

ciple; but finding our brethren inflexible in their opposition to it, we yielded and consented that their principle should be adopted by the united body. Is it then consistent with fairness and truth to charge us with the contrary as a reason for breaking off the negotiation?

"The object of our brethren in their statements upon this subject, seems evidently to be to produce the impression, that we approve of certain proceedings in the Established Church of Scotland, which they have described at some length. They cannot, however, be ignorant of the fact, that our fathers of the Secession raised their standard against the Erastianism of the Church of Scotland long before the members of the Free Church thought of unfurling their banner—that the present generation regard their reasons for secession as still valid, and that they have no disposition to return within her pale. So far from approving of the terms on which she holds her endowments, they disapprove altogether of her connexion with the state, as imposing trammels, which are inconsistent with that perfect freedom which is the birth-right of Zion; and have gone to lengths in asserting the freedom of Christ's Church, and in maintaining the rights of his people, to which the Free Church has scarcely yet attained."

However convenient this mode of disposing of the case may have appeared to the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod, it misrepresents the facts which they had to deal with, and evades the points to which they had to reply. The Committee on Union, in their Report which was submitted to the Free Synod on the 29th of June, 1847, after mentioning that they and the Committee of the Presbyterian Synod, met at New Glasgow, and recognised as a Doctrinal Basis the Basis of Union previously agreed to by both Synods, add, "The Committee then proceeded to discuss the subject of external relations, and found that the Committee of the Presbyterian Church made no distinction between the present Establishment and the Free Church, which, in the mind of this Committee, precluded a Union with them while holding such views." This is something very different from what is stated by the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod, although not at all inconsistent with any thing that appears in their Reply. There may seem, indeed, to be a difference recognised by them between the two bodies, in the fact that they were negotiating a union with the

Free Synod, while no corresponding step had been taken with those who still maintained a connexion with the Establishment in Scotland; but that admits of a very easy explanation, on grounds quite different from any approval of the Free Church, as maintaining the principles of the Westminster Standards in opposition to the defections of the Establishment—The members of the Union Committee of the Free Synod were not allowed to cherish the mistaken notion that this negotiation was an indication of superior regard for the Free Church, and were given very plainly to understand that "the toss up of a halfpenny" might determine with which of the bodies the Presbyterian Synod might be connected. Nor will it do for that Synod to say, as they do in reference to certain opinions expressed with regard to Lord Aberdeen's Act, "in our collective capacity we have expressed no opinion upon the subject, and we do not hold ourselves responsible for the private sentiments of our individual members, on matters in which we have no interest." In respect both to Lord Aberdeen's Act, and the relative position of the Free Church and the Establishment, they ought to feel an interest—if they were genuine Seceders they would feel an interest—and, as they cannot but know that the Free Church at all events feels an interest, it was their duty to see to it that their Committee, and especially its Convener, whom they appointed, were men who would be true exponents of the views of the body for whom they were appointed to act, and who would not just lay themselves out to insult those whom they were to meet on a treaty of union.

But what is there in the refusal of the Presbyterian Synod to join in the Protest of the Free Church against the Scottish Establishment, that should be regarded as an indication that they and the Free Synod do not entertain the same views with regard to the Confession of Faith and the Basis of Union? In answering that question, it may be necessary to remind the reader of two features which characterized genuine Seceders. The first is, that, as the Secession was a secession not from the Church of Scotland, but from the prevailing Moderate party, the original Seceders, and those who had a right to be recognised as their descendants, continued to feel an interest in that Church; and longed for the time, which they hoped might yet arrive, when through her falling into the hands of more