

THE ARK OF GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF DAGON.

MR. IRVING and his Church have been ejected from Babylon, and have found a refuge in the jaws of Antichrist. The readers of this Journal will have been long prepared for this event. A preacher who thinks only of the truth of God ; who will preach Christ himself, and not doctrines about him ; who is only anxious to tell what God has taught him, without any reference to its effect upon man ; was sure at some period or other to get far more light than others into his own soul, and exhibit more than the rest would endure.

But if we regarded this occurrence as merely the ejection of a faithful minister from the Church of Scotland, we should not think it necessary to bring it prominently before our readers, a large proportion of whom belong to the Church of England, and most of whom are unacquainted with the peculiar circumstances which give to this occurrence the dignity of a sign of the times, and involve in it the most important consequences to the church universal.

The profoundest thinker of the age has characterised Mr. Irving as " a mighty wrestler in the cause of spiritual religion and Gospel morality ; in whom, more than in any other contemporary, I seem to see the spirit of Luther revived." (Aids to Reflection, p. 373.) And the ejection of this man will, we are persuaded, mark an era of far greater importance than the ejection of Luther from the Papacy. The Reformation properly began before the time of Luther, and he at first would certainly have shrunk from those decisive steps which the course of events at length forced upon him : the setting forth of truth was all he aimed at in his theses and first addresses, with no ulterior object. So has it been with Mr. Irving : he declared his convictions of truth according as God taught it him ; and when Babylon had rejected it all, God delivered him and his flock at a single blow. The last truth to which Mr. Irving had been led, and for testifying to which he has been cast out, is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. For this great truth, which is in fact the *peculiar* doctrine of Christianity, the Reformers left no place : they admitted it as a doctrine, but drew their forms of confession and their rules of worship and discipline *too strait* for their doctrine. The Westminster divines mistook reverse of wrong for right ; and they drew the Westminster Confession *so loose* as to admit almost every variety of doctrine ; and it has been adopted by a variety of sects, who, agreeing in no one doctrine but that of the Trinity, find they can tack on to this confession any form of worship and discipline which pleases them best.

But this seems near its close : God is bringing out his own

doctrines, and making room for them in his church ; and those forms and confessions which are too strait to receive them, or too loose to retain them, shall be burst and snapped asunder, like the green withs on the arms of Samson ; and Mr. Irving may be the " mighty wrestler " empowered to do the deed. Let any thoughtful member of the Church of England mark the discrepancy between the breadth of the doctrines laid down or implied in her standards, and the narrow and precise forms which exclude their exercise. Her Canons, for instance, prohibit the improper use of prophesyings and exorcisms ; but where is the provision now for their lawful exercise ? The Homilies declare that the Holy Spirit doth *always* manifest himself by his fruitful gifts ; but who dares admit them into the church ? What is true of one church is true of all : not one of them has left place for the exercise of those gifts which were common in the Corinthian and Ephesian and all Apostolic churches. Mr. Irving has been ejected from the Church of Scotland for daring to allow them a place ; and God will now clear a way for the reception of all his gifts, to gather and constitute an Apostolic church, to be set upon his holy hill of Zion.

We stand now at a most critical period ; at the turning point, in fact, in all the typical histories ; at the conclusion of the wilderness wanderings of one class, and the entry into their rest ; at the commencement of wilderness persecution and endurance of every kind for another party. The forty years' probation of the church is now expiring, and the church of God is about to enter upon her inheritance : and the man who shall make the world like a wilderness, the Saul who shall hunt David to the wilderness, the impersonation of the dragon who shall persecute the seed of the woman, is about to arise. Preparation for both these states is now begun : the ark is separated from the high place, and the Philistines boast of their victory. But what is the high place without it ? Ichabod may be inscribed on its walls ; and though the congregations may offer formal worship, as at Gibeah and Shiloh, the name thereof shall be called Bamah (Ezek. xx. 29 ; Psal. lxxviii. 60 ; Jer. vii. 12 ; xxvi. 6).

The ark in the temple of Dagon is the type which explains what is now going on ; and considerations like the above, which we can only thus hastily glance at, induce us to attach more than its seeming importance to the ejection of Mr. Irving and his Church, from the Church of Scotland. It is profitable to bring before our minds the circumstances which led to this event, and to mark the way in which God had been preparing Mr. Irving for the important part which he seems designed to take in fulfilling the purpose of God.

