

From 1830, to at least, 1840, this Voluntary Question agitated the whole country. The Secession and Relief Churches most harmoniously co-operated on the side of freedom, and were by these means brought into acquaintance and friendship with each other, and into the exercise of mutual confidence and love. Voluntary Societies were formed in every part of the land. These, and other movements in defence of christian liberty, were followed on the side of the Establishment by agitation about the *Veto* law, the Chapels of Ease, and *Quoad Sacra* Churches, the Church Extension scheme, and the Petitions for Additional Endowments. All these schemes were conducted on the side of the Establishment with a view to counteract Dissent, and if possible, to annihilate it. They had even the effrontery to seek such an increase of churches to be built and endowed at the expense of the nation, as would accommodate the whole population, and thus supersede the use of Dissenting Churches. It was wonderful that so little knowledge of human nature could be exhibited. But the Church of Scotland, conscious of its imperfections, and disliking to have them exposed, seemed for a time to be intimidated, and to give an *involuntary* impulse to the Voluntary movement by their own injudicious opposition. Into all the movements on the enlightened side of this great question, the Relief Church entered with an activity which did them honour. It is a good thing to be zealously affected in a good cause; and conscious that this cause was good, and must prosper, they overcame all their denominational diffidence and reserve, and went forward with stout hearts to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Coming thus so much into contact with the United Secession, the two churches increased in resemblance, and were gradually prepared for union. The steps leading to this will be given when we bring up the Secession history from 1820 to 1847, when their union took place with the Relief.

In the meantime it is only necessary, before closing this part of our historic sketch, to take notice of a serious litigation into which this Synod were drawn, by which their civil rights were affected, and which occupied their attention for four or five years. We shall best present this matter, by quoting from a work entitled, "Memorials of the Union between the Secession and Relief Churches." This case arose out of an attempt on the part of Mr. Smith, Relief minister in Campbelton, to get over his congregation, and the property belonging to it, to the Established Church. Taking advantage of the remit sent down by the Relief Synod to its Congregations, to consider the proposal of union with the Secession Church, he forced on the alternative, whether they would unite with the Secession, or join the Church of Scotland. He avowed his own determination to be in favour of joining the Establishment, and by his observations, rendered it evident that he was about to take that step. Other circumstances in connexion with this, rendered it necessary for his Presbytery to interfere. Mr. Smith refused to accede to their decision, which required of him, simply to declare *ex animo*, that he would abide by the principles of the Relief Synod as at present constituted. After long dealings with him, they were necessitated to declare him no longer in connexion with the Relief Body. This decision was confirmed by the Synod, to which the case was appealed.

"Mr. Smith obtained an interdict from the Sheriff, to prevent the Church from being preached vacant, until his civil rights were ascertained in the Supreme Court. This case came in due time before the Court of Session. The question mainly at issue was, Is the sentence of a Dissenting Church Court to be considered by the Civil Courts, *res judicata*? or have the civil courts a right to examine, if it has been regularly and fairly pronounced, and, if any flaw is discovered, set it aside as to its civil consequences,—manse and stipend? Mr. Smith and his friends held the latter, the Synod the former, in this question. After a lengthened litigation, the question was decided in favour of the Relief Synod, and against Mr. Smith and his supporters.

"The proceedings in this case were watched with anxious interest, both by