

23

~~11/14~~
10 71

10
2/10

3/6

SCS#1133

Associate Postmaster and
District Agent Delaware
22

~~James F. Thomas~~

Gain

No 10.

James F. Thomas

Contents of this volume

- 1 Acts & proceedings of the associate
Synod 1747 with appendix
2. A Vindication of the Judicial Act
and Testimony by W Campbell 1748
- 3 Act Declaration & Testimony 1736
- 4 Sermon by ~~James Wilson~~ 1755
- 5 Sermon by Wm Wilson 1741
- 6 Moneroff on Covenanting 1744
- 7 Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace 176
- 8 Act for renewing the Covenants 1763

A C T S
A N D
P R O C E E D I N G S

OF THE
ASSOCIATE SYNOD,

At EDINBURGH, in *April*, 1747.

Containing their

Act asserting the Constitution and Rights of the *Associate Synod*, according to previous Contendings for the same.

Act further asserting the Constitution and Rights of the *Associate Synod*.

Act condemning the *Resolution* made in Synod *April* 8.

Act condemning the *Resolution* made in Synod *April* 9.

Act concerning the *Ministers and Elders* presently in a Way of *separating* from the *Associate Synod*.

Answers to *Reasons* of Dissent from, and Protest against their Sentence, at *Edinburgh*, *April* 9. 1746, concerning a *religious Clause* of some *Burgess-Oaths*; which *Reasons* are inserted.

W I T H

An INTRODUCTION and APPENDIX, and some other ADDITIONS.

E D I N B U R G H :

Printed by WILLIAM GRAY, for ANDREW STIVENSON; and sold by the said W. GRAY, and G. CRAWFORD in *Edinburgh*, D. BUIST in *Perth*, T. LUNDIN in *Glasgow*, J. NIMMO in *Kilmarnock*, W. HENDERSON in *Dunfermline*, J. HENDERSON in *Abernethy*, W. MARSHAL in *Hume*, J. KER in *Selkirk*, and other Booksellers in Town and Country. MDCCXLVII.

1810

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE



INTRODUCTION.

AMONG various Things in the Lord's Providence which have influenced the State of his Work in the *Secession*, that which lies in the present Controversy about the *religious Clause* of some *Burgess-Oaths*, hath already produced the most signal Effect.

It is now alledged, that this Subject was talked of in the Associate Presbytery at the framing of their *Testimony*, but dropt as not expedient to be meddled with. However, abstracting from the Question, whether the Members of the Associate Presbytery had *then* any particular Knowledge of Burgess-Oaths with the foresaid Clause; it is observable, that the Consideration of this Affair came, in its native Order, to be *after* framing the *Testimony*; because a stating the *Quarrel* with the present national Profession and Settlement of Religion, was necessary to pave the Way for condemning an *Oath* homologating the said Profession and Settlement.

The Sentence of Synod upon that Matter, at *Edinburgh, April 9. 1746*, runs as follows.

“ The Synod find, That a swearing the religious Clause of
“ some Burgess-Oaths, *viz. Here I protest, before God and your*
“ *Lordships, that I profess, and allow with my Heart, the true Re-*
“ *ligion presently professed within this Realm, and authorised by the*
“ *Laws thereof. I shall abide thereat, and defend the same, to my*
“ *Life's End, renouncing the Roman Religion called Papistry, by*
“ any under their Inspection, as the said Clause comes necessa-
“ rily in this Period to be used and applied, does not agree unto
“ the present State and Circumstances of the Testimony for Re-
“ ligious and Reformation which this Synod, with those under
“ their Inspection. are maintaining; particularly, that it does not
“ agree unto, nor consist with an entring into the Bond for re-
“ newing our solemn Covenants: and that therefore those of the
“ *Secession* cannot further, with Safety of Conscience, and with-
“ out Sin, swear any Burgess-Oath with the said religious Clause,
“ while Matters with reference to the Profession and Settlement
“ of Religion continue in such Circumstances as at present.
“ Moreover, the Synod find, That Burgesses of the *Secession*
“ who are already concerned in any such Oaths, should be requir-

“ ed, in order to their Admission into the Bond for renewing our
 “ solemn Covenants, to attend Conference with their respective
 “ Sessions, for signifying a Satisfaction with the present Judg-
 “ ment of the Synod, and a Sense of the Mistake they have
 “ hitherto, through Inadvertency, been under concerning such
 “ Burgefs-Oaths. And the Synod agree to sist farther Procedure,
 “ at this Juncture, in the whole Affair of the Burgefs-Oath.”

The Rise and Progress of the present Controversy upon the above Subject, will be found so far explained afterwards, that little needs be said upon it here.

It was a Subject of very *grave* Deliberation in the Associate Synod. Before the Decision was made, there was *much* Reasoning about it, at *four* different Meetings of Synod, in *thirteen* Sederunts mostly very long. *Thrice* were the Synod employed in publick *Fasting* with respect unto it; *thrice* in private Diets for *Prayer*; and *seven* Times were different Brethren employed *that Way*, in the Course of Reasoning.

It was all along Matter of great Heaviness to most of the Members, that such *Opposition* took place as was made, not only to the *Decision* insisted for, but even to *Consideration* of the Affair; considering the great *Plainness* and *Weight* of the Case, the palpable *Dependence* thereof upon our *received Principles*, the sad *retarding* of Progress in *Covenanting-work*, by that *Opposition*; and considering the manifest *Unaccountableness* of these Reasonings whereby the *Opposition* was supported,——as indeed the Reasonings at that Time were mostly for carrying away from any common Regard to the Word PRESENTLY in the Clause, in applying it to the PAST.-----But though some Members found themselves obliged, on such Accounts, to *dissent* twice from, and to *protest* once against the Delays of the Affair; and to protest at another Time for due Liberty of Practice in *Covenanting-work*, agreeably to their Principles about that Affair, in case a *pro re nata* Meeting appointed for the Consideration thereof, in the Heat of the *Rebellion*, should not take place, and in case the Call to such Work should in the mean time become more loud and pressing: However, a Concern for *Unity* and *Peace* in the Matter prevailed with the *Majority* unto sundry Delays.

After the *Decision* of the Affair on the 9th of *April* 1746, the *Opposition* of the *protesting* Brethren was carried on at a *high* Rate, beyond what might have been apprehended: And some of them went quickly to *Pulpits* with *Testimonies* against the Synod upon the Head; besides giving the Reasons of their Protestation, in a *Strain* most *unbecoming*, as will appear in reading them.

The Committee that was appointed to prepare *Answers* to these *Reasons* when given in, got not met till a few Days before the Meeting of Synod at *Stirling*, in *September* that Year: And as they did not then finish the Draught of *Answers*; so, otherwise, they were averse from the Thoughts of having them presented and entered upon at the said Meeting, in hopes that some *previous* Steps might be got taken, for bringing about that *Healing* which there was still the less Prospect of, if once the *Reasons* and *Answers* should be formally entered upon.

When the Synod met in *September*, the Brethren desired that their *Reasons* might be called for and recorded. Whereupon some others represented, that as the Draught of *Answers* was not finished, so they could not bear the Thoughts of proceeding upon the Affair in that Shape, without *first* trying if the *Necessity* thereof could be prevented, and *Healing* brought about, by Conference with Prayer, for removing the *Misunderstandings* that they conceived were *visibly* taking place; and as the Brethren hereupon dropt the Desire about their *Reasons*, so there was nothing further of it till the Close of the Meeting.

The Brethren who represented as above, signified that they had some Things to suggest toward a Removal of Mistakes on all Hands, in relation to the Matter foresaid, and craved an Opportunity of doing so, in the Synod's agreeing to spend some Time in Conference with Prayer before farther Procedure. This having been agreed to, the Conference on the Side of those for the Sentence was generally for removing any *Mistakes*, as if they were any way disposed to *deal harshly* with their Brethren of a *different* Judgment, or to neglect any practical *Forbearance*, *Tenderness* and *Patience* in the Matter, that could be *suitable*. But all this could no way *satisfy* the Brethren: Wherefore the Synod referred the Consideration of holding farther Conference with Prayer, upon the Subject, till next Sederunt.

At that Sederunt, after a little Conference, the Brethren moved, That the Question might be put to a Vote, *Whether the foresaid Decision of Synod should be a Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion, or, Not?* This was a Point entirely distinct from what had been before conversed about, as to all due practical Forbearance with them *in their Opposition*; seeing an affirmative Decision upon that Point behoved to be a judicial Countenance *unto their Opposition*. However, the Brethren being exceedingly bent upon this Motion, before it was taken in or Reasoning entered upon concerning it, "Mr. *Moncrieff* protested against the " taking it in, or reasoning upon it, in regard he conceived the " said Motion had come in *per saltum*, and in regard our receive-

ed Principles were thereby called in question, as it would be *materially* a receding from them. Whereupon he took Instructions. And he made the following Motion to be a Side to the first Motion, *viz. Lay aside this Question, and proceed immediately to the Business of the Synod, or, Not?* Hereupon long Reasoning ensued; and then the two Motions, after Prayer by a Brother for Light and Direction therein, being put to a Vote, it carried for the *first*. Immediately upon this, the Brethren craved, that their Question should be put. At which some others expressed great Surprise; signifying, that though the *Merits* of their Question had come to be spoke to in the *former* Reasoning, yet, as the Entertainment of their Motion was then *dubious*, they had not opened *fully* in reasoning upon it, and that though they had been willing to shew a *Disposition* for giving the *utmost* fair Play to that Motion, toward evidencing the *Unreasonableness* of any *Mistakes* about their *tender Inclinations* unto their Brethren, yet it never entered into their Minds, that this Motion was to be *immediately voted*, without *further* Reasoning upon it, and that they behoved to have *Liberty* for the same. And thus the Matter was delayed till the Afternoon's Sederunt.

When the Synod was met in the Afternoon, the Affair was resumed. The Brethren insisted with the greatest Keenness for a *Vote* upon their Motion, and the *Reasoning* continued till about *three* of the Clock next Morning. It was greatly insisted for, that they should explain their Question, by laying it in some *larger* Shape: But by no means could they be prevailed upon to alter or add one Word, as to the *first* Form of it, *Term of Communion, or, Not?* And though they would not *positively* refuse the *widest* Meaning that could be put upon it, yet they would not offer to give any *positive* Explication thereof, further than, as one of them owned, that it meant a *material reversing* of the former Sentence, so that it should only stand in the Minutes as the *Monument of a Testimony* which the Synod had *then* thought fit to give. There was also much Reasoning against their Capacity of being *Judges* in such a Question, while they were so evidently *Parties*, that the Question just amounted to a determining whether *any Account* should be taken of them or others, for *Opposition* to the Sentence: But they would no way yield to such an Objection. At the same Time their insisting for a *Vote* became more and more *strenuous*; so that some of them told they would not go out of the House till they should have a *Vote*, though they should sit till so and so long next Morning. Thus the Time was protracted, and the Synod thrown into such Perplexity and Confusion, that Members could scarce well have any

Composure for considering what they were doing. At length, when the Vote seemed to be just coming on, a *Protest* was taken as follows. “ Mr. *Gib* craved, that, in order to the said Question’s having a distinct Sense, so as a Judgment of Synod by a Vote thereupon may be a certain Sound of the Trumpet, that before putting said Question, it be so laid, as to distinguish, whether or not a *Negative* upon the same must extend unto a determining the late Judgment of Synod not to be a Term of Communion, notwithstanding *whatever* Course of *Difference* from and *Opposition* to said Judgment, in Time coming: But as this, after much insisting, could not be obtained, through Opposition thereto by the Brethren who were pushing for a Vote upon the said Question; — he therefore protested against putting said Question *otherwise* than as above insisted for, in regard the doing so behoved to be manifestly *irregular* and *unreasonable*; and thereupon he took Instruments:” To which Protest Mess. *Clarkson* and *Archbald*, Ministers, with *Adam Wilson*, Ruling Elder, adhered. After this there was a joint Demand by Members from all Corners of the House, that the Question should be put, *Proceed to putting the above Question, or, Delay the same till next Synod?* Whereupon immediately *five* of the Brethren and *nine* Elders *protested* against putting this Question; and the Vote being stated, and a Brother being employed to pray for Light and Direction in the Matter, these Brethren *withdrew* abruptly *before* Prayer; and the Vote being put, it easily carried *Delay*. Then the Brethren returned: ----- Whereupon the same *five* with *eleven* Elders *dissented* from, and *protested* against the *Delay*, while there were near *fifty* Members present. And Mess. *Ebenezer Erskine* and *David Horn*, Ministers, with *James Beugo* * and *John Caddel* †, Ruling Elders, *adhered* to the former Protest against the *Sentence*; As the Synod afterwards *delayed* calling for the *Reasons* and *Answers* till next Meeting; appointing the former Committee to prepare *Answers* likewise to what *additional Reasons* should be given in. --- And thus, after the Synod had been driven on till about three of the Clock in the Morning, as Men plunged in *Mire* and *Water*, little capable of *considering* what was in Hand, — did begin, in the above Vote of a *Delay*, again to *get up* their Heads, *breathe*, and *look about*.

After the said Meeting of Synod, the Brethrens *ado* against the Sentence was much *increased*. Notes were uttered in Pulpits, about *removing Land-marks*, about *Satan’s Squeeb*s thrown in, and other-

otherwise; which were commonly understood to be all *levelled* against the *Synod*, in the *present Controversy*. Some Brethren of the *other Side*, who had been *silent for a Time*, in *publick*, upon the *Affair*,---and understanding how People were come to be entertained as above, did then essay in *publick* to *vindicate* the *Synod's Conduct*. And this gave very great *Offence*, as appears by strange *Remarks* published upon *Notes* of some of their *Sermons*; to which a *Reply* was also published, chiefly in shewing the *Warrantableness* of the *Sentence*. After these *Remarks*, there came out from other two of the *Protesters*, a *Review* of a Pamphlet that had been published by a *private Hand*, upon the Subject of the *Burgefs-Oath*. But the *Remarks* and *Review* will speak for themselves, as to the *Principles* and *Spirit* in which they are *wrote*; as it must be remembered, concerning the *Review*, that the *private* Author therein immediately dealt with, is considered as bringing forth the *Arguments* that have been used by *Members of Synod* upon the *Affair*: Wherefore the extraordinary *Abuse* and *Rattness* wherewith he is there treated, must be considered as aimed against the *Synod*.-----Likewise Copies of the *Reasons* of *Protest* were let out, through different and distant Corners of the *Country*, among *Elders* and *others*.

Thus Matters went on, till the Meeting of *Synod* in *April* last; for which *Preparation* had been made by the forefaid *Conduct*, and to which about *thirty Elders* were got up, *double* the Number of what had *ever been up* at any Meeting of *Synod* before the *Sentence* was passed. And then indeed the *Cloud* was come to *great Darknes* and *Blacknes*; that none could for a *Time conceive*, how it might *break* or be *dispelled*. At opening the *Affair*, and after some Reasoning about it, the Brethren came to lay their *Question* in a *new Shape*, about *transmitting* the *Affair* to *Presbyteries* and *Kirk-Sessions*, on the Footing of what were called *Barrier-acts*. It is said afterwards, p. 120. that it had been *strenuously* and *importunately* urged to *forbear any Sentence*, until the *said Barrier-acts* should be *observed*. But indeed it cannot be remembered, that even such *Acts* were *mentioned*, or that ever there was any *urging* that way, before the *Sentence*. It is indeed remembered, that a *Rev. Father*, at the *first Meeting* of *Synod* where the *Affair* was entered on, suggested a *Proposal* of *transmitting* the same in an *Overture* to the *Presbyteries*; upon which it was observed, that a *Synod* was no more a *delegate Court* than a *Presbytery*; and *mere* of this *Affair* is not known to have been heard of.-----However, their *Question*, as *new-laid*, came to be strongly insisted on: And when a *Vote* was coming to pass upon the *previous Question*, whether *theirs*, or that about proceeding

ing to the *Reasons* and *Answers*, should be put? (after there had been objecting to no Purpose against their Capacity of *voting* in such a Question, being directly *Parties*), as a Preparative in the Case, one of the Brethren advertised all present, that the Consequence of proceeding to the *Reasons* and *Answers*, behoved to be the having *them* brought to the Bar, and *excommunicate* or *deposed*. But the Progress of the Affair at that Time, shall be referred to the Accounts given afterwards.

The Procedure in the Affair of the *two Resolutions* was evidently so *disorderly*, and *inconsistent* with the *Constitution of the Court*, as *obliged* to the *Step* which was taken on *Thursday's* Night. But *much more* did it *oblige* thereto, when taken into Connection with the *Matter* in hand. The Sentence of Synod, which was left professedly and formally standing, doth find upon the Matter, and it will be found afterwards sufficiently made out, That a *present* swearing the religious Clause of some Burges's oaths, is openly *contradictory unto*, and a material *Abjuration of the whole* of the Testimony in the Secession. And however covertly the *second* Resolution be worded and laid, it will not readily be denied, that the Design in proposing the *Transmission* from *Barrier-acts*, was to have the Sentence got *razed altogether* in the Issue. And it cannot be denied, that the Resolution *materially reversed* the Sentence, so as it should not in the mean time be reckoned *quarrellable* for Seceders further to swear *Burges's-oaths* with the *religious Clause*, or for Ministers and Sessions to proceed in *Covenanting*, in direct *Opposition* unto the Sentence. And seeing the Matter stood as above, as there behoved to be something done in opposition to such *awful Work*, so nothing could have been *regularly* done in the *Issue*, but what was done; because the *Resolution* could not be reckoned really the *Deed* of a *Court* so as to be protested against with *sitting still*, supposing that could have been an *adequate* Testimony otherwise; seeing, as neither *Moderator* nor *Clerk* were actually *officiating* in the Matter, none but *twenty* (among near *sixty* Members present) voted in it, *seven* of whom were *Parties*, and thus there were only *thirteen Men*, (according to the Style of the *Reasons*, Page 115.) and but *three* of them *Ministers*, real *Voters*, while *twenty three* were previously *Protesters* against the Vote altogether, both as to *Matter* and *Manner* of it: And when this was the Case, as the *Step* taken was necessarily *shut up to*, so it could not, in the Nature of it, have been *any longer delayed*.

Wherefore it cannot but be most *inconsistent*, to blame the *Course* taken against the *Resolution*, without blaming also the *Course* contended for; seeing they are wholly so *inseparable*, that they

they must *stand and fall* together. And as to the Impeachment that the Synod has been boldly laid under, of *Covenant-breaking* by the Procedure used against the prevailing Party at that Time; it is evidently most unaccountable, to construct of our Covenants as *binding to Unity*, otherwise than *along with Truth*, and the *Testimony of Jesus*: And *Unity* in *opposition* to that Testimony, is so far from being a *strengthening* one anothers Hands, that it is a most evident *weakening* of them as to the Lord's Work, and a *suffering Sin* to ly upon one another, *contrary* to all the mutual Faithfulness that our Covenant-engagements bind to.

It was once designed here to have taken some particular Notice of that particular *Opposition* to, and *impugning of our received Testimony*, in some late Prints and otherwise, which is now breaking openly forth upon the Side of the *Defence* of the Burgefs-oath in its *religious Clause*, and of the *Resolutions*; very agreeably unto the Nature of that *Cause*: But these Things shall be now superseded. And likewise sundry Remarks, which were in View, about the sad Verification that is now to be found on the *other Side*, of some Charges that were most *groundlessly* laid against the Synod, as to the *Method* of their Procedure,-----shall be dropt.

The Synod, after the *Acts asserting their Constitution and Rights*, appointed a *synodical Fast*, which was publickly observed on *Tuesday* the 14th, in conjunction with the Body of the Associate Congregation at *Edinburgh*. On *Wednesday* Forenoon the 15th, after the *Act condemning the first Resolution*, the Synod went immediately out to the Church, entred on the *Reasons and Answers*, spent that Day upon them till very late; as also the next Day, all but a Sederunt at Night; and thus came to *approve* of the *Answers*, when corrected and amended, as *taking off the pretended Force of the Reasons*. Likewise on *Wednesday* the 15th, "At the Afternoon's Sederunt, after reading the Minutes of the *Friday* before, and the Sederunt of the Forenoon of that Day, Mr. *John Cleland* of the Associate Presbytery of *Glasgow*, who came not up till that Week, being present, and having heard the whole read, declared *his Satisfaction* therewith, craving hereupon to be added unto the Roll of that Meeting; which was done accordingly."

After the *Acts* on *Thursday's* Night *condemning the second Resolution*, and *concerning the Ministers and Elders presently in a Way of separating from the Associate Synod*; on the *Friday*, a Fast was appointed to be observed on the 27th of *May*, Missions were appointed for *London* and *Ireland*, the three young Men who had been on Trials before the Associate Presbytery of *Glasgow*, were remitted to that of *Edinburgh*; and an Extract of the

Synod's Acts at this Time was appointed to be sent to the Presbyteries and Sessions, for being ingrossed in their Minutes, at the first Sederunt after coming to Hand; and some Pieces of private Business were considered. Likewise the two Questions following were unanimously added to the Formula of Questions to be put to young Men before Licence, and Ministers before Ordination, *viz.*

Quest. 1. " Are you satisfied with, and do you purpose to adhere unto and maintain the Principles about the present Civil Government which are declared and maintained in the Associate Presbytery's Answers to Mr. Nairn, with the Defence thereunto subjoined? "

Quest. 2. " Do you acknowledge and promise Subjection to this Presbytery, in Subordination to the Associate Synod, as presently constitute in a Way of testifying against the sinful Management of the prevailing Party in the Synod, at some of the first Diets of their Meeting at *Edinburgh*, in *April 1747*, or other Presbyteries in that Subordination, as you shall be regularly called; and do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain the said Testimony, in your Station and Capacity; and do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain, according to your Station and Capacity, the Sentence of Synod, in *April 1746*, concerning the religious Clause of some Burgess-Oaths, and that in Opposition to all Tenets or Practices to the contrary? "

Moreover, the Synod appointed, that their Acts at this Time should be published, agreed that the Reasons and Answers should be printed along with them; and they recommended to one of their Number to oversee the Printing, as also to give an Introduction and Appendix, with what Notes or Additions otherwise he should see proper,---agreeably to the Tenor of the Synod's Acts and Proceedings. Thus that Meeting of Synod was harmoniously concluded. Since which Time, the Rev. Mess. *David Smyton* at *Kilmaurs*, *John Erskine* at *Lesley*, and *Isaac Paton* at *Temple-Patrick* in *Ireland*, have heartily concurred with, and espoused their Acts and Proceedings,---in Subordination unto them.

E R R A T A.

P Age 13. line 19. read Burgess-Oaths. p. 15. l. 22. r.
Art. p. 28. l. 26. after any add of. p. 43. l. 10. r.
Compliment. p. 52. in the Foot-note, l. 15. r. Covenant still
extant. p. 55. l. 3. r. Commissioners. p. 60. l. 38. f. Law-
yers r. Layers. p. 99. l. 37. r. 1638. p. 101. l. 9. r. neces-
sarily. p. 106. l. 24. r. legal. l. 40. r. Mens. p. 107. l. 29.
r. formerly .p. 108. l. 8. r. be. l. 10. r. by. p. 111. l. 1. r.
undermined. p. 118. l. 22. r. 1650.



ACTS and PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ASSOCIATE SYNOD,

At EDINBURGH, in *April*, 1747.

At Edinburgh, the Tenth Day of April, one Thousand seven hundred and forty seven Years.



THIS Day and Place, the ASSOCIATE SYNOD being met, and constitute with Prayer, by the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Mair*; who, as last Moderator, had opened the Meeting of Synod on *Tuesday* this Week, with a Sermon from *Judges* xiii. 19. *And the Angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his Wife looked on; Psal. xlvi. 10. Be still, and know that I am God:*

-----SEDERUNT, of the Associate Presbytery of *Glasgow*, *Patrick Edmond* from the Associate Session of *Balfron*, Ruling Elder: Of the Associate Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, Masters *Adam Gib*, *Andrew Clarkson*, *Patrick Matthew*, *James Scot*, *John Whyte*, *George Murray*, and *Robert Archibald* Ministers; with *Andrew Grahame* from the Associate Session of *Linlithgow*, *Charles Scot* from *Midholm*, *Walter Henderson* from *Gateshaw*, *John Wilson* from *Dunse*, and *James Johnston* from *Armandale*, Ruling Elders; and of the Associate Presbytery of *Dumfermline*, Masters *James Thomson*, *Alexander Moncrieff*, *George Brown* and

William Campbell, Ministers ; with *Alexander Lyel* from the Session of *Burntisland*, *William Henderson* from *Abernethy*, *David Donaldson* from the Associate Session of *Ceris*, *Thomas Bogie* from *Lesley*, and *Thomas Drysdale* from *Muckhart*, Ruling Elders.--- An Excuse being offered for Mr. *William Mair*'s going Home before this *Sederunt*, was sustained-----Mr. *Thomas Mair* was unanimously continued in the Chair ; and Mr. *Gib* was chosen Clerk *pro Tempore*.

ACT, asserting the Constitution and Rights of the Associate Synod, according to previous Contendings for the same.

W Hereas, at the Afternoon's *Sederunt*, on *Wednesday* this Week, when the *Synod* was going to resume the Affair about their Sentence in *April* last Year, concerning a Religious Clause of some Burges's Oaths, it was moved, That they should proceed according to due Order, in calling for the *Reasons* of *Protest* against that Sentence, with the *Answers* to said *Reasons*, for having them read and considered ; hereupon the *Brethren* engaged in that *Protest*, proposed and insisted for a *Vote* upon the following Question, *viz.* " Whether the Decision anent " the Religious Clause in some Burges's Oaths, passed by this " *Synod* in *April* 1746, shall now or afterwards be made a Term " of Ministerial and Christian Communion, ay and until the " making of the same to be so, shall be referred by way of *Overture* unto *Presbyteries* and *Kirk-Sessions*, in order to their giving their Judgment thereanent ; that so there may, in the mean Time, be a friendly Dealing among the Members of this *Synod* with one another, in a Way of Conference and Prayer, in order to their coming, through the Lord's Pity, to see Eye to Eye in the Matter of the said Religious Clause ; or not ? " And after long insisting for a *Vote* upon said Question, it was with Difficulty obtained, that this other Question should be opposed unto the same, for a *previous Vote* ; *viz.* " Proceed " to call for the *Reasons* of *Protest*, and the *Answers* thereto, for " having them read and considered, or not ? " And then the previous *Vote* being put, it carried for the *first* Question to be voted ; whereupon Mr. *Campbell* DISSENTED from said *Resolution* ; to which Dissent Mr. *Thomas Mair* adhered, with a craving that the Door might be open at next *Sederunt*, for his carrying this Testimony farther, as he should see Cause ; to which Dissent and Craving Mr. *Moncrieff* adhered ; and thus the *Synod* adjourned till *Thursday* Forenoon :

And whereas, at that *Sederunt*, the foresaid Question was refused by the Brethren of the Protest, for being put to a Vote, according to the Resolution of the former *Sederunt*; hereupon Mr. *Thomas Mair* declared his Adherence to his former *Dissent* from that Resolution, with a craving Liberty still, to carry the said Testimony farther as he should see Cause; to which *Dissent* so laid, all the Members here present, except Mr. *Matthew* and *Charles Scot*, declared *Adherence*, as also Mr. *William Mair*; after which, and the foresaid Question having been much insisted upon by the Brethren of the Protest, and another Elder, for coming to a Vote, Mr. *Gib* gave in the following PROTESTATION with an Instrument, *viz.*

“Whereas this Reverend Synod did Yesternight resolve by a Vote, that, instead of proceeding to call for the *Reasons* of Protestation, against their Sentence in *April 1746*, about a Religious Clause of some Burgess-Oaths, with the *Answers* to said *Reasons*, for being read and considered, they would proceed unto a Vote, upon the following Question, *viz. Whether the Decision anent the Religious Clause in some Burgess-Oaths, passed by this Synod in April 1746, shall now or afterwards be made a Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion, ay and until the making of the same to be so, shall be referred by way of Overture unto Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, in order to their giving their Judgment thereanent; that so there may, in the mean Time, be a friendly dealing among the Members of this Synod with one another, in a Way of Conference and Prayer, in order to their coming, through the Lord's Pity, to see Eye to Eye in the Matter of the said Religious Clause, or not?* And whereas the putting the foresaid Question to a *Vote*, is still and at great Length insisted for, according to the *Resolution* Yesternight; I *Adam Gib*, Minister of the Gospel in the Associate Congregation at *Edinburgh*, do hereby, in mine own Name, and the Name of all in this Synod, who shall herein adhere unto me, PROTEST against putting the foresaid Question to a *Vote*, and and that it ought to be thrown *simpliciter* out of the Minutes, with all that has passed thereupon; that so the Synod may proceed regularly in their proper Business: Because this Question was *irregularly thrust* in upon the Synod at first, and has been all along *irregularly pushed*, unto the turning them aside from their proper Business and Duty: And because the Question proceeds upon a *Resolution* of Yesternight, suppressing proper Light about the Subject of the Question, to be had from a Consideration of the above-mentioned *Reasons* and *Answers*: And because the Question is laid and calculate for

“ *imposing* upon and *perverting* the Judgment of Members ; see-
 “ ing the manifest Scope thereof, as laid and insisted upon, is, to
 “ set the *Names* and *Pleasure* of Men in the Room of *Truth* and
 “ *Duty* upon this Affair : And because this Question is for in-
 “ troducing a sinful and dangerous *Innovation*, of subjecting the
 “ lawful Decision of Synod, upon a Controversy of Faith and
 “ Case of Conscience, unto the Consultation of inferior Judicatures,
 “ particularly *Kirk-Sessions* : And because an Affirmative upon
 “ this Question must run upon a *Toleration-Scheme*, in direct Op-
 “ position to the Lord’s Word, and *Presbyterian* Principles ; by
 “ judicially *allowing* of, at least for a Time, the swearing *contra-*
 “ *dictory Oaths* ; one homologating all the publick Defections
 “ and Corruptions of the Day, which we testify against, and the
 “ other condemning all these, as Grounds of the Lord’s Contro-
 “ versy to be testified against : With other *Reasons* that may
 “ be added in due Time : And protesting for Liberty to en-
 “ large upon the foresaid with other Reasons, and to carry on this
 “ Testimony as I shall find my self in Duty and Conscience ob-
 “ liged, I hereupon take Instruments :”-----To which Protestation,
 all the *Ministers* here present, except Mr. *Matthew* and
 Mr. *Scot*, declared *Adherence*, all thereupon taking Instru-
 ments ; and then, after some Reasoning, the Synod adjourned
 till Night :

And whereas, at that *Selerunt*, the Question was resumed and
 insisted upon as before ; when it was just coming to a Vote, Mr.
Moncrieff gave in the following PROTESTATION, with an
 Instrument, *viz.*

“ Whereas, notwithstanding of Protestation regularly entered
 “ to the contrary, the Reverend Synod is going on to a Vote
 “ upon this Question, *viz. Whether the Decision anent the reli-*
 “ *gious Clause in some Burges’s Oaths, passed by this Synod in*
 “ *April 1746, shall now or afterwards be made a Term of Mini-*
 “ *sterial and Christian Communion, ay and until the making of the same*
 “ *to be so, shall be referred by Way of Overture unto Presbyteries and*
 “ *Kirk-Sessions, in order to their giving their Judgment thereanent ;*
 “ *that so there may, in the mean Time, be a friendly dealing among*
 “ *the Members of this Synod with one another, in a Way of Conser-*
 “ *ence and Prayer, in order to their coming, through the Lord’s*
 “ *Pity, to see Eye to Eye in the Matter of the said religious Clause,*
 “ *or not ?* I *Alexander Moncrieff*, Minister of the Gospel at
 “ *Abernethy*, do, in mine own Name, and in Name of all who
 “ shall herein adhere unto me, PROTEST, that this Meeting is
 “ not, nor ought to be held and reputed, a *due and lawfully consti-*
 “ *tute Meeting of the Associate Synod IN THIS STEP :* Be-
 cause

“ cause they are proceeding upon a *Resolution* of Yesternight, which suppresses proper Light upon the Subject of the Question, while many Members were never present at any judicial Examination thereof, and some have been complaining, that they are precluded from necessary Acquaintance therewith: And because, notwithstanding of much insisting to the contrary, the *Members protesting* against the Sentence of Synod in April 1746, who are necessarily and directly *Parties* upon the Question, are sustaining themselves *Judges* for voting in it: And protesting for Liberty to enlarge the above Reasons, and to carry on this Testimony as I shall find myself in Duty and Conscience obliged, I hereupon take Instruments:” To which Protestation all Members here present, except *William Henderson*, who was absent through Indisposition, declared *Adherence*, as also *Mr. William Mair*, all thereupon taking Instruments: After which, the Question being put to Vote, and carried to a *Resolution* in the Affirmative, *Mr. Thomas Mair* did read with an audible Voice, the following DECLARATION and PROTESTATION, *viz.*

“ Whereas this Meeting of Synod have now passed a Vote and made a *Resolution* upon the *Affirmative* of that Question which has been insisted upon, in Opposition to a proceeding unto the Reasons of Protest against the Sentence of Synod in April 1746, with the Answers to said Reasons; and considering the two *Protestations* which have been entered this Day, concerning that Affair; and considering that, by the foresaid Step, this Meeting of Synod have *materially dropt* the *whole* Testimony among their Hands, *allowing* of, at least for a Time, a *material* ABJURATION thereof: And considering that, beside a considerable Number of Elders, the *Majority* of *Ministers* in this Meeting, who are the proper Judges in a Controversy of Faith and Case of Conscience, and who could be Judges in the present Controversy, have been all along at this Meeting contending for the proper Business and Duty of the Synod, in Opposition to the *contrary Torrent*: Therefore I *Thomas Mair*, Minister of the Gospel at *Oruel*, do hereby DECLARE and PROTEST, That the *lawful Authority and Power of the Associate Synod is DEVOLVED* upon, and must LIE in a constitute Meeting of the foresaid *Members*, Ministers and Elders, together with any other Members who shall cleave unto them, in a Way of confessing what sinful *Steps* and *Compliances* they have fallen into upon this Occasion: As likewise I DECLARE and PROTEST, That the foresaid Members *ought*, in Duty to the Lord and his Heritage, to

“ take up and exercise the Authority and Power of the Associate
 “ Synod, lawfully and fully devolved upon them as above,
 “ and for this End, to meet To-morrow at ten of the Clock
 “ Forenoon, in Mr. Gib's House, that they may regularly en-
 “ ter upon and proceed in the Business of the Synod :

And whereas the *Ministers* and *Elders* here present, are convened in Consequence of the foresaid DECLARATION and PROTESTATION, the Meeting was constitute as above.

