools. But above all, besides these, and many similar predisposing causes for a new Sect, I really have not sufficient information to determine, how far the way may not have been prepared for it, by the blessing of God upon the means of his grace; by scriptural views of the nature of Christ's kingdom which is not of this world; by love to Christ, by

love to the brethren, by love and by pity for perishing souls.

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OUR remaining Animadversions on Mr. R.'s performance shall be introduced by a quotation from his Conclusion.

“ I do not know how far the doctrine of Lay-Preaching, in the full sense of that word, may be followed out by any party which has arisen in this country. Men will often hold in theory, what they find it impossible, or inexpedient, to reduce to practice. While, therefore, they give it out, as the right of all Christians, to preach the Gospel, they may, consistently enough, require a degree of preparation, in those whom they, as a Society, particularly support in the exercise of that right. At the same time, it is clear as noon-day, that any system which holds forth a slight preparation as necessary for the Ministry, tends to degrade that office in the eyes of mankind; and is likely in the end to terminate in another system, in which any few individuals may erect themselves into a Church, and mutually administer the ordinances of the Gospel to one another.

“ HOWEVER careful those men may be in the admission of members, opinions which some of them have propagated, can scarcely fail to unite with the innovating spirit of the age. Men naturally transfer into Religion those opinions which they entertain upon Politics. It is scarcely to be supposed, that any who thought themselves wise enough to direct the helm of the nation, will continue to bear the restraints which

“ Presbyteries, amongst our most popular classes of Dis-  
 “ senters, are in use to lay upon them. Retaining still a  
 “ form of piety, they will, therefore, grasp at a system so  
 “ congenial with their ideas upon another subject. Even,  
 “ therefore, where the authority of the Parent Society  
 “ does not at all extend, its opinions may have their in-  
 “ fluence; and may there foster a spirit of faction, detri-  
 “ mental to the peace of every Christian Society, and  
 “ dangerous to the best interests of these lands.

“ THE mischiefs arising from the doctrine of Lay-  
 “ Preaching, in a religious point of view, have been well  
 “ described by the Rev. Dr. Jamieson, in his Remarks  
 “ on the Rev. Rowland Hill’s Journal. According to  
 “ that respectable writer, it tends to support a perpetual  
 “ revolutionary Government in the Church. I may  
 “ farther assert, that it has a tendency altogether to over-  
 “ turn the office of a Public Teacher. If every Christian  
 “ has a *right* to preach the Gospel, he has an *equal right*  
 “ to dispense every ordinance of Christianity. Thus it is  
 “ only for want of an auditory, that the lowest of the  
 “ people, do not become priests of the high places. But  
 “ though none should submit to their Ministry, yet who  
 “ can prevent their exercising it to their own families?  
 “ Can any man question their *right*, with respect to those  
 “ over whom God has given them a natural authority.  
 “ Thus we have restored, what the proud Sceptic has  
 “ long wished to see, the Patriarchal age! in which every  
 “ man does what is right in his own eyes; and, without  
 “ the controul of any other, acts as priest and prophet of  
 “ his own family. Were not the simplicity of the Patri-  
 “ archal age now lost, we might hope, that the plainer  
 “ principles of the Gospel would continue for a time to  
 “ operate. But from the present temper of men, we have  
 “ much reason to fear, that infidelity would grow apace;

“ till Christianity at last retired, and left her unnatural  
 “ children in the darkness of error and of superstition.  
 “ Surely the Infidels of the day cannot, without surprize,  
 “ behold religious men aim at that very end, which, by  
 “ craft or argument, they have been unable to accomplish;  
 “ and can scarcely fail to applaud a system, which, for  
 “ the present, they deride as weak and enthusiastic.”

IT is impossible to read this passage, without remembering the bitter complaint of the Psalmist : “ his words  
 “ were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.” In the outset Mr. R. confesses his ignorance how far the doctrine, which he has been combating, may be followed out by any party which has arisen in this country. Surely this confession might have shewn him the propriety of letting them alone. Instead of this, however, he proceeds, in his usual style of malignant supposition, to allude to those whom he had already branded, as “ a New  
 “ Sect in the Land;” and ascribes to them a system, calculated to degrade the office of the ministry, to foster a spirit of faction, to disturb the peace of every Christian Society, to endanger the best interests of these lands, and to shew that the men who espouse it, are aiming at that very end, which infidels have been unable to accomplish. Thus, upon confessed ignorance as to facts, and accumulated misrepresentation as to supposed practice and design, Mr. R. has reared a mass of accusation, which, if it could for a moment be believed, must deprive his opponents in a theological question, of their property, their liberty, and their lives. Nor is even this the worst. By blackening their character, he would make them a proverb, and a by-word, and a hissing in the midst of their sufferings. He would deprive them of the charity of the churches of Christ; he would render them the objects of disgust and horror to every pious mind; he

would even deny them the sympathy that is shewn by the multitude to ordinary malefactors, and lead every one who should kill them, to think, that he did God service.

THE sneer at this "new Sect," as holding in theory, what they find it impossible, or inexpedient, to reduce to practice, is a proof of that ignorance which Mr. R. had just confessed, and on account of which he ought to blush for his temerity in pretending to speak of them. They never held in theory that Christians might preach, except in so far as they were fit for it; their church order is calculated to discover and ascertain this fitness; and wherever it is found, the exercise of it, instead of being impracticable, or inexpedient, becomes highly edifying to the church, as well as useful to others. Upon this point, small as their experience is, they can nevertheless, where their churches have been formed, speak from experience. Nor is the experiment a new one. In the same way, congregational churches have, in every age, been ordinarily supplied with pastors. That the new Sect should endeavour to institute theological seminaries, for the improvement of those whose gifts are discovered to be promising, though little cultivated, is no practical contradiction of their theory, but the very reverse. It is a proof, however, that when Mr. R. accused them of despising learning, he knew not what he said, nor whereof he affirmed. Having his judgment warped by what he has been accustomed to, he thinks that a theological seminary is a proof, that the New Sect requires "a certain degree of *preparation*," in those whom they support; whereas the fact is, they only provide for a certain degree of *improvement* in those whom they find, by experience, to be worth supporting. They are not guilty of the absurd folly of letting any man among them study for

the ministry who pleases, if he only be free from public scandal; or of the absurd tyranny of making every student study for years, before it be tried by the church whether he ought ever to have studied at all.

BUT, says Mr. R. "any system which holds forth a slight preparation as necessary for the ministry, tends to degrade that office in the eyes of mankind." Here, our system, whatever it may be, is supposed to hold forth a slight preparation as necessary for the ministry, and the assertion is of course applied to it, that it tends to degrade the ministry. As these, and many similar observations throughout his pamphlet, proceed upon the assumption, that the members of the "New Sect" are patrons of ignorance, and even enemies to learning; while Mr. R. and his controversial adherents are no doubt the people with whom wisdom shall live and die; I think it may be edifying to search a little into the justice of it.

I AM so well convinced of the utility of Learning to a Minister of the Gospel, that I have often wondered, why arguments were thought necessary to prove it. Wherever learning really exists, in a man otherwise qualified for the Ministry, it will shew its own advantages to the conviction of all. This is so manifestly true, that when I see Clergymen boisterously declaiming about the necessity of Learning, for a Minister, I am strongly inclined to suspect, either that they want to obtain the reputation of more learning than they have, and are attempting to cover their real deficiency, by their ostentatious pretensions; or, that their object is, to secure, not a learned Ministry, but the privilege of deciding upon the learning of those who shall be received into the Ministry. No one disputes the advantage of Capital to a Merchant. If a man have knowledge of business, industry, integrity, and other per-

sonal qualifications, the utility of his Capital will speak for itself. The rich merchant has no occasion for making a display of his opulence, or upbraiding his neighbours for their poverty. He leaves these arts to the needy adventurer, who seeks to establish a credit which he does not deserve, or to the all-grasping monopolist, who wants an exclusive charter for the trade he pursues. After all, however, money is only an instrument of commerce. It is hard to say, how little may be sufficient to begin with; and daily observation proves, that with a very little indeed, the man of industry and prudence, may go on and prosper, while the boasted wealth of the Chartered Company is the very cause of its misconduct and its ruin.

It is one thing to say, that “a slight preparation is necessary for the Ministry;” and quite another, that a few opportunities of improvement, are all that circumstances enable to afford. This distinction would form a solid plea for the New Sect, although the opportunities which they afforded, were confessedly contemptible. But as Mr. R. is grossly ignorant of their whole scheme, it ill becomes him to express an opinion, especially an unfavourable one, upon any part of their procedure.

MEANS of improvement may be inferior, and yet not contemptible. The Universities of England afford greater advantages for Literature, than those of Scotland; yet men, who have been educated in Scotch Universities, have perhaps distinguished themselves as much for their eminent learning, as any who have been educated in English Universities. Nay, many Dissenters whose education has been derived from some private obscure Academy, have shamed whole graduated hosts in the public seats of literature. Where opportunities are small, the disadvantage is often more than counterbalanced by additional

diligence. And when a man's studies are directed to a specific object, and the whole of his time devoted to them, his progress will surely be more remarkable, than when he is obliged to attend to many things of questionable utility, and to teach for his subsistence, while he should be studying for the Ministry.

THE sources of knowledge have now become more generally accessible. It will not be denied, that whatever is most useful in the courses of Logic, Rhetoric, and Moral Philosophy, may be found by every English reader, in the writings of Reid, Beattie, Blair, and Stewart. As to Natural Philosophy, besides the numerous rudimental treatises on the subject, opportunities frequently occur, in different places, of attending popular Lectures on it, illustrated by more numerous experiments than are commonly exhibited in a University course; and it may be doubted whether one Divinity Student in ten, is really able to follow his Professor through a scientific illustration of the various propositions in Physics. Finally, where shall we find a more solid and ample discussion of all subjects in Theology than amongst our English Divines? What is the meaning, then, of all this senseless outcry about a contempt of learning, and an encouragement of gross ignorance, while the sources of information are just as free to those who are called Lay-Preachers, as to those who call themselves the Regular Clergy of the Church? After all that can be said upon the subject, the proficiency of individuals will be judged of neither by their opportunities, their personal pretensions, nor even the testimony of their brethren, but by the actual proofs which they give to the public of their respective ability.

Mr. R. may rest assured that I do not mean to keep silence on the subject of languages. Latin is a good help in the study of universal Grammar. It opens to us



many elegant writings of antiquity, and many works of theological erudition, though most of them very tedious, particularly among the Dutch and Germans. It will always be among the accomplishments of the general scholar. But a man may be a *learned* minister of the word of God, and yet know nothing at all about Latin. He may, without Latin, acquire the most perfect acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew, the original languages of the Holy Scriptures; and if, in addition to this, he acquire, what many a Latin scholar has not, an accurate acquaintance with his mother tongue, I apprehend he will possess a very competent degree of knowledge for his work, as far at least as language is concerned.

WHATEVER be thought of dispensing with the knowledge of Latin, it will undoubtedly be granted, that it is of less consequence for a divine to be ignorant of it, than to be ignorant either of Greek or Hebrew. I know that the Church of Scotland requires of her Ministers to be acquainted with all the three. But what is said to be the fact as to this matter? Will Mr. R. assert that one half of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland are really acquainted with their Hebrew bibles? Did he never hear of men getting just as much Hebrew as might enable them to pass trials, and then never looking more at it?—of some candidates getting their Hebrew Psalm written out for them in Roman characters, that they might be able to read it?—and of some whole Presbyteries prudently dispensing with Hebrew trials altogether, lest the trial should prove too trying for all parties? If Mr. R. be able to deny all this, I shall not contradict him, I shall even rejoice if I find that such reports are erroneous\*. But if

\* For the prevalent ignorance of Hebrew among the clergy, see the testimony of a prophet of their own, in the Preface to Wilson's Hebrew Grammar.

he cannot pretend that they are, let him learn a little more modesty, on the subject of literature. Ignorance of either or both the original languages of the Bible is inexcusable in any man who receives a salary, that he may devote his whole life to theological pursuits; and it is particularly shameful in those who have had good opportunities of learning them, especially in the present times, when such extraordinary exertions have been made, in the way of biblical criticism, both by the friends and the foes of the Gospel.

I BELIEVE the clergy of the Church of Scotland are more generally acquainted with Greek than with Hebrew; yet I suppose it will not be alleged that I do them injustice when I say, that their ordinary helps in expounding Scripture, are English Commentaries. Now, I should be glad to know, if Poole's Annotations, Henry's Commentary, Patrick, Lowth, and Whitby, Clarke, Guise, Doddridge, and Macknight, may not be read by Laymen, as well as Clergymen? Nor am I ashamed to confess, that I have often been much more edified, by the remarks which had occurred to a plain man, upon a serious perusal of his English Bible; than by the lecture of a Clergyman, who had collected for retail, the jarring opinions of a mass of Commentators.

