

draw from her communion; the Church of Canada in connexion with the Church of Scotland has hitherto stood on terms of the closest amity and friendship with that Church, terms obviously expressive of the fullest approbation of her doctrines, government, and discipline: by continuing that connexion as it has hitherto stood, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada have virtually declared that they give their sanction to the sins of the Established Church of Scotland, or at least that they regard them as slight and venial, they have witnessed, in a word, not against her but for her—and, therefore, we have been compelled to withdraw from communion with that Synod, we have felt it an imperative duty to free ourselves from the guilty responsibility for the errors and defections of the Established Church of Scotland which they have thus assumed, and to organize, as a faithful witness for Christ in this matter, the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Brethren, is not this simple statement of the facts of the case, of itself a vindication of our procedure?—Were we not in the circumstances called by our duty to Christ to do as we have done?

But we are anxious, Dearly Beloved, to give to every one of you the fullest satisfaction in this matter, and soliciting your patient attention, we shall proceed to illustrate the positions which we have above laid down:

I. First we say that the Established Church of Scotland has sinned in matters vital and fundamental—that she has, in a word, practically repudiated the doctrine of Christ's sole Headship over his Church.

This is a grievous charge to bring against any Church of Christ, and one not lightly to be preferred; but we are pained to say that in the present instance it is true, and supported by evidence which cannot be gainsayed.

We do not intend to recapitulate the history of the struggle so long maintained within the Established Church of Scotland by the friends of Free Church principles, which at length issued in the disruption of that Church, and the formation of the Free Protestant Church of Scotland—neither do we intend to pronounce an unqualified eulogium on all that the supporters of these principles have done, during the progress of that eventful struggle. Such is not necessary to the confirmation of our charge against the Established Church of Scotland. The commencement and the various steps of that struggle, may have been well, or may have been ill advised—in other words, the Free Church party may have acted prudently or imprudently in passing the Veto Law, and in the various measures by which they asserted their right to uphold, in defiance of the civil power, the principle of that Law—into these questions (although we have no doubt ourselves of the triumphant vindication which might be made of all the leading steps of the policy which they pursued), into these questions, we say, we do not intend to enter. The question to be decided is, what is the present position of the Established Church of Scotland? And the grand charge which we prefer against those who now constitute that Church rests, not on the history of their iniquitous though too successful opposition to the struggle maintained by the advocates of the rights of the Christian people, and of the exclusive supremacy of Christ over his own house; but on a ground which can be travelled over in much fewer words, and which can leave no room for doubt on the part of any one who will only attentively examine it—we mean the claims to control over the affairs of the Church, which have been embodied in various decisions of the Civil Courts, and sanctioned by the Imperial Legislature, and the assent to these unrighteous claims given by the Church, and embodied in the decision of her General Assembly. We believe that if individuals, instead of involving themselves in the discussion of the merits of the Veto Law, and other branches of the now finished controversy within the Church, examined the present position of the Established Church of Scotland by the light

of the decisions to which we have just referred, there would be fewer attempts made to gloss over the sins with which that Church is chargeable.

The courts of law, then, it will be observed, have advanced a claim generally, to review the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Courts, in all cases in which they conceive that a civil interest is affected, and in consequence, should they see cause, to interdict the procedure or to suspend the sentences of these courts. And this claim they have put forth in such a way, as to prove beyond all question, that it would enable them, if carried out, to drag under their jurisdiction the whole ecclesiastical affairs of the Church. Thus to illustrate by a few leading instances.—On the ground that some civil interest was affected, they have interfered to prevent a Presbytery from carrying out the law of the Church with regard to calls, and giving effect to the dissent of the Christian people in regard to the settlement of a Pastor over them, as in the case of Mr. Young, Presentee to Auchterarder, they have interdicted a Presbytery from ordaining a Presentee to the Pastoral office, as in the case of Lethendy; they have issued a decree requiring a Presbytery to take a Presentee on trials, and to ordain him to the office of the Holy Ministry, as in the case of Marnoch; they have decided that the refusal of a Presbytery to confer ordination renders them liable to an action of damages, as for an ordinary civil wrong, as in the case of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, they have suspended the sentence of deposition passed by the General Assembly itself, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon Ministers guilty of the most aggravated form of contumacy, and interdicted the Church from carrying her sentence into effect, as in the case of the majority of the Presbytery of Strathgogie; they have interdicted and suspended the sentence of a Presbytery, as incompetent from the presence in it of certain Ministers, although that sentence was a sentence of deposition on a Minister convicted of theft, as in the case of Cambusnethan; and they have prohibited the Church from extending her spiritual oversight in adaptation to the wants of an increasing population, by the formation of parishes, *quoad sacra*, as in the case of Stewarton.

