

passed an Act on the 15th of May, 1733, approving of the proceedings of the Synod, and appointed him to be rebuked and admonished by the Moderator at their own bar.

"When this sentence was intimate to Mr. Erskine, he declared, that he could not submit to a rebuke and admonition, in regard, he was neither conscious to himself, nor judicially convicted of transgressing the bounds of his ministerial calling, or of uttering any thing, in his sermon, contrary to the word of God, or the approved standards of this church; and then gave in a signed Protestation, dated May 14th, 1733.

"Mr. William Wilson, minister at Perth; Mr. Alexander Moncreiff, minister at Abernethy; and Mr. James Fisher, minister at Kinclaven, adhere to the Protestation and Declaration; upon which, and their refusing to retract the same, the Assembly ordained, 'That the four Brethren aforesaid, appear before the Commission in August next'

"As this severe sentence was past, without hearing the four Brethren, in open Assembly, upon the relevancy of the crime alleged against them to infer such a high censure, they, not being allowed to read it, laid upon the table, with an instrument, the following short paper, as their joint speech.

"In regard, the venerable Assembly have come to a positive sentence, without hearing our defences, and have appointed the Commission to execute their sentence in August, in case we do not retract what we have done, we cannot but complain of this uncommon procedure, and declare that we are not at liberty to take this affair to an avisanandum."

After various proceedings before the Commission both in August and November of that year, the four Brethren continuing still of the same mind as formerly, the Commission did on the 16th of November, 1733, loose their relation to their respective charges, and declare them no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland, upon which they read the following Protestation, and gave it to the clerk, having taken instruments thereon:

Edinburgh, November 16th, 1733

"We hereby adhere to the protestation formerly entered before this Court; both at their last meeting in August, and when we appeared first before this meeting. And further, we do protest in our own name, and in the name of all and every one in our respective congregati-

ons adhering to us; that, notwithstanding of this sentence, passed against us, our pastoral relation shall be held and reputed firm and valid. And likewise we protest, 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: And particularly with every one who are groaning under the evils, and who are affected with the grievances we have been complaining of; who are, in their several spheres, wrestling against the same. But, in regard the prevailing party in this Established Church, who have now cast us out from ministerial communion with them, are carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles; and particularly are suppressing ministerial freedom and faithfulness in testifying against the present backslidings of the Church, and inflicting censures upon Ministers for witnessing, by protestations and otherwise, against the same: Therefore we do, for these and many other weighty reasons, to be laid open in due time, protest that we are obliged to make a SECESSION from them; and that we can have no ministerial communion with them, till they see their sins and mistakes, and amend them. And in like manner we do protest, That it shall be lawful and warrantable for us to exercise the keys of doctrine, discipline, and government, according to the word of God, and Confession of Faith, and the principles and constitutions of the covenanted Church of Scotland; as if no such censure had been passed upon us: Upon all which we take instruments. And we hereby APPEAL UNTO THE FIRST FREE, FAITHFUL, AND REFORMING GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.
WILLIAM WILSON.
ALEX. MONCRIEFF.
JAMES FISHER."

In the circumstances of the case, these ministers may be said to have been most iniquitously cast out of the Church, from the prevailing party in which, at the same time, they seceded. But although the Moderate influence which accomplished this was predominant, it was not so overwhelming as to prevent a re-act on. The next Assembly, in 1734, re-