LIKE every other good thing, learning may be abused; and this will infallibly be done by a Christian Minister, when he makes it his boast, or when he trusts to it, for confounding, and vanquishing opponents, whom he supposes to be illiterate. Were there no other fault in this conduct, it is ungenerous to attack an adversary with a weapon, of which he is understood to be destitute. But God has given a deadly wound to hierarchical claims, even over the unlearned, by granting men the Bible in

their mother tongue. Let not the theological scholar despise translations. A translation was used by the Apostles in their writings of inspiration. The most inaccurate translations that have been made of the Scriptures, when attentively examined, will be found, even in spite of the errors held by many of the translators, to contain the substance of the doctrines of salvation. And, blessed be God, our English translation is so very excellent, that if a man hope to carry his point, merely by mangling it, that Scripture may seem to support extravagance and conjecture, he will certainly expose himself to merited derision.

OF this truth, I have never met with more abundant illustration than in the Pamphlet before me. To produce all the absurdities of Mr. R.'s criticism would be to compile an index to the work. I shall certainly not give my readers the trouble to review above one of them; yet I think Mr. R. will have little reason to complain, as my choice of an example will shew that I am willing he should possess every possible advantage. In Acts viii. 1.—4. Mr. R. had not to do with one of those passages, which Peter tells us, are hard to be understood, but with a plain historical narrative, written by one of the most perspicuous writers in the New Testament, and that with such simplicity, that had no controversy been affected by it, the mind of man would never have dreamed of a difficulty or a doubt about its meaning. With this easy task, Mr. R. has had the assistance of a learned friend. Let us examine the success of their combined exertions\*.

MR. R. who leads the van, commences an attack at once upon the text, and the generality of its interpreters. His quarrel with both is, that they have overrated a persecu-

\* See pages 35.—41.

tion, which he thinks a little one because it included only one murder and a number of banishments. He allows that the historian *would naturally style* that persecution great, though in reality little, which, for a time, deprived the fairs at Jerufalem of fo many faithful paffors. But whatever apology he may be willing to make for Luke's *style*, it is obvious that, in narrating the fame event, Mr. R. would not have adopted fo *inaccurate* an expreffion.

HE is content, however, that Luke and our Englifh tranflators fhould fhare the fault of ambiguity between them. Accordingly, to make the paffage intelligible, he propofes the following literal tranflation.

“ And Saul was confenting to his (Stephen's) death.  
 “ And *on that day* there was a great perfecution againft  
 “ the Church which was at Jerufalem; and all were dif-  
 “ perfed throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,  
 “ except the Apoftles. And devout men carried out  
 “ Stephen to his burial, and made a great lamentation  
 “ over him. As for Saul he made havoc of the Church,  
 “ entering *into the houfes*, and haling men and women,  
 “ committed them to prifon.” In this tranflation, two phrafes, on account, I prefume, of their peculiar importance, are printed in the italic character, and have the correfponding words of the original, fubjoined in a note. With regard to the firft, every fchool-boy knows, that the Greek word for *day*, (the whole ftory may be told without the formality of Greek quotations) like its correfponding Englifh word, may fignify, either, the time between the rifing and fetting of the Sun, called the artificial day; or the time from noon to noon, called the natural day; or indefinitely any appointed or fixed time. Which of thefe meanings is to be affixed to it, in particular paffages, muft be pointed out by the connexion, and by common fenfe. Guided by both, our Englifh tranflators have

rendered the phrase where it occurs in the passage before us, "at that time," understanding it as necessarily including a period of such duration, as to give the events referred to it, time to take place. Had they used Mr. R.'s word, and said "in that day," every intelligent reader would have understood them, as using the word in its large acceptation; as if one, writing the history of this season, should at some future period say, "there was a scanty crop, and *in that day*, there would have been great distress, had not large subscriptions been made for the importation of grain." But Mr. R. insists, that the term *day* is never used indefinitely in a plain historical narration. If even this were granted, it would be necessary to understand the historian, as telling us, on what day a persecution began, which, from what he immediately adds, evidently continued to rage for some time after. But Mr. R. will have it that there is no evidence whatever, that this persecution was *protracted beyond* the day of Stephen's martyrdom.

Now who does not see, that the persecution and the consequent dispersion are referred to the same date? If both are to be confined to the individual day of Stephen's martyrdom, the poor exiles must have made a notable day's journey; for "on that day," or more emphatically as Mr. R. would read it, "on the same day," all "were dispersed throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." Mr. R.'s learning will perhaps enable him to tell us, how this was accomplished. Arguing like him, upon suppositions, it may indeed be supposed, (at least nothing less extraordinary will bear him out in his hypothesis) that as the primitive Christians, especially the preachers among them, were prudent men, they must have foreseen the evil, and secured for themselves places in the different MAIL COACHES which left Jerusalem that morning. Be-

fore we deny this, Mr. R. may assert, as he does in another place, that it is incumbent on us to shew, at least the *probability* that this was not the case; for *if it was*, the proprietors had certainly authority to take into their coaches as many passengers as they could hold, and they may have been constructed to hold as many as Noah's ark; which *if it was so*, they must have travelled inconceivably faster than can be imagined by the illiterate advocates for Lay-preaching, in these degenerate days of sloth and retardation. *So far therefore from it being probable*, that the dispersion throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria did not take place on the same day with the persecution, *it may be viewed as certain* that it did.

By such sure and certain proofs Mr. R. has shewn that, since the time of Moses, there has been an order of men set apart for the public instruction of mankind, and regularly educated for that office<sup>\*</sup>; that, besides the apostles and seventy disciples, the hundred and twenty mentioned Acts i. were made up of rulers among the Jews, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea<sup>†</sup>; that Church means Clergy, or at least ecclesiastical judicatory<sup>‡</sup>; that Apollos was a scribe<sup>§</sup>; and in sundry other places of his learned dissertation, he has overthrown the arguments for Lay-Preaching in the same satisfactory and edifying manner.

THE other phrase, into *the houses*, appears to have been marked that Mr. R. might have the honour to maintain, what nobody ever dreamed of denying, that, Saul's entering into *the houses*, did not signify entering into *all* the houses; and because the expression could not fairly be extended to *all*, he thinks there is no great harm in confining it to *a few*. Although this degree of limitation is

<sup>\*</sup> P. 88.    <sup>†</sup> P. 11.    <sup>‡</sup> P. 21.    <sup>§</sup> P. 43, and p. 76, note.

quite as unwarrantable as the opposite degree of extension, Mr. R. asserts it as a matter of course, and after vapouring throughout a whole paragraph, about absurdities with which his opponents have no concern, he does himself the pleasure at the end of it to pronounce the modest decision, that their alleged manner of reasoning, “shews a gross ignorance of scripture criticism.”

MANY similar specimens might be given of Mr. R.’s learning, from his remarks on this passage, but it is time we should pay our respects to his learned friend. This obliging auxiliary having probably revised the Section before us, seems to have been grieved to find his brother so likely to be worsted by this same troublesome “scattering abroad throughout “the regions of Judea and Samaria.” Setting his wits to work, therefore, he produced and suggested to Mr. R. an *idea*, so consolatory, yea so transporting, that he was unable at first to judge of its merits. “It appeared to “me *so good*, says he, that for a time I *suspected* its truth.” This marvellous idea is, that the preachers of the gospel did not leave Jerufalem, so much on account of the violence of the persecution, although Luke seems to say so, as in obedience to the command of Christ, “when they “persecute you in one city, flee ye into another.” This idea has various recommendations. It may help perhaps to account for the celerity of the dispersion, because men go quickly on, when they have an inclination for the journey. But the quality which seems to have endeared it to Mr. R. is, that it gives to the dispersion a character of regularity, and may make it even admit of the forms of modern ecclesiastical procedure. Disregarding Luke’s account, that it took place at the same time with the persecution, Mr. R. and his learned Friend conceive the persecution to have been viewed by the preachers only as a signal to depart, in consequence of which they either

of their own accord, or in concert with the Apostles, left the city, and distributed themselves in every direction. Now, all the world will grant, that our Saviour's command made their flight warrantable; but that it, rather than the persecution, was the cause of that flight, requires proof. Of the proof produced by Mr. R. this is the sum. The verb rendered "scattered abroad," has the general signification of "separating by whatever means;" and as there is another verb in the Greek language, whose appropriate meaning is to "disperse by violence," therefore we should not suppose that the verb of general meaning, although allowed to signify separation by *whatever means*, and immediately connected here with a great persecution, can admit of being applied to the particular case of violent dispersion. After supporting this conclusion by examples worthy of the argument, it is remarked that, among other anomalies in language, verbs in a passive form *may sometimes have a neuter or middle signification*. As proof that this has happened *for once* with the very word in question, we are told, that, when Pharaoh *commanded* the Israelites to make brick without straw, in consequence of which "they were scattered abroad," the meaning is, not that they were dispersed by his persecution, but that "they *of their own accord* went in every direction in quest of stubble." If this was spontaneity, what is compulsion? Although, however, the solitary example had been as precisely for, as it is in fact against, the conclusion, that would never have warranted the drawing of it, in the case before us. Unless we choose to violate every rule of interpretation, and to turn exceptions into general rules, we must acknowledge that, in this passage, Luke connects the persecution and the dispersion as cause and effect; and in Acts xi. 19. where the same word is used, he expressly ascribes the one to the other.



THE preceding criticisms may perhaps shew us what some gentlemen would think of a modern persecution. If Mr. R. could make the public believe one half of his evil surmisings against the "New Sect in the land," I should not wonder to see popular indignation so strongly excited against the Tabernacle congregation of this city, as to occasion a tumult in which the life of at least one individual might be lost, while the rest found it necessary to flee from the place. Having a fellow feeling with the sufferers, I confess I should be much inclined, in giving an account of the affair, to adopt the style of Luke, and to say, "on that day there was a great persecution against the Church, and all were scattered abroad." But in perfect unison with their mode of criticising, Mr. R. and his learned friend might allege that by such expressions, the persecution, if it at all deserved that name, was greatly overrated. It was but the tumult of a single day. There was only one life lost, the life of a heretical advocate for Lay-Preaching, and as for the flight of the rest, they went away *of their own accord*, and the inconvenience sustained by them was hardly to be minded, when it might have the salutary effect of banishing a "New Sect from the land." If such apologies could be made even in the case of a riot, what might we not expect to hear, if they could disperse, or murder us, under forms of law.

No part of theological knowledge is more important than sacred criticism. In this way, much has lately been done, by Lowth, Kennicot, Newcome, Blaney, Campbell, and several others, for illustrating, and vindicating Divine Revelation. The Minister of the Gospel will often derive more assistance in his work, from attention to the original, than from poring over the folios of the most celebrated Commentators. He may often

expound Scripture with much advantage, by proposing an improved translation, which has occurred to him; and I believe it will be found that there is no improved translation of any consequence, which will not soon commend itself to the judgment of intelligent hearers, even although unacquainted with the original. But if, like the magic lantern of the juggler, the preacher's knowledge of languages, be used in a way, that can only confound the simple and ignorant; if, in the warfare of controversy, his critical faculties be prostituted to the purposes of a mere pop-gun manufactory of explosion and smoke, his exertions, however laborious, are contemptible indeed! Nor is this all. If the English reader be given to understand that the plainest passages of his Bible may be explained into opposite meanings; that great may really be little; the events of a week or more, only the scene of a single day; and the dispersions of persecution, concerted emigrations of a voluntary nature; what must he think of all this? what confidence can he any longer have, either in the history, or the doctrines of Scripture? It is true, his translation says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But a little Greek might perhaps enable him to alter, if not even to reverse the proposition. In this state of mind, his only alternative will be, either to pin his faith to the sleeve of a priest, and acquiesce in ignorance as the mother of devotion; or, to withdraw his confidence from the Bible altogether, and seek what he may be tempted to reckon the more intelligible instructions of some other guide. Such seems to me to be the evident tendency of the criticisms contained in Mr. R.'s pamphlet. We might smile at the vanity of the Pedant, if we did not behold in him the Pioneer of Infidelity.

Who appears to be guilty now, "of degrading the

“office of the ministry in the eyes of mankind?” We are far from disregarding the advantages of learning. We conceive it, however, to be the duty of the brethren, not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but to exhort one another, that, besides mutual edification, the gifts bestowed by the Head of the Church may be discovered, exercised, and approved; that those who have received them may be set apart to the work of the ministry; and that while they labour among us, and are over us in the Lord, and admonish us, we may esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake, and be at peace among ourselves. In this way, ordinarily, we hope to be supplied with pastors and teachers, and we shall neglect no means in our power, for making them workmen that need not to be ashamed. Mr. R. may call this, if he pleases, “admitting *something like* a standing ministry<sup>\*</sup>”; and he may further assert, “that this system is likely to terminate in another in which any few individuals may erect themselves into a Church, and mutually administer the ordinances of the Gospel to one another.” But when he uses such contemptuous language, he ought to take heed, lest he be found to vilify conscientious fellow Christians, if not even *something like* the constitution of a Church of Christ. There are still a few remnants of holy Scripture, which have not been dissolved in his critical digester. Jesus hath said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them<sup>†</sup>.” “Whofo shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh<sup>‡</sup>.” As to degrading the ministerial

\* P. 58.

† Matt. xviii. 20.

‡ Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

office in the eyes of mankind; we are not afraid that the simple rule of Scripture will suffer, upon a fair comparison with human inventions, even in the eyes of mankind\*. But if it should, we dare not depart from Scripture, to please men; nor shall their sneers dismay us, while we have Scripture on our side. It is written, “ I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” —“ Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble *call you*. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence.” 1 Cor. i. 19. 20. 26. 27. 28. 29.