When this gentleman first arrived in London, he was deeply infected with the intellectual pride of his countrymen, and

imagined that by setting forth the truths of Christianity in the forms of the schools, rather than in the forms of the Spirit, he might induce the philosophers and men of science to become Christians. The notion was erroneous, because, although the plan were to be accomplished, yet in that case Christianity would only be received as a science; and although it might furnish food for the mind, the affections and tastes would remain unmoved. In his Orations, and other sermons preached at that period, there are phrases quite as loose and objectionable as any which have occurred in his later works; but they excited little wrath, as they did not arraign the practices of men, nor carry home conviction of error to their consciences; while the church was crowded to suffocation with grandees of all classes, peers and peeresses, lawyers, metaphysicians, philosophers of every grade, and members of literary and scientific societies. During all this outward shew, however, there is no ground to believe that a single soul was effectually turned to God.

Mr. Irving was next brought to discourse on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, during the preparation of his church for the celebration of that ordinance; and he was led to preach upon the mystery of the Trinity, the impossibility of an incarnation of Deity, without it, and its application to the elements commemorating the risen Saviour, and the wine of the Spirit, and the kingdom. He at that time had no more knowledge of the subject than every well-taught minister usually acquires at college: but in watering others he was watered himself: the preciousness of the doctrine was brought with power to his own soul, and symptoms of spiritual life began to be manifested in the midst of his flock; so that a considerable number of intelligent young men applied for admission to the table of the Lord.

About this period of his ministry the Scotch Church in Regent Square was built; and amongst the first subjects to which he directed the attention of his hearers was that of the coming kingdom of the Lord, shewing that the locality of heaven was on this earth. This doctrine excited some clamour amongst the Society people, who had been falsely prophesying that the conversion of the world and the introduction of the Millennium was reducible to a sum in the Rule of Three; and that, if only a given amount of money could be obtained, preachers could be hired, and Bibles and tracts printed, sufficient for the whole work, without the interference of Christ in person at all. Mr. Irving had had the elements of the mechanical arrangement of the Apocalypse explained to him by Mr. Frere, who knew no more of the subject; and an application of the Committee of the Continental Society to preach their anniversary sermon afforded a fit opportunity for Mr. Irving to put forth the light which he had himself just obtained.

On the occasion of another celebration of the Sacrament he was again induced to turn his attention to the meaning of the sacred elements, and the benefits which accrue to the faithful thereby: and the doctrine of the human nature assumed by the Son of God, and his work in that nature, was necessarily treated of. A foolish heretic coming into the church, and hearing something which he did not understand, raised the cry of heresy against Mr. Irving. This was caught at readily by the radical schismatics, who, while they were unable to refute, were mortally offended at, the doctrine of the kingdom of Christ, and the present vicegerency of all earthly kings: and as it was more easy to rail than to argue, and as abuse is a more rapid outlet for ill temper than cool discussion, they have never allowed the din of heresy to be silenced from that time.—The next doctrine which was opened up was that of Baptism, in the course of which the right and privilege of the Christian church to possess all the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Ghost with which it was endowed at Pentecost was declared.—The last doctrine which he was brought to see, and which is the essence of the Christian life, is the absolute holiness necessary for all who aspire to be the bride of the Lamb: which has been insisted upon, and shewn to be possible, through the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost in all his holiness, love, and power. This was not to be borne any longer: doctrines were bad enough; but when it was held and maintained that men might not continue in sin; that the Calvinists could not get to heaven by believing certain propositions about justification and sanctification and election and final perseverance, while they continued in a course of slander, wrath, malice, backbiting, and defamation, it was high time to get rid of such a fellow from the earth; but, fortunately, not having the power YET to do this, they only did all they could, which was to get rid of him out of the kirk.

Time does not allow of our going more at length into the subject: suffice it to say, that the sentence of deposition by the presbytery was passed on Wednesday the 2d of May;—that the Sacrament had been appointed for the Sunday following: that, consequently, Thursday was the fast, which is always considered part of the ordinance;—that the ordinance was therefore interrupted by the notice being served on Mr. Irving on Thursday evening;—that on Friday morning the elders and deacons assembled, with Mr. Irving, in prayer, that the Lord would direct them to find a place in which the church might still celebrate the sacrament;—that they then went out different ways in search, trusting to the Lord to guide their steps in whatever direction He should please;—that all the chapels of all the professing Christians in London, where they applied, were refused them;—that the only place which was offered was the Ball

Room in which Mr. Owen, who professes to be an infidel, delivers his lectures ;—and that, in this place, on Sunday the 6th of May, at two o'clock in the afternoon, did Mr. Irving administer the ordinance to three elders and two deacons, together with the precentor, beadle, and almost the whole of his church, containing, probably, little short of eight hundred communicants, who had been previously admitted.

