

ing of the terms on which she holds her endowments, they disapprove altogether of her connexion with the state, as imposing trammels, which are inconsistent with that perfect freedom which is the birth-right of Zion; and have gone to lengths in asserting the freedom of Christ's Church, and in maintaining the rights of his people, to which the Free Church has scarcely yet attained." There are several points here that require some notice. 1st, This, as the Reply of the Presbyterian Synod, commits the Presbyterian Church in this Province, as a body, to a condemnation of the principle of Ecclesiastical Establishments. In a subsequent part of their Reply they say "We confess that with a few exceptions we are voluntaries;" but these exceptions, it seems, are too few and inconsiderable to prevent the Synod from issuing, in the name of the whole body, this Reply, in which they say "So far from approving of the terms on which she holds her endowments, they disapprove altogether of her connexion with the state, as imposing trammels which are inconsistent with that perfect freedom which is the birth-right of Zion." As a body, therefore, they condemn what the primitive Seceders most firmly maintained; and those who are acquainted with the history of the Secession Church in Scotland know, that if certain parties there calling themselves Seceders had been equally explicit, in the progress of some law processes which were carried on there several years ago, a considerable amount of Church property might be in different hands from those which now hold it. 2ndly, As the Presbyterian Synod have not only ceased to hold, but have openly condemned, principles which entered very essentially into the Testimony of the primitive Seceders, and on the ground of which they were properly styled, not Dissenters, but Seceders; they ought in all fairness to give up speaking about their "fathers of the Secession." They have forfeited all claim to be recognised as genuine Seceders. 3rdly, If the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod imagine that the principles which guided to those decisions which forced on the Disruption, are principles which can apply only to an Established Church, they are labouring under a very grievous mistake. The essential principle of that argument of the Dean of Faculty which, unhappily for the interests of religious freedom, was adopted, is, that wherever there is a civil interest concerned, *however indirectly*, the civil courts have a right to review and control the entire proceedings of church courts even in the most spiritual matters, for what they may regard as the due protection of that civil interest. The Voluntaries in Scotland raised a shout of triumph as each adverse decision was given against the Church of Scotland, when contending against this monstrous principle; but when, in carrying it through,

all the statutes which had been hitherto considered as so many fences to protect the liberty of the Church of Scotland were forced to give way, it was soon shown that not only had the privileges of the Establishment been violated, but the general defences of religious freedom were broken down.

The warrant for this assertion may be best learned from the following extracts from the Edinburgh "Witness" of the 11th and the 25th Jan., 1843. The brethren of the Presbyterian Synod are invited to consider these extracts with all seriousness; and then to explain what they mean when, in the face of such a case, and after the Disruption of 1843, they venture to say, they "have gone to lengths in asserting the freedom of Christ's Church, and in maintaining the rights of his people, to which the Free Church has scarcely yet attained."

"The Secession Presbytery of Stirling had deposed Mr. Rutherford of Falkirk and three of his elders. They appointed one of their number to intimate this sentence in Mr. Rutherford's church. An interdict against his admission to the Church for the purpose of intimating it, was applied for and obtained, and the person appointed very properly obeyed this interdict in so far, that he abstained from entering Mr. Rutherford's place of worship; but what we wish our readers to notice is, that if we are rightly informed, he *did not even intimate the sentence of deposition at all*. Now there might possibly be some shadow of excuse for this, inasmuch as, since the precise thing appointed to be done was physically impossible, the minister might perhaps reckon himself warranted in applying to his Presbytery for new instructions in the unforeseen emergency. We are willing to admit this, although it is a large concession. But a new case arose, by which the principles of our Seceding friends were more effectually put to the test. Seven of Mr. Rutherford's elders adhered to the Presbytery, and repudiated his new and strange doctrines. The Presbytery appointed a minister to constitute a Session, with the aid of these sound elders. This Session having met, cited certain members of the congregation to appear before them, with a view to discipline in connection with the recent divisions. But lo! a new interdict was immediately asked and obtained, against the Kirk-Session proceeding against these parties on the citations given, and on the old hackneyed ground that the discipline they might exercise would affect the civil rights of the refractory members. And, will our readers believe it? *this interdict was obeyed*, the Kirk-Session broke up, and the members resolved to give in answers to the civil Court. By such a proceeding our readers will at once see that the Erastian supremacy of the Civil Courts over the discipline of the Secession was acknowledged. If the Civil Courts