

her people no *legal* right to the power, in the exercise of which, it was intended to direct them, then the action of the civil courts has just made it manifest, not that there has been no encroachment upon the rights and liberties of the Church in respect of the call, but that such encroachment had taken place before the Veto Law was passed, and that the act restoring Patronage had struck a deadlier blow at the independence of the Church, than the worst enemies of Patronage had ever supposed. Decide, then, as to the legality and judiciousness of the Veto Law as you please ; but do not overlook the palpable fact, that in one way or other *the free right of call* has been taken from the members of the Established Church, and the power of making laws, with regard to the exercise of this right, from her office-bearers, and you have all the light bearing on our argument, which a discussion of the legality of the Veto Law can give, and a proof of the correctness, in part at least, of that general and sweeping charge of having enslaved and Erastianized the Church, which we are now to establish against the civil courts of Scotland, and the Imperial Legislature.

In order that you may see how the claims advanced by the civil courts, both in opposing the Veto Law, and in other cases, affect the spiritual independence of the Church, it is important that you should understand the principle on which these claims are based, as from not understanding this, many have been perplexed and staggered by assertions confidently put forth, and supported by apparently plausible proofs, to the effect that the civil courts do not claim the power of reviewing and reversing the decisions of Church courts in purely spiritual matters. Triumphant appeals, in particular, have been made to the decision of Lord Cunningham, in the case of a parishioner who had raised an action against his minister for having refused him a token of admission to the Lord's Table, and baptism for his child, in which that Judge states, that the case "is purely a spiritual case, and, as such, it is one in which the Church courts have an exclusive jurisdiction;" and again, that "the ministers of the Established Church have an exclusive jurisdiction, by statute, in all spiritual cases,—and it seems equally clear, that the ministers of other persuasions are equally protected at common law;" and it is asked what ampler acknowledgement of the spiritual independence of the Church could any man desire, and the public are left to infer, or sometimes flatly told, that in the statements which we make on the subject, we are guilty "of something like falsehood." An attempt is also sometimes made to show, that in all the cases in which they interfered with decisions of Church courts, the civil courts dealt only with civil