Upon every principle, no place in Europe could have been less desirable than that which it was alone possible to obtain. God, indeed, has taught us by it to feel that “He dwells not in houses made with hands ;” and that “the hour now is when neither in Jerusalem, nor in any mountain, shall we worship the Father ; for that he is a Spirit, and is seeking those only to worship him who will worship him in spirit and in truth.” This refuge is of course only temporary : the Lord’s dealings are wonderful : it is a place necessarily repugnant to the feelings of every Christian ; but God may have designed it to point out the strictness of the confederacy of the hypocritical churches against the hearing of His own voice in the midst of them, and to shew that He would not suffer any such association to break up a church that reverences the ministry of the word and the ministry of the Spirit.

The wheels of God’s providence move round the fate of nations ; and the dews from heaven fertilize and the sun of heaven ripens, or the windows of heaven are closed and the heat of heaven scorches, according as He wills to bless or to chasten a people. The wheels of nations move round the church ; and these rise or fall according as the institutions of religion are honoured or neglected. The wheels of the church move round the unseen prayers of the elect ; and the secularity of the priests in the desecration of their offices draws not down, though it provokes, the righteous vengeance of Omnipotence, for the sake of the true salt which is diffused through the mass. The wheels of the elect move round the Spirit of God within them : the living creatures go by the wheel in the middle of a wheel ; and whithersoever the Spirit goes, the living creatures go.

The fall of England, the cholera and the sword, has come on account of the wickedness of the people : the wickedness of the people has grown out of the apostasy of the church : the church has cast out the Spirit of the living God, and rejected His voice with unprecedented unanimity : and on the very first day that the Parliament met after this event, the government was overthrown, and a universal cry of a refusal to pay tribute was raised among the people. Let no one sneer, as if, in self-righteous arrogance, we claimed for Mr. Irving, or for the members of his church, greater holiness than others possess. No ; it is of the Sovereign Grace of God that his Spirit has been put into that church. But there it is, and the pastor has honoured

it, and the people have revered it, and all have welcomed it; and a spiritual ministry is there established, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Our readers may be glad to know likewise a few of the legal points of the case, which we will give as briefly as we can.—The building in Regent Square, though called the National Scotch Church, took that name from the accidental circumstance of Mr. Irving's being of the Church of Scotland. It was built by subscriptions, chiefly from personal friends of Mr. Irving, a large proportion of them being Englishmen. Some of the trustees were such, and one of them we know to be of the Church of England; and we have heard him declare, that he should never enter that building if Mr. Irving were removed. Many of the subscribers were positively told that the church was erected solely for Mr. Irving, and that provision had been made against the possibility of removing him. One of them writes thus: "When I was urged repeatedly to subscribe, and also to contribute to various collections, with all of which I subsequently complied, I was assured that no power whatever could displace Mr. Irving: on which assurance alone I consented; not being a member of the Church of Scotland, and having a strong objection to contribute to a church in connection with it."

Mr. Irving, however, has been removed and we now propose to consider the question, between the trustees on the one part and Mr. Irving on the other, in its legal bearings: and for this purpose will first discuss the state of the cause (to use a technical expression) as it was brought before the London presbytery; and, secondly, the jurisdiction which the presbytery possessed in the matter, and the way in which they exercised it, from the commencement to its final decision. In doing so we shall abstain as much as possible from comment: the bare relation of what passed is more fatal than any comment which could be made on the presumptuous ignorance and the pre-resolved injustice which marked every part of the judicial conduct of that tribunal, to which alone we now restrict ourselves. It is well for the moral interests of mankind, that, if injustice be perpetrated, it should be perpetrated in an unrighteous manner; and that the veil which it is attempted to throw over the ACT should be so slight as inadequately to conceal the real nature of the PRINCIPLES and MOTIVES.

I. 1. We repeat, that the church was avowedly built for Mr. Irving—built on the credit of his name—and, without that, it never would nor could have been built; and therefore it was never contemplated but that Mr. Irving should hold it for life. Yet, as Mr. Irving was not to be the only person who should hold the situation of minister, and the trust was to be perpetual, it was necessary, in framing the deed, to make proper provisions

for the election and removal of the minister in case of misconduct. Not to have included Mr. Irving in these provisions, so far as they could be applicable to him, would, indeed, have been to raise him above all rules, which none have contended for; and therefore the fact of their being made applicable to him, is no proof for the statements, attempted to be urged by the acting trustee on the trial, that the clause for removal was expressly made applicable to him, with a direct reference to the possibility of such a case as has occurred. To those who know any thing of the facts, this is too absurd to require an answer; but as the statement was made, we have deemed it right to say so much in observation on it.