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SINCE writing the preceding sheets, I also have had the happiness of receiving assistance from a learned friend, whose critical abilities will hardly be denied even by Mr. R.; and as a more complete confutation of this Gentleman's absurdities, or a more able exposure of priestcraft, and clerical ambition in general, could not have been written; I shall make no apology for enriching these Animadversions with some ample quotations from a post-

\* Compare Matt. xviii. 15.—20. with all the Synodical Decrees, Ecumenical Decisions, Canon Laws, Papal Bulls, Episcopal Mandates, Acts of Assembly, and Pastoral Admonitions, which have been enacted, ordained, or issued, since the days of the Apostles.

humorous work just published, intitled Lectures on Ecclesiastical History. I call the Author my friend, because he is as decided, as I could possibly wish, both in favour of what is called Lay-Preaching, and of Congregational Churches; and I suppose Mr. R. will acknowledge his merits, not merely because his character for talents and learning has been established by several works of universal celebrity; but because he was no vile, upstart Lay-Preacher, but one who was regularly educated for the clerical functions, one “who *officially* acted under a  
 “solemn engagement to maintain the discipline of the  
 “Church of Scotland,” a minister of that established Church, a Doctor Theological, a Professor of Divinity, nay Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen: in short he was, GEORGE CAMPBELL, D. D.

THE first passage, which I shall produce, gives a view of the genius of the Gospel, the constitution of the primitive Church, and its relation to Civil Government.

“THE moral precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ are remarkably sublime and pure. They are admirably calculated for regulating the passions and affections of the heart, out of which, as Solomon has observed, are the issues of life. The doctrines he taught, which are the motives whereby an observance of the precepts is enforced, are all purely spiritual, arising from considerations of the divine nature, and of our own; especially of God’s placability and favour, of the testimony of conscience, of the blessedness which the principles of true religion, faith and hope, love to God, and love to man, infuse into the heart; and from considerations regarding the future retribution both of the righteous and of the wicked. The positive institutions or ceremonies he appointed, are both few and simple,

“ serving as expressions of the love and gratitude of his  
 “ disciples to God, their common parent, and to Jesus  
 “ their master, the oracle of God; of their engagements  
 “ to the Christian life, and their perfect union among  
 “ themselves. And that whilst these institutions were  
 “ suffered to remain in their native simplicity, which  
 “ constituted their true beauty and excellence, it was im-  
 “ possible they should be misunderstood. With regard to  
 “ the founding of what might be called a polity or state,  
 “ it is manifest that nothing could be farther from his  
 “ intention. “ His kingdom,” he acquaints us, “ is not  
 “ of this world.” It is not of a secular nature, to be  
 “ either propagated or defended by the arm of flesh, or  
 “ to have its laws enforced by human sanctions, or any  
 “ such temporal punishments as merely human authority  
 “ can inflict.

“ It is impossible to conceive a greater contrast be-  
 “ tween the spirit which his instructions breathe, and that  
 “ spirit of pride and domination, which not many centuries  
 “ afterwards became the predominant spirit of what then  
 “ came to be denominated the church. Again and again  
 “ did Christ admonish his apostles, and other followers,  
 “ to live as brethren and equals, not to affect a superiority  
 “ over their fellow-disciples, or over one another; inas-  
 “ much as in this, his kingdom would differ in its funda-  
 “ mental maxims from all the kingdoms of the world:  
 “ that that person alone would there be deemed the  
 “ greatest, whose deportment should be the humblest,  
 “ and he alone superior, who should prove most service-  
 “ able to the rest. As to worldly monarchies or com-  
 “ monwealths, of whatever kind, he taught them to re-  
 “ gard it as their duty, to submit to such powers as Pro-  
 “ vidence should set over them; cheerfully paying tri-  
 “ bute, and yielding obedience to every human ordinance

“ and command that should not be found to contradict  
 “ the law of God. “ Render to Cæsar, said he, the  
 “ things which are Cæsar’s, and to God the things which  
 “ are God’s.” Far from affecting any secular power  
 “ himself, he refused a royalty of this sort, when the peo-  
 “ ple would have conferred it, and would not take upon  
 “ him to decide in a matter of civil right and property,  
 “ though desired. “ Man,” said he to the person who  
 “ applied to him, “ who made me a judge or a divider  
 “ over you ?” Then he said to the people, “ take heed  
 “ and beware of covetousness ;”—supporting his admoni-  
 “ tion as usual by an affecting parable. It was the end  
 “ of his institution to purify the heart, and his lessons  
 “ were ever calculated for extirpating the seeds of evil  
 “ that remained there. In a similar manner, when the  
 “ disciples privately contended among themselves who  
 “ should be greatest, he took occasion to warn them  
 “ against ambition. Jesus calling to him a child, placed  
 “ him in the midst of them, and said, “ Verily I say unto  
 “ you ; unless ye be converted,” quite changed in your  
 “ notions and conceptions of things, “ and become as  
 “ children, ye shall never enter the kingdom of heaven.  
 “ Whosoever, therefore, shall become humble as this  
 “ child, shall be the greatest there.” The same maxims  
 “ were warmly inculcated by his apostles ; and in their  
 “ time, under the happy influence of their instructions,  
 “ generally prevailed among Christians.

“ Now indeed was formed a community of the dis-  
 “ ciples of Jesus, which was called his church, a word  
 “ that denotes no more than society or assembly, and is  
 “ sometimes used in the New Testament with evident  
 “ analogy to the common use, to signify the whole com-  
 “ munity of Christians considered as one body, of which  
 “ Christ is denominated the head, and sometimes only

“ a particular congregation of Christians. In this ge-  
 “ neral society, founded in the unity of their faith, their  
 “ hope, their love, cemented, as it were, by a commu-  
 “ nion or joint participation, as occasion offered, in re-  
 “ ligious offices, in adoration, in baptism, and in the  
 “ commemoration of the sufferings of their Lord, pre-  
 “ served by a most friendly intercourse, and by frequent  
 “ instructions, admonitions, reproofs when necessary,  
 “ and even by the exclusion of those who had violated  
 “ such powerful and solemn engagements: in all this, I  
 “ say, there was nothing that interfered with the tem-  
 “ poral powers. They claimed no jurisdiction over the  
 “ person, the liberty, or the property of any man. And  
 “ if they expelled out of their own society, and, on sa-  
 “ tisfying their conditions, re-admitted those who had  
 “ been expelled, they did in this only exercise a right,  
 “ which (if we may compare great things with small,  
 “ and heavenly things with earthly) any private compa-  
 “ ny, like a knot of artists or philosophers, may freely  
 “ exercise; namely, to give the benefit of their own  
 “ company and conversation to whom, and on what  
 “ terms, they judge proper: a right which can never  
 “ justly be considered as in the least infringing on the  
 “ secular powers. The Christians every where acknow-  
 “ ledged themselves the subjects of the state, whether  
 “ monarchical or republican, absolute or free, under  
 “ which they lived; entitled to the same privileges with  
 “ their fellow-subjects, and bound as much as any of  
 “ them (I might say more, in respect of the peculiar o-  
 “ bligation which their religion laid them under) to the  
 “ observance of the laws of their country. They plead-  
 “ ed no exemption but in one case; a case wherein eve-  
 “ ry man, though not a Christian, has a natural title to  
 “ exemption; that is, not to obey a law which is unjust  
 “ in itself, and which he is persuaded in his conscience



“ to be so. But in regard of rights merely of a personal  
 “ or private nature, over which the individual has a  
 “ greater power, far from being pertinacious asserters of  
 “ these, they held it for an invariable maxim, that it is  
 “ much better to suffer wrong, than either to commit or  
 “ to avenge it. This, in my judgement, is the true  
 “ footing on which the apostolical church stood in rela-  
 “ tion to the secular powers\*.”

My next quotation will inform Mr. R. to whom be-  
 longs the right of exercising ecclesiastical discipline.

“ WHEN one Christian had ground, real or supposed,  
 “ to complain of the conduct of another as unbrotherly  
 “ and injurious, after private methods of reclaiming the  
 “ offender had been tried in vain by the offended, it be-  
 “ longed to the congregation to judge between them;  
 “ and either to effect a reconciliation, or to discard one  
 “ who, by his obstinacy in the wrong, shewed himself  
 “ unworthy of their fellowship. This method had been  
 “ clearly pointed out to them by their great founder.  
 “ If thy brother,” says he, “ trespass against thee, go and  
 “ tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he  
 “ hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will  
 “ not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that  
 “ in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word  
 “ may be established; and if he neglect to hear them,  
 “ tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the  
 “ church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publi-  
 “ can. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind  
 “ on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye  
 “ shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” What  
 “ ye thus do, agreeably to the instructions I give you,

\* Vol. I. pages 40.—45.

“ God himself will ratify. The practice of the apostolic  
 “ age, which has the best title to the denomination of  
 “ primitive, is the surest commentary on this precept of  
 “ our Lord. Not only were such private offences  
 “ then judged by the church, that is, the congregation,  
 “ but also those scandals which affected the whole Chris-  
 “ tian fraternity. Accordingly, the judgment which Paul,  
 “ by the Spirit of God, had formed concerning the in-  
 “ cestuous person, he enjoins the Church, to whom his  
 “ epistle is directed, that is, (to use his own words for  
 “ an explanation) “ them who at Corinth are sanctified  
 “ in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, to pronounce and  
 “ execute.” And in his second epistle to the same Church,  
 “ (chap. ii. v. 6.) he says, in reference to the same de-  
 “ linquent, “ Sufficient to such a man is the censure  
 “ which was inflicted by many;” ὑπο τῶν πλειονων, by the  
 “ community. And (v. 10.) “ To whom ye forgave a-  
 “ ny thing,” addressing himself always to the congrega-  
 “ tion, “ I forgive also.” We admit, with the learned  
 “ Dodwell\*, that in the censure inflicted on the incestu-  
 “ ous person, the Christians at Corinth were but the exe-  
 “ cutors of the doom awarded by the apostle. Nor does  
 “ any one question the apostolical authority in such mat-  
 “ ters over both the flock and the pastors. But from the  
 “ words last quoted, it is evident that he acknowledges,  
 “ at the same time, the ordinary power in regard to dis-  
 “ cipline lodged in the congregation; and from the confi-  
 “ dence he had in the discretion and integrity of the Co-  
 “ rinthians, he promises his concurrence in what they  
 “ shall judge proper to do. “ To whom ye forgive any  
 “ thing, I forgive also.”†

\* De Jure Laicorum sacerdotali, c. iii. § 10.

† Vol. I. pages 54.—56.

IN the two next quotations, Dr. Campbell will give us his opinion, whether the success of the gospel does at all depend on the personal, or party claims of preachers.

“ I MAY be deceived in regard to the pretensions of a  
 “ minister, who may be the usurper of a character to  
 “ which he has no right. I am no antiquary, and may not  
 “ have either the knowledge or the capacity necessary for  
 “ tracing the faint outlines of ancient establishments, and  
 “ forms of government, for entering into dark and criti-  
 “ cal questions about the import of names and titles, or  
 “ for examining the authenticity of endless genealogies;  
 “ but I may have all the evidence that consciousness can  
 “ give, that I thankfully receive the testimony of Christ,  
 “ whom I believe, and love, and serve. If I cannot know  
 “ this, the declarations of the gospel are given me to no  
 “ purpose: its promises are no better than riddles, and a  
 “ rule of life is a dream. But if I may be conscious  
 “ of this, and if the Christian religion be a revelation  
 “ from heaven, I may have all the security which the ve-  
 “ racity of God can give me, that I shall obtain eternal  
 “ life.

“ No,” interposes a late writer\*, “ Cannot God just-  
 “ ly oblige men, in order to obtain the benefits which it  
 “ is his good pleasure to bestow, to employ the means  
 “ which his good pleasure hath instituted? It pleased not  
 “ him to cleanse Naaman the Syrian from his leprosy by  
 “ the water of any other river than the Jordan; insomuch,  
 “ that had Naaman used the rivers of Syria for this pur-  
 “ pose, he would have had no title to expect a cure.”  
 “ Certainly none, Mr. Dodwell. But could any thing

\* Dodwell Parænesis, 34.

