

Independent minister of Birmingham, has long ago published a guide for Church members and congregations of his own body; and various publications of the same nature have been issued from the American press. The Wesleyan Church has also long had a very minute directory for the various duties required of its ministers, agents and people. The time has therefore come, we think, when something should be done to put within the reach of our people as well as our ministers a "vade mecum" of our doctrine, worship and discipline.

Nothing so comprehensive as this has yet been attempted in the Presbyterian denomination. The books which we have, pertain either to the Scriptural elucidation and defence of our system, or to the procedure of our Church Courts. The latter of these are intended almost exclusively for the use of office-bearers. The oldest of these "forms of process" was printed at an early time by the authority of the Church of Scotland, and pertains only to the department of scandals and immoralities. We have also "Gillan's abridgment of the Acts of the General Assembly," a reprint from the older works of Bell and Dundas; and we have the somewhat celebrated "Collections and observations methodized concerning the worship, discipline and government of the Church of Scotland, in four books, by Walter Stewart, Esq., of Pardovan." This book, up till 1820, with the exception of the before mentioned abridgement of Acts, was the only Manual which was accessible to Students of ecclesiastical law, and although now somewhat antiquated, and considered rather loose in its statements for the historical and legal precision of modern days, it is yet a book of much value and should be in the possession of every minister who wishes to be competently acquainted with Church processes. In 1830 a fourth edition of "Pardovan" was published by Alex. Peterkin, Esq., of Edinburgh. It is said to be carefully corrected, and in addition to contain "The form of process in the judicatories—the first and second books of Discipline—Acts of Parliament, relative to the establishment of the Church;" and in the second volume, a more correct "Compendium of the Acts of the General Assembly, from 1500 to 1830, with some curious information in the preface concerning the fate of the early records of the Church. Since that time the Acts, Records and proceedings of the General Assembly have been more fully and carefully printed by the "Church Law Society," together with a valuable book of "Syles;" but these are difficult of access and of little use to general readers. To go back in our Chronology we find in 1803, a "View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland," by Principal Hill, of St. Andrews, printed as part of his "Theological Institutes"; and published in a separate volume, with a few corrections, in the year 1817. This tractate is characterized by the author's usual comprehensiveness and clearness. More popular than any that had been published before, it also contains many directions for the practice of the Church Courts. This useful book has, however, been altogether superseded by, or absorbed into, the more formal directory for "The Practice of the several judicatories of the Church of Scotland," by Dr. Hill of Glasgow, son of the Principal, and which has passed through five editions, the last of which was issued in 1851, and adapted to the altered condition of the Church of Scotland since the Disruption, especially in reference to "Calls" and to the management of the poor. This is unquestionably a valuable work, and one from which great assistance may be obtained in Church business, and in the construction of any Manual for our own use. It rests solely upon its own merits for its authority. It commits the Church to nothing. It merely elucidates the principles of procedure, and adduces the practice most generally adopted by the best ordered Church Courts in the execution of their functions.

The Church in Ireland seems next to have moved in this matter, and that too with some purpose. In 1841, after much care and deliberation, there was published "for the use of the General Assembly," whether by its authority or not