To remove a minister, to sever the connection between a pastor and his flock, is, and ever has been, esteemed in the church of Christ one of the most important and awful acts which a Christian community can be called upon to perform. In all established churches it has ever been reserved, if not in the first instance, yet at least by means of appeal, to the highest authority. As Mr. Irving and the Regent-Square Church were situated, it was necessary to constitute a tribunal, for a tribunal having intrinsic authority there was none. The most obvious, and under general circumstances the most proper, tribunal was chosen—namely, that voluntary association which existed, of the ministers and elders of the Established Church of Scotland in London. True they were in a foreign land, surrounded by persons belonging to other divisions of the Christian church, and removed from the review both of their brethren and their inferiors in their own church; and, therefore, from the controul of that general knowledge of ecclesiastical proceedings and maxims of ecclesiastical jurisprudence which would necessarily be found among their countrymen in Scotland. True they only assumed to themselves, and among themselves (by voluntary agreement), to supply the place of a court, which, so far from being the final court of jurisdiction, fulfils in Scotland, for the most part, the function merely of preparing and reporting proceedings for a higher court. Still they were the best that could be had; and in choosing them it was the more necessary to guard against improper applications, and to lodge the power of complaint in proper and sufficient hands. There were selected for this last purpose three bodies—namely, 1st, the trustees, consisting of sixteen individuals, and who, under the provisions of the deed, were never to be permitted to sink below eight in number; and when reduced to seven, were to be increased to at least thirteen: 2dly, the elders and deacons: and 3dly, twenty seat-holders, being heads of families and communicants. The clause is as follows:

“That in case the trustees for the time being of the said church, or the elders and deacons for the time being of the said

church, or any twenty seat-holders for the time being, being respectively heads of families and communicants in the said church, and respectively paying for two or more seats therein, shall be of opinion that the minister for the time being is unworthy or unfit to be continued in his office of minister, the persons or person so for the time being considering the minister unworthy, &c., shall make a specific complaint to the London Presbytery." And then follow the clauses directing the form of proceeding in such complaint.

Now, to a lawyer, it is unnecessary to waste an argument, in addition to the mere statement of the words, to prove, that, in order to bring a valid complaint against the minister on which the award of the Presbytery could have any legal effect, it was necessary that all the trustees, and not merely a majority—or all the elders and deacons, and not merely a majority—or all the twenty seat-holders, being heads of families and communicants, and not merely a majority—should prefer that complaint. And to one not a lawyer, it is surely, if possible, even less necessary to explain that the words "the trustees" cannot be interpreted to mean 'some of the trustees.' But pass by the technical consideration of the mere words, and what—do we ask of any considerate person—what could have been the intention of the parties under whose direction the deed was constructed, and who have expressed that intention in so plain a manner? Look at the whole animus of the passage (if the Presbytery will permit us to use the expression, since they forbid it to Mr. Irving in his defence): see the care with which they provide that not even to twenty seat-holders, except they be heads of families, and communicants, is this power of complaint committed.

However, the legal effect of the clause is most clear; and, inasmuch as two of the trustees dissented from the proceeding, it follows that the whole of those proceedings, which filled with indignation all, even the most indifferent, who witnessed them; and that decision, which consigned to the open air, or to take refuge in an Infidel Lecture-room, a minister and his whole church, amounting to about eight hundred persons, on the very eve of partaking together of the most solemn rite of our religion, were in law absolutely inoperative and void.

This is so clear a case that we are warranted in asking, were not the trustees aware of this difficulty? They had legal advice, the advice of the very party under whose superintendence the deed had been drawn; and we happen to know that the point was not overlooked: we trust, for the sake of common honesty, it was not very prominently brought before their notice. What, then, are we to think of parties who could persevere in bringing the case forward, if they knew that their only hope of final success was the non-resistance of their victim? What are we to think? Not worse, surely, than of their ever consenting

to bring it before a tribunal which had already condemned their pastor as an heretic.