“ be more explicit than the oracle of God pronounced  
 “ by the prophet? “ Wash in Jordan seven times, and  
 “ thou shalt be clean.” Naaman did not, and could not  
 “ misunderstand it. Whereas, had the prophet said  
 “ barely, “ Wash seven times, and thou shalt be clean;”  
 “ and had the Syrian then washed seven times in Abana  
 “ or Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, and remained uncured,  
 “ would he have had reason to regard Elisha as a true pro-  
 “ phet? Could he have formed from this transaction the con-  
 “ clusion which he did so justly form in favour of the God  
 “ of Israel? Yet such an expression of the promise, where-  
 “ in an essential article of the condition is suppressed,  
 “ would be necessary to make the case parallel to the pre-  
 “ sent. *He who believeth and is baptized, saith our Lord,*  
 “ *shall be saved:* You qualify his promise with the addi-  
 “ tional clause, “ if he be baptized by a minister who has  
 “ himself received baptism and ordination in such a par-  
 “ ticular manner.” But where do you find this qualifi-  
 “ cation specified? Scripture is silent. The Spirit of God  
 “ hath not given us the remotest hint of it; would it not  
 “ then be wiser in you to follow the advice which Solo-  
 “ mon hath given by the same Spirit? *Add thou not unto his*  
 “ *words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* The  
 “ terms of the gospel-covenant are no where, in the sa-  
 “ cred pages, connected with, or made to depend on,  
 “ either the minister, or the form of the ministry, as Naa-  
 “ man’s cure manifestly was on his washing in one parti-  
 “ cular river. But so strange is the inconsistency of which  
 “ human nature is susceptible! No person can be more  
 “ explicit than this man, in admitting that there is no-  
 “ thing in scripture from which we can infer that any par-  
 “ ticular form of polity was, for every age and country,  
 “ appointed in the church. A passage to this purpose I  
 “ shall soon give you in his own words. Nay more,  
 “ that very episcopacy, for which he so strenuously con-

“ tended, making the existence of Christianity depend u-  
 “ pon its reception, is, by his own account, not only def-  
 “ titute of scriptural warrant, but is not properly of  
 “ apostolical origin, not having been instituted till af-  
 “ ter the death of the apostles, in the sixth or seventh  
 “ year of the second century: for even John, who liv-  
 “ ed the longest, is not said to have reached that period.  
 “ Arrogant and vain man! what are you, who so boldly  
 “ and avowedly presume to foist into God’s covenant  
 “ articles of your own devising, neither expressed nor  
 “ implied in his words? Do you venture, a worm of the  
 “ earth? Can you think yourself warranted to stint what  
 “ God hath not stinted, and following the dictates of  
 “ your contracted spirit, enviously to limit the bounty of  
 “ the universal parent, that you may confine to a party,  
 “ what Christ hath freely published for the benefit of all?  
 “ Is your eye evil, because he is good? Shall I then be-  
 “ lieve, that God, like deceitful man, speaketh equivo-  
 “ cally and with mental reservations? Shall I take his  
 “ declaration in the extent wherein he hath expressly  
 “ given it; or, as you, for your own malignant purpose,  
 “ have new-vamped and corrected it? “ Let God be  
 “ true, and every man a liar.” But as for you who  
 “ would thus pervert the plainest declarations of the  
 “ oracles of truth, and instead of representing Christ as  
 “ the author of a divine and spiritual religion, as the  
 “ great benefactor of human kind, exhibit him as the  
 “ head of a faction, your party forsooth! I must say  
 “ that I have stronger evidence that you have no mission,  
 “ than all your traditions, and antiquities, and catalogues,  
 “ will ever be able to surmount. For if “ he whom  
 “ God sendeth, speaketh the words of God,” (and this  
 “ is a test which Christ himself hath given us) he who  
 “ contradicteth God’s words is not sent by him. This

“ is alike the language of Scripture, and the language  
 “ of common sense. Yours is neither\*.”

“ THAT there was no such dependance, as is supposed,  
 “ on any thing in the form of the ministry, is manifest  
 “ also from this, that in the directions given to Christians,  
 “ as to the judgments they ought to make of those who  
 “ may assume the character of teachers in divine things,  
 “ the people are never directed to an examination of,  
 “ what I may call, the ostensible source of the authority  
 “ of those teachers, but solely to the consideration of  
 “ their character and conduct, and of the doctrine which  
 “ they teach. “ Beware of false prophets,” said our  
 “ Lord, “ who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but in-  
 “ wardly they are ravening wolves.” But how shall we  
 “ beware of them, or by what criterion shall we distin-  
 “ guish the false from the true? Shall we critically exa-  
 “ mine their spiritual pedigree, and see whether, by an  
 “ uninterrupted succession of regular baptisms and ordi-  
 “ nations, they be lineally descended from the apostles?  
 “ Impossible. A method this which would involve eve-  
 “ ry thing in impenetrable darkness, and plunge all the  
 “ hopes and prospects of the Christian into a scepticism,  
 “ from which there could be no recovery. On the con-  
 “ trary, the test he gives is plain and familiar. Mark  
 “ his words:—“ Ye shall know them by their fruits.  
 “ Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?  
 “ Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit,  
 “ but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good  
 “ tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a cor-  
 “ rupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bring-  
 “ eth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into  
 “ the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know

\* Vol. I. pages 88.——91.

“them.” And the apostle John says, “Believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God.” “And how are we to try them? The sequel plainly shews, that it is by the coincidence of their doctrine with that of the gospel. The like was also the method prescribed under the former dispensation by the prophet. “To the law and to the testimony,” says he, “if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” A very different mode of trial would now be assigned by a zealous patronizer of the hierarchy, popish or protestant\*.”

In connection with the above, it may be edifying to read the following paragraph.

“To assign to the Messiah, or rather, under that colour, to procure for themselves a worldly kingdom, was not an error peculiar to the Jews. The same evil principle, which in them proved the cause of the rejection of the true Messiah, proved quickly among the Gentiles, who acknowledged him, the source of the grossest corruption and perversion of his institution. After it became the aim of church rulers to secularize the kingdom of Christ: they uniformly had it for their object, in exact conformity to the example the Pharisees had given them, to remove the attention of men from things spiritual and essential, to things corporal and circumstantial. And in this, as in all other corruptions, they have but too well succeeded. The more effectually to answer this purpose, they have not scrupled to introduce such dogmas as tend to subvert the spirit of the gospel, and are inconsistent with the veracity of God†.”

\* Vol. I. pages 103.--105.      † Pages 108. 109.

I SHALL now produce the Doctor's sentiments on what is called Lay-Preaching, in a passage where we shall see how he understood the account of the persecution mentioned Acts viii.

“ IT has been said, that in the extraordinary and unsettled state of the church, the sacred offices were not so much appropriated to the ministers, as to exclude private Christians from occasionally exercising them, especially in the absence of the former. The first order given to the eleven *to make converts* (for such is the import of  $\mu\epsilon\theta\epsilon\beta\alpha\tau\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\alpha\iota$ ) *to baptize and to teach*, carries in it nothing from which we can discover, that it was a commission entrusted to them exclusively as apostles or ministers, and not given them also as Christians; and that the apostles were particularized, because best qualified, from their long attendance on Christ's ministry, for promoting his religion in the world; but not with a view to exclude any Christians, who were capable, from co-operating with them in the same good cause. That this last was the construction then put upon that charge, appears not improbable, from the subsequent part of the scripture history. Philip, though no apostle, and probably at that time no more than a deacon, (that is, a trustee for the poor in matters purely secular) did all to the Ethiopian eunuch, which the apostles had in charge with regard to all nations. He converted, baptized, and taught him. No reasonable man can doubt that any private Christian was then, and is still, warranted if he can, to convert an infidel, and to teach him the principles of Christianity. Yet these are two important parts of the apostolical commission. If I should say the most important parts, I should not speak without warrant. Our Lord himself made proselytes, and instructed them,



“ but baptized none, leaving this merely ministerial  
 “ work to his disciples. Peter was sent to open the door  
 “ of faith to the Gentiles, by the conversion of Cornelius  
 “ and his family. But the charge of baptizing them he  
 “ trusted intirely to the Christian brethren who attended  
 “ him. Ananias, a disciple, was employed to baptize  
 “ Paul. And Paul says himself of his own mission, that  
 “ Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel,  
 “ denoting thereby, according to the import of the He-  
 “ brew idiom, that baptizing compared with preaching,  
 “ though a part, was but an inferior and subordinate part  
 “ of his charge. Nothing here advanced can justly be  
 “ understood to combat the propriety of limiting, for the  
 “ sake of discipline, the power of baptizing to fewer hands  
 “ than that of preaching, when once a fixed ministry is  
 “ settled in a church, and regulations are adopted for its  
 “ government.

“ THE doctrine I have been illustrating, so far from  
 “ being, as some romanists ignorantly pretend, one of  
 “ the many novelties sprung from the protestant schism,  
 “ was openly maintained at Rome without censure, about  
 “ the middle of the fourth century, by Hilary, a deacon  
 “ of that church, a man of erudition and discernment, of  
 “ whom I shall have occasion to speak afterwards. This  
 “ commentator, in his Exposition of the Epistle to the  
 “ Ephesians iv. 11. 12. has these words: “ Postquam  
 “ omnibus locis ecclesiæ sunt constitutæ, et officia ordi-  
 “ nata, aliter composita res est, quam cœperat; primum  
 “ enim omnes docebant, et omnes baptizabant, quibus-  
 “ cunque diebus vel temporibus fuisset occasio.” A  
 “ little after; “ Neque Petrus diaconos habuit quando  
 “ Cornelium cum omni domo ejus baptizavit; nec ipse;  
 “ sed jussit fratribus qui cum illorierant ad Cornelium ab  
 “ Joppe.” Again: “ Ut ergo cresceret plebs, et multi-

“plicaretur, omnibus inter initia concessum est et evange-  
 “lizare, et baptizare, et scripturas in ecclesia explanare.”  
 “Such were the sentiments of a respectable member of  
 “the Roman presbytery in those days; for conclave, both  
 “in name and thing, was as little known at Rome then  
 “as it is with us at present. Now though the gradual  
 “settlement of a regular ministry throughout the church,  
 “would gradually abolish an usage of this kind, it is na-  
 “tural to conclude, that wherever there happened to be  
 “a return of the like exigencies, through want of licen-  
 “sed pastors, every private Christian would not only be  
 “entitled, but bound, if capable, to supply the defect.  
 “So thought the Christians, who were dispersed on the  
 “persecution mentioned Acts viii. For “they that were  
 “scattered abroad,” the historian makes no distinction,  
 “went every where preaching the word.” Now the a-  
 “postles remained in Jerusalem, and ordinary pastors  
 “were not yet appointed. This is agreeable to what ap-  
 “pears to have been the general opinion, and even the  
 “practice where circumstances required, as far down as  
 “Tertullian’s time, about the beginning of the third cen-  
 “tury. This author, the first of the Latin fathers, in his  
 “*Exhortatio ad castitatem*, wherein he inveighs against se-  
 “cond marriages, having urged that Paul made it neces-  
 “sary in a bishop that he be the husband of one wife, in-  
 “troduces an antagonist replying, that the prohibition to  
 “pastors implies a permission to others to marry oftener.  
 “He answers, that the distinction among Christians, be-  
 “tween the priesthood and the people, who, by the ev-  
 “angelical law, are all priests, is of the church’s making,  
 “that is, as I understand him, is not of divine original;  
 “referring to what appears to have been the approved  
 “practice of laymen even then, who, when none of the  
 “clerical order could be had, celebrated the eucharist, and  
 “baptized, and served as priests to themselves. “Three

“ persons,” says he, “ though laymen, make a church.”  
 “ Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est confessus, et offers, et  
 “ tinguis, et sacerdos es tibi solus. Sed ubi tres, eccle-  
 “ sia est, licet laici:” It matters nothing to the present  
 “ question, that his doctrine of the unlawfulness of se-  
 “ cond marriages is unreasonable; it matters nothing,  
 “ that his argument is inconclusive; we are concerned on-  
 “ ly with the fact, to which he refers as notorious\*.”

THE next quotation, though long, will be found full of important matter. The first part of it relates to the right of private Christians to deliberate upon ecclesiastical affairs. The second part will shew what right Mr. R. has to presume upon the distinction of *Clergyman*, and *Layman*, or, to exalt his brethren and himself, above others, by giving them the contemptuous title of *Lay-Preachers*.

“ If for our direction in forming a judgment concern-  
 “ ing the persons who were originally, and seem to be  
 “ naturally, entitled, to have a share in all consultations  
 “ about church-affairs, we recur to the account given us  
 “ in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, concerning the as-  
 “ sembly convened at Jerusalem, on occasion of the dis-  
 “ pute about circumcision, we can be at no loss as to the  
 “ privilege of the people in this respect. Those who com-  
 “ posed that convention were (as the sacred historian in-  
 “ forms us) the apostles, elders, and brethren; first the  
 “ apostles, the extraordinary ministers of Jesus, who were  
 “ destined to be the founders of his Church, and whose  
 “ office, like the title that expressed it, was temporary,  
 “ and expired with them; secondly, the elders, *πρεσβυτεροι*,  
 “ the stated and ordinary pastors, whose office was succes-  
 “ sive and perpetual; thirdly, the brethren, that is, as the

\* Vol. I. pages 117.—122.

“ term in the New Testament is known to denote, pri-  
 “ vate Christians, who possessed no particular charge or  
 “ office in the Church. And to cut off all pretext, that  
 “ these last were present only as witnesses or bystanders,  
 “ the decree runs as much in their name as in the name of  
 “ the apostles and presbyters, being given expressly and  
 “ authoritatively as the joint command of all the three  
 “ classes mentioned. Thus v. 23, &c. “ The apostles,  
 “ and elders, and brethren, send greeting to the brethren  
 “ which are of the Gentiles. Forasmuch as we have  
 “ heard, it seemed good unto us, being assembled with  
 “ one accord, to lay upon you no greater burden than  
 “ these necessary things.”