It was then proposed by Way of *Overture*, “ That the Synod
 “ should, according to the foresaid *Declaration* and *Protestation*
 “ find the lawful *Authority* and *Power* of the Associate Synod, to
 “ be lawfully and fully *devolved* upon them, and *lying* among
 “ their Hands; and themselves the only *lawful* and *rightly con-*
 “ *stitute Associate Synod* with the said *Authority* and *Power*; and
 “ obliged, in Duty to the Lord and his Heritage, to *exercise* the
 “ same, for supporting and carrying on the Testimony which
 “ the Lord has put into the Hands of the Associate Synod, in Op-
 “ position to the *material dropping*, and *allowing* of, at least for a
 “ Time, a *material Abjuration* of this whole Testimony, by the
 “ *Resolutions* foresaid, and the Method of carrying the same. ”

Whereupon, the said *Overture* being read once and again; and after serious Deliberation, and Prayer by a Brother for Light and Direction in this Matter, the Question was put, *Approve of the said Overture, or not?* And it carried unanimously *Approve?* Wherefore the Synod *approve* of this *Overture*; as they DID and hereby DO FIND, according to the foresaid DECLARATION and PROTESTATION, That the *lawful Authority* and *Power* of the Associate Synod, is lawfully and fully DEVOLVED upon them, and LIES among their Hands; That they are the ONLY LAWFUL AND RIGHTLY CONSTITUTE *Associate Synod*, with the said *Authority* and *Power*; and, That they are *obliged*, in Duty to the Lord and his Heritage, to *exercise* the same, for *supporting* and *carrying on* the Testimony which the Lord has put into the Hands of the Associate Synod, in Opposition to the *material dropping*, and *allowing* of, at least for a Time, a *material ABJURATION* of that whole Testimony, by the RESOLUTIONS foresaid, and the Method of carrying the same.

Extracted by

ADAM GIB, *Syn. Cls. p. 1.*

at Edinburgh, the Tenth Day of April, one Thousand seven Hundred and forty seven Years.

ACT, FURTHER ASSERTING the Constitution and Rights of the Associate Synod.

IT was proposed, by Way of *Overture*, " In consequence of
 " what has been found at last *Sederunt*, for the Synod to
 " find, That none of the Ministers and Elders, presently in a Way
 " of separating from the Associate Synod, through turning aside
 " from the lawful Constitution thereof, and from the Testimony
 " among their Hands, ought or can return unto a Seat in this Synod, but in the Way of confessing the sinful Steps and Compliances which they have severally fallen into, about the two *Resolutions* formerly mentioned, and the Method of carrying the same : And to find, That none of the Associate Presbyteries, can be lawful in their Constitution or Proceedings, but in a Way of Subordination to this Synod : And to find, That none of the Associate Sessions can be lawful in their Constitution or Proceedings, but in a Way of Subordination to this Synod ; or at least, in a Way of waiting, until the State of the present Cause and Controversy shall be got laid particularly open unto them : And to find, That only these Elders of the respective Associate Congregations, who shall be disposed as above, together with a Minister in Subordination to this Synod, can make up the lawful and rightly constitute Sessions in these Congregations : And, seeing the Majority of Ministers in the Associate Presbytery of *Glasgow* have been active in carrying on the foresaid Resolutions, to find, That the said Associate Presbytery of *Glasgow* cannot be lawful in their Constitution or Proceedings, nor be lawfully acknowledged as such, by any who are cleaving to the Lord's Cause and Testimony, until the said Presbytery shall return unto that Cause and Testimony, in Subordination to this Synod : And to find, That none of the Ministers and Elders foresaid, ought or can return unto a Seat in either of the other two Associate Presbyteries, nor to moderate or sit in any Associate Sessions, but in the Way of confessing the sinful Steps and Compliances which they have severally fallen into, about the two Resolutions foresaid, and the Method of carrying the same : And to find, That none of the Probationers in the Secession, ought or can lawfully preach the Gospel as Probationers, but in Subordination to this Synod ; nor take Appointments for that End, but form

“ Presbyteries in due Subordination thereunto: And to *find*,
 “ That the young Men presently on Trials before the Associate
 “ Presbytery of *Glasgow*, for Licence to preach the Gospel as
 “ Probationers, ought to be remitted unto one or both of the o-
 “ ther two Associate Presbyteries, for this Purpose: And as the
 “ foresaid Ministers and Elders are hereby invited and beseeched,
 “ in brotherly Love, to return unto their Duty; so to *find*,
 “ That this Synod ought, in due Time, and as the Lord shall
 “ clear their Way, to consider upon calling them unto an Ac-
 “ count for their Conduct foresaid, according to the Order and
 “ Discipline of the Lord’s House; providing they shall not return
 “ to this Synod, in the Way of confessing the sinful Steps and
 “ Compliances which they have severally fallen into, as above.”

Whereupon, the above *Overture* being read over, and then the
 several Articles thereof being, one by one, read and seriously
 deliberated upon, and then the whole being again read over; af-
 ter Prayer by a Brother for Light and Direction in this Matter, the
 Question was put, *Approve of said Overture, or not?* And it
 carried unanimously *Approve*: Wherefore the Synod *approve*
of this Overture; as accordingly they DID and hereby DO
 FIND, That none of the Ministers and Elders, presently in a
Way of separating from the Associate Synod, through turning aside
 from the lawful Constitution thereof, and from the Testimony among
 their Hands, ought or can return unto a Seat in this Synod, but
 in the Way of confessing the sinful Steps and Compliances which
 they have severally fallen into, about the two Resolutions formerly
 mentioned, and the Method of carrying the same: And they
 FIND, That none of the Associate Presbyteries can be lawful in
 their Constitution or Proceedings, but in a *Way of Subordinati-*
on to this Synod: And they FIND, That none of the *Associ-*
ate Sessions can be lawful in their Constitution or Proceedings,
 but in a *Way of Subordination* to this Synod; or at least, in a
Way of waiting, until the State of the present Cause and Contro-
 versy shall be got laid particularly open unto them: And they
 FIND, That *only these Elders* of the respective Associate Congre-
 gations, who shall be disposed *as above*, together with a Minister
 in Subordination to this Synod, can make up the *lawful and*
rightly constitute Sessions in these Congregations: And, seeing
 the *Majority* of Ministers in the Associate Presbytery of *Glasgow*
 have been *active* in carrying on the foresaid Resolutions, they
 FIND, That the said Associate Presbytery of *Glasgow* cannot be
 lawful in their Constitution or Proceedings, nor be lawfully ac-
 knowledged as such, by any who are cleaving to the Lord’s Cause
 and Testimony, until the said Presbytery shall return unto that

ause and Testimony, in Subordination to this Synod: And they FIND, That none of the Ministers and Elders foresaid ought or can return unto a Seat in either of the other two Associate Presbyteries, nor to moderate or sit in any Associate Sessions, but in the Way of confessing the sinful Steps and Compliances which they have severally fallen into, about the two Resolutions foresaid, and the Method of carrying the same: And they FIND, That none of the Probationers in the Secession ought or can lawfully preach the Gospel as Probationers, but in Subordination to this Synod; nor take Appointments for that End, but from Presbyteries in due Subordination thereunto: And they FIND, That the young Men presently on Trials before the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow, for Licence to preach the Gospel as Probationers, ought to be remitted unto one or both of the other two Associate Presbyteries, for this Purpose: And as the foresaid Ministers and Elders are hereby invited and beseeched, in brotherly Love, to return unto their Duty; so the Synod FIND, That they ought, in due Time, and as the Lord shall clear their Way, to consider upon calling them unto an Account for their Conduct foresaid, according to the Order and Discipline of the LORD'S House; providing they shall not return to this Synod, in the Way of confessing the sinful Steps and Compliances which they have severally fallen into, as above.

Extracted by

ADAM GIB, Syn. Cls. p. t.

At Edinburgh, the fifteenth Day of April, One thousand seven hundred and forty seven Years.

ACT condemning the Resolution made in Synod, on Wednesday last Week.

BECAUSE, on Wednesday last Week, a Resolution was made in Synod, that, instead of proceeding to call for the Reasons of Protest against their Sentence in April 1746, about a religious Clause of some Burgesses-Oaths, with the Answers to these Reasons, for being read and considered, they would proceed unto a Vote upon the following Question, viz: Whether the Decision anent the religious Clause in some Burgesses-Oaths, passed by this Synod in April 1746, shall now or afterwards be made a Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion, ay and until the making of

the same to be so, shall be referred by Way of Overture unto Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, in order to their giving their Judgment thereanent; that so there may, in the mean Time, be a friendly dealing among the Members of this Synod with one another, in a Way of Conference and Prayer, in order to their coming, through the Lord's Pity, to see Eye to Eye in the Matter of the said religious Clause; or not? Therefore though this Synod have, upon the Matter, condemned that Step already; yet, for the Vindication of Duty, and the Conviction of all concerned, they judge it necessary to descend unto a formal and more particular Condemnation thereof, as a Step very sinful and dangerous, in a Way most unreasonable and disorderly. For,

1st, It is manifest, that the Synod could not, according to any due and lawful Order, proceed unto any new Decision about their Sentence in April 1746, especially in Prejudice thereunto, without first calling for and considering the foresaid Reasons and Answers: Because otherwise it could not regularly appear, whether that Sentence deserved Alteration or Amendment; and whether the Opposition made unto it, with the Reflections cast upon it, by the Protesters against it, in the foresaid Question, were reasonable or not.

2dly, It is especially incumbent upon a Court of Christ, to search for, and much more to admit of all proper and necessary Light, upon the Subject of a Question to be determined: But the Sentence in April 1746, about the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, is the Subject of the foresaid Question; so far, that the Question was for a material reversing of said Sentence: And this Subject could not be brought fairly on the Field for any such Question, so as to have proper and necessary Light about Truth and Error, Sin and Duty, in the Matter, without calling for and considering the foresaid Reasons and Answers. Wherefore, by carrying the above Resolution, notwithstanding of much Opposition thereunto, the Synod did refuse, suppress, and exclude proper and necessary Light upon the Subject about which they were going to decide. And thus manifest Injury was done to Truth, by refusing to let it have a fair hearing; and by laying a Foundation for having it condemned in the Dark, without the Benefit of its own Light for preventing such Condemnation. Moreover, this Rejection of the Means of Light was contrary to Scripture-precepts, of judging righteous Judgment, searching after Knowledge, and walking in the Light; contrary to a Dependence on Scripture-promises, of Light and Leading; as also, contrary to the Example of Scripture-prayer, for the Lord's sending forth his Light and Truth. More particularly by the above Procedure,

The Opposers of the Synod's Sentence foreſaid, were *refuſing to come to the Light, that their Deeds might be made manifeſt*. And in all this it ſadly appears, that the prevailing Party was not *asking Underſtanding to diſcern Judgment*, and that there was no *Judgment in their Goings*, but that the Lord was provoked to leave them unto *Counſels of their own*.

3dly, What is above is further evident, in conſidering, that *four* of the Miniſters then preſent had not become Members of Synod, till after the Sentence in *April 1746*; and that *few*, if *any*, of the Elders then preſent, had ever been preſent at any judicial Examination of the Matter. Thus, not *one half* of the Members then preſent, had ever been regularly acquainted with the Cauſe, ſo as to be capable of Voting in the foreſaid Queſtion, *with Underſtanding*; and ſome Elders were openly complaining, that they were *precluded* from neceſſary Acquaintance therewith. And ſuch Procedure, in theſe Circumſtances, was the more unreaſonable, as it is notorious, that the *Reaſons of Proteſt* againſt the Sentence, had been let go through ſeveral Corners of the Country, among *Elders* and others, before-hand, whereby People had been impreſſed with a Variety of ſtrange Prejudices againſt the Sentence; and which made it peculiarly needful that *no Step* ſhould be taken about the Sentence, *previſus* to that of calling for and conſidering the Reaſons and Answers, that *both Sides* of the Cauſe might be *fairly* opened to all concerned.----- But when, notwithstanding of all this, the foreſaid *Reſolution* was pushed and carried, it ſadly appeared, that many Members were wanting to have the Cauſe buried at any Rate; ſo as they ruſhed on headlong and blindly in the Matter; without diſcovering any ſingle Regard to Truth and Duty, though upon a Cauſe nearly affecting the whole of the Teſtimony among our Hands. And in all this it is evident, that the prevailing Party was awfully left of God, to behave in *open Contradiction* to the Name and Nature of a Court of Chriſt.

4thly, The Matter is yet worſe, in conſidering that as the foreſaid Reſolution was carried by *Twenty nine*, againſt *Twenty two*; ſo, of theſe *Twenty nine*, *eight* were neceſſarily *Parties*, as Proteſters againſt the Sentence; who therefore could not, according to any Rule or Reaſon, have a Vote in the Affair; and without whoſe Vote it would have carried to the other Side: But a Vote therein they would needs have, ſo as could not be got prevented: And ſeeing it carried by their Vote, the *Reſolution* was then *highly diſorderly*.

Wherefore, on all the above Grounds, the Synod DID and hereby DO CONDEMN the RESOLUTION above mentioned, as a Step very *ſinful* and *dangerous*, in a Way moſt *unreaſonable*

and disorderly: And they determine, that, in Opposition therunto, the Reasons of Protest, with the Answers to the same, ought to have been called for, read, and considered; and that it is the Duty of the Synod now to do so.

Extracted by

ADAM GIB, Syn. Cls. p. t.

N. B. *The Synod did next call for, heard read, and judged upon, the Reasons of Protest against their Sentence in April 1746, with the Answers to these Reasons: But it is thought expedient here, before proceeding unto these, that the two following Acts be introduced.*

At Edinburgh, the Sixteenth Day of April, One Thousand seven Hundred and forty seven Years.

ACT condemning the Resolution made in Synod, on Thursday last Week.

BEcause, on Thursday last Week, a Resolution was made in Synod, That the Decision anent the Religious Clause in some Burgeſs-Oaths, paſſed by this Synod in April 1746, ſhall not now or afterwards be made a Term of Miniſterial and Chriſtian Communion, ay and until the making of the ſame to be ſo, ſhall be referred by way of Overture unto Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, in order to their giving their Judgment thereanent; that ſo there may, in the mean Time, be a Friendly dealing among the Members of this Synod, with one another, in a Way of Conference and Prayer, in order to their coming, through the Lord's Pity, to ſee Eye to Eye in the Matter of the ſaid Religious Clause: Therefore, though this Synod have, upon the Matter, condemned that Step already; yet, ſecing an heavy Stroke and deep Wound is thereby given unto the whole of the Lord's Cauſe and Teſtimony among a witneſſing Body, this Synod judge it neceſſary, for the Vindication of that Cauſe and Teſtimony, and for the conviction of all concerned, to deſcend unto a formal and more particular Condemnation thereof, as a very ſinful and dangerous Step: Being a — which, though it left the foreſaid Sentence of Synod in April 1746 formally ſtanding, was yet a material Reverſing of the ſame; ſo that, with awful Inconſiſtency, it enacted and enjoined an Allowance, at leaſt for ſome Time, of a Practice which has been and ſtill is found to be a Profanation of the Lord's Name; and

a material *Abjuration* of his whole Cause and Testimony among the Hands of the Associate Synod; whereby that whole Cause and Testimony was materially dropt: And being a Step which introduced a sinful and dangerous *Innovation*, manifestly subversive of *Presbyterian* Principles, and Order in the House of God: And being a Step which was carried in a Method so unfair, unreasonable, and disorderly, as openly contradicted the Duty, perverted the Business, overturned the whole Order, and *unbinged* the *Constitution* of the Court: And therefore, being a Step exceedingly dishonourable to *Zion's* King, Lord and Lawgiver, and destructive of his whole Cause and Testimony among a Witnessing Body. For,

1st, Though that Resolution left the foresaid Sentence of Synod in *April* 1746 *formally standing*, yet it was a *material Reversing* of the same, as is manifest in considering what follows.

The Protesters against the Sentence, by whom this Resolution was proposed, pushed and carried, do, in their *Reasons* of Protest, insist for a *Reversing* of the Sentence; and that the Judgment of Synod about the Religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oath is, according to the Sentence, *make* a Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion: But, as they have never insisted for an *explicit* or *formal* Reversing of the Sentence; so they proposed the foresaid *Resolution* for reverſing it *materially*, by *unmaking* what they reckon the Sentence *makes*. Accordingly, as they plead in their Reasons of Protest, that, in the Sentence, a new Term of Communion *is set up* by the Synod, and that an excluding of some People from Communion does *inevitably* follow from the Sentence; so the Resolution carried by them must be for *reversing* what they reckon *is done* by the Sentence, and *inevitably* follows from it; and must therefore be for making the Sentence *materially void*. Again, it is well known, that, when they introduced the Question for this Resolution, they did not refuse, but acknowledge, that the Import thereof was to make the Sentence *void as to any Effect*, tho' left standing in the Minutes. Moreover it is as well known, that the Resolution was specially laid, as it evidently stands, in an immediate Opposition to the *Conclusion* in the Sentence, about those who are, or might have Occasion to become engaged in Burgeſs-Oaths, with the Religious Clause; and the *reversing* of this Conclusion doth reduce the Sentence unto a *vain Shadow*. Accordingly, the Resolution was argued for by all who pushed it, and is manifestly laid, in immediate Opposition, at least for a Time, unto the alleging of any *Disagreement* or *Inconsistency* betwixt a Burgeſs-Oath in its Religious Clause, and the Oath of the Bond for renewing our Covenants

nants; so as Persons engaged in such Burgeſs-Oaths, ſhould be taken *no account of* on that Head, in order to their Admiſſion into the ſaid Bond; whereby the Sentence is materially *reverſed*. Likewise, under that Expreſſion, *Term of Miniſterial and Chriſtian Communion*, there muſt neceſſarily, according to *Preſbyterian Principles*, be included all the *Dealing* and *Discipline* which is *previous* to any regular Excluſion from ſuch Communion: And therefore the foreſaid Reſolution muſt neceſſarily *ſtrike againſt* all *Dealing with* or *Discipline againſt* any Perſons, in any Event, at leaſt for a Time, as *Offenders* againſt the Sentence; which materially *reverſes* the ſame. Accordingly the Reſolution was expreſſy inſiſted for, and is manifeſtly laid, for exceming *all Perſons*, at leaſt for a Time, from being called to *any account*, or any way *quarrelled*, for any *Oppoſition* or *walking contrary* to the Sentence; which materially *reverſes* the ſame.

Wherefore the foreſaid Reſolution is neceſſarily and plainly a *material reverſing* of the Sentence in *April 1746*; and a *judicial Allowance*, at leaſt for a Time, for Seceders to ſwear the foreſaid religious Clause, and to be admitted into the Bond of the Covenant, without any *Demur* upon their having done ſo; or a judicial Allowance of a *conjunct Engage ment* in both theſe Oaths, jointly avowed and adhered unto.

2^{dly}, According to the foreſaid Sentence, which this Synod have found valid, againſt all the Reaſons of Proteſt to the contrary; the ſwearing the religious Clause of ſome Burgeſs-Oaths, is *inconſiſtent with* and *contradictory* to a ſwearing the Bond for renewing our Covenants, ſo far, That, as the ſaid Oath of the Covenant *avouches* the whole Cauſe and Teſtimony of Chriſt in a witneſſing Way; ſo the other Oath doth materially *abjure* that whole Cauſe and Teſtimony, as it ſtands in a Way of open witneſſing againſt the manifold Deſections and Corruptions in the preſent national Profeſſion and Settlement of Religion. Wherefore, by the foreſaid *Reſolution*, there is a *judicial Allowance*, at leaſt for a Time, of materially *abjuring* that Cauſe and Teſtimony of Chriſt, and of proſanating his Name by ſwearing Oaths that are *inconſiſtent* and *contradictory*.

But further, the State in which Matters were left in the Aſſociate Synod, by that Reſolution, ſeems without any Paralel; and of ſuch a dreadful Nature, as may aſtoniſh the preſent and after Generations. For, on the one Hand, the Sentence in *April 1746*, was *left* profeſſedly or formally *ſtanding*; a Sentence declaring two Oaths *contradictory*, the one *abjuring* what the other *avouches*: And, on the other Hand, the ſaid Reſolution doth, upon the Matter, determine, that, at leaſt for ſome Time, the

conjunct

conjunct swearing of these contradictory Oaths ought not to be *opposed* or *quarrelled*. Now, if the prevailing Party had gone fairly to Work, for getting the Sentence expressly rescinded, and had done so, there would have been some Self-Consistency in the Thing: But to have that Sentence professedly *left standing*, and another set up *along* with it; the *one* determining two Oaths to be *contradictory* in the general Matter of Religion, and the *other* determining that the conjunct swearing of both these Oaths ought not, at least for some Time, to be *opposed* or *quarrelled*; this was indeed a dreadful Affair, as the prevailing Party did thus run into an *awful Inconsistency*, of giving *judicial Allowance*, in the mean Time, for a Practice which is, at the same Time, judicially found to be a *Profanation* of the Lord's Name, and a material *Abjuration* of his whole Cause and Testimony among the Hands of the Associate Synod. And as this is materially and necessarily the Amount of the Thing, it is melancholy that any should have lost their Way and Sight, so far as not to consider it.

Moreover, the *Reference* made of the Affair, by the foresaid Resolution, unto inferior Judicatories, particularly *Kirk-Sessions*, under the absurd Pretence of what were called Barrier-Acts, was a Step manifestly *subversive* of our Confession of Faith, Chap. 31. Act 3. and of Presbyterian Order in the House of God: Considering that the foresaid Sentence, is plainly in a *Controversy of Faith and Case of Conscience*: And considering that, according to what is above, the Sentence itself, when *become* and professedly *remaining* a Sentence, is thus thrown loose into the Hands of inferior Judicatories, particularly *Kirk-Sessions*.-- And further, as the Sentence amounts to no more, than a *necessary Stand* for the whole Testimony of the Secession, in Opposition to a swearing which has been found materially abjuring the same: Therefore, by the foresaid Resolution, it is upon the Matter referred to Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, to give their Judgment whether the Secession-Testimony ought to be *any longer maintained* and *walked up to*, by the Professors thereof; and whether the Synod should determine and endeavour so much.

3dly, The above Resolution was carried in a Method most *unfair* and *unreasonable*; which was calculate for *imposing* upon and *perverting* the Judgment of Members and others, in the Case. For, when the prevailing Party was rushing forward to a Resolution *reversing* the Sentence, it was pled and insisted for, that if such a Thing behoved to be done, it might be done in a *fair* and *ingenuous* Way; and that, if the Sentence could be found deserving to be reversed, it might be done *regularly*, *honestly* and *expressly*, in plain and ingenuous Terms, without any Covert. How-

ever, the *Protesters* against the Sentence, who were pushing the forefaid Resolution, would by no Means venture to let the Sentence have *fair Dealing*, or be *exprefly* brought into Question; fo as the Matter of *Truth* and *Duty* might have been fairly on the Field, to get the Benefit of common Juftice: But, for making fure a Party againft the Sentence, they would needs have it kept *in the dark*, and the Defign againft it *diffe mbled*; fo that it came to be materially reverfed, by a *Secret* and *covert Thruff*.

Moreover, a deceitful Engine was ufed, for carrying the Point, in making great Noife about *Depofitions* and *Excommunications*; as if thefe who flood up for common Juftice to the Sentence, againft the Resolution pushed, were only, in doing fo, making Head againft the getting them *reftained* from *depoſing* and *excommunicating* their Brethren. Thefe Friends of the Sentence, and of fair Dealing therewith, had given no Ground for *ſuſpecting* their Love unto their Brethren, or their Diſpoſition for Tendernefs toward them and all concerned in the Affair, or for all the practical Forbearances in the Matter that could be practicable, according to the common Rules of Religion. All they inſiſted for was, that the Sentence might be *fairly* handled, and that it might not be reverfed but in an *ingenuous Way* and on *fair Grounds*: And as they profefſed to maintain the Equity and Validity of the Sentence; fo, they as much profefſed an Inclination for all the practical Tendernefs, Patience and Forbearance, that could conſiſt with the Equity and Validity thereof, according to any Scripture Rule, and any Presbyterial Order. But no Profefſions or Declarations this way could avail: The *Noiſe* about *Depofitions* and *Excommunications* went ſtill on: Thus, the Matter of *Truth* and *Error*, *Sin* and *Duty*, as to the Sentence thruſt at, was entirely *diffe mbled*: The Resolution pushed was ſtill violently wreſted unto a Pretence of amounting to no more, than a *reſtraining* from *Depofitions* and *Excommunications*: And a Point of real, awful Injury to *Truth* and *Duty*, yea to the whole Teſtimony among our Hands, was ſtill dreſſed up, as only a Point of Tendernefs and due Regard to *Fathers* and *Brethren*: Wherefore, all along, the *Names* and *Pleasure* of Men were thruſt into the Room of *Truth* and *Duty*, as if there had been no more in Question, but a Point of due Tendernefs and Regard to them.

Again, the Resolution was laid under a Pretence of neceſſary Regard to what were called *Barrier-Acts*, *Annis* 1639 and 1641, about conſulting Presbyteries and Kirk-Sefſions; while theſe Acts could not be interpreted as having any Manner of *Reſpect* or *Applicableneſs* to ſuch a Caſe: However, this tended to enſnare Members. And farther, the Resolution was laid as an *Interim* or *tempo-*

temporary Thing; while yet the plain Scope thereof is, that the Matter rest so, till there can be *Unanimity* about doing otherwise; and the Brethren who pushed this Matter, did signify well enough, that no *Unanimity* about doing otherwise was to be expected, as long as they could hinder it.

4ly, It was an awful Affair, in a Court of Christ, and professedly in his Name, to deal with a Matter of Truth and Duty, and with the Honour, Name and Cause of Christ, in such a Method as hath been declared: But this Procedure went on, and that in a Way *most disorderly*. There was sad Disorder, in proceeding to such a Deed against the Sentence, in a way of *refusing, suppressing and excluding Light* upon the Subject; as by the former *Resolution*: For thus, the prevailing Party was rushing on to an Overthrow of the Sentence, in a Way of standing upon a *Grave-Stone* set and sealed, for keeping proper and necessary Light about it still *buried*.

At the same Time, *Seven* Ministers and *One* * Elder, who were Protesters against the Sentence, and who could have no real Title or Power to vote in the Question, were violently sustaining themselves *Judges* for voting in it, over the Belly of great Opposition thereunto.

Moreover, at the Time when the Resolution was coming to a Vote, the *Majority* of *Ministers* present, who are the proper Judges in a Controversy of Faith and Case of Conscience, and who were not Parties in the Matter, together with a good Number of *Elders*, were standing under the Banner of a *Protestation* against the Procedure: And before the Vote was got driven on, sundry other Ministers had caused mark in the Minutes their Desire of a Delay.

