

from it, the savour of Christ's knowledge was diffused all around. They "took sweet counsel together as they went to the House of God in company." Under such preaching and in such society he gradually increased in the knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, and also of the ecclesiastical state of Scotland; and his sympathies gradually gathered round the men, who had made so noble a stand for an unfettered gospel and for popular rights against the defections of the time. And "having first given himself to the Lord," he joined himself to those who were holding aloft the banner of truth and spiritual freedom.

But the event which particularly impressed his mind, and if it did not determine his choice in favour of the Secession, at least confirmed and established it, was the scene which occurred on the expulsion of E. Erskine from his church. For some years after the suspension of the "four brethren," they continued to occupy undisturbed the parish churches, in which they had formerly preached, although they had been joined by four others, and were engaged in measures for training a gospel ministry, and for supplying various parts of Scotland with gospel ordinances. At length however, in the year 1740, the whole eight were cast out of the Church, and deposed from the ministry, and the Assembly immediately gave intimation to the magistrates of their respective burghs, that they might be dispossessed of their pulpits. A description of the scene that occurred at Stirling we shall give in the words of a recent popular writer :

"At Stirling on the first Lord's day after Mr. Erskine's deposition, the church bells were forbidden to be rung, and the people, on assembling at the usual hour, found the doors of the church and church yard made fast to prevent their entrance. The exasperated multitude were about to proceed to violent measures to effect their entrance, but their venerable pastor having made his appearance, and expressed his disapprobation of all violent measures, succeeded in dissuading them from the attempt. Then in the presence of the immense multitude, whom the interesting occasion had brought together, he lifted