But it may be asked, Why did not the trustees, if aware of this defect in their case, remedy it by applying to so many seat-holders and communicants as, with those of them who were communicants (for they were not all communicants), should make up the number of twenty? The answer is, Because there were not twenty communicants who would have joined in the complaint. Many of the communicants, it is to be feared, did not heartily concur in the late proceedings of Mr. Irving: but that is a very different grade from desiring the removal of their pastor, and still further from descending to any participation in the act of the trustees in making this complaint: and therefore, when, from the conduct of the presbytery, it was evident, that, whether heard or unheard, Mr. Irving's future fate had been decided upon, and when in conducting their case, the complainants had dared to press for the decision of the presbytery in their favour, as a matter of justice to the subscribers to the church, the whole body of the subscribers and of the congregation, seat-holders and communicants, members and attendants on the word, came forward to memorialize the presbytery against the removal of Mr. Irving. That Memorial the presbytery in their wisdom would not even allow to be read! A point of form prevented its reception, as constituting the Memorialists parties to the suit, as they expressed it; and therefore the prayer of a whole flock, headed by their senior elder, and about to be cast out from their habitation, or separated from their pastor, was smothered before it could ascend to the ears of this high court of commission.

So much on the objection taken by Mr. Irving preliminarily to the discussion of the case, and which should have stopped these proceedings in their birth: but it was overruled. The members of the presbytery "were all reluctant to have any thing to do with the case," as they more than once declared: but they found out, that because, under the provisions of the deed, seat-holders at their general meetings were to decide matters by a majority; and because the decision of the major part of the committee of management, and of deacons, at their respective meetings, was to be binding; therefore—because the clause providing the mode of making complaint was made an exception to the rest of the deed—therefore they ruled that it was intended that it should not be an exception.

2. The objection having been overruled, and the complaint being taken to be properly brought under the notice of the presbytery, we now proceed to consider more strictly the nature of that complaint. It is, then, not on account of false doctrine preached; not for neglect of discipline; not for omitting any part of the worship of the Church of Scotland; not for changing

any part of it—all these, doctrine, discipline, and worship, remained as before. What, then, was the ground on which the complainants deemed Mr. Irving unfit to continue a minister? Simply for giving place and paying reverence to that which he believed to be the voice of God, and which they did not believe: simply because he had faith, and they had none, in this matter: simply because he wished to lead and instruct them, which was the very purpose for which he was set over them.

Such was the real occasion of the complaint. Mr. Irving has broken down nothing, and omitted nothing, in his services: but, in addition to the usual services, he has allowed, or not prohibited, the voice of God in his own temple. But it is of very little consequence, so far as we are at present concerned, whether the complainants or the Presbytery agreed or did not agree in Mr. Irving's views. The latter had no spiritual authority over Mr. Irving. They had no right to say, You are wrong in coming to or acting on this belief. Their only part was to adjudicate the case as it stood before them in evidence.

There is nothing, nor can be, in the standards of the Church of Scotland (nor of any church) which can be construed to forbid the Spirit of God speaking in the midst of the church. There is nothing in those standards to say that God will not be pleased again to raise up prophets. The nearest approach to this is a statement, "that the extraordinary calling by God himself immediately, as was of the prophets and apostles, in kirks established and well already reformed, has no place." (2d Book of Disc. ch. iii.) But this is so far from denying the possibility, that it clearly sanctions the probability, of such extraordinary calling—unless it be contended that Reformed churches can never fall away from the truth. And, in corroboration, it is expressly asserted, in the previous chapter of the Book of Discipline, that the office of the apostle, evangelist, and prophet have now ceased, "*except* when it please God extraordinarily for a time to stir some of them up again."

If, then, the possibility of the bestowal of supernatural gifts be once admitted, it becomes necessary, previously to the condemnation and extrusion of a minister for permitting the exercise of what he believes to be such gifts, to ascertain whether the assumed gifts be pretensions or not. But how can this be ascertained? It is a matter in its very nature incapable of being proved or disproved by evidence, except from the testimony of the gifted persons themselves. None other can by possibility testify to more than his belief. And, if not disproved on the evidence of the persons presumed to be gifted, so far as evidence will go, the case against the minister must fail. But, then, it is clear that there must be an authority in the church to try those that say they are apostles or prophets, and either to permit or