However, the *Protesters* against the Sentence, with the † *Elder* from *Edinburgh*, did still rush forward, with a fatal Obstinacy: So far, that when the Moderator was craving a *Delay*, and when the Clerk *pro tempore*, tho' one of the Protesters, was declining to call the Roll, another of them took it up and called it. But after all, as the Ministers and Elders who were making Opposition to this whole Course, could not, according to their Situation, meddle in the Vote, and as others were silent; the Vote came out but of *Nine* Ministers, and *Eleven* Elders for the Resolution, who made up few more than a *third Part* of the Members present; of whom *Thirteen* Ministers and *Ten* Elders were under Protestation against putting the Vote. Likewise, of the said Voters, *Six* Ministers and *One* Elder were *Parties*, who had no Right to vote;

C

and

and of the other *Three* Ministers, *One* had never been in Synod before, and *another* had never been present at any judicial Examination of the Subject in Question; as was the Case also with the Elders, according to what has been declared in condemning the *first* Resolution; and all were voting, in a Way of *refusing, suppressing* and *exclading* proper and necessary Light upon the Subject which they were voting about.

Thus was the Matter carried with a *Multiplicity of sad Disorder*, which could not be got stopped by any Insistings or Protestations to the contrary. And by such Procedure, the *prevailing Party* did openly contradict the Duty, pervert the Business, overturn the whole Order, and unhinge the Constitution of the Court; introducing awful and manifold Confusion into the House of God, and throwing the Keys thereof, in a Judicative Way, out of their Hands.-----And thus, the Ministers and Elders who were making Opposition to this *Torrent*, were necessarily and inevitably shut up unto the Course which they took.

Wherefore, on all the above Grounds, the Synod DID, and hereby DO CONDEMN the RESOLUTION above-mentioned, as a *very sinful and dangerous Step*: Being a Step, which, tho' it left the foresaid Sentence of Synod in *April 1746, formally standing*, was yet a *material Reversing* of the same; so that, with awful Inconsistency, it *enacted and enjoined* an Allowance, at least for some Time, of a Practice which *has been, and still is* found to be, a *Prophanation* of the Lord's Name, and a *material Abjuration* of his whole Cause and Testimony among the Heads of the Associate Synod; whereby that whole Cause and Testimony was *materially dropt*: And being a Step which introduced a *sinful and dangerous Innovation*, manifestly subversive of Presbyterian Principles, and Order in the House of God: And being a Step which was carried in a Method so *unfair, unreasonable and disorderly*, as openly *contradicted the Duty, perverted the Business, overturned the whole Order, and unhinged the Constitution of the Court*: And therefore being a Step exceedingly *dishonourable to Zion's King, Lord and Law-giver, and destructive of his whole Cause and Testimony among a witnessing Body*.

Extracted by,

ADAM GIB, Syn. Cls. p. t.

At Edinburgh, the sixteenth Day of April, One thousand seven hundred and forty seven Years.

ACT concerning the Ministers and Elders, presently in a way of separating from the Associate Synod.

THE Synod considering that the Lord JESUS CHRIST is the *alone King and Head* of his Church; and is the *alone Fountain* of all Church-Power and Authority; and that his *Word* is the *only Rule* by which the Power of Synods and Councils, and of all Ecclesiastical Judicatories, is *directed, limited and circumscribed*;-----and particularly, that, as the GOD of Order, he hath commanded, that the Powers derived from him be exercised in an *orderly Way*; and that they be exercised and employed for the *Maintenance of his Truth, Cause and Testimony*; and for *preserving a Practice* suitable to the Profession made and the Testimony maintained, according to the Rules of his Word, by the Members of his Church:

And considering the Case of the *Ministers and Elders*, who, at some of the first Diets of this Meeting of Synod, in a most *disorderly* Manner proposed and insisted upon the following Question, *viz. Whether the Decision anent the religious Clause in some Burgeess-Oaths, passed by this Synod in April 1746, shall now or afterwards be made a Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion, ay and until the making of the same to be so, shall be referred by Way of Overture unto Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, in order to their giving their Judgment thereanent; that so there may, in the mean Time, be a friendly dealing among the Members of this Synod with one another, in a Way of Conference and Prayer, in Order to their coming, through the Lord's Pity, to see Eye to Eye in the Matter of the said religious Clause; or not?* And who pushed for an *immediate* passing of a Vote upon their Question; to an excluding the proper and immediate Business of the Synod about the foresaid Sentence, in calling for, considering and judging upon the *Reasons* of Protest against it, with the *Answers* to these Reasons; and to an excluding all private Causes (except one which, with Difficulty, was got taken in) tho' Parties were attending, some of them from remote Places of the Kingdom, and others from *Ireland*: And who still pushed their Question; tho' the native and proper Question, for any that were against the Warrantableness of the Synod's Sentence, was, *Reverse the Sentence, or not?* And though their Question, as laid, *could not* be put, according to Presbyterian Principles: And who proceeded still in their *disorderly* Course, by rejecting the Declarations made, that it was not the View of

any in the Synod, that the said Sentence should be made a *Term of Communion*, more than any Sentence whatsoever, resolving a *Case of Conscience* about Sin and Duty : And who at length overruled by a Vote, that *their* Question, which was a violent Thrust at the *Act* and *Decree* of Synod in *April* 1746, should *first* be put to a Vote, before the Answers to the Reasons of their Protest against the *Act*, should be read and judged ; tho' all Form and Order required, that what was in Readiness to be answered to their Reasons of Protest against the *Act*, should be first heard and considered, before such an Attack had been made upon this *Act* and *Decree*, which had been deliberately considered and reasoned upon, in many *Sederunts*, at *four* different Meetings of Synod ; especially as the *Reasons* of Protest had been handed about, while the *Answers* had never Access to be heard : And who proceeded violently to push an immediate Question against the *Act*, contrary to all *Order* and *Decency* ; tho' some Elders, who were Members, *craved* to hear the *Reasons* and *Answers*, because they were so far unacquainted with the Question which was urged to be put immediately, that they never so much as *suw* or *heard read* the Synod's *Act* and *Decree* which was struck at by this Question : And who proceeded against *all Order*, to sustain themselves *Judges* in the Question ; tho' they were *Protesters* against the Synod's Sentence, and ought not to have had any Vote in excluding an Hearing of the Answers to their own Reasons of Protest, or in the Question itself ; in all which they were *Parties* against the Synod : And who thus pushed and carried, in a most *disorderly Way*, a *Deed* which tolerated a *material Abjuration* of the whole Testimony as in the Hands of the Synod ; and thus at once *materially dropt* and *rece'ed from* the whole Testimony adopted by them ; a *Deed* which *subjects* the *Acts* and *Decrees* of *Synods* and *Councils*, in Controversies of Faith and Cases of Conscience, to the Consultation of *inferior* Judicatories, particularly *Kirk-Sessions*, contrary to our received Principles : --- And considering what has been already found, in condemning the *two Resolutions* :

Therefore the Synod FIND, That by the irregular and arbitrary Procedure of the said *Ministers* and *Elders*, *Truth* was wounded, a *Testimony* for the Cause of Christ among their Hands buried, the *Consciences* of Men ensnared, and *Anarchy* and *Confusion* attempted to be introduced : And they FIND, That by their assuming to themselves an *arbitrary Power* of their own, which cannot possibly be derived from Christ, seeing it is employed against Christ, the alone King and Head of his Church, and for burying his *Truth*, Cause and Interest ; and that by their acting

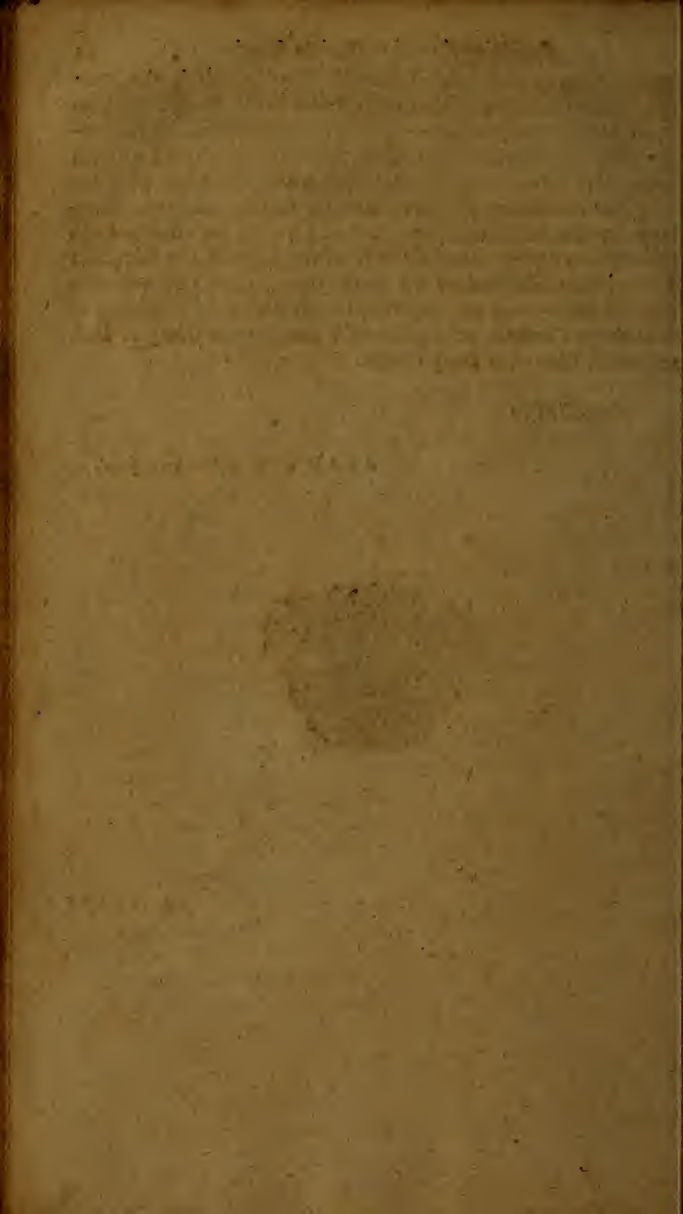
not according to the Rule of Christ's *Word*, which is the *alone Rule* of the Procedure of Courts constitute in his Name, but in *open Contradiction* to the same; and that by their obstinate *subverting* of that *Order* which Christ, as the **GOD OF ORDER**, hath commanded to be observed in his House, which is the *Church of the living God*;---They are highly **CENSURABLE**,---and have themselves, by this Mal-administration, **FALLEN FROM** all Right and Title to any *present actual Exercise* of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, committed by the Lord Jesus to the Office-bearers of his House,-----*ay and until* they be sensible of the *Sinfulness* of their above Conduct, *acknowledge* the same to the Glory of God, and *return* unto their Duty to him.

Extracted by

ADAM GIB, *Syn. Cls. p. 1.*



ANSWERS



ANSWERS by the Associate SYNOD,

T O

REASONS of DISSENT from, and PROTEST against, the SENTENCE of said Synod, at Edinburgh, April 9. 1746. concerning a religious Clause in some Burgeſſs-Oaths; by the Reverend Maſters, Ralph Erskine at Dunfermline, James Fiſher at Glaſgow, William Hutton at Stow, Henry Erskine, at Falkirk, and John M'Cara at Bruntſhields, Miniſters of the Goſpel; with James Wardlaw at Dunfermline, and William Robertſon at Edinburgh, ruling Elders.

A MONG the ſad and ſearching Providences of our Day, it is Matter of peculiar Concern and Grief, that the late Sentence of Synod about a religious Clause in ſome *Burgeſſs-Oaths*, ſhould have been controverted by a *Dissent* and *Proteſt*; and that the Controverſy ſhould not only endure hitherto, but become ſo aggravated as in the *Reaſons* of *Dissent* and *Proteſt*, ſince offered and ſtill inſiſted on. This Matter, in all Circumſtances conſidered, being ſomewhat aſtoniſhing and awful; there was ſome Reaſon to hope, that it might have been got ſufficiently expoſed and remedied, without any Neceſſity of entering the Liſts as at preſent: But ſuch is become the Hour of Darkneſs and Temptation, in Reſpect of ſtrange *Miſtakes*, *Miſconſtructions* and *Prejudices* upon this Head; that, under all Endeavours hitherto for healing the Breach, it widneth apace; and produceth bitter Fruits among the witneſſing Body, in *discouraging* ſome and *distracting* others, while the Goings of not a few are here *overthrown*. Thus, the Matter has already turned out unto a ſad Effect and a ſadder Aſpect, with regard unto the Maintenance and Management of the Lord's Work among our Hands: And after all, it is no leſs obvious than mournful, that further Debate thereupon, inſtead of promiſing a Reſtoration of Harmony with our Reverend Brethren, does threaten the contrary: However, the Synod find themſelves now obliged for the Benefit of the Lord's Work and People, as alſo for their own Vindication, to proceed in making formal *Answers* unto what our Brethren have offered, under the Title of *Reaſons* of *Dissent* and *Proteſt*, as above.

The Brethren give an *historical Preamble* to their *Reaſons*, which requireth a particular *Review*: Being as follows.

“ REASONS of DISSENT, by Mr. *Ralph Erskine* Mini-
 “ ster at *Dunfermline*, Mr. *James Fisher* Minister at *Glas-*
 “ *gow*, Mr. *William Hutton* Minister at *Stow*, Mr. *Henry Erskine*
 “ Minister at *Falkirk*, Mr. *John M'Cara* Minister at *Bruntshields*,
 “ *James Wardlaw* at *Dunfermline*, and *William Robertson* at *Edin-*
 “ *burgh*, Elders; in their own Name, and in the Name of all
 “ that shall adhere to them; from the Sentence of the Reverend
 “ the *Associate Synod*, met at *Bristow*, *April 9. 1746.* FIND-
 “ ING ” *That a swearing the religious Clause in some Burgefs-*
 “ *Oaths, (viz. Here I protest, before God and your Lordships,*
 “ *that I profess and allow with my Heart, the true Religion*
 “ *presently professed within this Realm, and authorised by the*
 “ *Laws thereof; I shall abide thereat, and defend the same, to*
 “ *my Life's End, renuciand the Roman Religion called Pa-*
 “ *pistry) by any under their Inspection, as the said Clause comes*
 “ *necessarily in this Period to be used and applied, does not agree un-*
 “ *to the present State and Circumstances of the Testimony for Reli-*
 “ *gion and Reformation, which this Synod with these under their*
 “ *Inspection are maintaining; particularly, that it does not agree*
 “ *unto, nor consist with, an entering into the Bond for renewing our*
 “ *solemn Covenants, and that therefore these of the Secession cannot*
 “ *further, with Safety of Conscience and without Sin, swear any Bur-*
 “ *gefs-Oath with the said religious Clause, while Matters, with*
 “ *reference to the Profession and Settlement of Religion, continue in*
 “ *such Circumstances as at present: Moreover the Synod FIND,*
 “ *That Burgefses of the Secession, who are already concerned in any*
 “ *such Oaths, should be required in order to their Admission into the*
 “ *Bond for renewing our solemn Covenants, to attend Conference with*
 “ *their respective Sessions, for signifying a Satisfaction with the*
 “ *present Judgment of the Synod, and a Sense of the Mistake they*
 “ *have hitherto, thro' Inadvertency, been under, concerning such*
 “ *Burgefs-Oaths: And the Synod agree to sist further Procedure*
 “ *at this Juncture, in the whole Affair of the Burgefs-Oath.”*

“ The Debate anent the Burgefs-Oath, took its first Rise in
 “ (what is now) the Associate Presbytery of *Dunfermline*: A
 “ Brother in that Presbytery having thought proper, at his own
 “ Hand, without taking the Advice of the then Associate Pres-
 “ bytery, to refuse some of his Congregation, who had taken the
 “ Burgefs-Oath, even without the religious Clause (which is the
 “ only Thing in that Oath the Synod have now condemned)
 “ the Privilege of entering into the Bond for renewing our so-
 “ lemn Covenants, immediately before his Sacrament, *Ann*
 “ *1744*; and at the same Time offered to admit them to the

“ Lord’s Table, if they would take it to Consideration, whether they
 “ would acknowledge the Sinfulness of the Burgefs-Oath, or not. A-
 “ nother Brother in the said Presbytery, either advised unto, or at
 “ least approved of this Conduct : And these two Brethren, having
 “ thus practically determined the Question anent the Burgefs-Oath
 “ themselves, some few Days before the Associate Presbytery
 “ erected themselves into three Presbyteries, in Subordination to
 “ an Associate Synod ; in Consequence hereof, at the first Meet-
 “ ing of the Associate Presbytery of *Perth* and *Dunfermline*, the
 “ said Brethren proposed, that the Burgefs-Oath might be taken
 “ under Consideration, as a Matter that might be referred to the
 “ Synod, to give their Judgment thereanent. This was refused
 “ at two several Meetings of the said Presbytery, as being a
 “ Question that was altogether new, and never formerly debated
 “ in the Church of *Scotland*. At length, at a Meeting of Pres-
 “ bytery at *Abernethy*, for Prayer and privy Censure, when, be-
 “ sides these two Brethren, there were present only Two other
 “ Ministers, and One Elder, with the Moderator ; the above
 “ Two Brethren insisted, That the Consideration of the Burgefs-
 “ Oath, should be transmitted as an Overture to the Synod ; the
 “ other Two Ministers opposed the Motion ; and it carried by the
 “ Elders Vote, *Transmit* ; whereupon the Two other Ministers dis-
 “ sented : So that these Two Brethren took the Advantage of the
 “ Absence of other Members, to bring upon the Field a Question
 “ altogether new, contrary to the declared Judgment of the Ma-
 “ jority of the Presbytery, at former Meetings †.

“ In this Shape the Matter came before the first Meeting of the
 “ Associate Synod, at *Stirling*, in the Month of *March* 1745 ;
 “ as an Overture, transmitted from the Presbytery of *Dunferm-
 “ line* in the above Manner : And tho’ many in the Synod judged,
 “ that the transmitting of an Overture anent the Synod’s tak-
 “ ing

D

† *Though it did not ly in the Synod’s Way, to examine the
 Charges here begun with, against Two Brethren, and the Associate
 Presbytery of Dunfermline, whereto they belong : Yet it may be
 observed here, that the very Thing mentioned about these two
 Brethren, was a good Reason for having the Affair taken un er
 judicial Consideration : Likewise, the Charity which thinketh
 no Evil, might have inclined to suppose, that these Brethren di
 not proceed lightly in the Matter ; and that they proceeded so, upon the
 Question occurring, through conceiving that their doing otherwise
 would have been much rather a practical Decision thereof : Fur-
 then*

“ ing the Burges-Oath under their Consideration, in the Way
 “ and Manner in which the said Overture was transmitted as a-
 “ bove, was rash and precipitant, especially as the two Brethren
 “ who did drive on this Matter had themselves given a practical
 “ Decision about it before ; yet, for the Sake of Peace, the Synod
 “ agreed, That the Burges-Oath should be among the List of
 “ several other Overtures, that were referred to a *pro re nata*
 “ Synod in *May*, at *Edinburgh*, the said Year.”

“ The Brethren, who first brought this Debate upon the Field,
 “ would not give Way to the Consideration of any other Over-
 “ ture, of whatever Importance, till the Question anent the Bur-
 “ ges-Oath should be first discussed: Accordingly, after rea-
 “ soning upon this Matter, at several *Sederunts*, for the Space of
 “ two Weeks, the Affair was, by Vote, delayed till next ordinary
 “ Meeting of Synod, at *Stirling*, *September* the said Year. Af-
 “ ter long Reasoning at some *Sederunts* of the said Meeting, it
 “ was again by Vote, delayed at that Time till a Meeting which
 “ was proposed *in hunc effectum*, to meet at *Stirling*, in *Novem-*
 “ *ber* the said Year: And altho’ there were two Weeks spent in
 “ reasoning at this Time, yet, when the Question was put, it was
 “ still delayed till the ordinary Meeting of Synod at *Edinburgh*
 “ in *April* last. By all which frequent Delays, after so many
 “ long and tedious Reasonings, it evidently appears, how aver-
 “ the Majority of the Synod were to determine a Point never
 “ formerly in Debate, so far as we know, in the Church of *Scot-*
 “ *land*. During the first Week of the Synod’s Meeting at *Edin-*
 “ *burgh* in *April* last, the Brethren who appeared for condemn-
 “ ing the Burges-Oath, spake as if they were for going into some
 “ healing Overture, wherein we might all agree. This was so
 “ acceptable to us, that we cheerfully consented to stay another
 “ Week, tho’ under no small Necessity to go home; in Ex-
 “ pectation that an amicable Period might be put to this Affair,
 which

*ther, it is easy to know, who are to be blamed, that the Synod
 got not forward to the Consideration of what these Brethren demur-
 red upon, so as to determine, whether or not they were in the
 wrong:—And moreover, it will be found afterwards, that all
 the Ministers were then under a new Necessity of pondering the
 Affair of the Burges-Oath, upon adverting to it; and that all the
 Presbyteries had got this Affair pointed out to them, by the last
 Meeting of the Associate Presbytery before the Disjunction, as
 Business proper for being introduced by them, to the first Meeting
 of the Associate Synod.*

" which, tho' we judge charitably of our Brethren, appeared
 " always to us to be a Fire-ball thrown in by the great Enemy,
 " for the breaking and dividing us: But, to our great Surprise,
 " when the Synod met the second Week, and several Members
 " who were present before had not returned, through Expectation
 " of the Continuance of the healing Disposition, which appear-
 " ed during the former Week, in not a few of these who were on
 " the opposite Side to us; all Overtures of Peace were rejected,
 " and a present Decision strenuously insisted upon, and at length
 " carried, by a small Majority; when not so much as one Half
 " of the constituent Members of Synod were present. Where-
 " upon we were constrained, from the Duty we owe to the Great
 " GOD, to ourselves, and to the present and after Generations, to
 " enter the following *Dissent and Protest*. 'In regard we have
 " contributed what we could to preserve Peace and Harmony
 " in this Synod, by proposing several Overtures, as Means to
 " prevent the fatal Consequences of a Rupture among ourselves
 " and the People under our Inspection; particularly, *That the*
 " *first Clause in some Burgeſs-Oaths, viz. Here I proteſt, &c.*
 " *might, for the Sake of Peace, be explained, according to the ori-*
 " *ginal and obvious Meaning and Intent of the Words themſelves, in*
 " *ſuch a Senſe as might be adapted to the preſent Teſtimony, eſpe-*
 " *cially as Magiſtrates of Burroughs are the original Framers and*
 " *Administrators of the ſaid Oath; likewise, a mutual Forbearance*
 " *of one another in the preſent Queſtion, as being one of theſe which*
 " *was never Matter of Teſtimony in the Church of Scotland, and*
 " *whereunto we never had attained, was earneſtly urged; alſo it*
 " *was propoſed, That for the Sake of Peace, and to prevent differ-*
 " *ent Practices, any under our Inſpection, who are to enter Burgeſſes,*
 " *be adviſed to take the Burgeſs-Oath without the ſoreſaid firſt Clause,*
 " *till the Members of the Synod come to ſee more clearly Eye to Eye in*
 " *this Matter: All which Overtures were rejected, and an ab-*
 " *ſolute Condemnation of the Oath, as ſinful, inſiſted upon, and*
 " *carried by a ſmall Majority of Thirteen to Nine, the one Half of*
 " *the conſtituent Members of the Synod not being preſent, when*
 " *the Decision of ſuch an important Queſtion was paſſed: There-*
 " *fore we, the ſaid Mr. Ralph Erſkine Miniſter at Dunfermline,*
 " *Mr. James Fiſher Miniſter at Glaſgow, Mr. William Hutton*
 " *Miniſter at Stow, Mr. Henry Erſkine Miniſter at Falkirk, Mr.*
 " *John McCara Miniſter at Bruntſhields; James Wardlaw in Dun-*
 " *fermline, and William Robertſon in Edinburgh, Elders; did and*
 " *hereby do diſſent from the above Decision of this Reverend Sy-*
 " *nod, as contrary to the Word of GOD, our Standards of Truth,*

the Practice of the Church of Christ in her purest Times; to that Brotherly Love, Regard and Forbearance, that the Members of Judicatories, and all Christians, ought to maintain towards one another; contrary to our Covenants, National and Solemn League; to our late Bond renewing the said Covenants, and to the Act of the Associate Presbytery appointing the same; this being a new Term of Communion, notwithstanding that the Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion were stated in the said Act; and likewise being a lording it over the Consciences of GOD'S Heritage, both Ministers and People, and a laying Burdens upon them which they are not able to bear: And we *Protest*, That the Synod, or Members thereof, who have joined in passing this Act, shall be chargeable with all the dismal Consequences which have or may follow upon the bringing of this Question upon the Field, and the pushing of it unto such a tyrannical Decision: And further we *Protest*, That we shall be no Ways limited or restrained in our Practice, by this Decision of Synod, from proceeding to renew the Bond in our respective Congregations, in Agreableness to the Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion formerly stated; and this our *Dissent* and *Protest* we give in, in our own Name, and in the Name of all that shall adhere unto us; and thereupon we take Instruments, craving Extracts, and Liberty to give in further *Reasons* of Dissent to the Moderator and Clerk, if the awful Providences of the Day shall permit, against the first of *July* in this present Year.

" It is with the deepest Concern, that we have been obliged to enter a Dissent against the Conduct of our Brethren, whom, altho' they be but a small Number in Comparison of the whole Synod if fully met, yet the Vote having carried by a Majority of that *Sederunt*, we shall, out of that due Respect we owe to our Presbyterian Principles, call the Associate Synod, and own the Sentence to be a Decd of the said Synod: And our Concern is the greater, that this is the first Time that ever any of us entred a Dissent and Protest, since we were Members of any our Associate Judicatories, and never expected that Matters would be driven to such an Height, as to oblige us to such a solemn Step, which we were always averse to, without the outmost Necessity: But now, since there is no other Remedy left us, in a Point wherein our Consciences are so much straitned, we offer the following *Reasons*, which are of Weight with us to support our Conduct.

REVIEW of the PREAMBLE.

WE shall not suppose that our Brethren have *erred wilfully* in the above Narration, or have therein *designedly* misrepresented the Rise and Progress of the Debate about the Burgess-Oath: But the Report there made of that Case, is so very *unfair, unsavourable and injurious*; differing from *Reality*, not only in some Particulars, but likewise in the *main Scope* thereof; that it is hard to conceive how there could miss to be at Bottom, an *uncommon* Measure of Forgetfulness and Prepossession.

Tho' there should be no secret Thrust in the Thing, at the Associate Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, it is, at least, improperly said, that the Debate anent the Burgess-Oath took its first Rise in (what is now) the Associate Presbytery of *Dunfermline*; when the Rise mentioned, was only *within the Bounds* of (what is now) that Presbytery.

What our Brethren give out as the *First Rise* of the present Debate about the Burgess-Oath, was, in general, a Thing *extrajudicial*, or among some particular Persons; but, in condescending upon the *First of such* Kind of Rise, they should have gone further back than the Conduct of Two Brethren, *Anno 1744*; as the Debate took some Rise of this Kind, some Years before that Time*. What they had properly ado here, was to mention the first Rise of this, as a *judicial* Debate; but *that* Rise of the Thing they quite overlook: And it is as follows.

When the Associate Presbytery was met at *Edinburgh*, in *October 1744*, a Brother who came not up till after the Sentence of *Disjunction*, offered unto the Presbytery a Paper of *Scruples* about that Sentence; one of which was, "That, altho' the Presbytery had determined both the *Abjuration* and *Allegiance* to be sinful, yet they had not as yet considered the *Burgess-Oath*, which he apprehended might be found by the Presbytery to be sinful; if they thought proper to take the same under Consideration": And the *Answers* then made to that Paper (which were approved by *all* the Brethren now protesting; yea, the *First* of them was one of the two that prepared the Draught of these *Answers*) it was replied, among other Things, to the foresaid *Scruple*

* This had been the Case, particularly among some praying Societies in *Edinburgh*.

Scruple about the Burgeſſi-Oath; that, "As all the Members would have better Access to conſider upon that Matter in their *reſpective Presbyteries*, for having their Opinions thereon ſignified to the *First Meeting of Synod*; ſo the Synod could not but be in a better Capacity for overtaking a Conſideration thereof, in the Manner propoſed, than the Presbytery in their preſent Situation". This indeed is the very *fiſt Riſe* of the Debate, that our Brethren had any Concern with here: And a Riſe it is, upon which, at the very fiſt, *they concurred* as much as *any*, without the leaſt Demurr, in pointing out the Affair of the Burgeſſi-Oath, in the above Manner, as Buſineſs proper for being introduced, by the *ſeveral Presbyteries*, unto the *First Meeting of Synod*: All which conſidered, it is really ſtrange to find the Matter repreſented as in the *Preamble* to the Reaſons of Diſſent and Proteſt.

Moreover, the Account given of the Introduction and Management of this Affair, at the fiſt Meeting of Synod, is likewiſe *unjuſt*: For, the Caſe was plainly as follows.----Along with ſundry *Overtures* laid before the *Committee for Overtures*, from the Associate Presbytery of *Dunfermline*; there was preſented a Tranſmiſſion of an Overture about the Affair of the *Burgeſſi-Oath*, with a Diſſent by two Brethren of ſaid Presbytery from that Tranſmiſſion, Reaſons of Diſſent, and Answers to theſe Reaſons; all which were read. At the ſame Time, there was before the Committee a *general Overture* from the Associate Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, for the Synod to conſider upon and endeavour the Removal of any publick *Burs* that might be preſently found in the Way of due Progreſs in Covenanting-work: And, upon what is above, ſome Brethren from that Presbytery did ſignify, That the ſaid general Overture, had a ſpecial View to the ſame Affair of the *Burgeſſi-Oath*; and, that the Affair having been under ſome Conſideration in their Presbytery, the Overture, with a View thereto, had been laid *ſo generally*, upon ſuppoſing that the Matter would be introduced unto *that Meeting of Synod*, *more expreſſly* from elſewhere: And accordingly, this general Overture was afterwards fallen from, by the Brethren of that Presbytery then preſent; when they found it, as to the ſpecial Deſign thereof, tranſmitted upon the Matter, by the Committee's tranſmitting to the Synod what was before them, on the ſame Head, from the Associate Presbytery of *Dunfermline*. Hereupon, the Committee ſoon concluded, that now, the Synod's doing ſomething about the Affair of the *Burgeſſi-Oath*, was *nearly connected* with the Affair of Progreſs in *Covenanting-Work*, and was neceſſa-

to clear the Way for that Progress: And therefore, whatever Difficulties or Grounds of Demur appeared about the Formality of the foresaid Transmission, all did easily agree to wave Deliberation and Dispute upon that Point, as being of small Moment to the Overture itself; which accordingly they did as easily and unanimously, without a Vote, transmit unto the Synod in the Front of sundry other Overtures which they transmitted on that Occasion.

