

have now to say shall be condensed into the smallest possible compass ; and if I fail fully to illustrate any point to the satisfaction of the meeting, I earnestly trust they will impute such failure to the briefness of the time, and the intricacy of the subject, rather than to the deficiency of evidence, or want of such proofs as would make the conviction irresistible, that the Church of Scotland had abandoned and traitorously given up the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and had transferred his authority to the civil courts of the country. In the case of the Presbytery of Dunkeld the courts of law had conferred on the minority of that body the right of settling a minister, opposed to the wishes of the people, and opposed by a majority of their own body. In the Quoad Sacra districts, the civil courts had declared that Ministers having a cure of souls, and exercising all the duties of Parish Ministers in the districts to which they were set apart, were yet unfit to sit in the church courts, and all sentences or proceedings they joined in were, for that reason, worthless and inoperative : and in the case of a person named Livingstone, who had been convicted of theft, and was therefore sentenced to be deposed from his ministerial office—although that conviction proceeded on his own confession, and the theft was neither attempted to be extenuated or atoned for—yet the man so convicted and deposed was, not on account of any extenuating circumstance or expression of remorse or repentance, but simply because one of these Quoad Sacra Ministers sat among his judges,—was declared by the civil courts to be entitled to exercise all the functions of the ministry, and to do all things proper to the ministerial office, including the administration of the sacraments !

After such a detail as that, would it be for a moment denied that the civil power had usurped the powers of the Redeemer—and not only usurped, but set them at naught—treated them with marked contempt and indignity—held them up as unjust and unlawful, and declared them impotent ;—and all for the protection of a thief, and the restoration of a degraded and unrepentant man to the functions of the holy Ministry ! Was that—was even that—the extreme point of their usurpation ? Far from it. They issued their interdicts, implying that only such persons as they sanctioned, should be admitted to sit in the courts of the church, or take part in her deliberations. So that, having divested the church of the power to regulate her own proceedings—to judge of the religious qualifications of those aspiring to be her office-bearers—having declared her incompetent to prevent the settlement of an obnoxious Minister, and liable in damages for using the powers of the church for that end ;—having issued their decision that those