to forbid the exercise of their gifts; and that authority, in Mr. Irving's case, was Mr. Irving, and himself alone. If it were not Mr. Irving, who could it be? Not the Presbytery of London: they had no spiritual jurisdiction or supremacy over Mr. Irving or his church: and certainly neither the trustees who chose to interfere in the matter, nor the public press, which lashed and goaded the trustees to that interference. Mr. Irving was the sole judge of the matter, and he decided that the supposed gifts were indeed of the Spirit of God; and in order to convict him of a false judgment therein, it was imperative on the complainants to bring evidence that these supposed gifts were not of the Spirit of God. But how does the case, as supported by evidence, in fact stand? *Three* witnesses were called; *two of whom* on oath declared their firm belief that the matter complained of was the voice of the Spirit of God. This was no proof *against* Mr. Irving. Had they both sworn that the contrary was their *belief*, it could not have enabled the court to pronounce against Mr. Irving. But the third and *only other witness*, swore to the fact that he had been one of the parties who had been the occasion of the complaint, and that he *did* speak by the power of the Spirit of God. This was the only evidence adduced, except Mr. Irving's letters, which, of course, contained statements only to the same effect. And on this evidence the Presbytery decided in express terms, that the *gifts* were supposititious.

Such is the fair statement of the case brought for the adjudication of the Presbytery. We now proceed to consider their exact position in respect of jurisdiction, and their manner of exercising their brief authority; passing by the fact, that, as matters stood, they had no jurisdiction whatever, there being no valid complaint before them, the which could alone have given them jurisdiction.

II. In the first place, then, be it remembered, that as a presbytery they had no authority. They were not in the position of that court in Scotland, dealing with a minister legally brought before them, and over whose entire ministerial conduct they could legally exercise controul. In one word, they were merely arbitrators, who were called upon to give their award upon the subject matter contained in the complaint, as supported by evidence, on the one part; and the answer of the defendant, on the other part. The fact that this court had previously, on another question, pronounced Mr. Irving an heretic (although, having no jurisdiction over him, their judgment was but *brutum fulmen*, an inoperative bull), had so altered the relation between the Presbytery and the National Scotch Church, that, in the eye of equity, they could no longer be regarded as impartial arbitrators; and, no doubt, on application to the Court of Chancery Mr. Irving would have been relieved from the necessity of trying the

question before them. But Mr. Irving having refrained from so doing, it was at least their duty to have abstained carefully from all former questions: yet will it be believed, that they not only refused to dismiss from recollection their former personal quarrels against Mr. Irving's doctrines, but, so blinded were they to all sense of propriety, that they actually inserted on their record the fact that "he had been delated and convicted before them on the ground of heresy concerning the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

These, then, were the judges by whom Mr. Irving was condemned. 'We, who have of our voluntary act and interference already adjudged this gentleman an heretic, do yet conceive ourselves competent to act as judges, and to give an impartial decision upon the question whether he be fit to remain minister or not; and therefore do decide that Mr. Irving is unfit to be minister.' If it be in human nature to give an impartial judgment under such circumstances, is it prudent, with a regard to character, that men should take on themselves such an office? Is it possible that their decision should be treated with respect?

The fact is, that the presbytery were parties, as well as sole judges; and as parties they acted from the commencement to the close. Instead of listening with attention to the arguments on either side; instead of suggesting their doubts, and being willing to hear what could be urged by the party against whom those doubts bore adversely; they seized the first moment when they could declare the parties removed, and then debated and decided, frequently on completely different grounds to those touched upon by either side; and if an attempt were made to set them right in their assumptions, however extravagant the notion or violent the mistatement giving occasion for such attempt, the intruder on their deliberations was told that he could not then be heard.

Hence proceeded the iniquitous course of examination to which the witnesses were subjected by the court:—cross examined by one judge after another, not for the discovery of facts: every question irrelevant to the matter of complaint, but directed to the detection of some false doctrine supposed to be held by Mr. Irving:—a moral crucible, in which the opinions of the witnesses might be fused, in order that, if possible, they might scrape up some dross and call it Mr. Irving's. But they were unsuccessful.

Hence also proceeded the monstrous proposition, that after the complainants had finished their case, after their witnesses had been examined and sifted and to no purpose, they, the judges, should make up for the deficiency which they were conscious did exist, and might themselves adjudicate on a case of their own construction. "Oh," said the Moderator, "the Rev. Defender and his agent ought to be informed that Presbyteries

in Scotland have the power of examining what witnesses they please, for they are frequently in the situation of prosecutors." True; for they are never judges in the last resort: they are subordinate tribunals, who make up the case for other courts. But that man is unfit to adjudicate the smallest matter, who cannot distinguish between his duties as a prosecutor and his duties as a judge. Had they been able to allege a doubt as to certain facts on which they required clearer evidence, there might have been some colour for the proposal; but common sense, on a perusal of the trial, will discover the real motive for this dismissal of the character of judge, and assumption of that of prosecutor.