In this Shape did the Matter come before the Synod, in March 1745: And then indeed, some of the Brethren now protesting (Two of whom only had belonged to the Committee for Overtures) did take Occasion to signify their Dissatisfaction with the Method of the Transmission from Dunfermline Presbytery, and with the Conduct of Two Brethren relative to this Affair at a late Sacramental Occasion: But, without any Dispute about the Overture, and without a Vote, the Synod unanimously received the same, as it stood in the first Room among these other Overtures; along with which it was, without any Debate or Vote, unanimously referred to a *pro re nata* Meeting of Synod, at Edinburgh in May the said Year. And this being the real State of the Case, it is far from being duly related by our Brethren, in the second Paragraph of their Preamble.

But the Narration which they make of the *after Progress* of this Matter, is still more unfair, and very unaccountable. As, 1mo. They tell, That “the Brethren (*viz. the two Brethren.*) “who first brought this Debate upon the Field, would not give “Way to the Consideration of any other Overture, of what- “ver Importance, till the Question about the Burgesses-Oath should “be first discussed;” and they immediately give this out with an *accordingly*, as the Spring of the Reasoning upon the Matter, when the Synod met in May 1745. Now, beside what is here repeated about the Rise of the Debate, which has been considered already; and without insisting upon the Face of *Absurdity* and *Looseness* there is in this Story, as to the very *undecent Reflection* which it casts upon the Synod, through the Sides of Two Brethren; it is further remarkable, that the Matter of Fact is here *altogether concealed* or *misrepresented*. For,

1. As it noway holds, that those two Brethren were *singular*, in the Management of this Affair before the Synod: It *as little* holds, (tho’ plainly insinuated by our Brethren) that an Entrance upon the Affair, at that Meeting of Synod, was with *any Struggle* or *Dispute*. On the contrary, tho’ it was never *agreed to*, yet *never proposed* (as will appear afterwards) that *no other Overture* should

should be considered before this about the Burges-Oath; yet hitherto, the Synod were *readily unanimous* in concluding that, as Matters stood, their doing something about this Affair was *nearly connected* with the Affair of *Progress* in Covenanting-work, and necessary to *clear the Way* for that Progress: Wherefore, they were *as readily* unanimous about proceeding *expeditiously* unto the Business. It is true indeed that, from the first Introduction of the Matter into the Synod, our Brethren did signify Uneasiness and Dissatisfaction, about what *Necessity* appeared of taking the same under Consideration; so as to blame and reflect upon others for it, that Things were come to this Pass: But it is very well known, that it was not till *after* the *first* Meeting of Synod, and till Reasoning on the Affair had been proceeded in at some Length during their *second* Meeting, that they began to quarrel any *Preference* given to *this* Overture before *others*. And, tho' they did, then and afterwards, come the Length of spurning against any further Consideration of the Matter; yea of arguing, that the Synod should not have meddled with it, and that they ought to drop it as a Thing they had no Business with: Yet, when this could not be obtained, they did still, from Time to Time, *acquiesce* and *concur* in further Reasoning thereupon.

2. The Case, more particularly, stands thus. When the Synod met at *Edinburgh*, in *May 1745*; having spent the *first* Day of their Meeting in a publick Fast; on the *second* Day thereof, the *Committee* for Overtures appointed at their former Meeting, was continued, with the Addition of *Six* other Ministers, *Three* of whom are now protesting: And the said Committee got general Orders to ripen for the Synod the Matters to come before them. Accordingly this Committee, having under Consideration, at two *Sederunts*, the Overture about the *Burges-Oath*; and having Copies of different Burges-Oaths before them; they had a good deal of Reasoning upon the Subject: Wherein there were Objections made by one Side, against *sundry Clauses* of these Oaths; and, by the other Side, Answers were offered thereunto: After which, the Committee did *unanimously*, without a *Vote*, overture unto the Synod, on the *third* Day of their Meeting, that they should take the Affair under Consideration at a private *Sederunt*; and this the Synod did *unanimously*, without *Dispute* or *Vote*, agree to have done the Day following. Wherefore on that *fourth* Day of their Meeting, they entered without any *Demur* upon this Affair; beginning with the *first*, viz. the *religious* Clause of some Burges-Oaths, particularly in *Edinburgh*; which was reasoned upon then and at some *After-sederunts*.

Moreover, by the foreſaid Words and what immediately follows, it is plainly given out, as if the Synod had not got *any other Overture* ſo much as *taken under Conſideration*, at their Meeting in *May 1745*; yea, nor at their After-meetings, till that about the Burgeſs-Oath was diſcuſſed; tho' the Diſcuſſion of the *firſt Clauſe* thereof was on Hand, after their Meetings in *September* and *November 1745*, till the *laſt Day* ſave *one* of their Meeting in *April 1746*: And the mani- feſt Scope of this Story is to bring other Members of Synod under the *Odium* of an inconfiderate and *blind Zeal*, upon the Overture about the Burgeſs-Oath. But, on the contrary, the *Minutes* of the Meeting in *May 1745*, do teſtify, that before this Overture was entred upon, (and indeed without the leaſt Oppoſition by the Two Brethren or any elſe) *three other Overtures* were diſcuſſed, and a *fourth* proceeded in as far as the Nature of it could then allow: And as other Pieces of Buſineſs were then handled, both before entring on that Affair, and in the Intervals of Reaſoning thereupon; ſo, after the Concluſion of the Reaſoning for that Time, *another Overture* was diſcuſſed, and *two more* proceeded in as far as the Nature thereof could then allow: And in like Manner the *Minutes* teſtify, that during the *After-meetings* when that Affair was in Dependence, the Synod proceeded in the Conſideration of *other Overtures*. beſide exped- ing Variety of other Buſineſs.

2do, Our Brethren having further obſerved, That there was long Reaſoning about this Affair, at ſome *Sederunts* of the Meeting in *September 1745*, (which Reaſoning was moſtly at *one Sederunt*, and all upon the Queſtion, Whether the Synod ſhould continue to ſit *next Week* and proceed in the Affair, or delay till a *pro re nata* Meeting in *November*? Which laſt carried by Vote;) and having obſerved likewise, the Time ſpent in reaſoning on this Subject, at the ſaid Meeting in *November*, after which the Matter was ſtill delayed till the Meeting at *Edinburgh*, in *April 1746*: From all this they deduce a general Inference, in the Words following; "By all which frequent Delays, after ſo many long and tedious " Reaſonings, it evidently appears how averſe the Majority of " the Synod were to determine a Point never formerly in De- " bate, ſo far as we know, in the Church of *Scotland*." Now, the ſaid *Majority* of Synod (excepting our Brethren) are *ſenſibly injured*, by alledging that their Averſneſs, ſo long, from a Deter- mination, did turn upon the Reaſon here told, which will after- wards occur to be examined: And, by the above Inference, Matters are *greatly miſrepreſented*. For,

It is very well known, that in *each* Meeting of Synod when this Affair was in Dependence, the *Majority* by much, of theſe

who interfeered with any Declaration of their Judgment, did *always* do so, to the very *same Purpose* with what is laid in the *Sentence* of Synod now protested against: And the *true Reason* of the *Delays*, from Time to Time, was this. Some of the Brethren now protesting, did still so strenuously oppose any such Determination, arguing the Inevitableness of a *Rupture* upon Supposition thereof; that some of the other Members did, for a Time, conceive that the Consequences of a *Decision* might be *worse* than these of *some further Delay*: And therefore, from a Fear of a Breach, Desire of Harmony, and Tenderness to these Brethren, the Majority went into *several Delays*: But as *one* Member, of the other Side from our Brethren, did insist much for some of these Delays; he at the same Time declared, that if some further Reasonings should be without the *desired Effect*, he would be obliged to *vote* for a *Decision* according to his Light. Moreover, the Minutes of Synod do oftner than once mention the *Fear of a Breach*, as the Reason of delaying: But it is certain, that there appeared not then any Reason to fear a Breach in Synod upon this Head, with respect to *more* than have since protested: And it is as certain, that *nothing* but *their Opposition* procured such *long and tedious Reasonings* on the Subject, and prevented the Synod's coming to such a *Decision* thereupon, as they have now made, even in their *first Meeting* when the Affair was entred on, *viz.* at *Edinburgh*, in *May 1745*.

3tio. The Management of this Business, in the Meeting of Synod at *Edinburgh*, in *April 1746*, when they came to a *Sentence* thereupon, is, by our Brethrens Account, *peculiarly clouded and misrepresented*.

They speak as if some of their Brethren had, on the *first Week* of the Meeting, deceived them with the Appearance of an healing Disposition, and a Proposal of going in to some healing Overture, for putting an amicable Period to the Affair; and had thus enticed them to stay another Week, under no small Necessity of going home: Whereas, on the *second Week*, they were greatly surpris'd in finding no Continuance of the former healing Disposition; the View whereof (they alledge) had prevented several Members who were present on the *first Week*, from returning on the *second*: But that, all Overtures of Peace being rejected, a present Decision was strenuously insisted upon.---This is the Shape in which our Brethren represent the Matter: Whereas,

1. The Synod being met at *Edinburgh*, in *April 1746*; and having returned to the Consideration of the Affair of the Barges-Oath, in the Afternoon's *Sederunt*, in the *second Day* of their Meeting: They did *unanimously* agree not to resume former Reasoning

soning about the religious Clause; but to consider upon *some Overtures* for bringing that Debate unto an Issue. All were of the Mind that there had already been enough of the former Reasoning: And some Members being much apprehensive, that the Continuance of our Brethrens *Opposition*, was *mostly*, if not *wholly*, owing to *Mistakes* of what was insisted for; such Mistakes as it will afterwards appear were then *really entertained*, and are *still adhered* to by them: It was therefore suggested, that the properest Way of removing these Mistakes, for coming to an amicable Issue in this Point of Debate, would be to proceed next unto an examining what *Overtures* might be proposed on both Sides, for terminating the same. And thus, indeed, as some did signify a Persuasion that their Brethren on the other Side, did greatly *misunderstand* and *misconstruct* them; so, they expressed much Hope, that, by the Method of Overtures as above, an *Harmony* might be attained: But *none* of the Brethren who had formerly declared their Judgment as in the Sentence of Synod now passed, did give the *least* Occasion of supposing that they had *altered* the same; or that they could be satisfied with the Synod's doing *any Thing less*, in a Decision of the Matter, than what they have now done.

Wherefore, some Overtures, as above, having been proposed and reasoned upon, at that *Sederunt*, without coming to an Issue; farther Procedure this way was then deferred: But there was an *unanimous Agreement* for proceeding, on the *second Week*, to some *Decision* that might prevent a renewing of the Debate, for retarding other Business, at next Meeting. Yea, so sensible did our Brethren then appear, of the *Necessity* of some such *Decision*; that, after much reasoning about some Overtures, on the *first Week*, without Effect, they did not propose any such Thing as a simple *Delay* till next ordinary Meeting.

Upon the whole, it is manifest, that all Members, on the *first Week*, had as *fair* Advertisement as could *then* take Place, of what might follow on the *second Week*: And it will afterwards appear, that instead of the alledged Decay, at this Time, of a former healing Disposition; there was only a mournful *Disappointment* of that Healing which had been proposed, and was *rationaly* to be expected, from that Overture which the Synod turned unto a Sentence. But,

2. Concerning the *Overtures of Peace* that were proposed; our Brethren speak as if there had been *none* but from *their Side*, tho' the Case was otherways: Again, they speak as if these proposed by them had met with nothing but *Rejection*; tho' each of

them was first reasoned upon, till found *unreasonable*: And one of the Overtures from their Side, is *concealed*. More particularly,

(1.) One of their *Overtures* was for explaining the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, “According to the original and obvious Meaning and Intent of the Words themſelves, in ſuch a Senſe as might be adapted to the preſent Teſtimony, eſpecially as Magiſtrates of Burroughs are the original Framers and Adminiſtrators of the ſaid Oath.” Becauſe there will be Occaſion afterwards for examining this Overture; it is ſufficient here to remember, that the Synod could not ſee how it was *competent* for them as a Church-Judicatory, and in their peculiar Situation; nor how they could, without expoſing their *Character*, offer to explain any Oath framed and adminiſtrated by any Civil-Authority. And further, that this Overture was *too myſterious* for the Synod: For, as they had no Buſineſs here, unleſs with the *preſent* Intent of the Words; ſo, they know no *preſent Intent of the Words themſelves*, but according as, in the *preſent Uſe* thereof, they are manifeſtly *intended*: Again, this Overture tells, that the Meaning to be explained is *obviouſ*, which ſays that an Explication was *really needleſs*; and yet this ſame Overture is for an Explication *in ſuch a Senſe as might be adapted to the preſent Teſtimony*, which, if it meaneth any Thing, ſays that an Explication was *really needful*: But, if this Overture was made, merely in *Condeſcendence* to other Members; theſe could by no Means have their Conſciences ſalved by ſuch an Expedient, conſidering what is above, and will occur afterwards.

(2.) Another of theſe Overtures was, for “a mutual Forbearance of one another in the preſent Queſtion, as being one of theſe Things which was never Matter of Teſtimony in the Church of *Scotland*, and whereunto we never had attained.” This *Forbearance*, as alſo the Reaſon here produced for it, will come into particular Conſideration afterwards. But it may be obſerved in this Place, that, beſide the Difficulties attending ſuch an Overture, upon a Queſtion directly about Sin or Duty, in the momentous Affair of an Oath, and ſo nearly affecting the Matter of Progreſs in Covenanting-work; even upon Suppoſition of the Synod’s forbearing a *preſent Decision* in the Queſtion, our Brethren would by no Means agree to forbear, *in the mean Time*, an *Admiſſion* of theſe engaged in ſuch Burgeſs-Oaths, into the Bond for renewing the Covenants; any more than if the Synod had paſſed Sentence on their Side; tho’ yet it was to remain a Queſtion, whether an Engagment in ſuch Oaths was *inconſiſtent* with an Entrance into the ſaid Bond: Wherefore, it could not appear

that the Forbearance proposed was *really mutual*, or any way calculated for preserving Peace, and preventing different Practices.

(3.) The next of these Overtures was, "That for the sake of Peace, and to prevent different Practices, any under our Inspection, who are to enter Burgesſes, be advised to take the Burgeſs-Oath, without the foreſaid Firſt Clause, till the Members of the Synod come to ſee more clearly Eye to Eye in the Matter". But this Overture, as propoſed, and then inſiſted on, was no way habile for gaining the End. For, it noway extended unto the Caſe of thoſe who were *already* engaged in ſuch Burgeſs Oaths: Again it behoved to imply the Synod's *allowance* of the *other Clauſes* of theſe Oaths; tho' yet they had not overtaken the Conſideration thereof; and tho' our Brethren knew well enough, that other Clauſes had been quarrelled, when the Affair of the Burgeſs-Oath was generally converſed upon, by the Committee for Overtures, at the Meeting in May 1745: Moreover, our Brethren would by no means grant, that theſe who ſhould ſtile to follow the Advice of the Overture, ſhould not, *in the mean Time*, be admitted into the Bond for renewing the Covenants; and how then could ſuch an Overture, if gone into, have been available, for *preſerving Peace and preventing different Practices*? But,

(4.) There was a further Overture propoſed in *Writ*, from our Brethrens Side, which is now paſſed in *Silence*; *viz.* An Overture of a *new Religious Clause* for theſe Burgeſs-Oaths; and that Seceders, when Occaſion offered, ſhould inſiſt for having the Oath adminiſtrate to them with *this new Clause*; or, otherwiſe, ſhould reſuſe it altogether. It is needleſs to make particular Remarks upon this *peculiar* Sort of Overture: But there is Reaſon for obſerving, That, if it meant any Thing, it generally meant juſt what the Synod have declared by their Sentence, about ſwearing the Religious Clauſe of ſome Burgeſs-Oaths, *viz.* That the doing ſo is *not right*: And it ſerved to ſhew that they had yielded long enough to the Oppoſition, when the ſame, with ſome at leaſt, turned out in ſuch an *abſurd* Appearance. Moreover,

(5.) Our Brethren ought to remember, that what is now the Synod's *Sentence*, was for ſome Time inſiſted upon, by theſe of the other Side, as an *healing Overture*. And it was really an healing Overture, an Overture of Peace: For, as will appear afterwards, it was *duly laſt* for removing *deep Miſtakes* which our Bretheren laboured under; ſo that if they had *yielded to the Removal* of theſe Miſtakes thereby, more Peace and Harmony might have enſued than was any otherwiſe probable: And further, as they had oftner than once diſcovered,

that their Opposition to a Decision on the *first Clause*, was much for *preventing* an Examination of some following; so, an Article for Peace, on this Point, was laid in the *Conclusion* of that Overture and Sentence; as thereby the Brethren who had signified material Difficulties upon other Clauses, did yet *agree* not to insist for an immediate Procedure, in the present Circumstances, unto any Consideration thereof.

4^{to}. Our Brethren produce a Charge against the Sentence of Synod, from the *Thinness* of that Meeting in which, and the *Smallness* of that Majority by which it was carried: For they complain, that it was "carried by a small Majority of *Thirteen*" "to *Nine*; not so much as one Half of the constituent Members of the Synod being present, when the Decision of such an "important Question was passed". Upon this Head, sundry Things are to be observed, for setting the Matter in a due Light. And in general, it is well enough known, that, from the *peculiar* Situation of the *Associate Presbytery* for some Years before the Disjunction, and of the *Synod* since, there have used to be *special* Deficiencies, as to the Attendance of *Ministers* upon their several Meetings: But that, *more especially*, the Attendance of *Elders* was always very *uncertain* and *precarious*; considering the great Distances, with the Engagements of Business at Home, especially in such Seasons of the Year as that when the Sentence passed, beside other common Occurrences; so that ordinarily *few* Elders came up, and *fewer* attended *both Weeks*, when the Meeting continued more than one. Wherefore, as our Brethren very well knew, if these Judicatories had used to *sist* Procedure, upon the Absence of *some* of the Ministers; or *most* of the Elders; the Lord's Work among their Hands behoved, even in Matters of *greatest Importance* or *Urgency*, to have been sadly, yea, *sinfully neglected*. And more particularly,

1. As to the Meeting of Synod in *April 1746*, the present Case stands thus. Of *Twenty eight Ministers* then belonging to the Synod, *Twenty three* did attend on the *First Week*; being as many as ever attended any Meeting of Synod before that Time: And there were present *Fourteen Elders*; being more by severals than had ever come up at the Examination of the Affair, before that Time. But, on the *Second Week*, only *Twenty* of the *Ministers* returned; tho' sometimes as few, sometimes fewer, had attended or returned at Meetings formerly: And there returned only *Five Elders*, with a *Sixth* who had not come up before. Moreover, considering that *Elders* who *never came up* from Sessions, to be received by the Synod as commissioned for this Purpose

pose, were not properly *Constituent Members* thereof, so that the *Constituent Members* were properly to be reckoned as above, viz. In Number *Forty three*; it is therefore unfairly said by our Brethren, that not so much as *one Half* of the *Constituent Members* were then present; when of the *Forty three*, *Twenty six* were present. But after all, according to what has been observed already, they had no Reason, during the former Dependence of the Affair, to expect that a fuller Meeting could have been of *more Advantage*, comparatively, to their Side of the Cause, but the very *Reverse*.

2. As the Dependence of this Matter before the Synod, behoved to be well enough known, all along, by all concerned; so, it can be instructed from the *Minutes*, that, from the First Entrance upon the same, the *several Delays* were made, with a View of coming to a *Decision* at every next Meeting: Wherefore, the Synod are noway answerable for it, that *more Members* did not attend on the *First Week* of the Meeting in *April 1746*. Again it appears from what has been said already, that all who attended on the *First Week* of said Meeting, had *due Information* of what was to be in Hand on the *Second Week*, yea that some *Decision* was in View; and none of them had any Ground given to conclude that the Matter might be *delayed further*, or that *such a Decision* might not fall out as actually came to pass: Wherefore the Synod are *as little* answerable that *more Members* returned not, on this *Second Week* of the Meeting; nor was it reasonable, from the Posture of Affairs and Presbyterian Principles, to delay urgent Business upon that Score. Moreover, as to the *Importance* of the Question, which our Brethren give out for a Reason against Procedure to a *Decision*, in the foresaid Circumstances; this very Importance, considering the Nature of the Thing in itself, and the Connection thereof with Covenanting-work, was the *very Reason* why the Synod could not longer *delay* a *Decision*: And it will appear afterwards, that this, as a Reason for *proceeding*, did justly preponderate all Reasons which could be then adduced for a further *Delay*.

3. The *Noise* which our Brethren now make, against Procedure to *Decision*, from the *Thinness* of the Meeting on the *Second Week*, will appear *most unaccountable*, upon considering what follows. When the Affair was resumed, at the second *Sederunt* of this Meeting on the second Week, they did not then reflect anyway upon the *Thinness* of the Meeting, so as to propose any *Delay* of further Procedure from that Consideration: But, after some Time then spent upon it, there was a *general Agreement*, without a *Vote*, to resume further Conference upon the subject, at the Forenoon's *Sederunt*, next Day. Moreover,

when

when that *Sederunt* came, after long Reasoning without Effect, they did not yet insist for a Delay of further Procedure : But, on the contrary, the *Minute* of said *Sederunt* runs in these Terms ; “ Resum’d Conference upon the Affair of the first Clause of “ some Burgesses-Oaths, particularly of the several Overtures proposed for bringing that Matter to an Issue ; and after long “ Reasoning upon the said Overtures, the Synod agreed to come, “ at next *Sederunt*, to a State of a Question, for terminating the “ Debate ” : And tho’ this *Minute*, importing such a general Agreement without a *Vote*, was read before them at that *Sederunt* ; and again at the Afternoon’s *Sederunt* in which the Decision was made ; yet none of them did ever alledge, as if they had been injured thereby. Yea, it was not till after some Reasoning at the *Sederunt* when the Decision was made, and till the Matter was coming to a *Vote*, that our Brethren began to insist for a *Delay* till next ordinary Meeting : And as for the *Thinness* of the Meeting, they did not begin to plead upon it, till next Day after the Sentence, when they gave in their written *Dissent* and *Protest* : Neither indeed could they, in a *Consistency* with themselves, have pled the *Thinness* of the Meeting, during the Reasoning before the Sentence ; seeing this would have been as strong an Argument against issuing in some of their own Overtures which they urged most, as against the Sentence which was passed. From all which it appears, that their Quarrel with the *Thinness* of said Meeting, is quite out of Time, and quite unreasonable. Again,

4. As to the Sentence having been carried by a small Majority of *Thirteen* to *Nine* ; it is to be remarked, that our Brethren had no Reason, from the Nature of the Vote, to conceive that even all these *Nine* were on their Side, as to the Cause itself. They had, all along, taken very cautious Care not to have their Side of the Controversy put to the Risque of a *Vote* : So that when, once and again, at former Meetings, a Vote on the Merits of the Cause had been insisted for, they never put their Side of the Controversy into a Side of the Question for a *Vote* ; but their Side of the Question was always for a simple *Delay* till next ordinary Meeting ; whereby they still made themselves sure of all who apprehended any Expediency of some further Delay, whether otherwise on their Side or not. Accordingly, when that Overture which the Synod have turned into a Sentence, was just coming to a *Vote* ; they did not offer to propose for their Side of the Question, any of those Overtures which they had earnestly urged during the Reasoning ; but they came then at last to propose for their Side of the Question, a simple *Delay* till next ordinary Meeting :

Meeting: Nor was it any Wonder, when the Vote came to *this State*, that *two*, not otherwise on their Side, voted a Delay; and that *Three* were silent in the Vote; while *Thirteen*, under much Heaviness of Spirit, found themselves obliged, from Considerations that will occur by and by, to vote the *Decision*, even in Opposition to a simple *Delay*. Wherefore, abstracting from *one* Brother of the said *Two* that voted a Delay; who professed *Scruples* and *Difficulties* only, about the Decision when made; while he *more strongly* professed *Difficulties* on the other Hand, about the *Burgefs-Oath*: But seeing the other of these *Two*, with the *Three* that had been silent in the Vote, did, by their Silence *acquiesce* in the Sentence when passed; and seeing the *Moderator's* Acquiescence in it was well known; it is then manifest, that the Division of all Members present, upon the Sentence itself, was by no Means of *Thirteen* to *Nine*, but of *Eighteen* to *Seven*; and, as to the Ministers, of *Fourteen* to *Five*.

5to, In the Preamble and afterwards, there are sundry Accusations laid against Brethren of Synod, as guilty of *undue Warmth*, *pushing*, *driving*, and *more than ordinary Keeness* of Spirit in this Affair: And there is Necessity of some Reply on this Head, for vindicating both the Synod and their Sentence.

It is true, that none of the Brethren accused will pretend to be *Proof* against *undue Warmth* of Spirit, when *violently*, and in their View very *unreasonably* opposed; especially upon an Affair, which required no small Measure of, what the Scripture calls, a *contending earnestly for the Faith once delivered unto the Saints*. This Affair, at the first Opening of it, did appear to some in such a Light, that besides the Bar thrown into the Way of due Progress in Covenanting-work, by the Debate and Difference thereupon; they reckoned the *Debate* maintained by our Brethren to be *detrimental* or *prejudicial* unto the Testimony already lifted up and avouched by this Synod; as conceiving that a *due* and *consistent Adherence* to the said Testimony, was *materially impugned* thereby: And they expressed great Fears, from the Beginning of the Controversy, that a *protracting* the Debate, by Delays of a Decision in such a Question, while the *Generality* of the Synod was clear about the Point, might prove an *Occasion* and *Mean* of further *bewildering* to our Brethren: On which Accounts, they had dissented from some Delays thereof. Moreover, as our Brethrens Opposition did indeed *gradually increase*, it required a good deal of *Patience* to bear with their *Method* of fighting against a Decision; by *spurning* against *Consideration* of the Affair, by *strange Refinements* and *Abstractions* about the Clause in Controversy, by *extraneous Discourses* and *Suppositions* about *former Times*,

and by *trazical Declamations* about a *Breach*.---But further, the particular Case, as to any strenuous insisting for a Decision in *April* last, was really this: The Members of Synod did *thex* come more generally than ever *before*, to conclude that a *further Delay* behoved, in all Probability, to be of *worse* Consequence than a *present Decision*, as to any apparent Hazard of a Breach thereby with our Brethren: In regard particularly, that some of them, conform to what is laid in their *Protest*, had then signified their Inclinations about Procedure in Covenanting-work, in *such a Manner*, as gave just Ground to fear that, before *another Meeting* of Synod, *different yea contrary* Methods of Procedure in that Work, might be on Foot among the People: And the Synod found themselves obliged to make a *Decision* at that Time; as a *necessary Step* toward preventing such an awful Posture of Affairs, and *necessary* for their own Exoneration in the Matter, whether it should prove successful or not.

THe *Narration* of the *Preamble* is now discussed: And it appears upon the whole, That the *Character* which was given thereof in the *Entry*, is *too just*; so that our Bretheren have thereby done no Service to their *own Side*, but given a very *ill-boding* Introduction to their *Reasons*. The Synod have no Pleasure in *exposing* their Brethren upon that *Narrative*; but would with Pleasure listen to all *Apologies* for the same: And if the *Hurt* done thereby were of a *personal* and *private* Nature, they should willingly have suffered all with Silence: However, seeing the *Hurt* is done unto the *Reputation of the Court*, and of their *Conduct*; they were obliged to make the foregoing *Review*, for the *Honour of HIM* whose the Court is, and for the *Credit of his Work*, as among their Hands in the present Controversy. Moreover, it is too well known, that our Brethren have seen meet to let *sundry Copies* of their whole Paper go abroad among the People, in different and distant Corners; and that the *Prejudices* abroad against the Synod's *Sentence*, are much owing to *Misrepresentations* of the *Method* of their *Procédure*, as laid in the said Paper, and *industriously* spread otherwise: Wherefore, there was more than *ordinary* need for examining that *Narrative*, and for doing so at good length.

The *heavy Charge* wherewith the Synod and their Sentence are loaded in the *Protest*, and the *Liberty* which our Brethren do thereby claim, will appear in their *proper Light* when the *Reasons* are considered.

Concerning other Things of the *Preamble*, what follows may be remarked. That as our Brethren did not *always* appear to take the present Affair for one of *Satan's Fire-balls*; so, they will be found in a *sad Mistake*, when satisfied with viewing it in such a Light: Likewise, it will appear in due Time, that they are *injurious* to these of the other Side, in what they mean by their Expressions of *condemning the Burgeses-Oath*, and an *absolute Condemnation* thereof: Again, it is evident from what has been said, that the Synod and their *Sentence* are *noway beholden* to them, for the Complement which is made in the last *Paragraph* of their Preamble: Further, they have no Reason to suppose, that Peace and Harmony were *less desirable*, or the Apprehension of a Breach *less burdensome* to other Brethren than to them; tho' *heavy Trials* this Way must be submitted to, for the Sake of *Truth* and *Duty*: And finally, it will appear, when the *Reasons* shall be discussed, whether our Brethren have contributed what they *morally could*, to preserve Peace and Harmony in the Synod; whether they were *really* under that *solemn Constraint* and *utmost Necessity* which they pretend, to enter their *Dissent* and *Protest*; and whether the *Weight* of their *Reasons*, doth indeed bear any *due Proportion* to the *Deepness* of *Concern* and *Straitnedness* of *Conscience* upon that Head, which they profess.

But to proceed: Before engaging with the *Reasons severally*, it is needful, for opening the Subject and preventing some Repetitions afterwards, to examine three *Grounds of Prejudice* against the Synod's *Sentence*, wherewith fundry of the *Reasons* are tingured; and which, tho' noway affecting the *Merits* of the Cause, are specially *built upon* by our Brethren. These are, *first*, that the Sentence is in a Point *altogether new*, which was *never formerly debated, questioned, or Matter of Testimony*, in the Church of Scotland; and whereunto *we never had attained*: *Secondly*, the Sentence is represented, as if it were *injurious* to the Memory and Reputation of our reforming and covenanting *Forefathers*, in contradicting their Practice of admitting *Burgeses* as well as *others* to swear the Covenants: And, in the *third* Place, it is represented, more particularly, as *injurious* to the Memory and Reputation of honest *Burgeses* in that Period. Now it may be easily perceived, that a Charge against the Synod, upon all or any of these *Grounds*, can-

not belong but unto an *unfair, unsound* Way of reasoning. But further.

