

should be effectual if they interfered with the rights and privileges of the Church, of which interference, and of which spiritual considerations the Church itself was to be the exclusive judge. Earl, then Lord John Russell, concurred in this view, as did other statesmen on both sides of politics. Sir Robert Peel said emphatically:—

“This House and the country never could lay it down, that if a dispute should arise in respect of the statute law of the land, such dispute should be referred to a tribunal not subject to an appeal to the House of Lords. If peace could be secured, if the rights of the subject could be maintained consistently with the demands of the Church, then, indeed, such is my opinion of the pressing evils of this protracted disputation, that I should almost be induced to make any concession to obtain tranquillity. But my belief is that such claims, were you to concede them, would be unlimited in their extent. . . . If the House of Commons is prepared to depart from those principles on which the Reformation was founded, and which principles are essential to the maintenance of the civil religious liberties of the country, nothing but evil would result, the greatest evil of which would be the establishment of religious domination, which would alike endanger the religion of the country and the civil rights of man.”

That patronage was the mere stalking horse used by the leaders of the party which ultimately became the Free Church and that ecclesiastical supremacy under the name of Spiritual Independence, was the real object aimed at, is abundantly evident from the course followed since the abolition of patronage in Scotland, where an attempt has been made to draw together two ecclesiastical bodies holding the most opposite views, with the object of disendowing and disestablishing the Church of Scotland. That the members of the branch of the Church of Scotland in this country refuse to join with those whose sympathies and, before long, whose active efforts, will be added to those of their friends in the Mother Country, is simply a duty they owe to themselves and to the Church by which they have been fostered. As represented everywhere their objections

are childish, arising from stupid obstinacy. But they are more than that. They are founded on reason and on justice, on the love of constitutional liberty, respect for the laws and determination to preserve the rights of conscience.

Lest I should be suspected of using the words of those who were opposed to the Free Church I quote the following from one of the leading authorities of that body, the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, of Dingwall, in a lecture delivered last January. His claim to speak on behalf of that Church and his ability to do so must be fully recognised by all who have followed her history. The word *Erastianism* placed in antithesis to *Papacy*, did good service in its day, but sensible men now laugh at the long pole, white sheet, scooped out turnip and candle end which frightened the ignorant. In the present case it means simply Constitutionalism. Dr. Kennedy says:

“As to spiritual independence I will only say that there can be no difficulty in proving the Free Church doctrine regarding it to be Scriptural. Christ is King of Zion. As such it is His to appoint the province, the organization, and the work of the Church. It is His, too, to issue laws for her guidance in the performance of her work, and as He has done so, it is not allowable that the Church should conform her action to any other rule, or subject her will to any other authority. Her King is alive and He hath the seven spirits of God. He can, therefore, effectually regulate the action of the Church. The Church should not submit to any authority but Christ's in doing her proper work, and she requires no other guidance than that of His word and spirit in order that her work should be rightly done. She has to please Christ, and Christ alone; and she is to be guided by Christ, and Christ alone.

“Within the Establishment (the Church of Scotland) in Disruption times, and to a great extent still, the idea on this subject was that either of the powers—Church and State—must be superior if not supreme; that they cannot be co-ordinate, and that in order to a settling of arising differences, either must be entitled to decide, as being superior in authority to the other. So says popery