Now the unrighteous nature, the Erastianism of the claims embodied in these and similar decisions, consists in this—that the courts of law do not merely assert their right to give or withhold civil effect from the decisions of the Ecclesiastical Courts,—that was perfectly within their province, and no one has disputed their right to review and to limit the decisions of Ecclesiastical Courts thus far—but they have asserted their right to interdict and to suspend purely spiritual and Ecclesiastical acts.—They have asserted their right, not merely to prevent the enjoyment of the fruits of a benefice from being dependant on the call of the people, but to prevent a Presbytery from giving ecclesiastical effect to the call—not merely to prevent a minister ordained to a Pastoral charge, from deriving civil benefit from that charge, but to prevent the Presbytery from performing the spiritual act of ordination on his behalf—not merely to withhold the fruits of the benefice if a Presbytery do not ordain a certain Presentee, but to require them to ordain him, may more, to punish them by fine or imprisonment if they refuse—not merely to prevent deposition from being followed by civil consequences, but to prevent both suspension and deposition from being followed by disqualification for the spiritual duties of the office of the ministry—not merely to pronounce the decisions of an Ecclesiastical Court, when constituted in a certain way, to be invalid as to civil effects, but to declare them invalid also as to effects which are purely and undeniably ecclesiastical—and not merely to refuse civil sanction to the proceedings of a Church Court containing certain members, but to interdict such members, from taking their seats in that court, and to refuse them the right of exercising even proper parochial superintendence over the flocks entrusted to their care. If this be not an encroachment into the Ecclesiastical province—if this be not Erastian-

ism in its most degrading form, we know not to what these terms are applicable.

Such, Brethren, are the claims to exercise control over the Ecclesiastical Courts, which have been made by the Courts of Law in Scotland, and sanctioned by the Imperial Legislature, and made the ground of legislation in Lord Aberdeen's Bill; and the Established Church of Scotland, we would next observe, has submitted to these claims, nay, has homologated them, and made them a ground of action, in her own decisions. By her giving up not only the form but the principle of the Veto Law, or in other words the great principle of our Church, that no Pastor shall be intruded on a reclaiming congregation, by her decisions and her action in the cases of Lethendy, and Marnoch, and Auchterarder, by which she has carried into effect all that the Civil Courts demanded in these cases; by her finding that the seven ministers of the Presbytery of Strathgogie, who had been solemnly deposed from the office of the ministry by the General Assembly, had never been deposed at all, and consequently that all the ordinances they had dispensed in defiance of that deposition, were valid ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ; by her allowing the right of the convicted and deposed thief of Cambusnethan, still to discharge the spiritual duties of his office, as if his deposition, because declared by the Courts of Law to have been passed by an incompetent court, had been no better than a nullity and a farce; and by her exclusion of *quoad sacra* ministers from Church Courts, and even from the right of Moderating in Kirk Sessions; by these decisions and these actings, decisions and actings in which she has made the law as declared by the civil power—not the law as declared by Christ and interpreted by the Church—the rule and ground of her action, she has, we maintain, conceded beyond all question, the Erastian claims of the Civil Courts, and bartered away her own and her people's blood-bought privileges, for the sake of the countenance and support of the state.

Brethren, has this Church been guilty of no sin in matters vital and fundamental?—Is this the Church of Knox and Melville and Henderson?—Is this a Church acting on the principles for the maintenance of which, so many of the worthies of Scotland have laid down their lives?—Or, is this a Church with which a pure and faithful witness for Christ and for the rights of his Crown, as King of Saints and King of Kings, can lawfully remain in friendly intercourse? We mistake as to the intelligence and spirit of the Presbyterians of Canada, if you are not prepared to answer indignantly, No! she has practically denied the sole Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ over his Church—she has allowed the Civil Power to sit, where he only should sit whose right it is to rule—she is unworthy of support.

But we have said that the Church of Canada in connexion with the Church of Scotland, has hitherto stood on terms of the closest amity and friendship with the Established Church of Scotland, terms obviously expressive of the fullest approbation, in all matters vital and fundamental, of her doctrines, government and discipline: and on this point lengthened argument or illustration will not be necessary.

The exact nature of the relation in which the Synod in connexion with the Church of Scotland has hitherto stood to that Church, and the terms on which she has held her endowments from the State, are still matters about which conflicting views are entertained. The whole subject of the relation in which, on Presbyterian principles, a Colonial Church should be held to stand to the parent Church in Britain, has never yet received that consideration, or derived the advantage of that thorough elucidation, to which its great importance entitles it; and each party is apt to make their own crude and undigested views of what they think to be proper and desirable in this matter, the rule as to what actually is. And hence the conflicting views to which we have referred. The Colonial Committee of the Established Church, in the re-