1mo. As to the *first* of these, *viz.* that the Sentence of Synod is in a Point *quite new*, which was *never formerly debated, questioned, or Matter of Testimony*, in the Church of Scotland; and whereunto we *never had attained*: This is a String upon which our Brethren strike high in their *Preamble*, again and again; and which they resume in more than one of their *Reasons*, as if it were of mighty Consequence to the Case in Hand. Whereas,

1. To defame the Synod's *Sentence* on that Account, is an awful Step; as being of a native Tendency to *discredit* the Laws of Christ and the gradual Method of his Church hitherto, about *wrestling for Progress or Advancement* in his Work; unless it could be proven, that such are the Attainments of the Church *already*, as make it *needless and unwarrantable* to press further forward, if some concerned refuse to go along.

2. The *gradual Nature* of Attainments in the Church, as to the *Order of Seasons*, neither *sooner* nor *later*, wherein the several Degrees thereof are brought about; this is a Thing which the Synod cannot, yea no Creature can be *accountable* for; being what the Lord hath eminently reserved unto his own *Wisdom and Sovereignty*: But, when *Duty, Occasion and Capacity*, all *concur*, for making any new Advancement in the Church; how absurd must it be to plead against doing so, even through *Opposition*, because it was not done *sooner*, or was never *attained before*? Again, the Lord makes every Thing *beautiful in his Time*: There is great Beauty in his ordering of *special Seasons for special Steps*: And when he breaks up Light, unto any *further Step* in his Work; as this is a signal Proof of his *Presence* in the Church; and as it affords new Matter of *Praise*; so, it gives new Evidence, how much Ground there is still for *humble Acknowledgement* with the Apostle, *Philip. iii. 12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.*

3. The Synod have, on this Occasion been *shut up* to a Consideration and Decision of the present *Affair*; so as they *never were before*, and *never was the Case formerly*, in a reforming Period of the Church of Scotland.

Such Brethren as were taking Thought upon the Subject, a little before it was started in the *last Meeting* of the *Associate Presbytery*, can answer for themselves; whether or not it really holds as they profess, that they were very *occasionally* and *unexpectedly* led and obliged to do so. However, it is very certain, that the Synod were noway *seeking after* the Thing, till it was providentially brought in their Way; few Members were *adverting* to such a Thing as the Burgeis-Oath, before the Mention of it

in the *last Meeting* of the Associate Presbytery; and fewer had *ever seen* any Burgess-Oath, at least with a *religious Clause*, till after that Time. Again, it is as certain, that a little *before* even that Rise of the Debate which our Brethren notice in their *Preamble*, Matters were come to be so situate, as to lay under a Necessity of examining this Point, upon the *first* adverting to it; *such a Necessity* as had not *formerly* taken Place, since the Rise of the Secession: So that, from the simple Proposal of the Thing in Synod, beside the common Talk about it then begun, the Synod were under an *undispensible Necessity* to take the same into Consideration. For, Matters in the *Secession* were then come the length of *solemn Covenanting*, the Administration of a *solemn Oath*, in renewing our Covenants; and this did evidently lay *all the Ministers*, especially in their *Judicative Capacity*, under a *new and narrower Necessity* than *ever before*, of examining *what Oaths* any of their People were *otherwise* concerned with: And upon the very *first* opening of this Affair in Synod, many Members were of the Judgment, that a swearing the religious Clause of some Burgess-Oaths, was even *inconsistent with* and *contradictory unto* a swearing the Oath in renewing our solemn Covenants.

From all this it is plain, that the Synod have, on this Occasion, been *shut up* to a Consideration of the present Affair; so as they *never were before*. And it is as plain, that they have been shut up unto it, so as *never was the Case formerly* in a reforming Period of the Church of Scotland; as will appear from the *vast Disparity* betwixt the Case of the covenanting Church *then* and *now*, to be considered in a little.

Farther it is already beginning to appear, as if the Lord had, in his sovereign and adorable Providence, *reserved* the present Affair *till now*; for a *general, a momentous Use and End*, beyond what it was *adepted for*, in the late reforming Period which our Brethren use to refer unto. Tho' it seemed at *first*, as if the Matter would have only affected the Case of a *few Burgesses*; yet, through the Debate and Difference thereupon in Synod, it is becoming a general Trial for the *whole witnessing Body*: And it will be found to be properly a Trial of their *Sincerity and Stability*, with respect to the *Secession Testimony*, which they have been of a good Time professing. But this is a *general, a momentous Use and End*, beyond what it was *adepted for*, in that reforming Period; even supposing (which yet is not the Case) that a swearing the religious Clause of some Burgess-Oaths had been condemnable *then* as much as *now*: Because it would have been *competent* to the Reformers *then*, not simply to *bear witness*, through *Opposition*, against the Thing, in a Way of cleaving to the Testimony

among their Hands, which yet is *all* that can be done in *our Circumstances*; but it would have been properly *competent* unto them, and *very easy* in their Circumstances, to amend and reform the Thing itself, upon adverting to it.

4. After all the Synod do entirely refuse, that what they have come to by the Sentence now protested against, is anyway *new* as to the *Matter* of the Thing, or further than as to the *Manner* thereof; in so far as they have not thereby adopted any *new Principle*, any *new Matter* of Testimony: But they maintain upon just Grounds, as will afterwards appear, that what they have done, is only a *new* and *necessary* Step as to the *Manner* of Testimony; or amounts to no more than the making a *new Stand* for Matters of Principle and Testimony, which have been *formerly* attained and avouched by them; even the *whole* of that Testimony, as it lies in a *Secession* Way.

2^{do}, The Sentence of Synod is represented, as if it were *injurious* to the *Memory* and *Reputation* of our reforming and Covenanting *Forefathers*; in contradicting their Practice of admitting *Burgesses* as well as *others* to swear the *Covenants*. This is the manifest Scope and Amount of what our Brethren do oftner than once harp upon, in their Reasons, about our Reformers: And however well such Way of Reasoning may be calculate for gathering an *Odium* upon the *Synod*; yet, it has no real Tendency to *invalidate* their *Sentence*. For,

1. Even *supposing* that a Swearing the Religious Clause of some Burgess-Oaths, had been *condemnable* in a reforming Period *before*, as much as *now*; it is yet to be observed, That,

(1.) As our Brethren acknowledge, this Point was never then *Matter of Testimony*, yea never in *Debate* or *questioned*: Wherefore, however *different* the Synod's Procedure may seem from that of our Reformers; it cannot be *contradictory*, or *contrary* thereunto: Because, for making up the *Contradiction* or *Contrariety*, it were needful to prove, that our Reformers had *expressly* taken up a Testimony, about the *Lawfulness* of Swearing the foresaid Clause; yea, about its being *consistent* enough with *Covenanting-Work*, for a *smaller Party* covenanting, in a Time of *National Defection*, to swear it; as the Sentence of Synod is about an *Inconsistency* of that Matter.

Moreover it is very certain, that an Evil still the *same* in *itself*, doth yet come under vastly *different* Considerations, according as it is brought into Controversy or not; and at different Times, when Light thereupon comes in Providence to be specially broke up, or not. A common Maxim, that *all is good till challenged*, doth hold comparatively in such a Case. Our LORD JESUS

said of the Jews, in this comparative Respect, *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloke for their Sin.* To the same Purpose, the Apostle speaks of GOD's *Winking at Times of Ignorance*: And even in such a momentuous Matter, as that of turning from *Antichrist to Christ*, the Call to do so, with Reference to the breaking up of Light at the *Reformation*, is backed with this notable Argument, *Rev. xiv. 7. For the Hour of his Judgment is come*; importing, that the Judgment of GOD which Antichristian Errors might formerly draw down, were *as nothing* in Comparison of what a *Perseverance* therein, when Light was broke up, would expose to. It is therefore *most unaccountable* to state a Comparison betwixt our Case, and that of our Reformers, upon the present Affair: Seeing the Point was never in *Debate* or *Question* among them; which says, that they never *refused* or *demurred* to take it under Consideration; that they never *thifted* or *neglected* Light upon the Head; and that they never *resisted* or *overlooked* any special Providence *shutting them up* to a Discussion thereof.

(2.) An Outcry against the Synod, on the present Affair, as if they were any way blackning our Reformers, or a reforming Period, is not only of a *bad Appearance*, but of a *dangerous Tendency*: For, it will strike against all *new Progress* and *Advancement* of the Church, in the LORD's Work; because it could still be pled, that there had been *famous Churches, famous Reformers, before*, who had not taken such Steps; but had been *overseen, defective, or otherwise minded*, thereupon. Again, is it any undue Reflection upon the best in this World, to say that they know *but in Part*, and are not *already perfect*? Is it any Injury to our Covenanting Reformers, to say, that tho' they wrestled forward in the LORD's Work, according to *their Measure*, and the Providences of *their Day*; yet they attained not unto some Steps which the Providences of *our Day* do *more specially* shut up unto? Did our Brethren ever argue at this Rate, when some Points of Testimony were espoused by the Associate Presbytery, which had never been explicitly attained to *before*, as in the *Act* about the *Doctrine of Grace*? Moreover, our reforming Ancestors never pretended, that there would be no need of going *farther* than they had done; but behaved to have reckoned themselves *wronged*, by using the *Weight of their Names* for such a Purpose: And an improving what Attainments they have made in the LORD's Work, instead of *discrediting* them, tends to *preserve the Memory* and *advance the Credit* of their Measure of Instrumentality, that Way.

2. What has been said, is sufficient for the Synod's Vindication upon the present Article; even supposing that a Swearing the Religious Clause of some Burges's-Oath, had been *condemnable*, in a Reforming Period *before*, as much as *now*. But then this no way holds: For,

(1.) There are fundry Points of religious Testimony *attained now*, that were not attained in the Time of our *first* Reformation, when according to our Brethren, the religious Clause was framed; nor yet were some of them attained under the *last* reforming Period: Now, it appears from the *Protestation made Anno 1638*, noticed in the *Answers to Mr. Nairn*, Page 37, that our Reformers in the last Period, were *expressly* of the Mind, that any *general Swearing to Religion*, without comprehending *all the Points of Testimony* attained, could not be warrantable: So that, in this respect, the *same* religious Oath, *commendable* in their Days, behoved to be *condemnable* in *ours*.

(2.) The national Profession and Settlement of Religion (which a swearing the religious Clause in some Burges's-Oaths, doth inevitably *homologate*, as will be manifested afterwards) are very different *now* in Point of Purity, from what they were then; as our Brethren will not refuse: And what is the Meaning of this, but that these Things which the religious Clause doth expressly refer unto *now*, are *very different* from these which it referred unto *then*? Yea that, in this respect, *such* a swearing of the religious Clause, *as now*, is a Thing which had *no Being* in their Days; and that, in so far, the Synod's Sentence does noway meddle with *them*, nor with any Thing they ever *did* or *had ado*.

(3.) It is with a special Reference to *Covenanting-work*, that the Synod have been led into the Examination and Decision of the Question, about the religious Clause of some *Burges's-Oaths*: Now, it noways holds, that *ever*, since the Reformation before this Time, the *constitute Church covenanting*, was *different*, yea *in Secession*, from the *constitute Church* whereunto the *national Profession and Settlement of Religion* did immediately and formerly belong: And so, for Members of a *constitute Church covenanting*, in a State of *Secession* from the *constitute Church* whereunto the *national Profession and Settlement of Religion* do thus belong; for *these* to join with Members of *that Church*, in any *general swearing to Religion*, under *that national Profession and Settlement*; This we say is an *Affair quite new*, that never had any *Parallel* in former *Covenanting-times*.

Upon the whole then, it is manifest, that Comparisons in the present Case, with the Practices of our reforming and covenanting Fore-fathers, are quite *off the Question*; and that any Charge

about walkin; contrary to them, or discrediting their Memory and Reputation, is entirely *groundless*.

3^{tho}, The Sentence of Synod is represented; more particularly, as *injurious* to the Memory and Reputation of honest *Burgesses* in that Period. This is likewise a grand Point with our Brethren, in the present Controversy, as appears from sundry of their Reasons; but there is *nothing* in it; unto the Purpose: Because,

1: Even *supposing* that the Engagement of these *Burgesses* in the religious Clause of the Oath, had been the *same Way* situate, as is the Case *now* with seceding *Burgesses*; yet, some of the Things that have been said upon a *like Supposition* under the *last Head*; may be easily accomodated for discerning, that to *argue* against the *Sentence*, or draw an *Odium* upon the *Synod*, from this Quarter, is a Step very *unreasonable* in its *Nature* and dangerous in its *Tendency*. But the Case *then*, is noway parallel to the Case *now*, considering what has been observed: That there are some Points of religious Testimony attained *now*, that ought to be carried along in *every Act* of swearing generally to Religion, which were not attained *then*: That the national Profession and Settlement of Religion, which are homologated by swearing the foresaid Clause, are very different *now*, in Point of *Purity*, from what they were *then*: And that the honest, or reforming and covenanting *Burgesses then*, were of that *Covenanting-Church-Body*; whereunto the *national Profession* and *Settlement* of Religion did immediately and formally *belong*; a Body unto whom it was *competent*, and who were essaying, with very desirable *Success*, to get *that* Profession and Settlement of Religion *further reformed*: It is plain therefore, That the Case *now* is noway *parallel* to the Case *then*; so that there is no *Comparableness* betwixt them, in the present Controversy. Moreover,

2: Our Brethren may indeed be left to deal among Traditions, about what was the Time when the religious Clause was first added unto some *Burgess-Oaths*; and whether it was retained without Interruption or Omission, where once added: But it cannot be passed, that they should give out this religious Clause, as if it had been a *noted Affair* in *Covenanting-times*. There is high Talk afterwards, about the said Clause having been compiled and laid by our *Reformers*; with *manifest Scope* and *declared Intention*, as a *March-stone* and *Fence* against Popery, a *Land-mark* of the Reformation: Also, there is arguing against the Synod's Sentence; from the *Mind* and *Practice* of all our *Covenanters* under the last Reformation-Period, in admitting *Burgesses*, as well as *others* to swear the Covenants; and if this mean any Thing to the Point, it means that the reforming Church of *Scotland*

land were still well apprised of, and preserved Respect for that March-stone, Fence and Land-mark; so that Burgeſſes themſelves could not but be particularly adverting and purpoſely adhering to the Thing. Thus, according to our Brethren, the religious Clause behoved to be then much accounted of, greatly reckoned upon, and commonly adverted to: But whence do they gather all this? Where is their Authority for it? Certainly nothing this Way hath yet appeared among us; and therefore all muſt be taken as *gratis dictum*, or ſpoke at Random.

But, as to the ſetting up of this March-stone, at our firſt Reformation; was not all the Affair done merely by the *Magiſtrates* of *Burghs*, as our Brethren acknowledge? And was it not done, only in a very few *Burghs*, as we cannot hear tell but of a very few where this Clause is to be found in the Oath?—Moreover, when the laſt Reformation Period came about, what if this Affair was lying in the dark; as it hath been for ſome Years with us? What if the reforming Church of Scotland was then noway adverting to the Thing? And what if the *Burroughs* were generally as little adverting to it, from its taking Place only with a very few of them?

But there is more than *Conjecture* here; it is certain, That ſome Way or other the religious Clause of ſome Burgeſſes-Oaths was generally unheeded at that Time. For,

3. The reforming Church and the *Burroughs* of Scotland, about and under the Time of the laſt Reformation, did expreſſly concur in a Teſtimony againſt what is expreſſly laid in the religious Clause of ſome Burgeſſes-Oaths.

Toward Evidence of this, it is to be remarked; That, in the Year 1633, and in a Parliament holden by *K. Ch. I.* an Act was made of the Tenor following, *viz.* “ Our Sovereign Lord, “ with Advice and Conſent of the Eſtates, ratifies and approves “ all and whatſoever Acts and Statutes made before, anent the “ Liberty and Freedom of the true Kirk of God, and Religion, “ preſently profeſſed within this Realm; and ordains the ſame “ to ſtand in full Force and Effect, as if they were ſpecially mentioned.” But, as is recorded by the Hiſtorian *Rapin*, a goodly Number of the Nobility, Barons and *Burroughs*, diſſented from from this Act: About which Caſe he writes as follows, *viz.* “ The whole Artifice of this Act conſiſted in theſe Words Religion preſently profeſſed; for thereby were confirmed all the Innovations in the Diſcipline of the Kirk of Scotland, to which “ the Oppoſers of the Act would not agree: They were willing “ to ratify the Acts made in Favours of Religion, as eſtabliſhed “ by an Act paſſed in the 6th Year of *K. Ja. VI.* when the “ Bishops

“ Bishops had no Power or Jurisdiction; but would not admit these Words, *presently professed*.”

Now, tho’ what was ratified and approved by the foresaid Act, got a very good Name, *viz. All Acts and Statutes made before, anent the Liberty and Freedom of the true Kirk of God, and Religion*; yet this was not sufficient to the Opposers of the Act; they could not satisfy themselves with any such Metaphysical *Nicities*, as these, *that the Act behoved to be right enough, because any bad Laws which had been made about the Kirk and Religion, could in Reality, be no Part of these good Laws, which had been made anent the Liberty and Freedom of the true Kirk of God, and true Religion; or that corrupt Innovations could be no Part of the true Religion*: But, on the contrary, they were of the Mind, that these Words *presently professed* (without any reduplicating *as*) did make the Act really *reduplicate* upon the *bad* as well as the *good* Laws, and upon the *Corruptions* in the *present Profession* of the true Religion.

Nor was it merely these Nobility, Barons and *Burroughs*, that came to be of this Judgment; nor is it merely the Authority of *Rapin* that we have upon the Head: As appears by the following Passage of a *Protestation* made at the Cross of *Edinburgh*, by the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, *Burrows*, *Ministers*, and Commons of the *four Tables*, *Anno 1638*; upon a Proclamation for renewing and subscribing the Confession of Faith, or *Covenant*, dated 1580; while the King assured them, that he never intended to admit of any Change or Alteration in the true Religion already established and professed, and while, from a Declaration of Privy-Council, the said Confession was to be renewed, and subscribed according to the said Date and Tenor thereof, 1580, and as it was then professed within this Kingdom. In their Protestation against doing so, they say: “ It is most manifest, that his Majesty’s Mind, Intention and Commandment, is no other but that the Confession be sworn, for the Maintenance of Religion, as it is presently professed, ———— and thus as it includeth and containeth within the Compass thereof, the foresaid *Novations* and *Episcopacy*; which under that Name, were also ratified, in the first Parliament holden by his Majesty,” *viz. Anno 1633*: — And a little after, they add, “ We must affirm the Religion in the Year 1580 and at this Time, to be altogether one and the same; and thus must acknowledge that there is no *Novation* of Religion.”

From what is above, it is manifest, that some *Burroughs* as well as others, *Anno 1633*, and with the Concurrence of the *Covenanters*, *Burgesses* as well as others, *Anno 1638*; did condemn

an *Act of Parliament*, even an *Act* for the *Liberty and Freedom* of the *true Kirk of God* and *true Religion*, because it bore a *Reference* to the *present Profession* of the *true Religion*, and so *homologated* the *present Corruptions* about *Religion*. How then is it possible, That these who condemned an *Act of Parliament*, for referring to the *present Profession* of the *true Religion* that took Place before the *Reformation*, Anno 1638, could have *justified* or *allowed* any *Oath*, in referring as much to that *present Profession*, had they *adverted* thereto? And as to *Burgessees* that concurred in the *Reformation* Anno 1638, and who had been *previously* engaged in *Burgessees-Oaths* with this religious Clause; how is it possible, that these *Burgessees* themselves, could have then missed to *quarrel* that *previous Engagment* in such *Burgessees-Oaths*? It is impossible to account for this, by any Thing else, than that the said religious Clause was some-way not specially *lookt into*. † Wherefore, our Brethren had no Reason to talk at such a Rate as they do, about *Covenanters* and *Burgessees* in that Period.

It

† That the religious Clause of some *Burgessees-Oaths*, was not then specially *lookt into* by the *Friends of Reformation*, might very readily come to pass:——Considering that the *Administation* of the *Oath* was noway on a religious, but merely on a civil Occasion: Considering also, what might have been much the Case then as now; that the *Oath* is seldom really *administated*, and seldom with any particular *Solemnity*: Considering likewise, that of these few *Burghs*, molt, if not all the *Burgessees*, who concurred in the *Reformation*, Anno 1638, might have had their *Tickets* lying for some Years among old *Papers*, never *lookt into* since first got, or at least for a good Time back: Considering further, that as can be instructed, even toward the Close of this *Reformation-period*, People could not so generally read *Print* as now, far less could they so generally read *Writ*; —yea, it is evident, from subscribed Copies of the *Covenant-stile* extant, that some *Commissioners* from *Burroughs*, belonging to the four *Tables* at the *Renovation* of the *Covenant*, Anno 1638, could not subscribe but by a *Notar*, and that the Case was the same afterwards, with some *Members* of *Town-Council*, even in *Edinburgh*; wherefore it is obvious to suppose, that many of the *Burgessees*, and perhaps the *honester Part* mostly, could not read their *Tickets*, and could not be *adverting* particularly to a Clause of the *Oath* written therein:——Considering moreover, that while the *Matter* was not specially known to the *Church*, these *Burghs* and *Burgessees* wanted proper Means of *Advertisement*, In-

formation

It is Time now, for engaging with the REASONS *ſeverally*; and as follows.

R E A S O N I.

THe Lawfulnes of the Burgeſſi-Oath, is a Point never ſo much as once called in Queſtion, in the Church of *Scotland*, and therefore the Synod ought to have been more cautious in deciding a Queſtion of this Nature. Our worthy deceaſed Brother Mr. *Wilson* in his Defence, Page 64. judiciously obſerves, "That, there is a Difference betwixt different Sentiments among the Members of a Church, upon ſome particular Points, that have ever been a Part or Branch of Teſtimony in that Church, or that were never adopted in any of her publick Acts and Conſtitutions; and ſuch Principles and Practices maintained and juſtified, which are in themſelves a Departure or Backſliding from

Formation and Light, about any Thing that might have been quarrelled in it:--- And after all, the Brethren have produced no proper Evidence, that there was no Interruption or Ommiſſion, as to the Uſe of this Clause in that Period.

The only Inſtance yet produced, as to any Notice taken or Account made of this Clause in that Period, is from King Charles's large Declaration, printed in London, Anno 1639, Page 41; which records a Petition againſt the Service-Book, bearing as follows:--- We, Men, Women, Children and Servants, Indwellers within the Burgh of Edinburgh, — being urged with this Book of Service, and having conſidered the ſame, we find many Things therein ſo far different from that Form of God's publick Worſhip, univerſally received and profeſſed within this Kingdom; And we Burgeſſes, being at our Entry and Admiſſion deeply ſworn for the Maintenance thereof, that now makes our Hearts to tremble, and our weak Conſciences will not ſuffer us to embrace and pracliſe this urged Service.

Concerning the above Paſſage, theſe two Things will be manifeſt unto any intelligent and impartial Reader; viz. That it noway ſtrikes againſt what has been obſerved about the general Inadvertency in the foreſaid Period, unto the Affair of the religious Clause; and that it is not of any Conſequence in the preſent Controverſy.

It noway ſtrikes againſt what has been obſerved, about the general Inadvertency, in the foreſaid Period, unto the Affair of the religious Clause: For, the Petition gives no Ground for conceiving, that the ſaid Clause was adverted to by any moe of the Petitioners.

from some Part or Branch of what has been received and addepte as a Point of Confession and Testimony in a Church. — The Question (says he) before us, is concerning such Principles and Practices, as may be justly reckoned a Departure from what has been Matter of Confession and Testimony in this particular National Church, “ Whereby our Reverend Brother, tho’ dead, yet speaketh his Mind, as to the Matter in Hand, viz. That in Principles and Practices never controverted in this or any other Church so far as we know, the Synod ought to have been exceeding tender and cautious in passing a Decision, especially when there were such different Sentiments about it among our selves, and an apparent Rupture threatned to ensue.

We

than the Drawer or Drawers thereof; as the Petition bears, We Children having considered this Book of Service: And further a very cursory View, or faint Remembrance of the Clause, was sufficient for all the Use made thereof, in that Petition; as will appear by and by.

Again, it is not of any Consequence in the present Controversy. For no Body refuses that the foresaid religious Clause contains a Testimony against Popery, and could not but strike against a Service-Book which had such an open Face of Popery, that, as is observed in another Petition offered at the same Time, the Romish Mass is, in the more substantial Points, made up therein. Further, it is not here controverted that the said religious Clause strikes against every Thing, in the Matter of religious Profession, which is not authorized by Law, but illegal: And the Service-Book is complained of in the above Petition, as a Thing which hath neither been agitated nor received, either by general Assembly or Parliament.

Moreover, it is a manifest and gross Imposition upon the World, to alledge, as if Burgeses, at that Time, appeared anyway by the above Petition, to consider themselves as sworn by their Burgeses-Oath, to maintain the Purity of Worship received and professed in this Church, in Opposition to any Laws at that Time, authorising Innovations: For in that Petition, they contended from their Burgeses-Oath, only against the Service-Book, which was authorized by no Law, nor had ever been received and professed in this Church. And it will be obvious to any Body, at one Reading of the whole Petition, that these Persons were not then come the length of testifying and contending against the Corruptions which were already taking Place, under that Period of Defection, in the Profession and Settlement of Religion, or the received Form of God’s publick Worship. But when they soon after came forward unto this Testi-

“ We find that in covenanting Times, Burgesſes are among the Denomination of theſe who are admitted to ſwear the Covenants, and no leſs than 48 Burghs were preſent by their Commiſſioner in the Aſſembly at *Glaſgow* 1638, as appears from *Deſ.* Page 248, and when, after the Reſtoration, Matters, with reference to the Profeſſion and Settlement of Religion, were quite altered from what they were before; yet we find none of our Sufferers in any of their Teſtimonies making the leaſt Exception againſt this, or any other Clause of the Burgeſs-Oath, nor were any of them that were entred Burgeſſes during that perſecuting Period, looked upon to have hereby receded in the leaſt from any Branch of their Teſtimony, and we may freely ſay, that they were as tender of Oaths as any in this Period, as appears by their reſuſing many other Oaths at that Time, and ſuffering to Death on that Account. ”

A N S W E R to R E A S O N I.

U Pon this firſt pretended Reaſon, it is obſervable; That,
 1mo. The Synod are under no Apprehenſion, but that their Decision will be found *cautious enough*, as to the *Nature* of it: And as to the *Leizure* taken in coming forward unto it; the Caution they have uſed, conſidering all Circumſtances, particularly the Connection of the Matter with their former Teſtimony, may ſeem to have been rather *too much*. Moreover, if there was Neceſſity of taking up and deciding the Queſtion, as the Synod have done, (and that there was ſo, will be farther manifeſt in due Time;) of what *Significancy* is it to object, That the Point had *never ſo much as once* been called in Queſtion in the Church of *Scotland*; eſpecially conſidering that, as hath been ſhewn already, the *preſent Point* of Controverſy had *never a Being*, and the *preſent Queſtion* about it *could not* therefore have had a *Being*, in any reforming Period of this Church before?

2do Sup-

mony, it could not have entred into their Minds, that their Burgeſs-Oath obliged them thereunto, but the Contrary: As it hath already been made appear, and will further be ſo afterwards, that our Covenanters, Burgeſſes and others, behoved neceſſarily, according to their declared Principles, to conſider and condemn the Burgeſs-Oath, in its Religious Clause, as homologating or approving of theſe Corruptions, by the Words preſently profeſſed, during the Time when Matters were not come the length of National Reformation,-----had they been led to look ſpecially into the ſaid Clause.

2do. Supposing the *Quotation* here made from our worthy deceased Brother, Mr. *Wilson*, were as the *Protestors* give out; it is noway to their Advantage but the *contrary*: Because their Sentiments and Practices in the present Affair, (which it is wished they may not be left further to maintain and justify), are, in themselves, a *Departure or Backsliding*, from some Part or Branch of what has been received and adopted, as a *Point of Confession and Testimony* in this particular Church, as will appear afterwards; and, in this Case, the Difference of Sentiments among ourselves, or Hazard of a Rupture, could not have warranted the Synod to forbear a *Decision*.-----But after all, the forefaid *Quotation* is so laid, as to conceal entirely the true *Design* thereof; and the Conclusion made from it, as the *Author's* Mind, is foreign to his *Scope*, without any *Foundation* in his *Words*, and injurious to his *Memory*. For Mr. *Wilson* is there stating the *Question* concerning *Secession* from the present *Judicatories*; and, where a *Gap* is left in the *Citation*, he says "The seceding Brethren are far from stating their *Secession*" on upon every Difference of Sentiments:" Now, what Connection is there, betwixt these two; that certain Things are not *Ground of Secession* from a Church, and that such Things ought not to be examined and adjusted, as at present, in the Church? It is the former of these Cases that Mr. *Wilson* speaks upon; but what Shadow is there of his speaking with Relation to such a Case as the present? His Words indeed bear no *Shew of Favour* to the Side which they are here drawn unto: But they are produced at *Random*; and the pretended *Conclusion* therefrom, tho' made with an Air of Assurance, doth issue meanly, in a Thrust against the Synod, instead of their *Sentence*, as if they had proceeded without due *Tenderness* and *Caution*.

3tio. From what was said formerly, it is evident, that there is no Reason to make an *Up-cast*, in the present Controversy, about the Case of *Burgessees* or *Burghs*, in covenanting Times: And tho' there were, it is vain to mention forty eight of these *Burghs*; on this Head; seeing we have not yet heard tell of so many as eight *Burghs*, that have the religious Clause, now controverted, in their Oath.

4to. Altho' our Sufferers, under the late Period of Persecution, had justified, or knowingly allowed of, a swearing the said religious Clause even in such Circumstances as then; yet, that could not belong to the protestant Rule for distinguishing betwixt Sin and Duty, or directing Conscience, in the Matter: Wherefore, an Upbraiding the Synod with their *Tenderness* about Oaths otherwise, can be neither an *ingenuous Shift* on this Subject, nor a *dis-*

direct Way of treating their Memory.-----But moreover, what is objected here, turns out to be very *astonishing* and *loose*.

It is *very astonishing*, to find our Brethren, (or their Words, at least), of Opinion, that our late Sufferers might *warrantably* and *consistently* enough swear the forekaid religious Clause, when (as is own'd), *Matters with Reference to the Profession and Settlement of Religion, were quite altered from what they were before*. The swearing this Clause, if it be not exempted from the *common Nature* of Oaths and Language, doth *homologate* a *present national Profession and Settlement* of Religion, by an expreis Mention of and Reference unto the same; and it expressly *takes up* that present Profession, in these Words, *I profess*: Might such a Clause therefore be *warrantably* enough sworn in *that* Period? And might our late Sufferers do so, *consistently* enough with their suffering unto Death, *rather than comply* with *that* present Profession and Settlement? Or might they *well enough* swear such a Clause, in a way of meaning what was *past*, and not *present*? These Things are indeed beyond Comprehension: And, at this Rate, there need-ed be *no more ado* about Oaths, but in leaving them to all the *Freedom*s of Deceit and Fancy.

