

not bind other churches which do not consider these deviations as inconsistent with Christian character; and in minor matters of church order every church will regulate itself—whether in the habit of sitting or standing during praise—whether the pastor should preach in a gown and bands or in plain clothes—whether they should stand or kneel at prayer. Nay, should any church introduce such a profane accompaniment to the psalmody as an organ—although regarded with horror by many pious members, nevertheless objectors cannot bring the prelatical novelty before any ecclesiastical court—the majority of the church will settle its own affairs. But let a Presbyterian church indulge in any such liberty, and it will soon be pulled up by its ecclesiastical superiors, which will interdict its procedure, unless sanctioned by the supreme court. In the report of a meeting of the Free Church Presbytery last month, I observed that Dr. Begg proposed that the Presbytery should take effectual means to instruct their members in regard to the Scriptural authority of the Presbyterian Church government. To this he seems to have been more immediately moved by an expression of Dr. Caird's, which he quoted from a contribution to *Good Words*, to this effect:—‘Whether I travel by the highway of Episcopacy, or by the footpath of Presbyterianism, or by the open common of Independency, if I reach the presence-chamber of my Redeemer, it will give me small concern if I only win Christ and be found in Him’—a sentiment in which most Christians will concur, though it seems to have given great offence to Dr. Begg, whether on account of the laxity of the sentiment or the inapplicability of the comparison as emblematical of the three denominations. To me there seems considerable aptness in the parable. In comparing Episcopacy to a highway, he may have alluded to its being the road travelled by the higher classes; but I rather think that he must have referred to the wideness of the road as compared with the narrow footpath of Presbyterianism. In the Church of England, although the most discordant doctrines may be taught by her bishops and doctors, yet the highway is sufficiently broad to admit of their all travelling on it without jostling one another. Whether they be High Church, or Low Church, or Broad Church; whether Evangelical, Puseyite, or Rationalistic—there is room and verge enough for them all in the Church of England highway without any ecclesiastical police being empowered to make them move on in the appointed track, or run the risk of losing their status and stipends. I suspect, however, that it is not so much to the comparison of Episcopacy to a highway as to the comparison of Presbyterianism to a footpath that the rev. doctor objects, as if it implied contractedness and illiberality when contrasted with the others. But in the very speech which contains his animadversions he gives a strong proof of the propriety of the comparison, for he affirms that Dr. Caird and all Presbyterian ministers, instead of publishing such lax or liberal sentiments, are bound by their ordination engagements to the conviction that the Presbyterian church government and discipline are founded upon the Word of God, and that they are under the strongest obligations to maintain and defend them; plainly implying that if a Presbyterian minister would examine the Scriptures for himself to ascertain their teaching on this subject, he is bound to have no conviction contrary to the profession he made at his ordination engagements, and to take care that he does not wander beyond the limits of the footpath, lest he gets rubbed against the wall or torn by the hedge. When Dr. Caird compares the church polity of the Independents to an open common he appears to me to adopt a happy simile. In travelling over this common, where there is neither highway nor footpath, there is no doubt that some of