

tended that any sort of severity should be used against any of those persons, it is overruled that it may be recommended to enquire into the truth of this fact: and further, as the abuse of the right of patronage has been one chief occasion of the progress of Secession, it is also overruled, that the General Assembly would be pleased to consider what methods may be employed to remedy so great an evil; and it is humbly submitted, whether it may not be expedient, for this purpose, to appoint a committee, to correspond with Presbyteries, and gentlemen of property and influence, and to report."

This report caused great discussion in the Assembly, after which they agreed to pass from the first part of it recommending the remit to Presbyteries, and as to the proposal of a committee to enquire into the abuse of patronage it was rejected by a considerable majority. The Overture thus fell to the ground, and the alarming evil was permitted to proceed without any attempt at its obstruction.

The movement served to show the jealousy and the fears of the leaders in the Establishment at that period, apprehending as they did that the effects of this schism were likely to take root, and had a threatening aspect to their Church. It serves to show that these adherents of the Establishment had the will to persecute, if they had had the opportunity and the means. But as the Rev. Adam Gib of Edinburgh, remarked,—"The assembly were seventy-seven years too late for this, and such was already the strength of the Secession cause that the suppression of their testimony was what would prove too hard work for all the people of the earth."

What would have been thought of this schism now when two-thirds of the nation of Scotland have joined in it; and when the number of members in Disenting Churches is double that of the Establishment!

From this period onwards for many years the Associate Synod took a deep interest in foreign missions; and they sent several ministers and preachers to the United States, and to Nova Scotia. It is not our intention to enter into details respecting these movements. The great difficulty was the want of preachers. From the many demands for supply of ordinances at home it was no small sacrifice to dispense with the services of any minister or preacher for foreign lands. Notwithstanding, the Synod did what they could, and their efforts were blessed with great success.

"In the course of little more than twenty years after the breach had taken place," (says Dr McKerrrow) "that section of the Secession, whose history I am now recording, had nearly quadrupled the number of its ministers. Forty-one of these were labouring in Scotland and England, about eight or ten in Ireland, and three in America. The number of Probationers in its list amounted to seven."

The Rev. Mr. Fisher, having for fifteen years officiated as Professor found it necessary, from his growing infirmities, to resign the charge of the Theological seminary; and in May, 1761, the Rev. John Swannston of Kinross, was chosen Professor. This eminent minister, however, exercised his office only during the short period of three years, when he was unexpectedly and suddenly removed by death from the scene of his labours.

He was succeeded in the Professorship by the Rev. John Brown of Haddington, a minister celebrated throughout Christendom for his learning and piety, and especially for the multitude and value of his writings.

"Soon after the appointment of Mr. Brown to the Professorship, the Synod made an enactment (in accordance with a former deed of the Associate Presbytery) concerning the admission of the Students to the Divinity Hall; declaring that none should be admitted to the study of Divinity, without proper testimonials from their respective sessions, approved of by the Presbyteries; and that all candidates for admission to the Theological Seminary should be carefully examined by the Presbyteries, not only on the different branches of literature, but also on the distinguishing principles of the Gospel, and concerning their attachment to that particular scheme of doctrine, order of worship, and scheme of discipline and government laid down from scripture in the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and Presbyterian form of Church Government. The students feeling the wants of a Theological Library to assist them in their studies, presented a petition to the Synod, craving that they would endeavour to raise a fund for this purpose. The Synod highly approved of the object, and they issued a recommendation to all the ministers and elders under their inspection, to exert themselves in

procuring, by private subscription or otherwise, the necessary supplies.

"Hitherto, owing to the scarcity of preachers, and the rapid increase of the congregations, the Synod had been under the necessity of rendering the term of Theological study as brief as possible; so that it was usual to license their young men, after they had been engaged in the study of Divinity for four years; but, by an act passed on the 4th of May, 1774, it was rendered imperative on all candidates for the ministry to attend, in ordinary cases, the Divinity Hall for five Sessions, and the Professor was prohibited from receiving any certificates of admission, except such as were given by the Presbyteries." (Dr. McKerrrow's History.)

In the year of 1773, in consequence of some ministers having demitted their charges, a question arose in the Associate Synod as to whether such ministers were entitled to a seat in the Church Judicatories. A committee of Synod was appointed to prepare a document on this subject, which might exhibit the mind of the Court. No case had as yet occurred in the Secession in which the Professor of Theology was without a pastoral charge; and the deliverance of Synod was, that no minister who had not the inspection of a congregation, could have a seat in any of the Church Courts.

It was on the 28th September, 1775, that the Church sustained a severe loss, by the death of the Rev. James Fisher of Glasgow, the youngest and last surviving of the four brethren. He died in the fiftieth year of his ministry, and seventy-ninth of his age. "His name," says Dr. McKerrrow, "will go down to posterity, associated with the names of those good men who nobly exerted themselves to stem the torrent of corruption, and who, when religion was reduced to a low ebb in this northern part of the island, were the honored instruments, in the hand of Providence, of effecting a considerable revival. Like those venerable men with whom he was associated, he showed how much he had at heart his Master's cause, by being unwearied in his labours, both in public and in private, to promote its success. He was held in high estimation as a preacher. His pulpit talents were such, that a person who was competent to judge, declared, concerning him, that 'neither as to sentiment, composition, nor delivery, had he ever heard his superior.' He was regular in his attendance upon the Church Courts, and took an active part in their deliberations. During a long ministerial course, his name is found connected with all the public transactions in which the Secession were engaged. A few years before he died, Mr. George Hender son was ordained as his colleague and successor in the ministerial office. Having out-lived, for a considerable period, the other founders of the Secession, and having witnessed the rapid increase of its congregations, and the great amount of good which it had already accomplished among his countrymen, it must have been pleasing to him, in advanced age, to contemplate those manifest tokens of the Divine approbation bestowed upon a cause which he had espoused at an early period of his ministry, and which he had labored for half a century to promote. He was gathered to his fathers in peace; and as being one of the excellent of the earth, his memory is blessed."

In the year 1773, the Synod agreed to re-publish those official documents which were acknowledged by the Church. This was accordingly done under the title of "The Re-exhibition of the Testimony." This work contained the Extra-judicial and Judicial Testimonies; the Label of the General Assembly, with the answers of the Associate Presbytery; their Declinature; the Assembly's condemnation of the Declinature, with observations by the Associate Presbytery; Reasons of the Four Brethren for not returning to the Church of Scotland in 1734; an Act declaring the Nullity of the Anti-burgher Synod; and an Act containing a Narrative of the rise, progress, and grounds of the Secession.

This volume of documents was intended, we believe, to give information on the various topics to which it relates. Whether it was ever in use, by Synodical sanction, for the admission of members into communion, we are not informed. We rather think it was never thus recognized. This side of the Secession did not carry testimony-bearing to the same extent as the other. With the Anti-burghers, as we may afterwards find, an approval of their testimony, was the term of admission to all the members; and an engagement in Covenanting was a term of ministerial admission. But the Burghers, after the breach, seem to have discontinued in a great measure the use of the Judicial Testimony, which had been common to all in their united state; and we have been informed that in no case did they ever engage in the work of Covenant-