Again, it is *very loosely* objected, that we find *none* of our Sufferers, in any of their Testimonies, making the least Exception against this, or any other Clause, of the *Burgess-Oath*. For the Truth is, our Sufferers were mostly *off the Way* of any particular Acquaintance with the Affairs of Burghs: Nor do we find that any of them were *adverting* to this Affair; more than honest Burgesses and Covenanters had been formerly, with Reference to the Period of Defection preceeding the Year 1638. And as none can be properly said to *recede* from a Branch of Testimony, but when they are conscious of *their doing* so; or, at least, of the Thing *by which* they do so: It is not conceiv-able, how the other Sufferers could have missed to reckon that suffering Burgesses were *receding* from their Testimony, by a *known* and *justified* Engage-ment in such Oaths; if these other Sufferers had been *adverting* to the Thing: As it was shown, that Honest Burgesses and Covenanters formerly, could not have *so* allowed of any *such* Engage-ment, even in Reference to the last named Period of *De-fection*, which was far from being so black as the *Persecution*-Period.-----Concerning other Things *loosely* objected here, it may suffice to remark; That we have but small Account of *suffering Burgesses*, especially suffering unto Death, in the said Period: And our Bretheren may try, if they can reconcile with *History* and *common Reason*, the Truth of what they take for granted;

that any were (yea or could be) among the then Sufferers, and yet entering, or commencing Burgesſes, at the ſame Time, in any Place where we have found the Religious Clause in the Burgeſs-Oath.

R E A S O N II.

“ 2. **I**T is evident, that the firſt Clause of the Burgeſs-Oath now
 “ condemned by the Synod, was compiled and laid as a March-
 “ Stone or Fence againſt Popery; as appears both from the Stile of
 “ the ſaid Clause, which is agreeable to the current Stile, or
 “ Mode of expreſſing the Profeſſion and Settlement of Religion
 “ in reforming Times, particularly in our *old Confeſſion* and in
 “ the *National Covenant*; and likewise from the expreſs Renoun-
 “ ciation of the *Roman Religion* called *Papiſtry*, in the Clause it-
 “ ſelf. This being the Caſe, it was the Buſineſs of the Synod,
 “ who have in their Teſtimony adopted the whole Work of
 “ Reformation attained unto, and tranſmitted unto us by our
 “ Forefathers, rather to have vindicated than condemned this
 “ Clause of the Oath as ſinful. There is an expreſs Prohibition,
 “ *Prov. xxii. 28. Remove not the ancient Land-mark, which thy*
 “ *Fathers have ſet*, which is repeated *Chap. xxiii. 10. Remove not*
 “ *the old Land-mark*. Now, if it be ſinful to remove the Land-
 “ marks of Earthly Inheritances, it cannot but be a more aggra-
 “ vated Sin to remove the Land-marks of Reformation in Oppo-
 “ ſition to the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition. To remove the
 “ Rubbiſh (if there was any) was indeed the proper Work of the
 “ Synod, by declaring the End and Uſe of this Religious
 “ Clause, as a March-ſtone laid againſt the Mother of Harlots and
 “ Abominations entering into the Burghs of this Kingdom, which
 “ was propoſed by ſome of us (wherein we all agree) as the Bu-
 “ ſineſs of the Synod, rather then to remove the March it ſelf.
 “ If any perverted it unto a wrong Uſe, for patronizing the De-
 “ fections of our Day; it was their Province to declare and
 “ warn, that in ſo doing, whether Administrator or Taker of the
 “ Oath, they thereby pervert the Deſign thereof, contrary to the
 “ manifeſt Scope and declared Intention of the firſt Compilers and
 “ Impoſers thereof, and the Mind of all our Covenanters, who
 “ admitted Burgeſſes as well as others to ſwear the Covenants;
 “ according to the Example and Practice of our LORD, *Matth.*
 “ *v and vi. Chapters*, who vindicates the Law, but refutes the
 “ corrupt Gloſſes put upon it; but to declare what was evident-
 “ ly ſet up by our Reformers, as a Fence againſt Popery, to be
 “ now ſinful, is, in our Opinion, a removing of one of their March-
 “ Stones

Stones, which no Sett of Witnesses before ever attempted.
 " This will further appear in the Sequel. But,

A N S W E R to R E A S O N II.

O U R Brethren do now advance with *high Pretensions*; but noway to the Purpose. While,
 1mo, They bring out the Religious Clause of some Burges-Oaths, in *so great a Form*, as we cannot find to have ever entered into the View of *any* before; and as seems not to have been in *their own View*, when condescending upon the *Original Framers* and *Administrators* thereof, in the *Preamble* to their Reasons.

We are told, that it was *compiled* and *laid* or *set up*, as a *March-Stone* or *Fence*, yea a *Land-mark* of *Reformation*, against *Popery*; or against the *Mother of Harlots* and *Abominations entering into the Burghs of this Kingdom*: And, at the same Time, The Thing is given out to have been done by *our Reformers*; as far back as our *Reformation from Popery*. All this is very confidently set furth, as being *evident*: And yet all the Evidence pretended, is from the *Stile* and *Words* of the Clause; which can signify no more than, in general, that it *may* have been framed *some-where*, in a *civil Way*, under our first *Reformation*, in Opposition to *Popery*.

The Truth is, from what has been said formerly, the History of the *Religious Clause* in some Burges-Oaths doth most probably amount unto this; that the *Magistrates* of a *few Burghs*, sometime about our first *Reformation*, and from *Honesty of Heart*, may have taken it in to their Burges-Oath, but without consulting either *Church* or *State* thereupon: And, tho' the Thing might have been pretty well known at first, and noway quarrelled, considering that the Clause did run in *Agreableness* to the *then* Testimony for Religion and Reformation; yet, that soon after, it began to *escape particular Notice*, and has done so more and more, becoming *generally unheeded*, till of late.

However, it is manifest, that this Clause had never any *other* or *higher Original*, than from the *Magistrates* of *Burghs*, either as to the *Framing* or *Administration* thereof: Considering that there is not to be found, any Constitution about it, as a *different* or *higher Authority*; as also, that it takes Place in *so few Burghs*; and that, even among these, the *Stile* of it is not *uniform*. Our Brethren indeed could not be brought, by *any Reasoning*, to acknowledge the said Original of this Clause: But

they came, at Length, of their own Record, not only to acknowledge it, but to *pleat* upon it; as in their written *Dissent* and *Protest*, prefixed to their *Reasons*: Tho' it be strange that they should have thus taken up, as an Argument on their Side, what only makes *against* them.

Well then, concerning the said Clause its having been set up, by our Reformers as a *March-Stone*, *Fence* or *Land-Mark* of Reformation, against Popery; our Brethren may be enquired at, how this Story can be made to *tell* and *hang together*?

Could our Reformers suppose, that any *Land-Mark* of Reformation against Popery, might ly in the *particular* and *private* Constitution of *Burghs*; or otherwise than in the *general* and *publick* Constitutions of the *Land*? And could they mis to reckon that the Course taken in Reforming-Times, by the supreme Authority of the Church and Nation, for keeping Popery *out of the Church and Nation* in general, was the *proper Course* for keeping it *out of Burghs* in particular? Again, if the said Clause was set up by our Reformers, as a *March-stone* or *Fence*, against the Mother of Harlots and Abominations entring into the *Burghs* of this Kingdom; how then comes it about, that the same was *never laid*, except in a *very few of these Burghs*; as our Brethren have not found it *yet lying*, except in a *very few* of them? It would be vain to pretend here, that it might have been *once* more *generally* used; but that, in *most Places*, it may have been got razed out *since*: For, as no *Record* has been found of any such Thing; so, there is no *Probability* for conjecturing that this *could* have been the Case: Because, from our first Reformation, there was never a Time of any Attempts in the State, to remove a *March-stone* or *Fence* *simply against Popery*; till toward the Close of the late Persecution-Period: And our Records of such Attempts *then*, will not admit of a Conjecture, that they *could* have had the *foresaid Effect*; nor could *all Accounts thereof* have perished *so soon*, if it had been so.

Moreover, as our Brethren acknowledge in their Preamble, *Magistrates of Burghs are the original Framers and Administrators of the Burgejsi-Oath*, with the foresaid Religious Clause; and thus, they acknowledge these Magistrates for the *original Compilers, Lawyers and Upsiders* of that *March-Stone* or *Fence* against Popery: But how can this *consist* with telling, that it was so compiled, laid and set up, by our Reformers? For certainly the Term, *our Reformers*, was never heretofore understood of the *Magistrates* of a *few Burghs*, acting in their Magistricial or civil Capacity; tho' it be only as acting in this Capacity, that they could frame and administrate such an Oath. And further,

if the Clause under Consideration, was set up by our Reformers, as a *March-Stone*, Fence or Land-Mark against *Popery*; then it behaved to be of *Church-Authority*: But how can this consist with its having the Magistrates of Burghs for the original Framers and Administrators thereof, while no other Authority has ever been interposed thereupon; seeing this makes it merely a *civil Deed*, of mere civil Authority?

Now, till these foregoing Objections can be removed; the great Things said here about the Religious Clause of some Burghs-Oaths, must be taken as a *Flash of Words*.

Finally, upon this Point, our Brethren might be farther expostulated with; about their Pleading for a Thing as some proper *March-Stone*, Fence or Land-mark of Reformation against *Popery*, which yet was never laid or ratified by the *supreme Authority* of Church or State; and about their thus acknowledging the *Magistrates of Burghs*, as of competent Authority for setting up a *March-Stone* or Land-Mark, in Matters of revealed Religion, or of the Church and Kingdom of Christ. But it is needless to enlarge here: Because, tho' these great Characters which they give of the Religious Clause were never so just; yet this doth now militate against or touch the Synod's Sentence, as will appear in considering, that,

210, There is an awful and heavy Charge now laid against the Synod, as being guilty of an aggravated Sin, in removing a Land-mark of Reformation in Opposition to the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition, a March-stone laid against the Mother of Harlots and Abominations entering into the Burghs of this Kingdom, and a Fence against Popery. This is indeed a dreadful Impeachment; and the more dreadful, in one Respect, that, while very confidently laid, it is without any Sort of Foundation or Provocation: Wherefore, the Use here made of some Scriptures, cannot properly give any Concern upon this Head, but about the melancholy Course that our Brethren are fallen into.

What is all the Reason pretended for the above Charge? It is just this, that the Synod have condemned the religious Clause of the Burghs-Oath; that they have condemned it as sinful; and that, thus, They have declared what was evidently set up by our Reformers, as a Fence against Popery, to be now sinful. But the Synod absolutely refuse that they have done so; and their Sentence gives no Shadows of Foundation for alledging any such Thing: What they have condemned, is a swearing of the said Clause, by Seceders as it comes necessarily to be used and applied in this Period: And thus, their Sentence differs from what is here pretended, not on-

ly in the *Manner of Expression*, but also in the whole *Matter and Merits of the Cause*, as may be easily perceived.

But it shall be observed here, that *however ancient* the religious Clause *itself* may be; yet what the Synod have condemned, *viz. a swearing of it by Seceders, as it comes necessarily to be used and applied in this Period*, is a Thing which had *no Being* in the Time of our Reformers, when the said Clause is supposed to have been set up, more than the Year 1746 had a Being in their Time: And the said swearing of it, is a Thing which had *no parallel* in their Time; more than *their Time*, as to the Profession and Settlement of Religion, with the State and Circumstances of the Testimony for Religion and Reformation, was parallel to *our Time*. Wherefore, what the Synod have condemned, is a Thing which had neither a *Being* nor *Parallel* in their Time: And thus, the heavy Charge here laid so confidently against the Synod, must *evanish* like a Dream.

Moreover, even supposing that Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, had been a proper enough *March-stone* against *Popery*: Yet, seeing fundry *other March-stones* have been set up by this Time, in Opposition to a Variety of *other Errors* and *Evils* beside *Popery*; must the Synod then be reckoned *Removers* of that *March-stone*, simply because they condemn a *general Act* of swearing to Religion, that *overlooks* and *neglects* all the *other March-stones*? If any Proprietor of a temporal State had got a *March-stone* set up against an encroaching Neighbour on *one Side*; and if his Successors, upon Controversies arising with encroaching Neighbours on *other Sides*, should get *March-stones* set *there* likewise; so as, at length, the Estate should come to have *March-stones* set *round about*: After this, would it be any *Detriment* or *Discredit* to the *first* or *old March-stone*, for a succeeding Proprietor to *refuse* and *condemn* any *general Definition* of his Estate, by that *March-stone*, without comprehending the *other March-stones*, as necessary for giving a *general* and *just* Definition of his Property and Claim? Yea, could such a Person be acting agreeably to *Law* and *Reason*; or with a *due Regard* to that same old *March-stone*, the original Design and Use whereof comes to be fortified and improv'd, by the other *March-stones* afterwards annexed unto it; if he should make out any *one general Deed* about the Extent of his Estate, *merely* with a Regard to that *old March-stone*; or without any further Definition of his Property and Claim, than *thereby*?

All this is plain enough; and an Application to the Point in Hand is easy: Wherefore, the Synod are so far from having done such a Thing by their Sentence, as *no Sett of Witnesses before ever attempted*; that they have only done what no Sett of

Witnesses could, consistently enough with that Character, have forbore to do, in the like Circumstances; and what is a proper Imitation of the former Witnesses of Christ.

3th, Our Brethren adventure to determine and teach, what the Synod should have done as their proper Work in this Affair, instead of the Sentence that they have now passed.

They are here improving upon an *Overture* narrated in their *Preamble*, which has been considered a little at that Place: And it is really dismal, to have ado with such manifest Absurdities, upon so grave and plain a Business.

The said *Overture* was for explaining the Clause, "According to the original and obvious Meaning and Intent of the Words themselves, in such a Sense as might be adapted to the present Testimony;" And the *Reason* given for doing so, was, that "Magistrates of Burroughs are the original Framers and Administrators of the Burgefs-Oath" with that Clause. How this could be indeed a Reason for the *Overture*, and not against it, is above Comprehension: Seeing (beside what has been said on this Point before,) it would be *profanly deceitful*, by being *plainly inconsistent* with the Nature of this Oath, as it is an Oath, that the same should be taken in any Sense, or with any *Explication*, but what is, at least, *openly adapted* by the Magistrates of Burroughs; because to them, or for their Assurance and Satisfaction, it is immediately taken: And likewise *no Explication* of an Oath, *however made or adopted*, can be allowed of, without manifest *Absurdity* and *Sin*, except it be agreeable to the *plain and common, or necessary Sense* of the Words: But, the plain and common Sense of the Words in that Part of the Oath, as it comes necessarily to be used and applied in this Period, cannot possibly be *adapted* to the *present Testimony* among *Seceders*, by any *Explication* that these Magistrates could either *make or adopt*; because the said Part of the Oath, tho' it takes up a *general Testimony* for Religion, doth yet take up *no more extensive Testimony*, than for the *Protestant*, in Opposition to the *Popish* Religion; and because, in the forefaid plain and common Sense of the Words, it necessarily *homologates* the *present national Profession* and *Settlement* of Religion, which the Testimony among *Seceders* doth as *necessarily find Fault with*; and because *these* Magistrates have not in their Power, to *rectify* that Settlement and Profession, in any of the Things for which it is so *found Fault with*. Wherefore, as on the one Hand, *seceding Burgeffes* cannot, consistently with the Nature, Use and End of an Oath, swear the religious Clause in any Sense, but according to the *Will of the Magistrates* for whose Satisfaction it is sworn; so on the other Hand, these

Magistrates,

Magistrates, because (among other Reasons) they are but Magistrates of *Burroughs*, cannot consistently administrate the same in *any Sense* adapted to the *present* Testimony among *Seculars* any more than they can *bring up* the *national Profession and Settlement* of Religion to a *Level with*, or make them *adapted unto* the *said Testimony*.

After all, it is very *absurd* to propose that the Synod should instead of their Sentence; have *explained* that Clause in some *Burgess-Oaths*; as if it were consistent with the *Nature* of an Oath, that *any* should determine the *Meaning* thereof, but *these* for *whose Assurance and Satisfaction* it is properly taken; and as if the *Meaning* with which these Magistrates *do* and *must* administrate the same, were not *manifest enough*, from the obvious Meaning and Intent of the Words, co-inciding with the present State of Matters, and with the open Profession which the Magistrates make. And the above Proposal will appear the *more absurd*; if it be considered, that the Clause needeth no Explication, as to the *Terms* thereof: Considering also that it cannot *admit* of any Explication as to the *Import* thereof; but in a Way of explaining the *present national Profession and Settlement* of Religion, as *necessarily homologated* thereby: And this *Explication* will be just a *Vindication* of the Synod's *Sentence*.

But, when our Brethren are come to *improve* upon their foresaid Overture, there is some *new Face* put upon the Thing. They talk mysteriously about *removing the Rubbish* from the religious Clause: And yet they put an *if* to it; so as not to grant that there is really any such Rubbish, or any wrong Use of the Clause in our Day. Well, how was the supposed *Rubbish* to be *removed*. It was (according to them) by *vindicating* the Clause; by *declaring* the supposed *Use and End* thereof; yea, by *declaring and warning*, both as to *Administrator and Taker*, against *perverting the Design* thereof, *contrary to the manifest Scope and declared Intention* of the first *Compilers and Imposers* thereof.

Now, if all this have any *distinct and co-herent* Sense, it must say, that the Synod should have made a *Declaration and Warning*, for having the Clause of the Oath administrated and sworn according to the *Meaning, Use and Application* which it had in the *Time of our Reformation from Popery*; or, as they speak, *according to the original Meaning and Intent of the Words themselves* which they reckon obvious.

But supposing that only *seceding* Takers of the Oath, but likewise *all other* Takers, and even the *Administrators* thereof should have been disposed to pay all imaginable Regard to such *Declaration and Warning*; yet how could this Scheme *confer*

and be complied with? For, tho' it was agreeable enough to swear generally unto Religion, only in special Opposition to *Popery*, at a Time when the Testimony on the Field for Religion was so stated; yet, how could this answer now, when a further Testimony is specially on the Field? Moreover, would our Brethren have the Synod to teach, that an Oath of a *current Nature*, expressly referring to *present Things*, a *present Profession* and Settlement; ought to be taken as meant of *past Things*, or with a Respect unto *past Things*, or in a Way of *abstracting* from the *present Things* that are *contrary* to these *past Things*? And have our Brethren forgot what they taught about an *Oath*, in the Answers to Mr. *Nairn*, Page 29, *viz.* "Tho' we should pronounce the *same Form* and Words, yet we behoved necessarily to understand it of the *present Time*, Persons, and Things; otherwise it could not be a *present Oath*?" This is Doctrine that we were all unanimous about once: And were the Synod to teach People the contrary now, they would indeed contradict the whole *Design, Use* and *End* of Oaths, and run a *real Risk* of being found *Students unto Perjury*; according to what is groundlessly insinuated against them in the next *Reason*.

However, our Brethren do some Way explain themselves here. For, they talk of *present Magistrates* in Burghs as *Administrators* of this Clause in the Oath; and of *Magistrates at the Reformation* as the *first Compilers* and *Imposers* thereof, according to whose *manifest Scope* and *declared Intention*, or *original Meaning*, the Clause is to be taken: And thus, as indeed they have used to argue, they do not own the *present Magistrates* to be on a *Level* with these *former Magistrates*, in respect of the Oath; but that the *former* are *still* to be considered as the *Imposers* of the religious Clause, and the *latter* as *Administrators* thereof; so that *only* the *Scope* and *Intention* of these *former Magistrates*, in *framing* and *imposing* it, is *now* to be regarded in *taking* it; and thus they make the *present Magistrates* to be no more here, than *Executors of the Will of the Dead*.

This is indeed a new Kind of Scheme, contrary to what has been commonly received hitherto, *viz.* That the *whole Power* of *Magistrates* doth *natively* devolve upon their *Successors*; so that *present Magistrates* must be, in respect of the *former Ones*, as *absolute Masters* and *Imposers* of the Oath, as ever these *former Ones* were.

But further, in this and what else is said upon the Head, our Brethren seem to forget that the Matter in Hand is of an *Oath*, a *solemn Oath*. For, *all* the special *Use* and *End* of an Oath, as such, can be nothing else than to put an *End to Strife*, or to give

Affurance and Satisfaction to the *Imposers* thereof: Wherefore, People cannot swear this Oath *now*, for giving *Affurance and Satisfaction* to the *Old*, the *dead* Magistrates; or otherwise, than to give *present* *Affurance and Satisfaction* to the *present*, the *living* Magistrates, about the *present religious Profession and Purpose* of the Swearer. This Oath then, as all Oaths, must, in the swearing thereof, be considered *simply and merely* as a *present* Thing, for that *present Use and End*; as indeed the other Clauses thereof, wherewith the first or religious Clause doth coalesce, cannot possibly be interpreted with any Reference to *past* Things: And thus, the Oath must be understood and sworn *now*, in the very *same Way* as if the Frame of it had never had a Being under any former Magistrates; because it is of no Consideration here, how ancient the *Frame* of it be; seeing the Thing considered under the *Formality of an Oath*, for *present Affurance and Satisfaction* to *present* Magistrates, is a Thing that *never had or could have a Being* under any former Magistrates?

Well then, must not the *present* Magistrates of Burghs, be reckoned *as much* the *Imposers* of the Oath, for Satisfaction to *them*, as ever any former Magistrates were, for Satisfaction to *them*? And if it be taken now at all, must not the Swearers take it, according to the *known and consistent Scope or Intention* of these *present* Magistrates, without any proper Dependence upon the Scope and Intention of *former* ones; because this would contradict the *present Use and End* thereof, which is noway to give *Affurance and Satisfaction* to *past*, but to *present* Magistrates?

All these Things are plain and undisputable, according to the Nature of Oaths, and the Sense of all Ages about them. Moreover, according to the *obvious Meaning and Intent* of the Words in the Religious Clause, they are of a *current Nature*, necessarily referring to *present* Things, in the *present State* of Matters, as to the Profession and Settlement of the true Religion: Therefore, the present Magistrates of Burghs *cannot* consistently, nor *ought* to administer the same, if they do so at all, but with a *Scope and Intention*, of having *Security* from the Swearer, about his Satisfaction with *that present State of Matters*; notwithstanding the Defections and Corruptions therein which we complain of, as *injurious* to that *true Religion*. Wherefore our Brethren had no Reason to talk of *Administrator or Taker* of the Oath now, as if they would *pervert* the *proper Design* thereof, by any such Scope and Intention: Seeing, an Use of it, as Matters now stand, *without* this Scope and Intention, would be a gross and dreadful *perverting* of the Oath.

But

But further, as our Brethren, in their Proposal for *vindicated* the *Religious Clause*, do make a Reference to our LORD's *Example* and *Practice* of *vindicated* the *Law*, in the 5th and 6th Chapters of *Matthew*; this is indeed but an *absurd* *Affair*, according to what has been said already: But moreover, the Comparison is by no means *decent*: And thus the *Religious Clause* must be some *strange Thing*; not of the Nature of *any other Oaths*, but of the Nature of *GOD's Word*; so far as to need no more for accommodating it to *all Times* and *Circumstances*, but simply a refuting *corrupt Glosses* put upon it.

In a Word, nothing as Matters stand, can be *proper Work* for the Synod, about any Oaths of Civil Society, but to testify against what is amiss therein, and to deal with their People about Sin and Duty thereupon; which is just the *Import* and *Amount* of their Sentence about the *Religious Clause* now protested against: And they behaved *either* to pass this Sentence; *or* to let their People go on in the *Affair*, as it stands.

And finally upon this Reason; as our Brethrens Argument therein turns out, hitherto, but unto a *poor* Appearance; they had much need, according to their Promise, to make it *further* appear in the *Sequel*.

R E A S O N I I I .

“ 3. **I**T is, in our Opinion, most dangerous, to make Oaths re-
 “ duplicate upon all the sinful Laws and Constitutions
 “ that are in being, in any Period; when there is no such Redu-
 “ plication specified in the said Oaths. The Synod makes the
 “ Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of the first Clause of some Burges-
 “ Oaths, to turn intirly upon certain Circumstances, with re-
 “ spect to the Profession and Settlement of Religion: And al-
 “ though they affirm that Matters at present are in such Circum-
 “ stances, with reference to the Profession and Settlement of Re-
 “ ligion, as make the Swearing of the Burges-Oath, with the
 “ said Religious Clause, sinful and unlawful; yet they thereby
 “ seem to suppose, that the Time has been, when Matters, with
 “ Reference to the Profession and Settlement of Religion, were
 “ such, that the swearing the Burges-Oath with the said Reli-
 “ gious Clause, was lawful and warrantable.

“ The Circumstances with respect unto the present Profes-
 “ sion and Settlement of Religion, are, in the declared Judg-
 “ ment of our Brethren who differ from us, some Acts and Con-
 “ stitutions of Parliament, which we have testified against; such

“ as the Revolution and Union Settlements, the Toleration and
 “ Patronage Acts, &c. And they make the Burgess-Oath to re-
 “ duplicate upon all the evil Constitutions that are presently in
 “ Being : Whereby, (1.) They fix Perjury upon such Burgesses
 “ as did swear this Religious Clause in some Burgess-Oaths, in
 “ covenanting Times ; for 'tis plain Patronages were in Being
 “ according to Law, when the Covenants were renewed, *Anno*
 “ 1649 : The Acts of Parliament settling Patronages, and the
 “ King's Power of calling and dismissing Assemblies, in ordinary
 “ Cases, which were made not long after the Reformation, be-
 “ ing in Force at that Time. So that, according to this Sen-
 “ tence of the Synod, Burgesses, who had sworn this Religious
 “ Clause in some Burgess-Oaths at that Time, did homologate
 “ the evil Laws and Constitutions then in being : The Settle-
 “ ment of Religion at that Time, with respect to the Right of the
 “ People to call their own Ministers, and the intrinick Power
 “ of the Church, being far from being agreeable to the Word.
 “ But whatever bad Laws were in being at that Time, our wor-
 “ thy Forefathers knew very well, that these were no Part of the
 “ true Religion, contained in our approven Standards and of
 “ publick Authority in the Land, but altogether different there-
 “ from, and opposite thereto. Into whose Mind could it ever
 “ enter until now, that the Toleration, Patronages abridging
 “ the intrinick Power of the Church, or any Thing else inconsi-
 “ stent with the Word of GOD, is any Part of the true Reli-
 “ gion, contained in the Standards of this Church that have been
 “ authorised by Law ? (2.) As there is no Reduplication ex-
 “ pressed in the Religious Clause of the Burgess-Oath, upon any
 “ of the Civil Laws ; so the fixing of such a Reduplication upon
 “ it by the Sentence of the Synod, tends to destroy the Nature
 “ of all Oaths, and to make them so ambiguous, as that they
 “ are no certain Evidence of Truth, in however simple Terms
 “ they be expressed. According to our *Confes.* Chap. 22. §. 4.
 “ *An Oath is to be taken in the plain and common Sense of the Words,*
 “ *without Equivocation or mental Reservation.* Agreeably hereto
 “ the *London Ministers*, in their *Testimony to the Truth of*
 “ *CHRIST*, page 28, say, *Neither the Covenant, nor any other*
 “ *Oath, is otherwise to be interpreted, than according to the com-*
 “ *mon, plain and true grammatical Sense of it* According to
 “ the Sentence of the Synod, it is impossible to frame any
 “ Oath, but it must be ambiguous : Yea the Bond of the
 “ Covenant it self ; because there will be always some that will
 “ put various Glosses and Interpretations upon it, and make it
 “ redu-

reduplicate or not upon this or the other Law, according as their different Inclinations or Interests lead them. But Mr. *Zachariah Croft*, in his *Fastning of St. Peter's Fetters*, Pag. 126. well observes; *Some (says he) charge the Solemn League with Ambiguities and Contradictions in its Terms,-----Others plead them as an Argument to make void the Oath; but such had need to see, that there is no Possibility of understanding the Terms in a sound Sense, and making them to agree among themselves; lest they be found Students unto Perjury.-----These Ambiguities and Contradictions must be real and in the very Words themselves, and not in the Fancy or Imagination of such as, in Prejudice do decline the Oath; nor in the Intention of him that sweareth, not willing to be bound: For, if the Words be clear and plain, in their proper Signification, the Apprehension of the Confederates, or the due drift and Scope of the Oath, the Oath obligeth, and must be carefully observed; as Doctor Sanderfon, Grotius, and many others, in this Case do teach. (3.)* The Synod, by making the Religious Clause in some Burgeſs-Oaths reduplicate upon all the bad Acts and Constitutions presently in Being, by the ſame Parity of Reason, make our National Covenant, as renewed in the Years 1638 and 1639, to reduplicate upon all the Acts of Parliament that are ſpecified at the End of the ſaid Covenant: Whereas the Associate Presbytery, in their Act againſt Mr. *Nairn*, have expreſſly declared Page 32. That theſe Acts were no Part of the Preamble far leſs any Part of the Oath itſelf.

A N S W E R to REASON III.

IN this Reason, a threefold Argument is taken up againſt the Synod and their Sentence, for charging the Burgeſs-Oath, in its Religious Clause, with a *ſinful Reduplication*. That Reduplication which our Brethren, (in ſome *loſe and jarring* Expreſſions,) do blame, the charging it with, is upon *all the evil Conſtitutions, Laws and Acts of Parliament, that are preſently in being, relative to the preſent Profeſſion and ſettlement of Religion*: And it is very true, that the Synod conſiders it as having a Reduplication, which preſently *homologates* all theſe. However, they and their Sentence are here much miſtaken and wronged: For Matters are repreſented, as if a conceived *Reduplication*, and particularly *this* Reduplication, were *all* the Ground of the Sentence; yea, as if they made the *Unlawfulneſs* of Swearing that Clause, to turn *entirely* upon this Reduplication. Where-

The Synod have considered the sinful Reduplication in the swearing of said Clause, as presently extending a great deal *farther*, than civil Constitutions, Laws and Acts of *Parliament*; even unto *all* the Defections and Corruptions, *ecclesiastical* as well as *civil*, in the *present* national Profession and Settlement of Religion. Again, they never made their Sentence to turn *entirely*, upon what *Reduplication* they conceive the Oath has in its said Clause; for, besides this, they reckon it chargeable with a sinful *Deficiency* of Reduplication, as it is not calculate for comprehending the different Branches of the Testimony for Religion and Reformation, that have been attained since our Reformation from Popery, in Opposition to the *present* general Defection; and likewise, beside all the *general* View of the Matter, they consider that Swearing as *peculiarly* sinful among *Seceders*, from their *peculiar Circumstances*. Moreover, the Synod never offered to make the *Unlawfulness* of swearing that Clause, to turn entirely, *either* upon what sinful Reduplication our Brethren speak of, *or* upon all the sinful Reduplication which the Synod means, *or* upon the sinful Deficiency of Reduplication which they mean, *or* upon the peculiar Circumstances of Seceders in swearing the Clause; *or* upon *all of these*: For, it is not the Unlawfulness of said swearing, in *general* and *absolutely*, but the Unlawfulness thereof, *in so far as*, the Sentence meddles with it, that they make to turn upon the above Hinges: And so, the *general Supposition* here charged upon their Sentence is very groundless.

