

over the heads of the people, and in defiance even of the church ; for the civil court had declared, that not only had they the power of forcing a Pastor on the people, however disagreeable to that people ; or however disqualifed by conduct or otherwise, but they would hold each member of a Presbytery liable in damages to such a nominee, if they refused to give effect to his presentation. These were the points involved in the Marnoch and Culsalmond decisions,—an assumption of power of the civil over the ecclesiastical body, that awakened the indignation of universal christendom. The Church of Scotland became a party to this monstrous usurpation. She consented—she submitted;—some of her members even hailed the decision as one of christian equity ; and therefore it was that he (Mr Bayne) held that that church had committed a grievous sin, by surrendering all the religious rights of the people under her charge to the power of the civil law.

He came now to the grand charge against the Church of Scotland, namely, that it had become an Erastian church—denying the Headship of the Redeemer, and transferring it to the civil power, and thereby establishing a principle degrading to the Saviour, and obnoxious to the religious freedom of the people. In order fully to understand this charge, it was necessary to refer to the great principle entertained by the Church of Scotland, of the sole Headship of the Saviour, and the entire and absolute independence of the Church in all ecclesiastical matters. It was, he repeated, the great and distinguishing fundamental principle of the Presbyterian Church, that the Lord Jesus Christ had committed to that Church the sole power, controul, and discipline therein, and the office-bearers of that church were held responsible to him alone and not to any human power or institution of mere human origin. In other words, that he has instituted his Church,—organized its government,—enacted its laws,—appointed its office-bearers ;—and as he was the sole Head and founder of the system, so to Him only were those office-bearers responsible in their capacities as such in that church.

No human power then, under a system so constituted, can controul the office-bearers of that Church in the exercise of their spiritual functions. Christ is their Head ; they are to serve and obey him only as their sole Master and Governor ; his people are to obey his laws alone in spiritual things ; and if any secular power should attempt to coerce or controul them in the exercise of their functions as the freemen of their Lord and Saviour, that power is thereby attempting to assume the prerogatives of the Almighty, and to wrest the power of government from the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, not only could no one interfere, nor any