

can arrest that discipline for one moment, they can do it for ever. If they can arrest discipline on the pretence that civil rights are involved, they will never want such a pretext. If they can do it in one Kirk-Session, they can do it in all. But perhaps this sinful submission, so unlike the conduct of Daniel, of the Apostles, and even of our own reviled ministers, in similar circumstances, was dictated by worldly policy. "We shall behave better," said they to themselves, "than the rebellious Establishment. We shall affect to reverence and respect these civil Judges, even when they intrude into our province. We shall thereby conciliate the favour of Caesar, and he will let us go free." Accordingly, they obeyed *Caesar instead of God in the meantime*, came up to Edinburgh and argued the question before the civil Judge; and they have received their reward. *The interdict has been confirmed*; and we are all now in breathless expectation to know what they will do next."

"We are glad to discover from a recent article in the *Scotsman*, that our Seceding friends are beginning to be alive to the danger to which they are exposed from the usurping spirit of the Civil Courts. They admit that the recent interdict in the case of Falkirk, "involves the question whether Voluntary Churches, in the exercise of discipline, are liable to be controlled or interfered with by the Civil Court." And in proceeding to describe that interdict itself, they represent it as having been "utterly incompetent, inconsistent with freedom of conscience and with religious liberty, injurious to morality, and contrary to public policy." We are precisely of the same opinion; but we as clearly believe that the contrary view is merely a following out, and nothing more, of the principle of the recent interdicts in regard to the Established Church; and, moreover, it is important for our friends to consider, that although such is their opinion and ours, yet, in conformity with the principle announced in Sir James Graham's letter, such questions, as being questions of *jurisdiction*, must, in the opinion of our present rulers, be finally decided, not by them, nor by the Word of God, but by the mere will of the civil Courts. If the Court of Session should therefore finally decide, and the House of Lords confirm the decision, that such interdicts are not "utterly incompetent," but highly necessary, the question remains, what would the Seceders do?—What could they do except what we have done amidst their opposition. They would be forced either to relinquish their claim to the character of a Church ruled by Christ's Word, or to disobey what is improperly called the "law of the land." This question is all the more urgent, because, in so far as the matter has yet gone, the Civil Court has unhesitatingly asserted its claim to jurisdiction and authority in all such cases.—The *Scotsman*, no doubt, says that the Se-

ceders have manifested "a firm determination to support their rights. They have appeared in Court, met their accusers, and pled their religious rights before the Judges appointed to protect them." True, but he forgets to add that the Judges, after hearing their pleadings *confirmed the interdict*.—We are now, however, informed that this interdict is withdrawn; but the question still is, who withdrew it? Not the Judge, in consequence of discovering that he had overstepped his province. The very opposite of this. It was withdrawn, it seems, by consent of parties, and in circumstances which would be none the worse of being explained. This withdrawal does not affect the claim of the Judges. And in what state does this leave the Secession Church? It leaves them with a recorded judgment of the civil Courts against them, to the effect that any of their members, upon whom they are about to exercise discipline, has only to go to Edinburgh, and say that his civil interests are about to be injured (which can always be done), and he will at once obtain an interdict to arrest the progress of discipline. We grant, and are quite aware, that, in the language of our contemporary, this is "inconsistent with freedom of conscience and with religious liberty, injurious to morality, and contrary to sound policy;" but still! what we maintain is, that at present this is the *actual state of the fact*.

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LETTER FROM THE REV ALEXANDER SUTHERLAND.

To the Editor of the *Missionary Record*.

PICOTU, Decr. 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—

Since your last publication, I have returned from Prince Edward's Island, after a very interesting visit; being my fourth and last for this season. My stay on any of these occasions did not exceed ten days, and was chiefly confined to Scotch Settlement and New London.—The people of that congregation have peculiar claims upon my attention. The Brethren settled to the eastward render within these large and populous districts (with which De Sable and Long Creek are conjoined at present), what services they can; but the distance is so great, and their services are so much required in their more immediate spheres of labour that the proportion given to this congregation must come far short of what such as are acquainted with that field would expect. The elders conduct readings in the churches on the Sabbath; and, at least in one distant locality, another devoted individual conducts a similar service for those in his neighbourhood.

They have made many applications for