For explaining this Point a little, it is to be considered; that, tho' in the *first* Paragraph of the Reason, compared with the Beginning of the *second*, the Judgment of the *Synod*, as such, and the Judgment of *Brethren* in the Synod, about the foresaid Unlawfulness, are spoken of as Things *co-extensive*; or, as if the Synod had laid their Sentence, for comprehending *all the Grounds* of that Unlawfulness, which *any Brethren* of Synod had mentioned; yet the true Case is otherwise: For, some of these Brethren had mentioned *four* such Grounds, which the Sentence doth not meddle with, or extend unto.

The *first* was, that they conceived it wrong, to have a *religious* Clause and Testimony, being of an *evangelical* Nature and Use, *limited* unto any Burgeſs-Oath: And they conceived it wrong, to have such a Clause, of a *general* Nature, laid and *continued* in any Burgeſs-Oath; because, in their Opinion, *either* that general Clause could not *still* be lawfully sworn, by having it still accommodated to *new Advances* of Testimony in the Profession of Religion, after the Reformation from Popery; *or*, if it were so accommodated, this would make the Terms of *civil* and *religious* Com-

Union of *equal Strictness*. — The *second* was, more particularly, that they conceived it wrong, to have *Magistrates of Burroughs* acknowledged, in their imposing by themselves, any *such* Clause: considering the *Marches* that take Place betwixt *spiritual* and *civil* Jurisdiction, according to 2 *Chron.* xix. 11. *And behold, Amariah the chief Priest is over you in all Matters of the Lord, and Zebadiah the Son of Ishmael, the Ruler of the House of Judah, for all the Kings Matters; also the Levites shall be Officers before you; deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the Good:* And considering that it is not *competent* for these *Magistrates*, to *inspect* and *cognosce* upon the *moral* and *religious* Qualifications, that are necessary in Persons, for *warranting* the Administration of such an Oath unto them; especially as the *Laws* of the *civil* Society do not warrant a *limiting* *Burgess-Privileges*, unto Persons of the *moral* and *religious* Qualifications, that are necessary in being admitted to a solemn *religious* Oath. — The *third* was, that, according to ordinary Fame, there are ordinarily many accidental Abuses, in the Way of *administering* and *dealing* with *Burgess-Oaths*, having that solemn Clause. And the *fourth* of these Grounds, was taken from the Connection betwixt the *religious* Clause, and the Clause of *Penalty* which doth now take Place in some of these *Burgess-Oaths*; whereby the Swearer engages to pay a certain *Picce of Money* unto the Town's common Good, *suac ast* as he shall break *any Part* of this his Oath: For they conceived, that this Clause of *Penalty*, contained a *Supposition* and *Penalty*, dreadfully *inconsistent* with the Nature of Swearing, especially unto Religion; as also they conceived, that by the said Clause, the Swearer did virtually become *free of the Town*, for *Perjury* in the Matter of the Oath, even about Religion, at a Rate of *Money*.

These are Things that had great Weight with *Brethren* in Synod: But the *Synod* have *abstracted* therefrom in their Sentence; having given *no Judgment*, whether or not the Unlawfulness of swearing the foresaid Clause, might be extended *farther* than they have done.

And there was Reason for their proceeding after this Method: Because the *third* of these foresaid Grounds was not regularly before them; nor had they got regularly forward to the Consideration of that Clause which the *fourth* turns upon: And, as to the *other two*, they did properly belong to the general Question, whether the *religious* Clause *ought to have Place* in a *Burgess-Oath*, which is a Thing that the *Synod* have not Capacity for getting rectified; and besides, these other two Grounds are in Matters of *Principle*, which the *Synod* had not found *judicially* determined before,

before, in these particular Circumstances. Wherefore, considering the Opposition they met with, in coming forward to any Sentence on the Affair; they could not see it meet, to have themselves retarded from what was eminently the present Work, and have more Opposition thereto occasioned, by extending their Sentence at that Time, any farther than to answer the peculiar and urgent Case, of directing particularly the People under their Inspection unto present Duty, about the swearing of that Clause, as comes necessarily to be used and applied in this Period. And thus the Synod have, by their Sentence, meddled with no Matter of Principle that was not judicially determined before; but have meddled entirely with a Matter of Practice among their People relative to the Testimony already espoused and maintained among them; determining a Case of Conscience, in a Matter of Practice among their People, concerning Principles already received, and the due Application thereof.

These Things being premised, the Synod goes on to consider the Arguments or Objections here managed by their Brethren, on a Point which is given out, as above, for the whole of the Controversy, tho' it be only a Part thereof. And,

1^{mo}. In the last Article of this Reason it is alleged, that the Synod, when charging the Burgeſs-Oath in its religious Clause with reduplicating upon bad Acts of Parliament about Religion do, by the ſame Parity of Reason, make the Bond of the Covenant, Annis 1638 and 1639, to reduplicate upon all the Acts of Parliament that are ſpecified in the Preamble thereof; ſo as to contradict what is declared by the Associate Presbytery in their Answers to Mr. Nairn, Page 32. viz. that theſe Acts themſelves were no Part of the Preamble, far leſs any Part of that Oath itſelf. But this Objection is without Shadow of Ground; ſeeing to ſay that theſe Acts themſelves were no Part of the Oath, and that they were not reduplicated upon by the Oath, are by no Means the ſame Thing: So that there is a plain Conſiſtency betwixt ſaying that theſe Acts themſelves were no Part of the Oath; and yet ſaying, as the plain Truth is, that the Oath, in the ſecond Sentence thereof, did expreſſly refer unto, or reduplicate upon, theſe laudable Acts; not indeed immediately and indefinitely, but according to the Definition thereof that was prefixed, for juſtifying our Covenanters as acting legally, in liſting up a Teſtimony, by that Oath, againſt manifold Corruptions about Religion, which the Court was then introducing.

2^{do}. As the laſt Article of this Reason doth eſſay in vain to bring the Associate Presbytery into the Field againſt this Synod; fo

So the first Article thereof goes the same Way to Work, for the third Bout, with some Burgeses in Covenanting-times,

But seeing such Sort of Reasoning can no way touch the Sentence, as to the *Merits* of the Cause; or cast any *Spark of Light*, for directing Conscience about Sin or Duty in the Matter: The Synod therefore are only obliged, in this Place, to make Head against the drawing of an *Odium* upon *themselves*, for the Sake of their Sentence. It is needless to repete here, what has been formerly said about the *History* of the religious Clause, in some Burgeses-Oaths; or to enlarge upon the vast *Dissparity* that was observed before, betwixt the present Case and that of bygone Covenanting-times, as to the swearing thereof: But there is Necessity of something *further* for the Synod's Vindication, against the *Odium* which they are exposed to from the *first Article* of this Reason; as, under that Vindication, some considerable Light may cast up upon their Sentence.

It is needless to remark here, upon the *Terms* in which our Brethren see meet to express themselves: And the Charge, with Respect to some Burgeses in Covenanting-times, doth, upon the *Matter*, amount unto this; that the Synod's Sentence doth suppose a swearing of the religious Clause in *Covenanting-times*, to have been of a *sinful Reduplication*, which consisted not with Covenanting. But tho' the Sentence did *really* suppose such a Thing (which yet is *not Fact*, as will appear by and by;) it need not however seem any hideous Affair, to say, that a particular Evil which the Lord bath, in his Providence, brought to Light, and brought about a Testimony against, *now*, was not brought to Light and given up with in the said reforming Period.

Moreover, as the *Stroke* supposed to be given to the Memory of some honest Burgeses in that Period, is alledged to be given, by charging the Burgeses-Oath, in its religious Clause, with a *Reduplication* upon some bad Acts of Parliament presently in Being, about Religion; so, the Synod's *Judgment* about that Reduplication, is strangely ascribed to its having entred into their Mind, *That these bad Acts, such as of Toleration and Patronage, are a Part of the true Religion contained in the Standards of this Church that have been authorize by Law*: And our Brethren do wonder greatly at such a Notion, as what could never have entred into the Mind of any until now. However, the only Thing that needs to be *wondered* at here, is, how it could have ever entred into the Mind of any, that the Synod had such a Notion, when they never gave *real Occasion* to any so much as *dreaming* that they had it. The Synod has not given up so

far with *common Reason*, as to suppose that any of these bad Acts are a *Part* of the said *true Religion*: Nevertheless, they think it a Shame to be of the Mind, that those bad Acts are *homologated*, in homologating generally the *present national Profession* and *Settlement* of the said true Religion.

But, in a pretended Opposition to the *Synod's* Mind, it is told of our worthy *Fore-fathers*, that, "Whatever bad Laws were in Being at that Time, they knew very well that these were *no Part* of the true Religion contained in our approved Standards, and of publick Authority in the Land, but altogether different therefrom and opposite thereto:" And this *nice Observation* is brought in, as an *Expedient* which covenanting Burgeses had and used, yea all they needed, to clear themselves from any Charge of a *sinful Reduplication*, in swearing the religious Clause of a Burgeses-Oath. It is true indeed, that these Burgeses could be liable to *no such* Charge, by swearing the Clause in that reforming Period; but 'tis as true, that as they needed not, so they would have condemned any Use of the above *Expedient*, for clearing themselves. Because this *Expedient* (abstracting from the *Vanity* thereof) being of a *general* Nature, could not be any better pled upon, for the said Purpose, under a Time of *Reformation*, than under a Time of *Defection*: So that they could not have salved their Consciences about swearing the religious Clause, by such an *Expedient*, under the Time of *Reformation*, without being of Opinion that the swearing of said Clause could have no sinful Reduplication upon bad Acts at any Time, of *Defection* more than of *Reformation*; but such an Opinion would have been *contrary* to their declared Principles.

It is indeed very manifest, that, upon this Ground of *bad Acts* being *no Part* of the *true Religion*, our Brethren are of Opinion, that the Burgeses-Oath, in its religious Clause, can have no sinful Reduplication upon bad Acts, at any Time, of *Defection* more than of *Reformation*; and it is as manifest, that they charge our Covenanters with being of the *same Opinion* upon the *same Ground*. But it is still as manifest, that these Covenanters were of an *opposite Opinion*, with respect to a Time of *Defection*: So that if it had come in their Way, to *advert particularly* unto the Burgeses-Oath in this religious Clause; and if any should have told them, that the swearing of said Clause, in a Time of *Defection*, did not *reduplicate* upon, so as to *homologate bad Acts* about the true Religion, because these bad Acts were *no Part* of the true Religion; they would have reckoned this but an insignificant *Quibble*, contrary to that Gospel-simplicity which they were enabled to profess and practise, in the Matters of God.

What puts this beyond Controversy, is, that, as was shewn before, with respect to the Time of *Defection* immediately preceding the Year 1638; our Covenanters then, *Burgeses* and others, had no Demur in reckoning, that, *under the said Time of Defection*, the simple Mention of these Words, *presently professed*, even in an Act of *Parliament* about the true Kirk of God and true Religion, behoved to make the Act *re duplicate upon*, so as to *homologate* the *bad Laws* that were in Being about Religion, whereby *Innovations* had been made to the *Prejudice* of the true Religion, in the *Profession* thereof: And while they reckoned thus, even about such an Act of *Parliament*; it were most absurd to suppose that they could have been otherwise minded about any *solemn Oath*, under a Time of *Defection*, bearing as much the very same *Reduplication*, in the very same *Expression*. It is then as clear as a Sun-Beam, that our Covenanters in that Period, if they had been providentially led to any particular Notice of the forefaid Clause in a *Burgeses-Oath*, behoved to have *condemned* a swearing thereof, as chargable with a *sinful Reduplication*, in a Period of *Defection*.

And accordingly, when they renewed the *national Covenant* in the Year 1638, before Matters were come the Length of *national Reformation* in the *Profession* and *Establishment* of the true Religion; they did swear to the true Religion by the *new Bond*, in a Way of *direct Contradiction* to what a swearing the religious Clause of some *Burgeses-Oaths* would have been: For, in the very first Sentence of that Bond, they found Fault with the *present Establishment* and *Profession* of the true Religion, as having *Corruptions* and *Novations* in them; so that they swore to the true Religion in a Way of looking backward, with an *express Reference* to the *Establishment* and *Profession* thereof, which had taken Place under the former Period of *Reformation*.

BUT, for the better Illustration of what is above, it will be necessary to deal more expressly with the Argument that is couched in the first Article of this Reason: And it comes out thus.----The Synod doth charge the *Burgeses-Oath* in its religious Clause, with a *Reduplication*, that makes *Burgeses* who swear it, to *homologate* the *evil Laws* and *Constitutions* about Religion, now in Being: But there were *evil Laws* and *Constitutions* about Religion, taking Place likewise in the late *Covenanting-times*: Therefore the Synod doth, by Parity of Reason, make *Burgeses* in these Times, to *homologate* the *evil Laws* and *Constitutions* about

Religion, *then* in Being; so that the swearing of said Clause, be hove*d not to consist* with Covenanting-work *then*, as well as *now*.— This is indeed the plain Shape of that Argument which our Brethren are here insisting upon: And accordingly they undergo a Task not very creditable, to *take up and aggravate* some evil Constitutions about Religion, as continuing un*reformed*, about the Close of the late Reformation-period; that thus there might appear some *Parallel* betwixt that Period and *this*, concerning a Reduplication upon and Homologation of evil Laws and Constitutions, in swearing the foresaid religious Clause.

However, let it be supposed, that the swearing of this Clause, had been a Thing *adverted to then*, as well as *now*; and let a former Consideration be abstracted from, *viz.* That the *Church-covenanting* was not *then* as *now*, *different*, yea in *Secession*, from that Church whereto the national Profession and Settlement of Religion do properly belong: Yet still it will certainly overthrow the *whole* of the above Argument, if the Synod can *reconcile* these two Propositions; *viz.* That a swearing the religious Clause of some Burge*ss-Oaths*, in this Period, must *re-litigate upon*, so as to homologate all evil Laws and Constitutions *now* in Being, about Religion; but that a swearing thereof in the late Covenanting-times, could not reduplicate upon, so as to homologate any evil Laws and Constitutions *then* in Being, about Religion: And the Reconciliation of these two Propositions, is very easy.

For, *Now* is a Period of *Defection*, as to both the Profession and Settlement of Religion; but *then* was a Period of *Reformation*, as to both of these. *Now*, this Defection is come a *great Length*, and on the *Advance*; but *then*, that Reformation was come a *great Length*, and on the *Advance*: Yea, as *now*, the *Defection* is *resolute* and *progressive* in Church and State; so *then*, the *Reformation* was *resolute* and *progressive* in Church and State. And accordingly, these very two evil Constitutions that our Brethren take up, as in Being at the Renovation of the Covenants, *Annus 1649*, were got reformed that *same Year*, in a *few Weeks* after; as appears from the *Act* abolishing Patronages, and from *Act 15th* and *16th* of the second Session of Parliament that Year, the *one* whereof is prefixed to our Confession of Faith, and the *other* is recorded after the Answers to Mr. *Nairn*, *Page 48*; as also in the *Act* and Testimony, *Page 17*.

Well then, wherever an Oath does generally homologate a present Profession and Settlement of Religion, it must, in the Nature of the Thing, homologate them, considered *just according to what they really are* in their complex Circumstances. Therefore, a swearing the religious Clause of some Burge*ss-Oaths* in this Period,

riod, when it generally homologates the *present* national Profession and Settlement of Religion, it must homologate them, considered just according to what they really are; that is, in a State of *great Defection*, which manifestly includes an *holding fast* of *growing Defection*, in refusing to let it go: And it is most evident, that a *general Homologation* of *such* a Profession and Settlement of Religion, *must* homologate, not only *Things* that are *defective*, but the *very Defection* thereof; when homologating these *Things*, as considered in a *manifest Tendency* and *Progress* toward *further Defection*. But, on the other Hand, a swearing the religious Clause of some Burgess-Oaths, in the fore-said *re-forming* Period, behoved to homologate the *then* national Profession and Settlement of Religion, considered just according to what they really were, that is, in a State of *great Reformation*, which manifestly included an *holding fast* of *growing Reformation*, in refusing to let it go: And it is most evident, that a *general Homologation* of *such* a Profession and Settlement of Religion, *could not* homologate any *Imperfection* of these *Things*; when homologating the same, as considered in a *manifest Tendency* and *Progress* toward *further Perfection*.—In a Word, the swearing of said Clause *now*, when it *generally homologates* the *present* national Profession and Settlement of Religion, *must necessarily consent unto* what is *inseparable* from this Profession and Settlement, *viz.* a *progressive Defection*: But the swearing of said Clause in *that* Period, when it *generally homologated* the *then* national Profession and Settlement of Religion, behoved necessarily to *consent unto* what was *inseparable* from that Profession and Settlement, *viz.* a *progressive Reformation*; and this was utterly *inconsistent* with homologating any particular *Evils* thereof, that might be found needing Reformation.

Moreover, in *that* Time of Reformation, none were bound or warranted (because in a Time of *Reformation*) to be contending *separately* by a publick formal *Testimony*, against any *Evils then* unreformed; for this is a *Duty peculiar* to a Time of *Defection*: Wherefore, a *general homologating* by publick formal *Oath*, the national Profession and Settlement of Religion *at that* Time, *could not* include any *sinful Silence* about them, and so could not homologate any *Imperfections* thereof. But now, the Lord's People are warranted and bound, (because in a Time of *Defection*), to be contending *separately* by a publick formal *Testimony*, against manifold *Evils* about the *present* national Profession and Settlement of Religion: Wherefore a *general homologating*, by publick formal *Oath*, the *said* Profession and Settlement of Religion, *must* include

include a *sinful Silence* about them, and so must homologate the manifold Evils thereof.

These Things are plain, as to the vast Odds betwixt swearing the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, in a Time of *Reformation* and in a Time of *Defection*. And agreeably to ſuch Principles, the Associate Presbytery (in the *Defence* ſubjoined to their Answers to Mr. *Nairn*), when their immediate Work was only to vindicate Scripture-Doctrines, about Subjection to the preſent Civil Government; they did juſtly *declare* (as in *Page 45, 46.*) that it was *unwarrantable* for them on *that* Occaſion, to be *ſilent* about, or *drop a conjunct* Conſideration of the National Apoſtaſy, and the Corruption of our Rulers, as what might have tended to *harden* a wicked Generation, and to *bewilder* a witnessing Remnant: — Whereas it would have been unaccountable for them to declare *any ſuch Thing*, on a *like* Occaſion, in a Time of *general Reformation*.

It ſhould therefore ſeem nothing *abſurd* or *ſtrange*, eſpecially among *Seceders*, to ſay, That the *ſame Act* of homologating generally a preſent National Profeſſion and Settlement of Religion, in ſwearing the religious Clause of a Burgeſs-Oath, which could homologate *no Evils* about that Profeſſion and Settlement, in the late Time of *Reformation*; muſt yet homologate *all publick Evils* about them, in this Time of *general Defection*: And our Covenanters, *Anno 1638*, were manifeſtly of ſuch a Mind; when, becauſe the *general Defection* was ſtill *continuing*, they did ſwear to the *true Religion*, with a Reference, not to the *preſent* but to the *paſt Profeſſion* and *Eſtabliſhment* thereof, in the preceeding Period of *Reformation*, as hath been obſerved before.

From what has been ſaid, now and formerly, relative to the Matter contained in the *firſt* Article of this *third* Reason; it appears, that the *repeated Attacks* upon this Synod, in the preſent Controverſy, from the Quarter of Covenanters, *Burgeſſes* or others, in any reforming Period before, could ſerve no good Purpoſe, but in giving Occaſion for *illustrating* and *confirming* the Synod's *Sentence*.

But the *firſt* and *third* Articles of the Reason being now diſcuſſed, it remains to conſider that,

3^{tio}. All that our Brethren declaim, particularly in the *ſecond* Article of this Reason, about the Synod's making the Burgeſs-Oath, in its religious Clause, to *reduplicate* ſo and ſo, is *entirely vain*, as labouring *whoſely* under a manifeſt *Miſtake*: For, the Synod never offered to *make* it reduplicate upon any Thing, but what it reduplicates upon, *whether they will or not*. This has appeared in ſome Meaſure already, that *all the Reduplication* there-

of which they plead for, is really and manifestly in it, in the very Words themselves: Wherefore the heavy Charges here laid against the Synod, by Citations and otherwise, do proceed merely upon an *imaginary Ground*. Our Brethren adventure indeed to expose the Synod, upon a *monstrous Fancy*, as if they reckoned all evil Acts and Constitutions about Religion, to be a Part of the true Religion presently profest, so as to charge a swearing the religious Clause with a *sinful Reduplication* upon these *evil Acts* and Constitutions, because it reduplicates upon that *true Religion*: But the Synod's Charge of the said *Reduplication* proceeds quite otherwise, arising necessarily from the plain and common Sense of the Words.

For, in that Clause, the *true Religion* is not reduplicated upon, or sworn to generally and indefinitely, but under the Form of a present National Profession and Settlement. Again, this Settlement belongs not immediately and indefinitely to the true Religion in itself, but in the said Profession thereof; as the true Religion cannot, in itself, but in the Profession thereof, derive Authority from human Laws. Moreover, in Swearing that Clause, there is a solemn Acknowledging and Avouching before God, the present Being of the foresaid National Profession and Settlement, without any Regard unto a Testimony against the Defections and Corruptions thereof: Yea the Swearer, in these Words, *I profess*, takes up, espouses, and declares his Acquiescence in the said National Profession and Settlement; engaging to abide thereat and defend the same to his Life's End, without Regard to any Testimony against the Defections and Corruptions thereof, that we testify against. Further, the Oath, thus homologating or approving that Profession and Settlement, must homologate or approve the same, just considered as they are, in the present complex Circumstances thereof, under all the foresaid Defections and Corruptions, as Matters presently stand; while none of the publick Defections and Corruptions that we testify against, can be morally separable from the National Profession and Settlement of Religion, in this Time of general and growing Defection. And finally, the foresaid Oath of the religious Clause, is a general Deed about Religion, offering to give a general and faithful Account of a Man's Profession and Purpose that Way. Thus it is then, that a Swearing the religious Clause at present, is charged with a *sinful Reduplication*, homologating or approving the present National Profession and Settlement of Religion, under all the Defections and Corruptions thereof which we testify against, and in diametrical Opposition to the whole of that Testimony among our Hands. All this arises from the plain and common Sense of the Words, in Swearing to Religion with a Reference to the present National Profession and Settlement thereof, at this

Time

Time of *Defection*. And our *Covenanters* were so *tenacious* in this Way of Thinking, that in the Year 1638, they not only swore to Religion in the new Bond, with a Reference to the *past* instead of the *present* Profession: But, when they were required by the King to swear the National *Covenant*; because his Proclamation for Swearing it, did bear a Reference to the *present* Profession of Religion, they protested that a Swearing to Religion this Way, would be a Swearing to it, *as it includeth* (say they) *and containeth within the Compass thereof, the Novations and Episcopacy*; according as was noticed before.

But to proceed,

It is at least very *inconsiderate*, to make use of a Passage from Mr. *Croston*, for comparing the *Synod's* Sentence with the Course of some *Malignants* of old, as these became *Students unto Perjury*, by making void the Oath of the solemn League, in *condemning* it for *fanciful* and *imaginary* Ambiguities and Contradictions: While yet, on the contrary, the *Synod* is here employed in debating with a *Scheme*, which tends to *make void* a Swearing the Religious Clause of some Burges-Oaths, by *vindicating* the same in a Way that eludes the *true Drift* and *Scope* thereof, with *real* Ambiguities and Contradictions.

As to the other *Citations* produced by our Brethren here, against the *Synod*; these do strike *merely, manifestly* and *strongly* against *themselves*; because their own Words in this Place, ought to be *corrected* and *inverted* as follows.

“As there is a *Reduplication* expressed in the Religious Clause of some Burges-Oaths, upon the *State of Religion* in the *present National Profession and Settlement* thereof; inevitably *homologating* the said Profession and Settlement, under all the *Defections* and *Corruptions* of the same, that we testify against: So the *denying* such a Reduplication, tends to destroy the Nature of all Oaths; and to make them so ambiguous, as that they can be no certain Evidences of Truth, in however plain Terms they be expressed. And according hereunto, it is not possible to frame any Oath, but it must be *ambiguous*; yea, the *Bond* of the Covenant itself, which we have solemnly sworn; because there may be some that will use various *Glosses* and *Interpretations*, for eluding the Reduplication thereof against the *Evils* of the Time, as their different *Inclinations* or *Interests* may lead them”.

REASON IV.

“ **T**HE Synod, in their Sentence, plainly contradict themselves; for they affirm, that Matters at present are in such Circumstances, with reference to the Profession and Settlement of Religion, as makes the swearing of the Burgeses-Oath with the said Religious Clause, to be sinful; whereby at the same Time they implicitly affirm, That the Time has been when Matters, with reference to the Profession and Settlement of Religion, were such, that the swearing the Burgeses-Oath with the said Religious Clause, was lawful and warrantable. Now, since it is a certain Fact, that there was no Period since the Reformation, but there were bad Acts and Constitutions, with respect unto the Profession and Settlement of some Parts of Religion; it plainly follows that, according to them, this first Clause could no more be sworn in any former Period, than in this; in regard it was as sinful to homologate any bad Laws, then as now. Besides, it would follow, that the Oath of the Covenant could never in any Period be warrantably sworn; because, in every Period, there were bad Acts in Being relating to Religion, upon which, according to the Synod, the Oath of the Covenant must reduplicate, and consequently must be a sinful Oath ”.

ANSWER to REASON IV:

HAD our Brethren been disposed to speak with that Modesty and Duty, which became a Profession of owning this Synod for a right constitute Court of Christ, and the Members thereof for Men of common Reason; instead of telling the Synod furthwith, that *in their Sentence they plainly contradict themselves*, they would have but proposed for Examination what made them *think so*; especially when the Sentence is so far from giving *any Handle* for such a Thought, that they are obliged to *wrest* it, for getting any *Face* of Contradiction made out; as *both Sides* of the alledged Contradiction, are *without* any Foundation, either *in* or *from* the Sentence, but are fixed upon it, the one by a *violent Interpretation*, and the other by a *violent Inference*.

The gross Mistakes about the *Nature* and *Extent* of the Sentence, which were noticed and exposed in the Beginning of the Answer to *last* Reason, are still couched *here*; but it is needless

to insist further upon them. However, the Sentence is here *wrested* by a *violent Interpretation*; when our Brethren, having told in the *last Reason* that it *seems to suppose*, do come the Length of telling in *this*, that it *implicitly affirms*, the Time to have been, when Matters with Reference to the Profession and Settlement of Religion were such, that the Swearing a Burgeſs-Oath with the Religious Clause, was *lawful and warrantable*. It is indeed laid for granting, that the Religious Clause may have been used in former Periods; and the Synod have had Occasion *now*, to deliver some Sentiments about a Swearing thereof in former Periods: But then, the Sentence it self is *manifestly* laid, for confining *all its Determination* unto the Question *as now stated*, about Swearing the said Clause; a Question which never had any *Being or Paralel* in former Periods, as hath been shown already: And so, the Sentence itself leaves the Question about such Swearing in former Periods, *quite untouched*: Wherefore the *first Side* of the alledged *Contradiction*, has *no Being* in or from the same.——Moreover the Sentence is *wrested* by a *violent Inference*; as if it said or supposed, that a Time of general *Defection* and of general *Reformation*, are the *same*; so as to make *no Difference* betwixt Swearing this Religious Clause, in the *one* or *other* Time: Whereas, in full Consistency with the Sentence, it has been already shown, that there is the greatest *Consistency* betwixt saying, that a Swearing the said Clause, in *this Period of Defection*, must homologate *all* evil Acts and Constitutions about Religion, *now* in Being; but that in *former Periods of Reformation*, it could homologate *no* evil Acts and Constitutions about Religion, *then* in Being.

But farther, there is a a strange Inference made from the Sentence, in the *Cloſe* of this Reason; as if it would follow therefrom, that the Oath of the *Covenant* could never, in *any Period*, be *warrantably* sworn. It is true indeed, that in a Period of *general Defection*, the Oath of the *Covenant* could not be *warrantably* sworn, with a Reference to Religion under the *present* National Profession and Settlement thereof; wherefore, our Covenanters, *Anno 1638*, excluded any such Reference, as hath been observed before. However, the strange Inference here drawn from the Sentence, evidently depends upon the *absurd* and *unaccountable Notion*, charged upon the Synod, of reckoning *evil Acts and Constitutions* in Being about Religion, to be a *Part* of Religion; so as a Swearing to *Religion* would be a Swearing to *these Evils*, in the Oath of the *Covenant*, as much as in the *Burgeſs-Oath*: But this Matter has been sufficiently exposed already.

REASON V.

THE Synod, by this Sentence, have inevitably introduced a new Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion; by excluding all Burgeſſes in the Kingdom, who have acceded or may acced to the Lord's Cauſe and Teſtimony, from Chriſtian-Fellowſhip and Communion with them, who ſhall not ſignify a Satisfaction with the preſent Judgment of the Synod, and a Senſe of the Miſtake they have hitherto, thro' Inadvertency, been under, concerning ſuch Burgeſſes-Oaths as contain the foreſaid religious Clause. If, according to the Synod's Determination, ſwearing the religious Clause in ſome Burgeſſes-Oaths, cannot agree nor conſiſt with entering into the Bond for renewing our ſolemn Covenants; then whoever has ſworn the ſaid Clause, and does not acknowledge his Sin in ſo doing, muſt be cut off, not only from entering into the Bond, but alſo from all other Church-Privileges, as continuing in a manifeſt Sin, unacknowledged and not repented of; and muſt be the proper Object of Church-Cenſure: And likewiſe, ſuch Miniſters as cannot ſignify their Satisfaction with the preſent Judgment of the Synod, but judge it their Duty to act contrary thereto, muſt alſo, according to all Form of Church-Diſcipline and Order, be proceeded againſt with Church-Cenſures; and thus, a new Term of Communion is ſet up by the Synod; and their Judgment and Determination, in this Matter, turned into a grievous Impoſition upon the Conſciences of the Lord's People, who cannot ſee with the Synod's Eyes; and a Foundation laid for perpetual Diviſions and Animolities, both among Miniſters and People, and for rending the Body of Chriſt, and alienating the Minds of the Diſciples from one another.