The ignorance of the Presbytery, not only in the forms of procedure in their own church, but, what was of much more importance, of the first principles of justice, betrayed them continually into acts which would have been only absurd, had they not been injurious to the cause of justice. They had heard somewhere in Scotland, that at a certain period, in a church cause, it is not competent for any to constitute themselves parties therein: and therefore, while the very matter in discussion was whether all the trustees assented to the complaint or not, they refused to hear one of the trustees, who rose to set them at rest on the subject, and to say that he did not assent to the complaint. And on the same ground they refused to listen to the united voice of the subscribers and seat-holders, expressive of their wish to retain Mr. Irving as minister. Rules for the government of a large community may be very good things, and tend on the whole to the promotion of justice; but it quite escaped the Rev. Gentlemen, notwithstanding their anxiety for abstract maxims, that "summa jus" is too frequently "summa injuria."

But, above all, and beyond all, was their daring act of defiance to God and His word, in their refusal to allow appeal to the word of God, upon a subject which, from the nature of the case, could only be determined theologically from the word of God. Let our readers mark the manner in which this was done: for, iniquitous as was the decision of the General Assembly in forbidding to Mr. Campbell a similar appeal, there was no common principle whereby to connect the present case with Mr. Campbell's, as was attempted by the Presbytery. The latter case, even had it been rightly ruled, was no precedent for the former. Mr. Campbell was charged on a matter of doctrine, which, after proving that the standards did not contradict, he attempted to support and enforce out of the word of God, and thence to draw additional proof that his was the correct construction of the standards. He was told to limit himself to the standards. But in the present case a witness was asked as to his own private belief—a matter which had nothing to do with the question, it is true; but which line of examination by Mr. Irving had been rendered necessary by the previous examination

by complainants and court;—and it was on a private man's belief, not on the doctrine held by a church, that the appeal to the Scriptures was forbidden. If this be not rank Popery, to be a Papist is an impossibility.

Being thus prevented from appealing to the Scriptures, Mr. Irving put in the following Protest:—“I protest, in the presence of Almighty God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church, that I was not permitted, in questioning the witnesses, to refer to the word of God, which is the only appeal in all questions; that my judgment therein was taken away; and that I will put no further questions.” This conduct was persisted in by the Presbytery, and subsequently attempted to be justified by the Moderator, on the precedent afforded by the General Assembly of last year. “I can state,” he said, “on my own personal credit, having been present at the case, that, at the last General Assembly, the Rev. Mr. Campbell of Row, who is now a deposed minister, was proceeding with the same line of defence, by taking his appeal to the Scriptures, instead of justifying his doctrine as coming under the standards of the Church. *The General Assembly ruled that it was an incompetent line of defence.*” This is a practical illustration of the argument at the commencement of this article, and shews that the Church of Scotland refuses to be tried by the Word of God, and must be dashed in pieces, unless she instantly repents of her sin, and abjures the abominable acts of her rulers.

We cannot conclude without calling the attention of our readers to one matter further in the conduct of the Presbytery. Conscious of their disqualification, so far as accorded with all human maxims and morality, to act with impartiality in the adjudication of this question; and therefore of the necessity of publishing the ground for taking on themselves a burthen which, contrary to their own inclination, as they alleged, was cast upon them; they give, as their solemn reason for so doing, in their Judgment, that “the Trust Deed, legally drawn with the consent of the Rev. E. Irving and the parties thereto, provides not only that this Presbytery shall act and adjudicate in all cases of complaint brought against the Minister for the time being by such persons, but that the said award shall be final and conclusive.” These words are very clear; their intent also is very clear: and *therefore*, as the Presbytery were convinced that under the Trust Deed a *majority* only of the trustees were sufficient to *compel* them to adjudicate, not their will consented, but necessity threw upon them the decision: otherwise *justice* must have been deprived of her efficacy; and—a pastor and his *whole flock*, with the exception of some eight or ten individuals, must have been permitted to *continue in the house expressly built for them*, against the will of those few individuals. However, our readers will be astonished to hear, and the Presbytery grieved to learn, *for the first time*,

that the burden of adjudication was not necessarily laid upon them, that the very next clause in the Trust Deed to that which regulates the form of proceedings before the Presbytery, is a provision, that "*if the London Presbytery shall neglect or refuse, for one calendar month next after any matter shall be so referred to them as aforesaid, to declare their consent to hear and decide on the same; then the complaint shall be referred to the consideration of*" (the parties really interested, namely,) "*the seat-holders of the said church at a general meeting.*" Now, as the ground of complaint against Mr. Irving is not false doctrine (such complaint the trustees specially guard themselves from the imputation of making), but the interruptions, as they are called, of the public worship; to whom could the complaint have been with so much propriety referred as to the seat-holders?—We have presumed that this clause was unknown to the Presbytery. They inspected the original Deed, yet might have overlooked it: This might have been negligence. But, since writing the last few lines, we regret to observe, on reference, that *the Trustees have, most properly, taken express care to state it in the body of their complaint.* What *this* amounts to, we leave to our readers to decide.