“ I do not say that that meeting could be denominated  
 “ either a provincial or a diocesan synod, and far less a  
 “ general council. This model of management, in re-  
 “ gard to ecclesiastic matters, was not then devised.  
 “ But that the apostles themselves, notwithstanding their  
 “ supernatural gifts, called the private disciples to assist  
 “ in the determination of matters of public concernment,  
 “ may serve as demonstration to us of the natural title  
 “ that such have (whatever be the model) to participate  
 “ in those councils whereby the Christian community are  
 “ to be concluded. And that private Christians conti-  
 “ nued, in the first ages, to share in the deliberations of  
 “ their synods, we have sufficient evidence, as was signi-  
 “ fied already, from the ancient ecclesiastical writings still  
 “ extant.

“ HOWEVER, as in the space of a few centuries mat-  
 “ ters were, in this respect, greatly altered, and the  
 “ church wore a new face, and as these came at last to  
 “ be totally excluded, it began of course to be maintained  
 “ as a doctrine, that those persons, who did not belong

“ to any of the sacred orders, were absolutely unfit for  
 “ being received into their councils, to deliberate and  
 “ judge in spiritual and holy things; that for the pastors  
 “ to admit them, would be to betray their trust, and pro-  
 “ fane their office; and for such unhallowed men to ar-  
 “ rogate any power in these matters, would be no better  
 “ than a sacrilegious usurpation.

“ BUT before such tenets as these, which favour so  
 “ much of the political views of an aspiring faction, and  
 “ so little of the liberal spirit of the gospel, could gene-  
 “ rally obtain, several causes had contributed in preparing  
 “ the minds of the people. On every occurrence the  
 “ pastors had taken care to improve the respect of the  
 “ lower ranks, by widening the distance between their  
 “ own order, and the condition of their Christian bre-  
 “ thren; and for this purpose had early broached a distinc-  
 “ tion, which, in process of time universally prevailed, of  
 “ the whole Christian commonwealth into clergy and laity.  
 “ The terms are derived from two Greek words, *κληρος*,  
 “ lot or inheritance, and *λαος*, people. The plain inten-  
 “ tion was to suggest, that the former, the pastors or cler-  
 “ gy, for they appropriated the term *κληρος* to themselves,  
 “ were selected and contradistinguished from the multi-  
 “ tude, as being, in the present world, by way of emi-  
 “ nence, God’s *peculium*, or special inheritance.

“ IT is impossible to conceive a claim in appearance  
 “ more arrogant, or in reality worse founded. God is  
 “ indeed in the Old Testament said to be the inheritance  
 “ of the Levites, because a determined share of the sa-  
 “ crifices and offerings made to God was in part to serve  
 “ them instead of an estate in land, such as was given to  
 “ each of the other tribes. But I pray you mark the dif-  
 “ ference; no where is the tribe of Levi called God’s in-

“ heritance, though that expression is repeatedly used of  
 “ the whole nation. Concerning the whole Israelitish na-  
 “ tion, Moses, who was himself a Levite, says in an ad-  
 “ dress to God, Deut. ix, 29,—“ They are thy people,  
 “ and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by  
 “ thy mighty power.” The words in the septuagint trans-  
 “ lation deserve our particular attention. *‘Ουτοι λαος σου ε-  
 “ κληρος σου υ- εξογαγεις εκ γης Αιγυπτιας. In ισχυι σου τε μεγαλι.* The  
 “ same persons are in the same sentence declared to be  
 “ both the *λαος* and the *κληρος*. What, says the canonist,  
 “ at once laymen and clergy? That is certainly absurd;  
 “ the characters are incompatible: yet it did not then appear  
 “ so to Moses. Now would it be thought reasonable or  
 “ just, that what was allowed to be the privilege and the  
 “ glory of every Israelite, under the more fervile esta-  
 “ blishment of Moses, should, under the more liberal  
 “ dispensation of the gospel, be disclaimed by all those  
 “ disciples of Jesus, who have not been admitted into the  
 “ sacred order, which they, for this reason, have called  
 “ clerical.

“ WHEN we recur to the use of the term in the New  
 “ Testament, we find one passage, and but one, wherein  
 “ it is applied to persons. The passage is in the first  
 “ epistle of Peter, the fifth chapter, and third verse, which  
 “ is thus rendered in our version: “ Neither as being  
 “ Lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the  
 “ flock.” The words in the original are, *μηδ’ ως κυριουσις  
 “ των κληρων, αλλα τυτοι γινωμενοι τυ ποιμνιου.* They are part of a  
 “ charge given to the presbyters, or pastors, relating to  
 “ their care of the people committed to them, who are  
 “ called God’s flock, which they are commanded to feed,  
 “ of which they are to take the oversight, not the mastery,  
 “ and to which they are to serve as patterns. The same  
 “ persons, therefore, who both in this, and in the pre-

“ ceding verse, are styled *ποιμνικα*, the flock, under the di-  
 “ rection of God’s ministers, the shepherds, are also called  
 “ *κληρονομια*, his inheritance, over whom their pastors are com-  
 “ manded not to domineer. It is somewhat extraordi-  
 “ nary, that in the choice of distinctions, which the  
 “ church-rulers so soon showed a disposition to affect, they  
 “ should have paid almost as little attention to the style, as  
 “ they did to the spirit and meaning of the sacred books.  
 “ Let it be observed then, in the first place, that this  
 “ distinction, so far from having a foundation in Scrip-  
 “ ture, stands in direct contradiction both to the letter,  
 “ and to the sense of that unerring standard. I am not  
 “ ignorant that some expositors, jealous for the priesthood,  
 “ render the term *κληρονομια* here, the church’s possession. Not  
 “ to mention that this explication but ill suits the context,  
 “ and annihilates the contrast between an imperious mas-  
 “ ter and an engaging pattern, and supposeth an awk-  
 “ ward ellipsis in the words, allow me to ask, What were  
 “ the church’s possessions in those days? Was she so early  
 “ vested with lands and hereditaments, for it is to such  
 “ only that the term *κληρονομια*, when denoting property or  
 “ possession, is applied? Or have those interpreters been  
 “ dreaming of the truly golden age of pope Gregory the  
 “ seventh, when the patrimonies of some metropolitanical  
 “ and patriarchal sees were indeed like dukedoms and  
 “ principalities, and the grand hierarch himself could  
 “ dispose of kingdoms and empires? In the apostolic times,  
 “ on the contrary, the church’s patrimony consisted  
 “ mostly, I may say, in persecution and calumny, hatred  
 “ and derision, agreeably to the prediction of her Lord.

“ SOME have ascribed, but very unjustly, the origin of  
 “ the distinction we have been considering, to Clemens  
 “ Romanus, who, in his epistle to the Corinthians, which  
 “ I had formerly an occasion of quoting, contradistin-

“guishes λαϊκοί (the laics, as we should be apt to render  
 “it) among the Jews, from the high-priest, the priests,  
 “and the Levites. It ought to be observed, that it is  
 “introduced by him when speaking of the Jewish priest-  
 “hood, and not of the Christian ministry; neither does  
 “it stand in opposition to any one general term, such as  
 “κληρος or κληρικοί; but after mentioning three different or-  
 “ders, he uses the term λαϊκοί, to include, under one com-  
 “prehensive name, all that were not specially comprized  
 “under any of the former; and in this respect it exactly  
 “corresponds to the application sometimes made of the  
 “Latin word *popularis*. In this view it may with equal  
 “propriety be contrasted with men in office of any kind  
 “whatever. Thus in speaking of civil government, it  
 “may be opposed to ἀρχαίς, to denote the people as dis-  
 “tinguished from the magistrates; or, in speaking of any  
 “army, to στρατηγοί, to denote the soldiers as distinguished  
 “from the commanders or officers.

“I MAINTAIN further, that in the way the term is em-  
 “ployed by Clement, it does not imply that he consider-  
 “ed it as in itself exclusive of the priesthood and Leviti-  
 “cal tribe, to which the term λαῖοι is opposed in that  
 “passage. They are here indeed excluded, because se-  
 “parately named, but not from the import of the word.  
 “But as this criticism may, to a superficial hearer, ap-  
 “pear a mere subtlety or refinement, I shall illustrate it  
 “from some similar examples, which I hope will be  
 “thought decisive. Acts xv. 22. “Then pleased it  
 “the apostles and elders with the whole Church.” Here  
 “are three orders plainly mentioned and distinguished,  
 “the apostles or extraordinary ministers, the elders or fix-  
 “ed pastors, and the church or Christian people. But  
 “does this imply that the name church does not proper-  
 “ly comprehend the pastors as well as the people? By no



“ means. They are not indeed, in this passage, compris-  
 “ ed under the term, not because it does not properly  
 “ extend so far, (which is not fact) but because they are  
 “ separately named. The import of the expression is,  
 “ therefore, no more than this, “ The apostles and el-  
 “ ders, with all the Christian brethren, who come not  
 “ under either of these denominations.” Of the same kind  
 “ exactly is the passage lately quoted from Peter, where the  
 “ *πρωτοβυτηροι* are opposed to the *κληρικοι*, not as though the former  
 “ constituted no part of God’s heritage, or, to adopt the  
 “ modern style, *clergy*; they only do not constitute that  
 “ part, of which they are here commanded to take the charge.  
 “ In like manner Clement’s mention of *λαϊκοι*, after speak-  
 “ ing of the several orders of the Jewish priesthood, im-  
 “ ports neither more nor less than if he had said, “ And  
 “ all the Jewish people.” So that his manner of using  
 “ this term affords no foundation for the distinction that  
 “ was long after his time introduced; no more than the  
 “ general argument against the encroachment of the  
 “ people, or of the pastors, on each other, taken from  
 “ the rigid observance which the different classes, under  
 “ the Mosaic economy, had of their respective functions,  
 “ affords a foundation (as some have ridiculously urged)  
 “ for concluding that the orders, in the Christian mini-  
 “ stry, were the same in number with the Jewish. So  
 “ far indeed is Clement from giving any insinuation of  
 “ this kind, that, in a passage formerly quoted, he ex-  
 “ pressly mentions the Christian orders as being two,  
 “ and as having been clearly and by name predicted in  
 “ the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.

“ BUT to return to the distinction of the whole church  
 “ into clergy and laity: in after ages they even improved  
 “ upon their predecessors. The schoolmen (a modest  
 “ race, all clergymen) thought it was doing the laymen

“ too much honour to derive the name from λαος, populus.  
 “ It suited their notions better to deduce it from λαος, la-  
 “ pis, a stone. Take for a specimen a few things advanced  
 “ on this subject by some celebrated doctors, as quot-  
 “ ed by Altensfaig in his Lexicon Theologicum. “ Ca-  
 “ pitur clericus pro viro docto, scientifico, perito, scien-  
 “ tia pleno, repleto et experto. E contra laicus capitur  
 “ pro viro indocto, imperito, insipiente et lapideo. Un-  
 “ de laicus dicitur a λαος Græce, quod est lapis Latine.  
 “ Et sic omnis clericus, in quantum clericus, est lauda-  
 “ bilis; laicus vero, in quantum laicus, est vituperandus:  
 “ Clerici quoque a toto genere de jure præponuntur, et  
 “ debent præponi laicis.” To these I shall add the sen-  
 “ timents of Cardinal Bona, in relation to the care that  
 “ ought to be taken by the clergy, that laymen may not  
 “ be allowed to do themselves harm by studying the pro-  
 “ founder parts of Scripture, which their stupidity is ut-  
 “ terly incapable of comprehending. He kindly mentions,  
 “ at the same time, the books which he thinks they will not  
 “ be the worse for, and which, therefore, they may be per-  
 “ mitted to peruse. “ De laicis in quibus mater cæcita-  
 “ tis superbia regnat, quatenus ad ea quæ sunt fidei et  
 “ morum. Cum enim sicut idiotæ presumunt sacram  
 “ scripturam exponere, quæ est profundissima omnium  
 “ scripturarum. Cum iterum habeant quandam honesta-  
 “ tem exteriorem, contemnunt vitam omnium aliorum,  
 “ et merito hujus duplicis superbiæ excæcantur, ut inci-  
 “ dant in errorem istum pessimum, per quem excæcan-  
 “ tur a Deo, ut nesciant discernere quid bonum est et  
 “ quid malum. Quare non omnes scripturæ libros legant  
 “ laici. Quoniam nihil est tam sanctum et salubre et pi-  
 “ um quo non contingat abuti, sic de libris evenit, quo-  
 “ rum non est culpa, neque scribentium, sed scælus est  
 “ in abusu: non tamen arcendi videntur ab opusculis mo-  
 “ ralibus et devotis, nullam in se difficultatem, nec am-

“biguitatem, nec absurditatem in translatione gerentibus, cujufmodi funt hiftoriæ, vel vitæ, vel legendæ fantorum, nec non meditationes fantæ.” How condemning is the good doctor! He does not abfolutely prohibit the ftupid and conceited generation of laymen from reading fome of the plainer books of Scripture, and indulges them freely in what is better for them, ftory-books and godly meditations, and the legends of the faints\*.”

AFTER remarking, that the world is ruled by Names, and illustrating their effect in corrupting Chriftianity, Dr. Campbell fhews, from what fpirit Clergymen firft were led to affume the facred appellation, REVEREND.

