

## REMARKS

ON THE

"*Reply of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, to the Letter of the Free Church Synod declining the Union.*"

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR KING.

## THIRD ARTICLE.

It appears from the Act of Assembly 1647, which was given in full in the Second Article, that the Church of Scotland received the Westminster Confession of Faith *without a single objection or exception to any of its doctrines*. It continued to maintain it to the same extent; and, down to the period of the Disruption, the office-bearers of that church were required, before receiving ordination, to answer affirmatively to the question, "Do you sincerely own and believe *the whole doctrines* contained in the Confession of Faith, approved by the General Assemblies of this church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be founded upon the word of God; and do you acknowledge the same as the confession of your faith;" &c. ?

To the same extent was the Confession received by the men who, upwards of a century ago, originated the Secession Church in Scotland. The Commission of Assembly having, in November 1733, loosed the relation of the four ministers (Ebenezer Erskine, Alexander Moncreiff, William Wilson, and James Fisher), to their several charges, and declared them no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland, these four brethren read, and left with the clerk, a protestation, in which they declare "That, notwithstanding of our being cast out from ministerial communion with the established church of Scotland, we still hold communion with all and every one who desire, *with us, to adhere to the principles of the true presbyterian, covenanted church of Scotland, in her doctrine, worship, government, and discipline.*" In the following December, they formed themselves into a presbytery, which was afterwards known as the *Associate Presbytery*, and a committee of their number, appointed for that purpose, composed, and published in March next year, A Review of the "Narrative and State of the proceedings of the Indicatures of the Church of Scotland" in their case, which had been issued by a committee of the Commission of the General Assembly. In this Re-

view, they say, "We have made a secession from the *prevailing party* (that is the Moderates), who are carrying on the course of defection." "Our secession is not from the Church of Scotland: *we own her doctrine contained in her Confession of Faith;*" &c. This declaration is repeated in the "Testimony to the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the Church of Scotland," which they published in May of the same year, and which is known as the first and extra-judicial Testimony. In giving their reasons for their secession from "the prevailing party in the established church," they say expressly, "our secession is not from the Church of Scotland; *we own her doctrine, contained in her Confession of Faith;* we adhere to her covenanted presbyterian church-government, discipline, and worship."

In December 1736, the Associate presbytery emitted their second or Judicial Testimony, the title of which is, "Act, Declaration, and Testimony, *for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland;* agreeable to the Word of God, *the Confession of Faith, the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations;* and against several steps of defection from the same, both in former and present times." Amongst other matters to which, in this document, they bear testimony is the following: "VI. Likewise, they hereby receive, acknowledge, and approve all the several pieces of Reformation attained unto by this church in her several reforming periods; particularly, the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines who met at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland; which Confession they receive and own as the Confession of their Faith; *as the same was received and approved by Act of Assembly, 1647, Sess. 23.* As also they receive and own the whole doctrine contained in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, compiled by the foresaid Assembly at Westminster;" &c. Soon after the publication of this Testimony, they drew up a formula of questions to be put at the ordination of ministers and elders, and at the licensing of probationers to preach the gospel. The following is a part of the second of these questions: "Do you sincerely own and believe *the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith compiled by the Assembly of Divines, who met at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scot-*