

influence of a determination not to be convinced, has in blinding mens' judgements, we should be loath to confide, even in the most trivial matter, to the judgement of the man who could coolly weigh the facts we have submitted, and yet make such assertions.

*Third.*—But further, it will be admitted, that the conferring of power to perform spiritual functions is also a spiritual matter. This is one of the powers committed to the Church by Christ himself, and is essential to her very existence. If a party without the Church may confer such power, then that party may change, at any moment, the relative position of the members and office-bearers of the Church, and reduce its government to a nullity. It seems scarcely possible to conceive that any civil court could be so infatuated, as deliberately to claim the right of conferring such power. Yet, what have the civil courts actually done in the third Auchterarder case? The Church, it is known, has conferred on Presbyteries the power of performing certain spiritual functions; but the civil courts found, in the case referred to, that the majority of the Presbytery of the bounds were determined not to become their submissive tools in the performance of these functions, but to obey, in accordance with their ordination vows, their ecclesiastical superiors; and, in these circumstances, they actually authorized the minority of the Presbytery, a body which possessed, according to the laws and constitution of the Church, no power in the matter, and which, at the same time, was acting in defiance of the superior ecclesiastical judicatories, to perform the functions proper to the Presbytery, and to proceed to the ordination and settlement of a minister. And yet, forsooth, we are to believe, that the civil courts respect the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction of the Church, that no fetters shackle her movements, and that she is "as great, glorious, and free as ever." We willingly leave those to believe this *who can*.

*Fourth.*—But further still, it will be admitted, that the determination of the composition of Church courts, or in other words, of the parties entitled to sit in such courts, and to perform the spiritual or ecclesiastical duties for which these courts are appointed, is a spiritual matter. As Presbyterians, we hold that Christ hath laid down rules and principles relative to this matter, by which the Church is bound to regulate her procedure. As Presbyterians, too, we hold that a close adherence to these rules and principles is inseparably identified with the well-being of the Church. Have the civil courts, then, respected the independence of the Church in this matter, and allowed her to obey, in relation to