

mer had said, abstained from replying for the objectors.

Parties were then removed, when

Dr. Lee objected to the mode of reasoning adopted by Dr. Anderson, that because there were but 22 objectors to Mr. Blackwood and some 900 or 1000 names subscribed to the call, while Mr. Blackwood was popular over the entire kingdom of Fife, therefore it was the business of the General Assembly to settle him in Scoonie. He held that if, instead of there being 22 objectors there were only two, or even one objector, it would be the duty of the General Assembly to look at the objection or objections which these two individuals or that individual brought forward, and if, on the judgment of the Assembly it was a valid objection, it was their duty to give effect to it. With regard to the sermons of Mr. Blackwood, he was of opinion that not one of these objections had been proven, and not only so, but there was not only one of these objections which had any plausible ground of proof whatever. Could they expect a youth, coming out of college, plunged at once into the cares and labors and anxieties of a large parish, and called upon to produce two sermons in a week—could they expect him to write great sermons? (Hear, hear.) Why it would amount to the nature of a miracle to do so. They must look, therefore, at the circumstances, at the average attainment in them—and not apply a standard to these sermons which they felt would be unjustly applied to their own productions. There were, he granted, incautious expressions in these sermons, which, on more mature consideration, Mr. Blackwood would not have himself approved; but surely that was very common in the experience of a young man. The expression about “the solitude of the Deity” was in bad taste—was presumptuous, and was diving into things which we had no right to meddle with; but, notwithstanding that, it had older and far higher authority than that of any popular preacher in Edinburgh. (Hear, and laughter.) In like manner he disapproved of the expression, “a part of the Divine nature;” but he took into account the hurry in which these sermons were produced. It appeared that they were four of his ordinary productions, and though not great sermons, they were very creditable indeed to a young man of his age and standing. (Applause.) Every one of the objections could be most satisfactorily answered, and particularly the one respecting the doctrine of the atonement. In the passages cited by the learned counsel, there was an anxiety to express that doctrine fully. It was true Mr. Blackwood used commonly the expression “propitiation,” but that was a scriptural expression, and the word “atonement” in theological language, had often been used to imply, not merely the reconciliation of God to man, but of man to God. While they were not great sermons, they appeared to him to indicate, in various

passages, great originality and great power. (Hear, hear.) If the time or the patience of the House permitted, he thought it would be easy, not only to show, but to demonstrate that there were various thoughts in those sermons which would not occur to a commonplace man, and which would not be in the productions of a man who took his matter from the *Homilist*, or any other compendium. There was no doubt whatever that Mr. Blackwood would prove himself worthy of the affection and admiration excited in the parish of Scoonie; and he begged, in conclusion, to move that the appeals be dismissed, and that the judgment of the Synod of Fife be affirmed, and that the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy be enjoined to proceed with the settlement of Mr. Blackwood with all convenient speed.

Mr. K. McCallum seconded the motion.

Dr. Pirie said that, generally speaking, he entirely agreed with the motion of Dr. Lee. (Loud cries of “Agreed, agreed.”)

Mr. Oswald, of Camelon, wished to make an observation or two, and attempted to do so amid general and repeated cries of “hear, hear,” and interruption. Mr. Oswald protested against any member of the house being put down in this fashion, and renewed his attempts to be heard. A scene of confusion and excitement lasted for many minutes—members rising to their feet, some preparing to leave the hall, and others urging on Mr. Oswald to desist, as the moderator had declared the motion carried. Ultimately, amidst signs and expressions of impatience, Mr. Oswald succeeded in giving expression to an opinion regarding the discourses of Mr. Blackwood, in which he should have liked to have seen more of the evangelical spirit—more of the great leading truths of the gospel.

The motion of Dr. Lee was then passed, the result being received with great applause in the gallery.

#### THE ELGIN ACADEMY CASE.

A petition from the Synod of Morayshire, Aberdeenshire, and Rosshire, was then read, which stated that the Elgin Academy, being a national school which had been the means of doing much good to the Church and to the country, the Assembly had in former years instructed the Presbytery of Elgin to maintain its efficiency and vindicate its rights, if tried to be impugned, by a civil process at the expense of the Church. Circumstances had arisen which had necessitated the Presbytery to take advantage of these instructions, and they had gone to law to defend their rights. The case, accordingly, came on in the Court of Session, and was decided on the 16th of January last. In consequence of this the Presbytery had become liable to expenses, to the amount of £500; and as the case was now under appeal in the House of Lords, by the Town Council of Elgin, it was petitioned that the Assembly should adopt measures for relieving the members of the