

III. *That no NEW PRINCIPLES, or TERMS OF COMMUNION, different from those of the Church of Scotland, were ever adopted by the Seceding Ministers; and therefore it is as ungenerous, as it is unjust, to call the Secession a SCHISM, in this church, or the Seceders SECTARIES.* If the Seceders had advanced any new doctrines, or adopted principles unknown in this church, it had been easy for their opponents to have adduced this as the ostensible reason for proceeding against them with the highest censures. This, however, was never alleged to be any branch of their supposed crime. They were censured, because they refused submission to an ecclesiastical authority with which, they were well persuaded, the church of Christ was never invested; and because they held sacred the obligation of their ordination vows, which solemnly bound them to a steadfast adherence to the principles and constitution of this church, in opposition to whatsoever hath a tendency to destroy either the one or the other. Actuated by a sense of the supreme authority of Jesus Christ, the only King and Lawgiver of his church, they durst not refuse to testify against the encroachments that were made upon his royal prerogative, when laws were enacted in his church to which he had never given his assent; and were calculated not to promote the edification of his disciples, but to accomplish the destruction of that system of government and discipline which he hath delivered to them in his word. When the Seceding Ministers were, by an arbitrary exertion of this assumed ecclesiastical authority, actually cast out of the established church, for no other reason but because they would not counteract their ordination vows, and submit to those restraints which were then laid upon ministerial liberty and freedom, they found themselves obliged, by these very vows, to declare their secession from the prevailing party; but they, at the same time, declared their steadfast adherence to the principles received by this church, as founded on the word of God, and exhibited in the Confession of Faith, Catechisms larger and shorter, Form of Presbyterian church government, and Directory for worship. Under the influence of these principles they declared their Secession; and agreeable to these, they have hitherto been helped of God, in some measure, amidst numerous weaknesses and infirmities, to dispense the ordinances of Christ, to all those under

their inspection, who profess to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints: and they will cheerfully hold church-fellowship with all those who profess a cordial attachment, and whose practice is correspondent to that system of doctrine, worship, government, and discipline, which is revealed to the church by Jesus Christ in his word; an open avowal of which, and adherence to it, was declared in the most solemn manner, in the National Covenant and Solemn League.

"These are their terms of communion; and they are apt to think they are the very same with those held by the church of Scotland, in every period of the Reformation: and what is of unspeakable greater moment, they think they are perfectly agreeable to the word of God, and revealed will of Jesus Christ, who commands us, that *whereto we have already attained, we are to walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing*: and they believe it will be always true, that as many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. It will not, they apprehend, be an easy task to shew from the holy scriptures, the impropriety, or absurdity of excluding from their communion, in sealing ordinances, all those who are either open enemies, or secretly disaffected to that system of revealed truth just now mentioned, and will not submit to those ministrations that are agreeable to, and consistent with it.—And they are further of opinion, and think they are able to prove it, that their terms of communion are as extensive as the word of God will admit.—Their Secession, therefore, is not a Schism in the church; for they never seceded from the principles and constitution professed and established at the Reformation and Revolution; but, upon every occasion, declare their steadfast adherence to these, in opposition to the prevailing party who have receded from them."

POSTSCRIPT.

Mr. Trotter is again on the field, and has published a Second Letter in Reply to these Remarks, in the "Presbyterian Witness" of the 27th ultimo. He seems to be possessed of a very remarkable talent for misunderstanding, or, at all events for misrepresenting, whether thro' misunderstanding or otherwise, the views, the statements, and the arguments of his opponents. Specimens of this have