

ronage," to such extent as almost to give up their "right to choose their own office-bearers." And it is notorious," he adds, "that had the controversy between the Church and State turned solely upon that one point, no Disruption would have taken place." Now, here are two men of the first mark and standing in the Free Church, on the same day, and in the same pulpit, giving expression to contradictory statements. We are not without proof, however, as to which is in the right. Dr. Hanna only in 1859, reiterates sentiments well known to have been entertained by Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Gordon, and other leaders of the Disruptionists in 1843. They were all in favour of Patronage; i.e. they were all willing to allow patrons to have the right of nominating, or of choosing who should be the office-bearers or ministers of the Church. If Dr. Hanna be right, and that he is the whole history of the period and its stirring events proves, then the existence and exercise of Patronage was not a cause of the Disruption.

The question recurs, What was it? It was what has been claimed not only by the Free Church, but by the Church of Rome, and now by the Puseyites in the Church of England, and that is, "Spiritual Independence." That this was claimed and most strenuously acted out by the Church of Rome for ages, may be seen by any one who consults Prescott and Robertson's History of Charles V., in our circulating library. Now, whatever this Spiritual Independence is, the love of the Jesuits for it, is no great prestige in its favour, neither is that of the Puseyites. It is right, however, to give its definition in the language of the preachers on the occasion of the forementioned collection; and first I quote Dr. Candlish. Spiritual Independence, he says, page 12, "is really nothing more than the bare right of saying, who shall, and who shall not be members? who shall, and who shall not be ministers?" and at page 18, he amplifies this account of the subject in these words: Spiritual Independence is the "authority conferred by Christ, the Church's Head, upon us his servants,—the authority to determine who shall, and who shall not be ministers; who shall, and who shall not be members; what shall be the Pastor's sphere of spiritual duty; what shall be his spiritual right of ruling in Christ's house; the authority to dispose of such matters as these, upon our responsibility to Christ our only Head;" and "that no court of law has a right to subject our spiritual proceedings to review." Again, I quote Dr. Hanna, page 8. Spiritual Independence he says, is the liberty of ministers to "regulate all the purely ecclesiastical affairs of the Church, in accordance with their own judgement of what the Word of God and the interests of religion required;" and implies, page 9, "the Church's separate and exclusive jurisdiction,"—and, again, page 10, the "free and uncontrolled liberty of judgement of action, which belongs natively and

exclusively to the Church, as a separate and independent society:" exempt from all secular restraint and control, to regulate its actions according to their own best judgement of what the interests of Christ and his kingdom are.

The spiritual matters or proceedings with which the Free Church contended, no law-court had a right to interfere, were such as these:—"The right of the Church to admit or reject a presentee on the ground of acceptability or unacceptability to the people,—the right to exercise discipline over their own members and office-bearers,—the right to make what arrangement seemed to them best as to preaching the word and administering sealing ordinances or sacraments, for the extension of the Saviour's Kingdom, (Hanna, page 8.); or, in other words, the right to determine without any earthly control or accountability, what the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church should be: to determine all this at all times, according to their present views of the will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures. Dr. Candlish (page 10) expresses himself with reference to this matter of the Church's Spiritual Independence, thus:—"The Church is not identical with the State; it is a body organized for religious purposes, and quite distinct and separate from the general community, in the midst of which it exists. Can it be allowed to regulate its own affair; to govern its own officials and its own members, and, in the last resort, to excommunicate them, or exclude them from its communion without being subject to the control of the chief magistrate or ruling power in the community?" The language of our Confession on all this is: "Christ hath appointed in the Church a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate." It is particularly worthy of observation that Dr. Hanna (page 14) declares distinctly, that the Free Church and Established Church are at one as to "Christ's vital Headship over the one true Church:" that "there is no essential difference between them" as to Christ's Headship, legal and regal, over the visible Church: that both Churches acknowledge Christ's Headship over the visible and invisible Church, and bow to His authority as supreme and unchallengeable: that though they may differ in their interpretation and application of one or other of the laws or regulations to be found in the New Testament, relative to the Church's affairs, no differences like these can ever warrant the Free Church to impute to the Established Church, (or *vice versa*) "any thing so monstrous as that it has plucked the crown from the Saviour's brow and rejected Him as the Church's Head and King."

After these quotations from, and references to, these sentiments of those eminent men on the Church's Spiritual Independence, the question recurs, Did the courts of civil law