

They did not separate because, in violation of that Settlement and of the Articles of Union between England and Scotland, church patronage had been re-established. They felt and they complained of that wrong, and, with many brethren whom they left behind in the Establishment, they desired to have that wrong redressed; but they knew, as those in that day who were versant in civil and ecclesiastical law knew, that patronage was not the absolute thing which it has since been made, and that, with the unquestioned right which the Church possessed of satisfying itself with respect to the call of the people, it was nothing but the tyrannical conduct of the Moderate majorities in the church courts, which really interfered with the fundamental principle "that no man be intruded into a parish contrary to the will of the congregation." They did not separate as being dissatisfied with any one of the doctrines of the Confession of Faith; and, in particular, they had no objection to the doctrine concerning the civil magistrate stated in the 23rd chapter of the Confession. In their answers to Mr. Nairn they say expressly, "The whole Confession of Faith, and consequently the passage of it now pointed at, was received by the Church of Scotland as truth, and that among us;" &c.

According to the Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Secession, published by order of the Associate Synod in the Re-exhibition of the Testimony, in 1779, the Church of Scotland "having been in danger of being leavened by a scheme of Arian, Socinian, and Arminian doctrines, taught in one of her seminaries of learning by Professor Simson; and of a corrupt erroneous and time-serving ministry, for whom a wide door had been opened by several violent settlements on reclaiming congregations, from and after the year 1726; and by an act of Assembly, anno 1732, concerning the settlement of vacant churches: at the same time, a standing Testimony, by way of protestation, against these and other courses, which would have been a habile mean of transmitting truth to the generations following, being impracticable; in regard the 7th Act of Assembly, 1730, had discharged the recording of reasons of dissents against the determinations of Church-judicatories: Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, minister of the gospel at Stirling, one of the members of this court, thought it his duty, in a sermon at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, at

Perth, October 1732, to testify plainly and freely against some of the prevailing evils and sins of the present times, and particularly against the foresaid Act of Assembly 1732, and the proceedings of church-judicatories in the settlement of ministers over reclaiming and dissenting congregations, which so galled and tormented some of the ministers then present, that they pushed and obtained of the Synod the appointment of a Committee to consider the particulars vented in the sermon, which were said to have given offence, and which they were to lay before the Synod next die: Mr. Erskine, who with some difficulty obtained a sight of the quarrelled expressions in the clerk's hand, gave in answers to them to the Synod; and both are to be found in the *True State of the Process*, p. 15, &c.

"The Synod, after spending three days on this affair, did find Mr. Erskine censurable for the said expressions alleged to have been emitted by him in his sermon before them. From which sentence several ministers and elders dissented, and against which they protested, and gave in their reasons of protest, which the Synod in compliance with the 7th Act of Assembly, 1730, would not record. Mr. Erskine and Mr. Fisher protested, and appealed to the next General Assembly. The Synod by another vote resolved to rebuke Mr. Erskine at their bar, and to admonish him to behave orderly for the future, although he had not in the least departed from the standards of this church, as the Synod themselves were obliged materially to acknowledge; for, Mr. Ferguson at Killin, having accused Mr. Erskine, in the course of reasoning, of departing from the standards of this church, and Mr. Erskine having protested, that Mr. Ferguson should be obliged by the Synod to make good his charge, the Synod dismissed that affair, upon Mr. Ferguson his explaining himself. This sentence of Synod, appointing Mr. Erskine to be rebuked and admonished, Mr. Erskine could not in conscience submit to, as it would be a departure from the Testimony he had formerly given; and therefore the matter came before the Assembly in May, 1733, who refused to hear Messrs. Wilson and Moncreill, dissenters from the Synod's sentence on their reasons of dissent; and whose committee of bills refused to transmit Mr. Fisher's appeal: And the Assembly, upon hearing parties at the bar, after some reasoning,