In making the above remarks on what we do not hesitate to call a perversion of all the forms and all the essentials of justice, the guardianship whereof was on this occasion *assumed* by, but, had it regularly come before them, would have been improvidently committed to, most incompetent hands—incompetent both in a moral and intellectual sense—we have carefully abstained, as far as possible, from remarks on individuals. It is much to be deplored, for it is a mark of our innate depravity, that men in a body, and therefore removed from individual responsibility and remark so far as regards their fellow-creatures, will ever be liable to fall into acts which they would have cautiously avoided in their individual capacities. We condemn the Presbytery—for their acts, we condemn them. We say not one word of the individuals composing the Presbytery; neither of those who distinguished themselves either by violent or more discreet animosity, nor of those who in taking part in the proceedings could not conceal the sparks of former regards still latent and alive. However, they have taken their part, and to God must they answer individually, not only for the incidental acts on which we have been last remarking, but for that principal crime which, in ignorance as we trust, they have committed.

As to the promoters in this unhappy affair, when passion has subsided, and the common and universal affections of mankind begin to operate, bitter and severe must be the reflections with which their breasts will be disturbed. All have partaken of Mr. Irving's hospitality; all profess great personal regard for him; all of them know that he has never hoarded a shilling, and that his stipend as a minister is his only support: they not only bring

no charge against his moral character, but eulogize it in the highest terms ; they bring no charge against his doctrine, " but restrict this their complaint to the matters set forth therein " (p. 6); yet, for an irregularity, at most, in the service of the church, and an irregularity which has excluded nothing and broken down nothing, they cast Mr. Irving and his family upon the world, depriving him, as far as in them lies, of all means of support. But is he without support? Oh no! he stays himself upon his God, and beneath him are the Everlasting Arms. " I have been young, and now am old, yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." And the time is short. Mr. Irving carries with him his attached flock ; and such a shelter as is needed for this short time will be easily provided ; and such means of support as their pastor needs, they esteem it a privilege to furnish. The towers and pinnacles of the building from whence they have been ejected may aptly symbolize the antiquated church, garnished with man's devices, which has cast Mr. Irving out ; but the plain and hasty building which will now be erected will better suit with our condition of "strangers and pilgrims " here below, and more fitly symbolize that "house not made with hands," whither we hope speedily to arrive, the "city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

WE have received a continuation of the *Journal of Rev. Joseph Wolfe*, but not sufficient to make a sheet, and we therefore defer its publication till a further portion arrives. It commences from Semnan, the first considerable town of Khorassan, 30th September, 1831: the succeeding dates are, Dowlat Abad, 2d Oct.; Bustan, 3d Oct.; Deh Mullah, 6th Oct.; Detshe, 8th Oct.; Rhana Rhode, 13th Oct.; and lastly, Ain Abad, in the province of Khorassan, 16th Oct. 1831; where he thanks God for having led them through the most dangerous road without accident, and says that from thence to Herat the people and roads are better. We have received the following sums for the use of this zealous Missionary:—

C. Barber, Macclesfield	£1	0	0
Mrs. Cowley	2	2	0
Relief Church, Glasgow	5	0	0
Three Friends, Stow Market	12	0	0
M. Spurgin	2	0	0

K. Z. intimates that "circumstances have occurred in the case of the person at Clothall, mentioned in our last Number, which render the whole transaction more than simply equivocal." Of these circumstances we have not heard, and shall be obliged to K. Z. if he will inform us. And we take this occasion most earnestly to request all our readers to do us the kindness, nay, the justice, of correcting any mistatement into which we may inadvertently fall. To Truth we wish to devote ourselves: not to any party.

Some Correspondents wish us to point out from time to time the new publications of interest. We will endeavour to comply with their wishes; but to do it conscientiously involves greater difficulty than they apprehend, for the right conduct of such a Journal as this absorbs nearly all our time.