

such errors—and contains a solemn confession of those truths of the Gospel which had been impugned by the steps taken in this process.

“It is now,” says Dr. McKerrow, “upwards of forty years* since this overture was published, under the sanction of the Provincial Synod of Glasgow; and there are passages to be found in it, which, though they had been penned in the spirit of prophecy, with a view to the Voluntary Church question of the present day, could not have been more appropriate. They show us that the doctrine of civil establishments in religion was not much more in repute half a century ago, in at least one section of the Seceders, than it is now; and the charge brought against the present race of Seceders, that the sentiments entertained by a large portion of them, unfavorable to civil establishments, are new, is unfounded. In this publication, we find such anti-Establishment declarations as the following—‘The ministers of the National Church are not only divided about ecclesiastical management, and other questions of more doubtful disputation, but about the most fundamental articles of revealed religion. Now, our Lord has declared that a house or kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; and, in fact, there is properly no bond of union among them, except the Civil Establishment. Were this *old rusty hoop* knocked off, they would fly into ten or twenty pieces.’ Again—‘It is more than time that the people in this country were falling upon more resolute and regular methods of having this Antichristian yoke (Patronage) dashed in pieces. They should resolve to let every intruder instruct his proper audience—the pews, walls, bells, and steeples, with his honorable or right honorable patron; and they should persist in an orderly and peaceable, but firm and determined, application to Parliament every year, till they get either this legal and oppressive tyranny abolished, or the public funds applied for the support of one in each parish, to whose ministrations they can with a safe conscience submit, in proportion to their real numbers; or, what is perhaps the only effectual way of being quit of this cruel usurpation, let the public fund be applied to other useful purposes, and let every one pay his own minister, as he does his lawyer or physician.’ These statements are sufficiently plain; and whatever opinion my readers may be inclined to form of them, they at least establish the fact, that Voluntary Church sentiments in the Secession are not new.”

Various occurrences at this period seemed to combine to give a new and most salutary impulse, in different forms, to the administrations of this Church. “An improved mode of pulpit address,” says an eminent minister, “was introduced. The former, though abounding in the statement and exposition of sound principles, profuse in Scriptural quotation, and replete with experimental and practical instructions in godliness, had yet, through a necessity arising from many causes, involved a certain deficiency of exact preparation, been less concise and consecutive in illustration, less polished in diction, as well as less correct in elocution, than was desirable. A new taste was created and cherished both amongst hearers and speakers—a new, and, in some respects, more perfect mode of preaching arose; and the public in general, especially those who led their judgment, hailed and approved the change.* Again, it may be remarked that there was a more catholic spirit beginning to be diffused among the ministers and members of this Church. It is remarked, and we believe justly, in Dr. Hough’s Memoirs, referring from an earlier to this later period,

* Published in 1841.

* An anecdote may be introduced here, showing that these changes awakened the prejudices of the people, although they were not resisted by any. A certain preacher of the old school having newly entered the field, and preached for the first time in one of the congregations of the Perth Presbytery, occasioned these remarks—‘Mr. — preached to us yesterday, and pleased us remarkably well. He had none of your new-fangled words, as *Sion* and *Holy One* (*run*): but the *gude auld Zion* (pronounced as *e*) and *Holy One* (pronounced as *on*).