“I MIGHT add to the above obfervations, that fome carried this fpecies of innovation fo far as even, one would think, to envy the Pagans the appellations they beftowed on the minifters of an idolatrous worfhip, and on thofe who prefided in their fecret and abominable rites. The learned doctor lately quoted, though a fincere Chriftian in his way, poffeffed much of that fpirit, and feems to regret exceedingly that we have no fuch fine words and high-founding titles as hierophant, hieromyft, and myftagogue. It was the fame fpirit that prompted, in the pastors, the affectation of epithets, added to their names, expreffive of their virtues, and of the eftem and veneration of thofe that approached them, fuch as moft holy, moft bleffed, moft religious, moft worthy of God, beloved of God, reverend, venerable, and many others, which it were tedious to enumerate, together with certain ceremonies, fuch as bowing the head, kissing the hands, and the like. Of thefe I

\* Vol. I. pages 295.—305.

“ shall only say, that though some of them became after-  
 “ wards, as words of course, mere marks of civil respect  
 “ for the office, they were, in their application at first,  
 “ intirely personal. If we were to settle a sort of spiritual  
 “ barometer for determining the precise quantity at which  
 “ piety and virtue, at any given time, arrived in the  
 “ church, I could not assign a better than the use of these  
 “ epithets and ceremonies, holding it as an invariable  
 “ canon, that in proportion as the external signs multi-  
 “ plied, the substance of internal religion decreased. At  
 “ no time could the Pharisaical scribes be accused of  
 “ greater ostentation, or more desire of greetings in the  
 “ markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, than  
 “ were, a few ages afterwards, the ministers of the humble  
 “ Jesus, who had so expressly warned his followers against  
 “ the imitation of their vain-glorious manners. Yet such  
 “ are the manners which even, in these more enlightened  
 “ times, the priestly pride of some prelatical preachers has  
 “ instigated them to write whole volumes to revive\*.”

AFTER repeatedly asserting the Scriptural meaning of  
 the word, Church, to be very different from what Mr.  
 R. seems to contend for, our Author proposes an unex-  
 ceptionable plan for settling the point.

“ If any impartial hearer is not satisfied on this point,  
 “ I would recommend it to him, without the aid of any  
 “ commentator on either side of the question, but with  
 “ the help of proper concordances, attentively to search  
 “ the Scriptures. Let him examine every passage in the  
 “ New Testament wherein the word we render church  
 “ is to be found, let him canvas in the writings of the Old  
 “ Testament every sentence wherein the correspondent

\* Vol. I. pages 317.—319.

“ word occurs, let him add to these the apocryphal books  
 “ received by the romanists, which, as they were either  
 “ originally written, or translated by Hellenists, amongst  
 “ whom the term *ἐκκλησία* was in frequent use, must be  
 “ of some authority in ascertaining the Jewish accepta-  
 “ tion of the word; and if he find a single passage, where-  
 “ in it clearly means either the priesthood, or the rulers  
 “ of the nation, or any thing that can be called a church  
 “ representative, let him fairly admit the distinction as  
 “ scriptural and proper. Otherwise he cannot admit it,  
 “ in a consistency with any just rule of interpretation\*.”

I SHALL conclude these quotations, of which I think my  
 readers cannot be tired, with two anecdotes from the same  
 author, the one intended to illustrate the tendency of High  
 Church honours, when given to the clergy, and the other,  
 the nature of High Church Faith, as instilled into the  
 laity.

“ I SHALL conclude this lecture with a story, homely  
 “ indeed, but apposite: An English country parson was  
 “ bragging, in a large company, of the success he had  
 “ had in reforming his parishioners, on whom his labours,  
 “ he said, had produced a wonderful change to the  
 “ better. Being asked in what respect, he replied, that  
 “ when he came first among them, they were a set of un-  
 “ mannerly clowns, who paid him no more deference  
 “ than they did to one another, did not so much as pull  
 “ off their hat when they spoke to him, but bawled out  
 “ as roughly and familiarly as though he were their equal;  
 “ whereas now, they never presumed to address him but  
 “ cap in hand, and, in a submissive voice, made him their  
 “ best bow, when they were at ten yards distance, and

\* Vol. I. page 326.

“ styled him *your reverence*, at every word. A Quaker,  
 “ who had heard the whole patiently, made answer;  
 “ And so, friend, the upshot of this reformation, of  
 “ which thou hast so much carnal glorying, is, that thou  
 “ hast taught thy people to worship thyself.” So much  
 “ for clerical and papal claims\*.”

“ *IMPLICIT faith* has been sometimes ludicrously styled  
 “ *fides carbonaria*, from the noted story of one who, ex-  
 “ amining an ignorant collier on his religious principles,  
 “ asked him what it was that he believed. He answered,  
 “ I believe what the church believes.” The other re-  
 “ joined, “ What then does the church believe?” He  
 “ replied readily, “ The church believes what I believe.”  
 “ The other desirous, if possible, to bring him to particu-  
 “ lars, once more resumes his inquiry; “ Tell me then,  
 “ I pray you, what it is which you and the church both  
 “ believe.” The only answer the collier could give was,  
 “ Why truly, Sir, the church and I both—believe the  
 “ same thing.” This is implicit faith in perfection, and  
 “ in the estimation of some celebrated doctors, the sum  
 “ of necessary and saving knowledge in a Christian †.”

THESE quotations are but a small specimen of the senti-  
 ments of a man, who was unquestionably one of the most  
 learned divines that ever appeared in the Church of Scot-  
 land. They form part of Lectures which were delivered,  
 for many years, with great approbation, to a class of students  
 in divinity, belonging to that Church. The reader will  
 judge how far they patronize the doctrine of Lay-Preach-  
 ing. When I consider that Principal Campbell must  
 have known, at least as well as Mr. R. what “ his so-  
 “ lemn engagements to maintain the Discipline of the

\* Vol. II page 201. † Pages 259, 260.

“ Church of Scotland” required ; I cannot reflect, without renewed astonishment, on the temerity of my accuser.

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I COME now to the most malicious part of Mr. R.’s pamphlet, where he asserts that the practice of the “ New Sect in the land” is likely to be attended with political danger.

“ HOWEVER careful those men may be in the admission  
 “ of members, opinions which some of them have propa-  
 “ gated, can scarcely fail to unite with the innovating  
 “ spirit of the age. Men naturally transfer into Religion,  
 “ those opinions which they entertain upon Politics. It  
 “ is scarcely to be supposed, that any who thought them-  
 “ selves wise enough to direct the helm of the nation,  
 “ will continue to bear the restraints which Presbyteries,  
 “ amongst our most popular classes of Dissenters, are in  
 “ use to lay upon them. Retaining still a form of piety,  
 “ they will, therefore, grasp at a system so congenial with  
 “ their ideas upon another subject. Even, therefore,  
 “ where the authority of the Parent Society does not at  
 “ all extend, its opinions may have their influence; and  
 “ may there foster a spirit of faction, detrimental to the  
 “ peace of every Christian Society, and dangerous to the  
 “ best interests of these lands.”

It is truly hard, that from a clerical opponent, one should so seldom meet with fair play. I have never yet seen an ecclesiastic make war upon those, who questioned the claims of his hierarchy, without desiderating, in his conduct, the plain dealing of an honest man. The cause, it would seem, of persecution, is so desperate and vile, that men must either abandon it, or submit to min-

gle artifice with their cruelty. In no case, are baser stratagems resorted to, than when it is the object to filch from adversaries their good name. In all the annals of assassination, indeed, it will be found to hold true, that in exact proportion to the malignity of intention is the semblance of candour, if not even of friendship. “Joab said to Amasa, art thou in health my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab’s hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground\*.”

REFLECTIONS like these are absolutely unavoidable, after perusing such a paragraph as that which is before me. It will be allowed that it contains the most awful charges; yet, from the one end of it to the other, there is not the production of a fact in support of them; the reasoning is merely hypothetical; and the hinge of the whole is expressed with a shocking ambiguity, which conceals its weakness, and is calculated to increase suspicion and alarm. All that was wanting to consummate the hypocrisy was an affectation of candour, with which accordingly Mr. R. craftily introduces his deadly thrust. He was wise for himself, in allowing that the men against whom he meditated ruin, “might be careful in the admission of members;” for an ample concession induces a belief, that even in the most favourable case possible, the conclusion must follow. But, says he, “however careful those men may be in the admission of members, —*opinions which some of them have propagated.*”—Here is the ambiguity of which I complain. Were Mr. R. cross-examined as to this phrase, it is very likely he would be

\* 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10.



obliged to explain it, as referring merely to their opinions on the subject of Lay-Preaching. For my own part, I do not understand it at all, if he intend it should refer to any thing else. But his purpose was better served, by avoiding precision. As the phrase stands, many a reader will suppose that Mr. R's. adversaries have propagated *political* opinions of a seditious or treasonable nature; and of course will swallow his inferences at once as obvious and indubitable.

AN attempt so scandalous to prejudice the public mind, connected as it is with so atrocious a purpose, I conceive, can be accounted for only by ascribing it to conscious weakness in point of argument, seeking to gratify ungovernable resentment, by other means. The advocates for Lay-Preaching, those of them especially, whom Mr. R. labours to destroy, because they have prepared the way for a New Sect in the land, have, from the very beginning, declared, in the most explicit manner, their sense of the duty of Christians to civil government\*. On this subject, their views will be found, not only more Scriptural, but much more decided, than those of the Clergy, in any national church under the sun. The politics even of those, who boast the loudest of their loyalty, may

\* See the Journal of a Tour, by Messrs. Haldane, Aikman, and Rait, undertaken with a view to promote the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, page 29. of the Introduction, second edition.—Plan of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, last paragraph,—And their Letter of Instructions to Itinerant Preachers and Catechists.—These papers which have been printed separately, have been also inserted in the Missionary Magazine, and the passages referred to will be found Vol. III. pages 59. 60. and pages 482. 483. See also A Sermon, by the Writer of these sheets, on the Duty of Christians to Civil Government. It is remarkable, that almost the only publications which state the doctrine of subjection to the higher powers, in that extensive and unequivocal manner in which it is treated in the New Testament, have been written by Dissenters from the national church

be referred, I presume, to one or other of the celebrated systems of Whig and Tory. As to the former, it is notorious that the Whig suspends his obedience to civil government, upon his own opinion of public measures. Even the Tory, who pleads for the divine right of kings, connects his allegiance with the reign of some particular family. Both hold it lawful to resist, by force of arms, a government of which they disapprove. But the men, whom Mr. R. and many of his brethren have conspired to defame as dangerous to the state, have explicitly declared, that they hold themselves bound in conscience to be subject to *the powers that be*, to the existing government, of whatever form, in whatever country their lot may be cast. Without regard to any opinion they may entertain of the merits of civil rulers, they will obey them in every thing, that case only excepted, (which all Christians must except,) where they might be constrained to say, "we must obey God rather than men." Even then they would make no resistance, but, if they could not flee, would look to God for grace, to endure persecution. Meanwhile, they pay taxes, they honour the king, they give honour to all, to whom honour is due, they pray for kings, and for all in authority, and are ready to every good work. Such are the *seditious* principles of the men, whom Mr. R. humbly imitating his brethren of last General Assembly, would hold up to the jealousy of government, and to public execration.

I HAVE not the least doubt that Mr. R. will deny our sincerity in these professions. I expect this, not only from his hostility, but from his apparent ignorance of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ. If, however, he shall ever submit to the plain doctrines of the New Testament, he will see, that such a political creed is not the expedient of a day, but an important part of

the faith, which was once delivered to the saints, and one of the most striking features of Christianity, as a religion intended, not for a national engine of state, but for universal diffusion, for peace on earth, and good will to men. He will perhaps be surprised to hear, that this creed has an intimate connexion with what he is pleased to call the doctrine of Lay-Preaching. Upon examination, however, it will be found, that, in all Scotland, there is no congregational Church, whether called Glasfite, Independent, or Baptist, which has ever received into its communion, or retained in it, persons who were known to be enemies to government, either in principle, or in practice. And wherever churches have been formed in any of the Tabernacles, the same rule is observed. This is a better test of conscientious subjection, than political Addresses to the throne. These Addresses may indeed be necessary to ascertain the loyalty of men, whose obedience is connected with the opinion they entertain of those fluctuating things, men and measures; but they are wholly unnecessary, with regard to those, whose obedience is connected with nothing but the unchangeable word of God. From such men, we shall never hear of a political Address, and we shall never hear of seditious practices. Without asking or expecting any peculiar favour, without thinking themselves at all entitled to civil privilege as members of a church, they will live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness, and in all honesty.

If it might not be deemed an insult to ecclesiastical dignity, I would send Mr. R. for instruction on these points, to the sermon of a very respectable man, and I believe a very worthy pastor of a Baptist church in Edinburgh, although, in Mr. R's estimation, nothing more than a Lay-Preacher, who has the audacity, not only to

pour forth, but sometimes even to print, and publish his  
 “ *loose harangues.*” The title of this sermon is, “ Loyalty  
 “ enforced by Arguments which are founded upon just  
 “ views of Civil Government, as an ordinance of God,  
 “ and essential to the happiness of mankind, to which is  
 “ added, a Vindication of some Dissenting Congregations,  
 “ who have been charged with Disloyalty by the late Ge-  
 “ neral Assembly of the Church of Scotland; by William  
 “ Braidwood.” This sermon I am willing to submit to  
 the public, as a specimen of Lay-Preaching, and I shall  
 not tremble at the issue of a fair comparison, at least as to  
 faithfulness, and Scripture knowledge, between it, and  
 the most polite, profound, or critical oration on the same  
 subject that ever proceeded from tongue or pen of Doc-  
 tor in Divinity. If Mr. R. and his learned friends, are  
 not of the number of those who delight in their scorning,  
 and hate knowledge, they will thank me for a perusal of  
 the following quotation.

