

of the hands of a Presbytery, among us, does by no means confer the same advantages. If the qualifications for the sacred office have not been acquired by the candidate for ordination beforehand, they will not be imparted in this rite;—and hence the peculiar necessity among us of a careful observation of the apostolical precept—“lay hands suddenly on no man.”

But we cannot doubt, that it was long the practice to ordain pastors, who had not received any special literary education, for the pastoral office. The circumstances of the Church and times rendered this necessary. There were no Christian Colleges to which candidates for the ministry might repair for instruction; and even, had these existed, it is not probable that the majority of such candidates could have afforded the time and expenditure which a lengthened collegiate education demands.—The field, which is the world, reeded labourers, and such were chosen as the Church could supply, and the exigency of the time required. When the alternative is, whether the gospel shall be preached at all, or by men of very humble attainments, the course is obvious;—by all means let it be preached. Better far that its precious truths be disseminated by the humblest instruments, and in the most imperfect forms, than that any portion of mankind should remain in ignorance of the only way of salvation. Upon this principle the founder of one of the most zealous sects of the present day, Mr. Wesley, defended lay preaching, and the admission of men into the ministry who had not enjoyed the advantages of a regular education.—He was a man too acute, and too learned himself to undervalue these advantages; but he clearly perceived, at the outset of his evangelical labours, that the learned were not likely to rally round

his banner; and deeming that the low state of religion in the Church of England, and the suppression of evangelical doctrine by a great majority of her Clergy, warranted the employment of such instruments as he could find to supply their lack of service, he did not hesitate to admit to the ministry, under his superintendence, men of piety, though possessed of little learning.—His plain and forcible argument for this step, if our memory serves us well, was, that as, when we cannot enjoy the advice of the regular practitioner in medicine, we may call in the itinerant vander, so when men are seeking death in the error of their ways, the exhortation of a pious, though illiterate man, may be the means of reclaiming them. Hence the origin of the Wesleyan plan of a fortuitous and itinerant ministry, through which the gospel has been preached in quarters that, but for it, might have remained destitute; and a system of foreign missionary operations has been carried on—so extended, and as we believe so efficient—as to call forth the admiration and gratitude of the Christian world. We cannot therefore disapprove of the adoption of this method in circumstances where nothing better can be obtained.

It is nevertheless as a general system attended with serious evils. Were no provision made to educate men for the work of the ministry—were it the rule to select ministers promiscuously from the Church, we might often be unable to induce the best qualified to enter the sacred office. They might be so involved in business as not to be able to disentangle themselves; or the prospects of temporal prosperity might be so fascinating as to render them deaf to the calls of the spiritually destitute; the Church might thus be cast for the supply of its teachers, upon the idle, or the