

ation to the judgment of the Presbytery, the late Dr. Murray declared in open court, that it was contrary to Presbyterial order, to allow the people to dictate to the court. However, when it was found the people maintained that they were denied that for which they were led out of the Church,—a voice in the election of a minister, and that they would return to the Church they left, were this denied them,—rather than this, the Presbytery had to succumb. And now, instead of the male communicants having the supreme control in the choice of ministers, there is no definite rule on the subject. So that, in respect to this grand principle, which led to the secession of the Free Church, they are actually lawless. "The Act of May 29th, 1843, anent the election of office-bearers, was merely the report of a committee appointed to consider the subject, contained some suggestions for the present, until congregations should be regularly formed; but it was afterwards found necessary to suspend it, and a declaratory act was passed 1st June, 1846, in which the General Assembly of the Free Church declare it is not necessary or expedient to procure a minute directory of regulations for the election of office-bearers, but that the Church should be satisfied with one or two general rules, . . . and that the Church Courts, in moderating a call, should show a reasonable regard to the inclination and convenience of congregations." Now, were it productive of any real benefit, it might be shown that, in attending to this *reasonable regard*, they have had as much disagreeable and disorderly conduct as has been manifested in the Established Church for scores of years, if not for centuries. And the natural result of raising the expectations of the people so high, and subjecting their licentiates to their tender mercy, is, that it is found that young men of talent and spirit have their attention diverted from the ministry, and the Free Church had to deplore this fact in their General Assembly, recently, with closed doors. But, it should be considered whether the people in the Church of Scotland or Free Church are most likely to have a choice of a popular, good minister? Facts give a reply to this. In poor parishes in the Highlands, where they had the most popular ministers in the Establishment, after seceding, these ministers were called away to more wealthy parishes, and the question comes to be, Are the people able to raise a certain salary, before they can have the services of any minister? But, it should also be considered how many of the people, in any Church, can hope to have their choice, before this dogma should be so industriously circulated; and whether it is desirable or conducive to the extension of pure and undefiled religion, to lead the people to regard this so very essential? It is very evident, in the Gospel and Apostolic history, that the doctrine and life of Teachers require close scrutiny. But, had the people been encouraged, in olden

time, or in the Apostolic Church, to indulge such finical notions about the externals of pulpit appearances in our freeness of utterance and excellency of speech, neither Moses nor Paul would have been countenanced by many congregations, and it would be taken as a sufficient proof, by many, that they were not sent by the Lord, because they were rejected by the people. Just think what would have been the position of the prophets, and apostles, and early teachers, if the judgment of the people was deified as in our day. We certainly think that, had there been half as much diligence exercised in recommending the people to be earnest at a throne of grace, that the Head of the Church would make choice for them, and to rely less on their own wisdom, and, likewise, that He would endow those in the office more and more with the spirit of their office, it would doubtless have proved more conducive to the peace and true prosperity of the Church of Christ; and, had delegations been sent round, and solemn advice given to those empowered to send forth preachers of the Gospel, to exercise the most faithful vigilance in seeing to the qualifications, and the moral and Christian character of all who receive their imprimatur, it would tend a thousand fold more, to advance the spiritual health and true well-being of all the churches. It would also most certainly be more in accordance with the spirit and tenor of the Word of God.

But the great consideration which should be kept in view, is, not what is said or done in times of general excitement, but what are the teachings of God's word? To adopt the lessons of those excited times, we would be led to receive the heathen maxim, "The voice of the people is the voice of God." And when we search for the Scriptural authority, which the most zealous try to adduce, we cannot but wonder that they should say so much, with such meagre quotations from the Word of God, and these, too, so indirect or inapplicable. To note two or three of these, which seem to give most support to their views: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world." I. John iv. 1. Again, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into thine house, &c." II. John v. 10. Now, it is clear that the warning is here against false prophets or teachers—those who taught false doctrine; and there is not the slightest reason to believe that they were tested as to the soundness of their views, or sent forth by the constituted Church authorities, as is done in the Church of Scotland. Once more, the transactions in the 1st chapter of the Acts, in which the election of Matthias is adduced, in proof of the right of the people to exercise this arbitrary power; but, to us, it does not appear to afford the slightest shadow of support. On the contrary, is it not unwarrantable procedure, on