“ A CHURCH connected with the State, or which  
 “ aspires after that sort of pre-eminence, may fight against  
 “ the State. And, not contented with obtaining an ec-  
 “ clesiastical establishment for themselves, they may en-  
 “ deavour to persuade the Civil Government to persecute  
 “ those who dissent from them. The General Assembly,  
 “ who would have us to believe that every Church is se-  
 “ ditious except their own, refer to an instance exactly  
 “ in point, when they boast of “ THAT CHURCH, *in de-*  
 “ *fence of which our fore-fathers fought and bled.*” And  
 “ their advice to the people to “ RECOLLECT *the counsels*  
 “ *and the practice of their fathers,*” seems to imply that  
 “ they also ought to fight and bleed in the same cause. It  
 “ may easily be recollected, that our fore-fathers fought  
 “ not only against Popery and Episcopacy, but also against  
 “ the Civil Powers, by whom those adversaries of the Pres-

“ byterian Church were successively countenanced and  
 “ established. In modern times, the Church of Scotland  
 “ has gradually relaxed, and seemed to be disarmed by  
 “ the *Act of Toleration*, and the lenity of our Civil Go-  
 “ vernment. She has long permitted the honour of o-  
 “ penly maintaining her ancient warlike principles, to  
 “ devolve on the disciples of *Cameron*. But now her  
 “ Ministers appear willing to resume the sword, and to  
 “ imitate the violent proceedings of their fathers; though,  
 “ in other respects, many of them do not much resemble  
 “ the Scotch Reformers. Their boldness, though hither-  
 “ to untried, may perhaps be equal to that of John Knox,  
 “ who feared no man. But do they also resemble him in  
 “ their knowledge of the Protestant doctrine, their warm  
 “ attachment to it, and the strictness of their religious  
 “ character?

“ WITH an uncommon degree of earnestness and zeal,  
 “ they have intreated the people to adhere to *a fighting*  
 “ *Church*; not recollecting that this is one of the most  
 “ prominent and distinguishing features of “ *Babylon the*  
 “ *great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth!*”  
 “ A FIGHTING PROTESTANT CHURCH AT THE CLOSE OF  
 “ THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY!!!—Christianity shud-  
 “ ders at the thought; and humanity itself would drop a  
 “ tear, did not all men believe, that the wisdom and be-  
 “ nignity of the British Parliament will, under God,  
 “ prove a sure defence against her hostile designs, which  
 “ are equally impolitic and unchristian.

“ WHEN General Councils endeavour to awaken the  
 “ fanatic zeal of the multitude, *by celebrating the martial*  
 “ *achievements of their ancestors, in the cause of religion*, it  
 “ becomes necessary to regard them with a jealous eye.  
 “ Have any of the Dissenters dared to publish sentiments

“ equally hostile to the peace of the country? If they  
 “ have, let them be prosecuted by the Civil Power, and  
 “ receive the punishment which their crime deserves. But  
 “ even in that case, the Church of Scotland could not con-  
 “ sistently challenge them for adopting principles similar  
 “ to her own.

“ IT is far from being the intention of the author to re-  
 “ present the national Church, or any other Church in its  
 “ collective capacity, as *actually unfriendly* to the present  
 “ Government. He has only endeavoured to show the  
 “ *tendency* of some principles, which is not always discern-  
 “ ed by those who hold them. He even hopes, that the  
 “ sanguinary expressions used in the Pastoral Admonition,  
 “ which seem to threaten the peace of the Dissenters, are  
 “ nothing more than rhetorical ornaments, or the un-  
 “ meaning language of persons who glory in they know  
 “ not what. It is difficult, in any other way, to account  
 “ for their unanimous assent to an abusive and inflamma-  
 “ tory address, which has greatly prejudiced them in the  
 “ estimation of all moderate and impartial men, who  
 “ have any tolerable understanding of the nature of  
 “ Christ’s religion, and of the character of its ministers.

“ IT is probable indeed that some members, who could  
 “ not but discern a striking contrast between their *Admo-*  
 “ *nition* and those of the Apostles to the first Churches,  
 “ were over-awed by the fear of seeming to give any  
 “ countenance to a new class of preachers, whose exer-  
 “ tions had offended the clergy in general. The suppres-  
 “ sion of lay preachers and catechists, being a common  
 “ cause, was earnestly and unanimously desired by all  
 “ parties; and therefore none of them were over scrupu-  
 “ lous in adopting measures, which they fondly imagined  
 “ would have a tendency to accomplish it.

“ THE General Assembly infer the disloyalty of all Dis-  
 “ senters merely from their professing certain *religious*  
 “ *principles*, which, although they are admitted to be un-  
 “ friendly to the established Church, have long ceased to  
 “ be viewed in a *criminal* light by many of his Majesty’s  
 “ loyal subjects, and by the civil power itself. Dissent-  
 “ ers from the national Church are not connived at; they  
 “ are *Tolerated by act of Parliament*\*. But no government  
 “ can be supposed to tolerate that which is in its own  
 “ nature a clear proof of hostility against the state. On  
 “ the other hand, it is pleasant to recollect that the prin-  
 “ ciples of established church-men, the intolerance of  
 “ which, and their disloyalty *in certain cases*, have been  
 “ so fully evinced by the Pastoral Admonition, can only  
 “ operate against the civil power in circumstances which  
 “ do not now exist. The Church of Scotland has been  
 “ long in the peaceable possession of an ecclesiastical esta-  
 “ blishment; and at this moment it remains unchallenged  
 “ and unimpaired by any effort of external violence. Other  
 “ parties who may have formerly envied her, are now, it  
 “ is thought, more disposed to allow her to retain her  
 “ birth-right, if she does not attempt to persecute. But  
 “ let it be observed, that this opinion is founded on *their*  
 “ *having forsaken*, in some measure, those tenets in the  
 “ religious system of their fathers, which led them to  
 “ fight for the establishment of Presbytery, and made it  
 “ impossible for them to bear a rival, or even to tolerate  
 “ those who differed from them, and who wished to live  
 “ in peace.

“ \* See an authentic copy of the Speech of William Earl of Mansfield,  
 “ in the House of Lords, Sept. 4. 1767, in the cause between the city of  
 “ London and the Dissenters, published by his Lordship’s permission, by  
 “ Philip Furneaux, M. D. in the Appendix to his Letters to Mr. Justice  
 “ Blackstone, concerning his Exposition of the Act of Toleration. 2d edit.  
 “ London 1771. The Doctor’s letters are also worthy of the most serious  
 “ attention.”

“ SUCH evils have frequently arisen from confounding  
 “ the kingdom of Christ with the kingdoms of this world.  
 “ And the loyalty of church-men, who feel an interest in  
 “ supporting ecclesiastical establishments, is sometimes  
 “ founded more upon the state of the times, than upon  
 “ any solid religious principle. But churches formed on  
 “ the plan of those “ which in Judea were in Christ  
 “ Jesus,” as they have no wish to participate in the ho-  
 “ nours or emoluments of the state, nor to employ its  
 “ power and influence in propagating their religion, are  
 “ in no danger of fighting against it. Can it be supposed,  
 “ that any man in his senses will hazard his life in order  
 “ to obtain for himself and his party, that which he con-  
 “ siders as a real evil? Or will he use violence for the  
 “ purpose of exterminating false religion, while he is deeply  
 “ convinced that nothing could more essentially injure  
 “ the cause of true religion? Is it not perfectly clear, that,  
 “ before he can follow such practices, he must change  
 “ his principles, or resolve to act in direct opposition to  
 “ them? Let the truth then be fairly admitted, which is,  
 “ that the principles maintained in the *Sermon*, and in  
 “ this *Vindication*, secure the loyalty of those who hold  
 “ them; and will never, in any possible case, excite se-  
 “ dition against the civil powers, how adverse soever they  
 “ may be to the authority of ecclesiastical rulers, who on  
 “ that account are not much disposed to do them justice.  
 “ They find it easier to misrepresent, than to refute them.

“ FROM these hints, and from the sentiments contained  
 “ in the *Sermon*, the public will judge whether the author  
 “ and his religious friends ought to be considered as  
 “ movers of sedition.” And he has no doubt that all  
 “ candid persons, except political clergymen and their  
 “ partizans, will honourably acquit them of this illiberal  
 “ and groundless charge\*.”

\* Pages 43.—47



To this quotation I shall only add, that if Mr. R. choose to repeat his dark insinuations, about political danger, against any of the advocates for Lay-Preaching; or against myself in particular; I shall be very much disposed to treat his slander with the silence of contempt. An endless alternation of assertion and denial, of libel and not guilty, would be a mere game at shuttle-cock, an amusement for which I have little inclination, and less time. I believe, that, in this country, both the rulers, and the public in general, have more sense, than to take *professions*, as a test of loyalty, either from Mr. R. or me, or any other person. My Bible affords me a plain direction, by which, after all the arts of clergymen to excite suspicion against me, I may still dwell in the land, without danger, and without alarm. “Wilt thou not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same\*.”

THE reader will now be able to judge, how far the opinions of the advocates for Lay-Preaching are likely “to unite with the innovating spirit of the age.” I am not afraid, however, to meet Mr. R’s. insinuation full in the face. Be it so, that “men who thought themselves wise enough to direct the helm of the nation,” should find their way into our communion. Let these men be supposed as bad as it is possible. Jesus Christ chose twelve Apostles and one of them was a devil. But if devils shall intrude into our churches, they will probably meet with less quarter there, than in some of the churches from which they came. We do not mean to display our discipline, in the partial and ludicrous penances of a *Catty-Stool*. Following the form of process, prescribed in the New Testament, we shall “mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which

\* Rom. xiii. 3.

“ we have learned; and avoid them.” “ We shall warn  
 “ them that are unruly†.” “ Them that are such, we  
 “ shall command, and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 “ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread‡,”  
 “ From traitors, having a form of godliness, but denying  
 “ the power thereof, we shall turn away§.” “ We shall  
 “ put the brethren in mind to be subject to principalities,  
 “ and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every  
 “ good work||.” “ And a man that is an heretick, (or  
 “ factious), after the first and second admonition, we  
 “ shall reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted,  
 “ and sinneth, being condemned of himself¶.”

MR. R.’s attempt to enlist the “ popular classes of Dis-  
 “ senters,” in his service, is extremely diverting. By way,  
 I presume, of gaining their confidence and friendship,  
 he kindly supposes, that enemies to the state are to be  
 collected only from their communion; as if none of the  
 seditious were ever known to belong to the Established  
 Church. Is not this a hint sufficiently plain, that the  
 artillery which is now levelled against “ the New Sect,”  
 will serve equally well, if occasion should require it,  
 against dissenting sects of every kind? Nay, Mr. R. not  
 only insinuates that the popular dissenters harbour all the  
 seditious at present, but thinks they must be so unwilling  
 to part with those worthy members, as to be provoked to  
 jealousy by the fear of their being lost. If I could sup-  
 pose, that any class of dissenters could, for a moment, be  
 duped, by such ill-disguised pretences of friendship, such  
 awkward attempts at unnatural coalition; that they could  
 be lulled into security by fair speeches; or ever feel indif-  
 ferent in any case to the persecution of brethren; I would

\* Rom. xvi. 17.

† 1 Thess. v. 14.

‡ 2 Thess. iii. 12.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 4. 5.

|| Titus iii. 1.

¶ Titus iii. 10. 11

remind them of Mordecai's message to Esther, "Think not  
 " with thyself, that thou shalt escape in the king's house,  
 " more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest  
 " thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and  
 " deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but  
 " thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed\*." There  
 is little occasion, however, for any admonition of this na-  
 ture. The Dissenters, however they may differ in other  
 respects, are very generally of one mind, as to the *sincerity*  
 of those political churchmen, who, pretending friendship  
 as their motive, attempt to intermeddle where they have  
 no business. A respectable minister in one of the most  
 popular classes of dissenters, has recently made to one  
 of Mr. R's. learned friends, a very pointed acknowledge-  
 ment for such 'good and faithful services; and Mr. R.  
 will do well to derive from it a use of warning†.

In the end of the paragraph Mr. R. affects to speak of  
 "the New Sect in the land," in terms apparently bor-  
 rowed on purpose from the organisation of seditious and  
 treasonable societies. He speaks of a "Parent Society,"  
 which will of itself suggest "affiliated Societies," and  
 both, the idea of political conspiracy. I am really at a  
 loss to reconcile such stabs in the dark, with any thing like  
 simplicity and godly sincerity. If I understand the New  
 Testament at all, it was exactly by such accusations, as  
 are here implied, that the chief priests and elders urged  
 on the crucifixion of Jesus, and afterwards endeavoured  
 to obstruct the propagation of the gospel. Mr. R. can-  
 not but know, that ever since there ~~was~~ was a church upon  
 earth, one church has given rise to others; churches of  
 the same denomination have always had, what they ought

\* Esther iv. 13, 14.

† See Mr. Peddie's Letter to Dr. Porteous, in defence of the Associate  
 Synod, particularly pages 39, 40.

to have, a friendly intercourse; and some of them, such as his own, have adopted very complicated and powerful bonds of connexion, in addition to those of the word of God. The Scriptures celebrate the unity of churches, as edifying and beautiful, and foretell an increase of it, as one of the most exalted felicities of the latter day. The "New Sect," are so well satisfied with the dictates of Revelation on this head, that they have not seen it necessary to have any other bond of union than that divine word, of which they in common profess to believe the doctrines, and in common endeavour to observe the ordinances, and obey the precepts. This unity, the offspring of love for the truth's sake, by which Christ saith, all men shall know his disciples, Mr. R. slyly points at, as a source of danger, a ground of suspicion.

It seems this Parent Society has "authority." That every society should have authority over its own members, and its immediate servants, is necessary, I apprehend, to its existence as a society. If Mr. P. can shew that there is any authority of one society over another society, of a Parent Society over affiliated ones, among those of whom he speaks, he must be possessed of proof upon the subject, of the nature of which I have no idea. I know that such authority has never existed, and I promise to decline it, if it shall ever be assumed.

BUT "even where the authority of the Parent Society does not at all extend, *its opinions* may have their influence,"—(here is the ambiguity again) "and may there foster a spirit of faction, detrimental to the peace of every Christian society, and dangerous to the best interests of these lands." My readers must be shocked with such virulent inferences, without proof, and drawn by hypothetical reasoning, from premises of vague indeter-

minate meaning. Opinions which can have the effects Mr. R. speaks of, must be diabolical indeed! What are they? If political, they have been described above, and the reader may judge betwixt us. If theological, I appeal to all ecclesiastical history, whether High Church opinions, or the contrary, have tended most to foster a spirit of faction, to disturb the peace of Christian societies, and to endanger the best interests of any country, or of these lands in particular.

THERE is yet another paragraph, which I proposed to examine, of Mr. R.'s performance\*. In the beginning of it, he refers, as an authority, to Dr. Jamieson, whom I cheerfully acknowledge to be a respectable writer. I do not agree with him, in opinion, but I have no inclination to meddle in the controversy between him and Mr. Hill, from whom he has just received a reply, and perhaps I might be found to differ, in some points, from both parties. I shall do Dr. Jamieson the justice, however, to declare, that I think him a very different opponent from Mr. R. The Dr. seeks not the aid of calumny. He avows love to the person, and even to the labours of his antagonist, as far as his conscience can approve of them; and in the very paragraph to which Mr. R. seems particularly to refer, he disclaims the suspicion, that any of the advocates for Lay-Preaching, have hostile designs against either the church of Christ, or the kingdoms of this world. Addressing Mr. Hill, he says, "I am far  
 " from supposing, that you, or any of those with whom  
 " you co-operate, wish to serve the cause of Scepticism,  
 " or really mean to injure the church of Christ. You act,  
 " I am persuaded, according to your light, although in  
 " this instance to me it appears to be darkness. As little  
 " can I entertain the idea, that either you, or they have

\* See above page 28.

“ any designs inimical to civil government. I feel no inclination to have recourse to such weapons, convinced that those, which the Holy Scripture supplies, are sufficient; whether I have been able to wield them aright, or not\*.” Had Mr. R. shewn himself capable of such honourable sentiments, he should, for me at least, have enjoyed all the satisfaction of a supposed victory, over Lay-Preaching, without molestation, and without answer.

THERE are now, I think, only three assertions, with which I shall give myself, or my readers, any further trouble. The doctrine of Lay-Preaching tends to support a perpetual revolutionary government in the church: it tends to overturn the office of a public teacher: and its advocates aim at that very end which infidels have been unable to accomplish. In replying to the first, I repeat that the doctrine of Lay-Preaching, as lately contended for, has been justified, only in so far as it might not interfere with the discipline of any particular church. But since Mr. R. attacks it, as peculiarly congenial with Congregational principles, which I doubt not it may be; I ask, are those principles one whit more revolutionary, than the principles of Presbytery, Episcopacy, or Popery? Is not what is called the System of Independency, of as definite, uniform, and permanent a nature, as any other system of church government whatsoever? Is it not the common complaint against Congregational churches, that, instead of being given to change, they are too tenacious of their notions respecting church order and communion?

As to the alleged tendency of Lay-Preaching to overturn the office of a public teacher; I ask, when, and where, has it ever done so? It will be trifling to repeat

\* Page 85. of Dr. Jamieson's Remarks on Mr. Hill's Journal.

the case of Cromwell's army\*. The Lay-Preachers in it depended, it seems, not upon the warrant and direction of Scripture, but upon a kind of miraculous assistance of the Divine Spirit, without any study or preparation. They violated every church order, for they took possession of the country pulpits where they were quartered. In short, they were bold enthusiasts, and they introduced all those disorders, which enthusiasm will always tend to introduce, both amongst Lay, and Clerical Preachers. Church history will furnish at least as many examples of enthusiasm among the latter as the former; and will shew, that when circumstances favour its growth, it will become ungovernable, in spite of every form of church government. The preaching of Cromwell's officers was not a mere example of Lay-Preaching, but of enthusiastic Lay-Preaching; and the circumstances which chiefly favoured the growth of their enthusiasm, were the principles and conduct of the High Church clergy. Had not men of sense been previously disgusted with clerical arrogance, and the multitude sunk in gross ignorance through clerical neglect, the enthusiasm of Cromwell's laymen would never have met with so much indulgence, or been able to produce such deplorable effects. After all, they did not succeed in overturning the office of a public teacher: on the contrary, their extravagancies tended to shew the importance of that office more clearly than ever. It is remarkable, that though Independents have always been the readiest to admit of Lay-Preaching, the unfavourable account of the Lay-Preachers in Cromwell's army, is taken from the testimony of an Independent against them†. Did the Assistant Minister of *Cambuslang* never hear of enthusiasm and disorder, mingled with the work of God,

\* See Dr. Jamieson's Remarks on Mr. Hill's Journal, page 69.

† Neale, in his History of the Puritans. Vol. III. chap. vi and ix.

where there was no Lay-Preaching, under all the orthodox forms of Presbytery, and in the very church of Scotland, the neighbourhood, and the parish, to which he belongs? It would be wrong to argue from such things, against the Presbyterian system, or to sustain them as a sufficient objection against that revival of religion, of which they contributed in some measure to tarnish the glory. A solitary case, occurring under remarkable circumstances, can never decide the merits of a general question. The fact is, that in Congregational churches, and where what is called Lay-Preaching is expressly encouraged, the office of pastors and teachers is considered as no less essential, than it is in any other churches whatever. All the silly declamation, therefore, about the lowest of the people becoming priests of the high places, restoring the Patriarchal age, promoting Infidelity, and forcing Christianity herself at last to retire; is a mere running away with the question, if not a poor shift to prevent simple readers from patiently considering the arguments which may be offered, on the other side.

BUT if it is indeed true, that the advocates for Lay-Preaching are *aiming* at that very end, which Infidels have been labouring to accomplish, all their apologies, however plausible, deserve to be spurned away with indignation. Had Mr. R. proved this, he might have spared every other part of his labour. Having neglected so much as to make an attempt at the proof, it was criminal in him to throw out the dreadful accusation. Let him consider well what he is *aiming* at himself, when he thus presumes to judge others. With us it is a very small thing that we should be judged of him, or of any man's judgment. But we will not boast of our designs. He that judgeth us is the Lord. "Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts. And see



“ if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way  
“ everlasting.” Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

THESE Animadversions, have been as unpleasant to me, as they possibly can be to any of my readers. I have found them an irksome interruption, amidst a press of important business, from which I would not wish, for a moment, to turn lightly aside; and now that they are finished, I am deeply sensible, that Mr. R. and myself might have been much more usefully employed, in the proper labours of our Lord's vineyard, where surely there is still room for us both. I felt myself-called to come forward, as a work of necessity, in vindication of the character of my immediate Christian connections, as well as of my own, against an attack of the most serious and dangerous nature, which was equally unwarrantable and unexpected.

WHILE I repel charges which are false, I am far from pretending, that either my friends or myself should be justified in every thing. “ If we say that we have no sin, “ we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” I am conscious of many faults, which it is my duty to confess to my fellow creatures. “ How much less shall I answer “ him, and choose out my words to reason with him, “ whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge.”

IN imitation of Mr. R. I give notice before-hand, that every anonymous reply will by me be disregarded. I mention this the rather, because the most unprincipled attacks have lately been made, in this way, both upon the personal reputation, and the public conduct of those, with

whom I am in some measure connected, as well as on myself\*. If Mr. R. shall think proper to return to the charge, let him observe the indispensable rules of ordinary justice, which require that the burden of proof should lie on the accuser. Let him state his case, with at least intelligible precision; let him produce what he supposes to be evidence in support of it; and, if I find myself unable fairly to prove my innocence, I hope I shall have the honesty to plead guilty. But if his allegations shall resemble those in the pamphlet before me; if they be conceived in ambiguous language, couched under oblique hints, founded in hypothetical reasoning, or in the secret whispers of an unnamed informer; the public will be sufficiently sensible from what I have written already, that my silence is by no means a tacit acknowledgment of their truth.

I AM not conscious of the smallest degree of irritation against Mr. R. personally; but, lest my heart should deceive me, I desire, as in the presence of God, and as I am taught to pray for pardon myself, to forgive him for every injury, which I have, or suppose I have, received at his hands. His High Church principles, I conceive to be foreign from the doctrines of Scripture, repugnant to the spirit of the gospel, and equally inconsistent with the peace of the church, and of the world. On these accounts, I wish to hate them with a perfect hatred. But

\* One of the latest instances of this kind, was a confident assertion, in a Magazine which has an extensive sale, that the Edinburgh Clerical Review, a contemptible and odious publication, which existed only to a second Number, was an engine, employed by the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, to sap the foundation of the Church of Scotland. The impudence of this charge was the more remarkable, that the Editors of that abortion had been particularly enquired after, and were known, by all concerned in its fate, to be men altogether unconnected with the defamed Society.

Mr. R., like many worthy men, may be sincere in maintaining them; and, while I am left to the liberty of my own conscience, I have no right to complain, if, in matters of this kind, others judge differently from myself. The cause of truth will never be promoted, either by deceit, or by violence. Theological controversy, however interesting, will in no case justify defamation, or any attempt whatever, “to reward evil unto him that was at peace with us.”

WHILE I give Mr. R. credit for sincerity, I am under the necessity of making a marked distinction, between his principles, and the manner in which he has endeavoured to recommend them. Of the latter, I have had too much occasion, in these animadversions, to remark the want of candour, the artifice, and the cruelty. To me, the very title page appears to be formed for deception. The passages I have quoted, not to mention many others of a similar description, sufficiently shew, that the book which contained them, deserved not so plausible a designation, as that of “Lay-Preaching indefensible, *on Scripture principles.*” It is strongly, but justly, observed by an eminent minister of America: “All hypocrisy is detestable; but I know of none so detestable as that, which is coolly written, with full premeditation, by a man of talents, assuming the character of a moral and religious instructor, a minister, a prophet, of the truth of the infinite God. Truth is a virtue perfectly defined, mathematically clear, and completely understood by all men of common sense. There can be no halting between uttering truth and falsehood, no doubts, no mistakes; as between piety and enthusiasm, frugality and parsimony, generosity and profusion. Transgression, therefore, is always a known, definite, deliberate villainy. In the sudden moment of

“ strong temptation, in the hour of unguarded attack,  
 “ in the flutter and trepidation of unexpected alarm, the  
 “ best man may, perhaps, be surprised into any sin; but  
 “ he who can coolly, of steady design, and with no unu-  
 “ sual impulse, utter falsehood, and vend hypocrisy, is  
 “ not far from finished depravity\*.”

IN justification of the severity of my censure, I plead, not provocation, but duty. There are sins, which must be reprov'd with a firmness, proportioned to their turpitude. The sins, which I have detected in Mr. Robertson's pamphlet, appear to me to be of this number; and as they seem, in the present times, to abound most grievously, among an order of men, who profess better things, and, by their prevalence, to threaten the most mischievous consequences, both to the temporal and spiritual interests of mankind; I should have felt myself blameable, had I neglected this opportunity, of bearing my decided testimony against them. Severe reprehension, when the case requires it, is not only warranted, but enjoined, by an inspired apostle, as a pastoral duty of a salutary nature. “ There are many unruly and vain talk-  
 “ ers and deceivers, faith Paul, especially they of the cir-  
 “ cumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who sub-  
 “ vert whole houses, teaching things which they ought  
 “ not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even  
 “ a prophet of their own said, the Cretians are always  
 “ liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true:  
 “ WHEREFORE, REBUKE THEM SHARPLY, THAT THEY  
 “ MAY BE SOUND IN THE FAITH.” Titus i. 10,—13.

\* Dwight's Sermons on Infidel Philosophy.



Page 30. line 5. from the bottom, for *requires* read *require*.