The Terms of Communion were fixed, before we our ſelves entered into the Bond for renewing our Solemn Covenants, as appears by the Act thereanent; and they were, in the Judgment of many, thought too ſtrait as they are there laid. But after that we our ſelves had entered into the Bond, and fixed that as the Term of Communion among our ſelves, to introduce another new Term, eſpecially anent a Matter that did not caſt up ſince that Time, but exiſted long before our Day, and which was long ago talked of amongſt ſome of us, and dropt as not expedient to be meddled with; is what we never dreamed of. As the fixing of the Terms of Communion, has been looked upon by all the Churches of Chriſt, as one of the tendereſt Points; ſo the introducing of any new Term of Communion, never practiſed in the Chriſtian Church before, eſpecially anent; Matter wherein there is far from being a Harmony among theſe who are holding the ſame Teſtimony, is that which all the Churches of Chriſt, before now, have carefully ſhunned.

ANSWER to REASON V.

OUR Brethren proceed now to an *Engine* against the Synod's Sentence, which has been the most *successful* of all yet invented, for creating *Prejudices* against the same.

It is really melancholy, considering the naked and *genuine* Shape of the Synod's Sentence, that Matters should be come the Length of arguing against it at this Rate; which is indeed a Method of doing, well enough calculate for raising *Dust* and *Din*, to prevent the Sentence from being impartially *lookt into*, or getting a *fair Hearing*.

A Variety of Remarks that might be made upon what is said here, shall be passed; and the following Observations may suffice, for wiping off the Dirt now thrown upon the Sentence.

1. The Synod have not, by their Sentence, adopted any *new Principle*; but have only taken a necessary Step for the Support of that Testimony which they had *previously* espoused and avouched: And if the branding *this*, with the Charge of introducing a *new Term* of Communion, can look well in our Brethren, may be easily judged.

2. The Sentence is purely *directive of Duty*, in a Matter of Christian Conversation. And as it is no *new Thing* among us, to reckon that there is *Sixfulness* in *contradicting* our *Profession*, and swearing *contradictory Oaths*: So, when a *new Instance* of such Things, upon Discovery, is declared against; it is something strange, that this should be called the introducing a *new Term* of Communion.

3. Our Brethren have not yet been able to produce any *Shew of Argument*, against the *Point* that is decided in the Sentence; *viz.* That a *swearing the religious Clause of some Burges-Oaths, by Seceders, as it comes necessarily to be used and applied in this Period, doth not agree unto the present State and Circumstances of the Testimony for Religion and Reformation, and particularly does not consist with entering into the Bond for renewing our Covenants*. Now, if *this* hold, as the Synod is confident it will, against all Contradiction; then, they could not possibly be in the the wrong, in *warning* their People against such swearing; and in *directing*, that Persons who have been engaged that Way, should be required to *acquiesce* in the Sentence, in order to their being admitted into the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants; that so the *admitting* them into that Bond, might not be an *Allowance* of contradictory Oaths, All this is *inevitable* from the *fore-said Point of Decision*; so that it is impossible to get any Quar-

rel picked with all this, except in a Way of *disproving the Point* from whence it follows, which our Brethren have not yet even *seemed* to do: And it was but *reasonable*, that they should have said *something* to the Purpose against the *Premisses* in the Sentence, before they had made such a Noise against the fore^said *Conclusion* inevitable therefrom.

4. Whatever Conclusions our Brethren draw, about the Necessity of *Excommunication*, upon all who shall not submit to the Sentence; they ought not to have fixed these on the Synod, till the Synod themselves had said *something* less or more, upon the Head, which they have never done. As the Sentence makes no Supposition of *Disobedience*, so it prescribes no *Discipline* thereupon; nor was it indeed to be supposed, except from such Methods as our Brethren have been using, that there would have been any Difficulty of getting *all Seceders* satisfied about the Sentence, being in a Case so *plain*, and inevitable from their *received* Principles and Profession. Our Brethren indeed speak, as resolved to *continue* their Opposition to the Sentence, tho' they have not yet fallen upon any *feasible Reason* for doing so: And they suppose that Persons concerned are not only to start at the Sentence, but that *all Means* are to be *uneffectual* for reconciling them thereunto; though it be very hard to fall upon their Reason for supposing that this *shall* be the Case, except in their own Endeavours and Expectations of having it *made* so. However, the Synod have yet determined nothing about Discipline and *Censures* in these Matters: And as it will be a sad Affair, if they should have this ado; so, in that Event, they desire to hope, that the Lord will direct them to walk agreeably to the Rules of *Truth, Patience* and *Prudence*.

What Step the Synod have *as yet* taken, is only in making a *necessary Stand* for the Banner of a Testimony entrusted unto them: And what they shall do, or will get done, in case this *Stand*, shall be more and more *struggled against*, they have not determined, nor can tell. But, considering what Opposition they are exposed to in the LORD'S Work, from other Quarters; it is indeed heavy, that they should have their *own Brethren* in such a Case to struggle against them; and to struggle against what they *have done*, by no better Arguments than a Number of hard Conclusions about what they *have not done*; while it may be easily perceived, that this Way of arguing, tends nothing to the *Benefit* of *Truth* or *Conscience* upon the Cause in Hand, but to the *Clouding* and *Confusion* thereof. Yet, as the *Equity* and *Necessity* of their Sentence, must be *self-evident* to every considering, unprejudiced *Seceder*; and as they have never evidenced any Disposition of dealing *un-*
tenderly

tenderly with any, in Prosecution thereof: So, it will be found in the Event, that the Charges of creating *Divisions, Rents, Animosities* and *Alienations* about this Affair, must ly at another Door than that of the *Synod*.

R E A S O N VI.

“ **T** His Affair came at first into the Synod in an irregular
 “ Way, contrary to the Mind of the Majority of the
 “ Presbytery of *Dunfermline* at that Time; as we have shown a-
 “ bove: And it was decided in a thin Meeting of Synod, when
 “ one Half of the constituent Members were not present. Our
 “ Brethren taking this Advantage, is so much the more grievous
 “ to us, that it could not but be known to them, that they were
 “ never able to carry a Decision in former Meetings of Synod,
 “ concerning this Affair; and there was not one present at the
 “ Decision, who had altered his Mind to their Side. This Con-
 “ duct does not appear to us to be the Lord’s Way; especially
 “ when it is remembred, that the Decision was pushed with so
 “ much Warmth. And, if the Honour of any Brother, or Breth-
 “ ren, who had practically determined this Question themselves,
 “ without the Concurrence of their Brethren, was less or more at
 “ the Bottom of introducing and deciding this Matter; ’tis so
 “ much the less of the Lord, and the Consequence will, we fear,
 “ be the more fatal.”

A N S W E R to R E A S O N VI.

T His whole Argument consists of an Attempt to *blacken* the Sentence, by repeting that *gross* and *unaccountable Misrepresentation of plain Facts*, which has been already exposed upon the *Preamble*: And it shall only be further observed here, that the Words in this Reason are so *artfully* laid, as to suggest, that the not carrying of a Decision at any of the Meetings of Synod before that in *April 1746*, had been owing to the Presence of a *Majority* on our *Brethrens Side*; though it is well known, that nothing prevented a Decision at *each* of these Meetings, but a Disposition in the *Majority* to yeild, merely on *their Account*, to some further Delay. Again, it is a strange Assertion, concerning the Brethren who were for the Decision in *April 1746*, *That there was not one present at the Decision who had altered his Mind to their Side*; when the carrying of the Decision then, was manifestly owing to the *most Part* of these Brethren having *altered their Mind* from

from the former Disposition of yeilding to further Delay, and that for the good Reason which was given already upon the *Preamble*.

As to the Reflection thrown out in the *Close* of this Reason, it is *too low* and *unföber* to deserve any particular Remark.

R E A S O N VII.

“ **T**HE Synod, by their determining the whole first Clause in some Burgeſs-Oaths to be ſinful, without Exception of any Part thereof, do thereby find, that the renouncing of the Romiſh Religion called Papiſtry, does not agree unto the preſent State and Circumſtances of the Teſtimony for Religion and Reformation, which this Synod, with theſe under their Inſpection, are maintaining, and particularly, that it does not conſiſt with entering into the Bond for renewing our ſolemn Covenants,

“ As the Synod, neither in the Narrative of the Act, nor in the Act itſelf, make any Exception of the above Words, but have them expreſly reſpected in their Act, as what they condemn; the Conſequence is inevitable.

“ We are far from charging our Brethren with the leaſt Inclination to diſcourage a Teſtimony againſt Popery, having ſo expreſly renounced the ſame in the Bond which they entred into alongſt with us: But ſuch was their Raſhneſs and Precipitancy in this Matter, that they were left to fall into this Inconſiſtency, when an Attempt was made to introduce Popery and arbitrary Power amongſt us.”

A N S W E R to R E A S O N VII.

THE Manner in which our Brethren do vent themſelves here, deſerves *Aſtoniſhment* rather than *Answer*. What Remarks might be made on the *apparent Scope* of the Charge here laid, ſhall be overpaſſed: But a few Things are to be noticed for expoſing the groſs *Unreaſonableneſs* thereof.

It was noticed upon the *Preamble*, that our Brethren had been labouring under, and are ſtill cleaving, unto a *deep Miſtake* about what was inſiſted for, in the Affair of the religious Clause. To this Miſtake was much aſcribed the Oppoſition which they made unto the Synod; and the Sentence was particularly and *ſufficiently* laid for the Removal thereof. But our Brethren, it ſeems, *will not* give up with it; and *will have it*, Reason or none, that the Sentence of Synod ſimply condemns the *religious Clause* of ſome Burgeſs-Oaths. A Threed of this Notion has been running through the *foregoing* Reaſons, is taken up again *here*, and continues thro' the

ninth Reason; where a condemning the *Clause*, and a condemning the *Swearing* thereof by Seceders, as it comes necessarily to be used and applied in this Period, are still taken for the *same* Thing though they be Things very widely *different*: And so, the whole Foundation of the dreadful *Conclusion* in this Reason, is purely imaginary. The *Clause* is repeted in the Sentence, not as a *Clause* condemned, but as a *Clause* the *present Swearing* whereof is condemned, as is manifest unto any who incline to understand it.

It is really an odd Affair, to accuse the Synod of condemning a *Testimony* against Popery; because they will not allow of their People, in Swearing to Religion, by an Oath which takes up *no further* Testimony than against Popery; while, at the same Time, it approves of the *present National Profession* and *Settlement* of Religion, under all the *Defections* and *Corruptions* thereof which we testify against, engaging to *abide* at and *defend* the same. But when our Brethren proceed at this Rate, they might as well have accused the Covenanters, *Anno* 1638, of condemning a *Testimony* against Popery; because they testified against it as *sinful*, to swear the *National Covenant* then, at the King's Desire, without having it accommodated to the Circumstances of the Time, and the Advances which had been made in Reformation, particularly by Swearing the *new Bond*.

R E A S O N VIII.

“ WE have Reason to fear, that an Opinion anent the Allegiance to our present Sovereign, contrary to the Testimony and Principles which we profess to hold, maintained by some Brethren who pushed this Question to a Decision, gave Rise to and influenced the Sentence of the Synod against which we have dissented.”

“ The Associate Presbytery, in none of their Acts, have ever found a simple Allegiance unlawful, abstracting from the Act imposing the same. This is a Question that the Associate Presbytery before, nor the Synod since, have never determined. And altho', in the Matter of the Burghs-Oath, the Synod have only condemned the first Clause thereof, without meddling with the Allegiance; yet as the Allegiance in that Oath, was the first Thing quarrelled therein, by the Brethren who pushed this Matter in the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, in their first Meeting after our Disjunction into different Presbyteries; so we are informed that, since the last Meeting of Synod, it has been the Object of their publick Testimonies; which is another practical Decision, in a Question not yet determined by the Synod; but
determined

determined by our Ancestors; who, besides the Allegiance in our Covenants, and in the Burgess-Oath, swore the Civil Allegiance to the then Sovereign, although he was of a different Religion from them. *Dickson and Henderſon, Answers to Replies, Page 57. We all, by our Oath of Allegiance, by his Majesty's Laws, and by other Obligations, acknowledge, That we owe many other Duties to the King, which were very impertinent to express in this Covenant.* And the most faithful of our Sufferers declared, *That no honest Minister or Christian, would scruple to take a simple Allegiance: Apologet. Relat. upon the Head of the Oath of Supremacy.*”

A N S W E R to R E A S O N VIII:

THIS Reason is of a Piece with the *last*, as to the Appearance of an *hard Intention*. The Matter here *lugged* in, is so *foreign* to the Point in Hand, as presently to require no particular Consideration. But it may be observed in general, that this Synod have given *no Reason* for any to suppose or fear, that they have receded from *any* of the Principles about the present *Civil Government*, which are laid down in the *Defence* subjoined to the *Answers* to Mr. *Nairn*; nor that they have adopted any *new* Principles upon that Head.

Moreover, as it is plainly a Charge of *Disloyalty* that is here insinuated against the Synod, for their Sentence, through the Sides of Brethren; so, the *Accusers* had need to consider *what Manner of Spirit* they are of, in this Matter. For it is impossible to make out any *Connection* betwixt the *Sentence* and *Disloyalty*, further than betwixt the *Secession* and *Disloyalty*; in regard the Sentence amounts to *no more* than a *necessary Stand* for the Principles and Testimony of the *Secession*, in Opposition to a Swearing which generally *contradicts* and *contemns* the same: And that there is the *fullest* Consistency of the *whole* *Secession-Testimony*, with *Loyalty* to the *present* *Civil Government*, is sufficiently manifest in the *foreſaid* *Defence*; as this Synod, and all the Members thereof, do here take Occasion of declaring their *Adherence* to the Principles *there* laid down, without receding from *any* of them, or adopting *any* Principles *opposite* thereunto: And if our *Brethren* have not taken up any *new* Principles about *Civil Government*, since that Time, opposite thereunto; they have no Reason to suspect any *Difference* betwixt *this Synod* and *them*, upon *that* Head. But, while they talk as in this Reason, it shall only be further observed here, that

Such Procedure of our Brethren, on the present Affair, is indeed *awful*; and may serve to give some *Guests*, what *Sort of a Cause* they are now left to take up.

R E A S O N IX.

“ **T**He Sinfulness of this Act and Sentence of Synod, appears
 “ to us to be so glaring and manifest, that we could not
 “ but dissent from, and protest against the same, not only for the
 “ above, but also for several other Reasons, that were mentioned
 “ as supporting our Dissent when we entered it.

“ *1mo.* This Act and Sentence of the Synod, is contrary to
 “ that Brotherly Love, Regard and Forbearance, that the Mem-
 “ bers of Judicatures, and all Christians, ought, according to the
 “ Word of GOD, to exercise one towards another.

“ It must be owned by all, that the Observation of the *Jewish*
 “ Ceremonies was once lawful; and with as little Reason can it
 “ be denied, that the Clause condemned by the Synod was like-
 “ wise once lawful. After Christ rose from the Dead, there was
 “ sufficient objective Evidence unto all, that as the Substance was
 “ come, there was no Use for the Shadow; and that the Obser-
 “ vation of the Old Testament Typical-Ceremonies, was virtual-
 “ ly and upon the Matter, a saying, that Christ the Substance was
 “ not yet come in the Flesh. This was the Intention of the
 “ Work, whatever was the Intention of the Worker. That the
 “ Apostles themselves understood this to be the Case, is clear
 “ from the Strain of the whole of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*.
 “ But, yet, because the Observance of these Ceremonies was once
 “ unquestionably lawful, newly quarrelled, and never formerly
 “ Matter of Debate; therefore a mutual Forbearance, between
 “ these who were clear, that the Ceremonial Law was abrogat-
 “ ed and of no more Use, and these who were zealous of the
 “ Law, notwithstanding of their different Sentiments and different
 “ Practices in that Matter, was exercised, until the Temple at
 “ *Jerusalem* was entirely demolished, and the daily Sacrifice and
 “ Oblation made to cease; excepting in the Case of the mingling
 “ the Observance of these Ceremonies with the Righteousness of
 “ Christ, in the Matter of Justification before God. Now, even
 “ upon Supposition we should grant, that, in like Manner, Cir-
 “ cumstances are now so altered, as that there is sufficient
 “ objective Evidence unto all, that the swearing the Clause now
 “ condemned, would be doing a Thing that is virtually, and upon
 “ the Matter, a sinful receding from any Part of the Testimony
 “ of the Day, which we are professing to hold: Tho’ it were

to be granted, that this behoved to be the Intention or Tendency of the Work whatever was the Intention of the Worker: yet still it would follow, from the above approved Example of the Apostles and Saints in Scripture, that, as the said Clause was once lawful, and the swearing of it is but newly quarrelled and was never formerly Matter of Debate, that therefore the Synod ought to have enjoined a mutual Forbearance, between these that reckon the present swearing thereof to be a sinful Receding from our Testimony, and others who, on the contrary, do look upon the Condemnation of the Clause and the Prohibiting of the swearing thereof, to be rather a Falling from former good Attainments, notwithstanding of their differing from one another as to their Sentiments and Practices in this Matter; that the Synod, we say, ought rather to have enjoined this mutual Forbearance, than to have condemned and prohibited the present swearing of said Clause. And it will be the more evident, that we ought to carry our Forbearance toward one another thus far, in Imitation of the Scripture-Example adduced; if 'tis considered, that the Apostles and Elders, in the Council at *Jerusalem*, went further; Not only did they forbear these who observed the Ceremonial Law, but because the *Jews* who observed and were zealous thereof, were not able to forbear the *Gentiles*, in their entirely omitting the Observation of that Law; therefore they went the length of enjoining, for a Time, the Observance of that Part of the Ceremonial Law, by the *Gentiles*, that related to the abstaining from Things sacrificed to Idols, from Things strangled, and from Blood; that so Offence might not be given to the *Jews*, and the Unity of the Spirit might be kept in the Bond of Peace.

And whereas these on the other Side may possibly alledge, that there can be no warrantable Forbearance in a Matter sinful, when it is made the Subject of a solemn Oath: To this we would Answer, These who were zealous of the Law, when they entred into their Covenants of Duties, could not act consistently with their own Sentiments, without engaging in these Covenants, by Solemn Oath, that they would observe the said Law in every Point; as looking on the whole of it to be one special Part of that Duty which, according to them, they owed unto the God to whose Service and Obedience they were devoting themselves: So that it still appears, that the Cases are parallel; and this Argument might be further amplified, from the Decision of the Presbytery at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* xxi. 18, 20, --- 26.

" The Apostle Paul speaks very agreeably to what we have
 " advanced on this Reason; when, in *Phil. iii. 15, 16*, He says,
 " *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if*
 " *in any Thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this*
 " *unto you; Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let*
 " *us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same Thing.* He is
 " there speaking to a Church that had considerable Attainments
 " in Reformation, and were still pointing towards it; and is ex-
 " horting them to press forward in seeking after the practi-
 " cal Knowledge of Christ and of his Way: And, because he
 " knew that they would be ready to follow their own hasty Spi-
 " rits, so as not to forbear or wait for one another in Questions
 " that were new; but, on the contrary, to take such Measures
 " in these Matters, as would come to land them in Schisms and
 " Separations, if the Lord did not prevent it; therefore he gives
 " the Caution above express; *Let us, says he, as many as be per-*
 " *fect, or desire to aim at Perfection, be thus minded, or minded*
 " *as I am, pressing toward the Mark; and if, in any Thing not*
 " *formerly determined or attained, ye be otherwise minded, or dif-*
 " *ferently minded, as the Word may be rendered according to*
 " *the Original, some thinking one Way about it, and some ano-*
 " *ther, God shall reveal even this unto you; so that, might he say,*
 " *ye are to believe this Promise of God, and believingly to wait*
 " *for the God of Truth his accomplishing thereof in his own*
 " *Time, without limiting the Holy One of Israel to any Time*
 " *of yours: And, in the mean Time, they were to forbear one*
 " *another, and walk together in Christian Love and Fellowship,*
 " *in a Way of holding fast what they had all-attained to already;*
 " *as it follows, Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained,*
 " *let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same Thing.* And
 " the same Apostle must be understood as speaking agreeably to
 " this, when he says in the same Epistle, *Chap. ii. 1---3. If*
 " *there be ---in Christ---any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of*
 " *the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy, that ye*
 " *be like minded, having the same Love, being of one Accord, of*
 " *one Mind,---in Lowliness of Mind let each esteem other bet-*
 " *ter than themselves.*

" We have dissented from, and protested against the above
 " Sentence of the Synod, as contrary unto the Word of God;
 " and we may now add, to that Method of Procedure which God
 " observes in his Dispensations towards the Church, while here be-
 " low. 'Tis beyond Doubt, that, as we all know but in Part, in
 " our present State; so we have our different Measures of Light,
 " every one according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ bestow-

ed on us : But for the Synod to have passed a Sentence, so circumstanced as already narrated, which necessarily obliges them, according to the Rules of Discipline, to censure their Brethren and Fellow-Christians, should their Light continue to be what it now is, that they cannot see with the Synod the Sinfulness of the Clause condemned ; must infer a manifest Reflection upon the Dispensation of that wise LORD, and a lording it over their Brethren ; whose Light in this Matter, the Law of Charity, *In Lowliness of Mind, let each esteem other better than themselves*, Phil. ii. 3. Eph, iv. 1, 2. and the Law, *Lean not unto thine own Understanding, be not wise in thine own Eyes*, Prov. iii. 5, 7. obliged them to think was as single as their own.

“ 2do, The said Act and Sentence of the Synod, is contrary unto our Standards of Truth.

“ The Synod, by their above Deed, have attempted to force their own Light, in a Question that was never on the Field before, upon the Consciences of others, as the Rule that should determine them. That they attempt this, is evident ; because as has been shown above, the falling in with the Judgment of the Synod, anent the above-mentioned religious Clause, is according to the Act, made a Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion ; which is contrary to *Westminster* Confession of Faith, Chap. 20. §. 2. where it is declared that *God alone is Lord of the Conscience* ; Which Proposition is there proven from *James* iv. 12. *There is one Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy ; who art thou that judgest another ?* And from *Rom.* xv. 4. *Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant ? To his own Master he standeth or falleth : Yea he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.* Also it is contrary to Chap. 31. §. 4. ----- *Synods or Councils-----are not to be made the Rule of Faith or Practice, but to be used as a Help in both.*

“ We may likewise add, That 'tis contrary to Chap. 22. §. 4. Where, when 'tis said, *An Oath cannot oblige to sin ; 'tis added, but in any Thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to Performance ; -----Nor is it to be violated, although made to Hereticks or Infidels :* For, by the said Act of Synod, these who have sworn the Clause condemned, are bound, under Pain of being debarred from Church-Privileges, to renounce what they have sworn to in that Clause ; tho', as appears from the Tenor of our Reasons, what they have sworn to therein is not sinful, but, on the contrary, is given as the only Criterion of the true Church, *Confess.* Chap. 25. §. 2. Where the visible Church

“ is described as consisting of all these, throughout the World, that
 “ profess the true Religion, together with their Children.

“ 310. The above Act is contrary to the Practice of the
 “ Church of Christ in her purest Times. 'Tis contrary to the
 “ Practice of the Church in the Days of the Apostles; who ex-
 “ ercised Forbearance one towards another, in Matters that were
 “ newly brought into Debate, as has been made evident above :
 “ And contrary to the Practice of our Church, in her purest re-
 “ forming Time; as is clear, particularly from their Conduct in
 “ in the Year 1638. When they renewed the National Cove-
 “ nant that Year, the Words of the Covenant were of Purpose,
 “ so framed, as to admit of those to join with them in covenant-
 “ ing, who maintained the Lawfulness of Episcopacy and the
 “ five Articles of Perth; For, say Dickson and Henderson, Answers
 “ to the Replies, Pages 48, 49.----You (the Professors of Aber-
 “ deen) will have all the Covenanters, against their Intention, and
 “ whether they will or not, to disallow and condemn the Articles of
 “ Perth and Episcopul Government :----But 'tis known to many Hun-
 “ dreds, that the Words were purposely conceived for Satisfaction
 “ of such as were of your Judgment, (viz. for justifying them,) that
 “ we might all join in one Heart and Covenant, for establishing Re-
 “ ligion and opposing Error.

“ 4to. This Decision of the Synod is inconsistent also with our
 “ Covenants, National and Solemn League, and with our late
 “ Bond renewing the said Covenants; by all which we promise
 “ and swear, *That we shall, in our several Places and Callings, en-
 “ courage and strengthen one anothers Hands, in pursuing the End
 “ and Design of this our Solemn Oath and Covenant; That we shall
 “ live together in the Fear of the Lord, and Love one to another,
 “ in the Work and Cause of the Lord.* But how is this Engage-
 “ ment fulfilled, when, instead of loving one another, and strength-
 “ ning one anothers Hands, a Foundation is laid by the said
 “ Decision, for biting and devouring, and so for destroying one
 “ another, and the Lord's Work among our Hands? Those
 “ Brethren who have pushed and determined this Question, after
 “ such solemn Vows, in a Matter that was never before contro-
 “ verted, yea in which all the Lord's Witnesses before us have
 “ harmonized, had need, in our Opinion, to consider their Ways :
 “ lest, contrary to the Oath of God, they be found guilty of
 “ weakning instead of strengthening the Hands of their Bre-
 “ theren, who cannot see with their Light; but yet see that
 “ Clause of the Burgeis-Oath in the same Light with all the Lord's
 “ Witnesses that have gone before us. We are afraid. That
 “ this

this Conduct, after covenanting, brings them under that awful Charge, of, *after Vows making Enquiry.*

“ We may add, that the Synod’s affirming in their Act, That a swearing the religious Clause, &c. and requiring all concerned to signify a Satisfaction with the present Judgment of Synod, and a Sense of the Mistake, &c. when yet, at the same Time, the Synod have not shown how this religious Clause comes necessarily, in this Period, to be used and applied, nor in what Respects it is inconsistent with entring into the Bond for renewing our Solemn Covenants; nor have in the least shown, from the Law and Testimony, or approved Standards agreeable thereto, how the Conscience is bound to what they are requiring, under no less Penalty, than of being secluded from the Privilege of entring into the Bond, and consequently, from all Church-Privileges; we say, we may add, That this Conduct of theirs appears to us to be very arbitrary and dogmatical. We could wish our Brethren had more attentively reflected upon the Extent of the Power of Ecclesiastical Judicatories, as so excellently well limited and circumscribed, according to the Word, in our *Old Confession*, Art. 20. The Words are, *So far then as the Council proceedeth the Determination and Commandment that it giveth, by the plain Word of God, so soon do we reverence and embrace the same: But if they---pretend to make Constitutions repugning to the Word of God, then utterly we must refuse the same, as-----drawing our Souls from the Way of our only God, to follow the Doctrines and Constitutions of Men.*

“ After all, we cannot but lament, That our Brethren have all along carried on this Matter, from first to last, with a more than ordinary Keeness of Spirit; as if their Opinion had been a Point of the last Consequence, agreed upon by all the Churches of Christ, in this and other Nations; the Reverse of which is the Truth. Never was this Matter debated or doubted of by any Christian or Body of Christians, till now, so far as we know. This gives us Reason to fear, That this Sentence, instead of being of the Lord, is nothing but a fiery Squeeb of the Enemy of Christ and his Church, one of whose leading Maxims is, to divide and reign. Altho’ Matters of far greater Moment and Consequence were upon the Anvil; such as, Overtures concerning Uniformity in privy Censures, Uniformity in parochial Visitations, concerning the Procedure of the *General Assembly* with Respect to Professor *Leechman’s* Sermon on Prayer; besides Proposals and Petitions from our People in the Time of the Rebellion, for Directions how they were to manage, both as to their rising in Arms, and paying of Taxes

“ and

“ and Contributions levied by the Antichristian Crew, in order to
 “ carry on their hellish Designs against a Protestant King and
 “ Cause ; as also a seasonable Warning, relating to the Grounds
 “ of the Lord’s Controversy, and the Duty of the People at that
 “ Juncture, that they might not be entangled or ensnared by the
 “ Enemy ; as also, a Proposal was made, for compiling and emitting
 “ an Explication of the lesser Catechism, for propogating
 “ and preserving the Principles of our holy Religion in Purity,
 “ in this and following Generations : We say, That altho’ all
 “ this was upon the Wheel, yet such was the Keeness of our
 “ Brethren in pushing the Condemnation of the above Clause,
 “ that all these, and other important Affairs of far greater Con-
 “ cern, could not be admitted to enter into the Consideration of
 “ the Synod ; as appears from their frequent Protests against the
 “ Synod’s Sentences, delaying the Matter. It was all along urged
 “ by us, That the Consideration of the Burgess-Oath should be
 “ delayed, until, by Prayer and mutual Conference, in the Spirit
 “ of Meekness, we should come to see Eye to Eye, and thus be
 “ embracing one another in Love : But, contrary to the Law
 “ of Love, and Solemn Covenant-Engagements, whereby they
 “ were obliged to wait on us who were otherwise minded,
 “ until God should reveal this unto us also ; our Brethren stealed
 “ a March of us, in a thin Meeting at *Edinburgh*, in *April* last ;
 “ and over the Belly of their Brethren, and their strongest Entrea-
 “ ties for a Delay till a full Meeting, they determined judicially
 “ the Sinfulness of the said Clause of the Burgess-Oath : And
 “ what the Event of this Decision shall be, God knoweth ; only
 “ it hath already jumbled and perplexed the Lord’s People,
 “ grieved the Generation of the Righteous, made the Enemies
 “ of the Lord’s Testimony to triumph, saying, Aha ! so would we
 “ have it ; also it has been a Mean of stopping Progress in the
 “ Lord’s Work, both as to acceding to the Testimony, and pro-
 “ ceeding in covenanting Work ; especially when it is considered
 “ That in all former Times of Covenanting, there was a beautiful
 “ Harmony to be observed, both among Ministers and People.
 “ But, to conclude, such is our Desire, That the Unity
 “ of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace may be kept and preserved,
 “ and that the fatal Consequences of a Rupture may be prevent-
 “ ed ; that we cannot but exhortate with our Brethren, in the
 “ Bowels of our Lord Jesus, and for the Sake of his mystical Bo-
 “ dy, which is like to be rent and split among themselves, that
 “ they would consider the Sinfulness of the above Sentence,
 “ and the sad Effects thereof, both among our selves and the
 “ Lord’s Heritage, thro’ the Land ; That they would yet think of

“ removing this Bone of Contention out of the Way; that we may
 “ all go on as formerly, with one Heart and in one Way, in the
 “ Lord’s Work ; that brotherly Love, which is like to be much
 “ marred by this Sentence of the Synod, may yet continue ; that
 “ we may yet have fervent Charity among our selves, with Long-
 “ suffering, forbearing one another in Love, being kindly affection-
 “ ed one towards another with brotherly Love, in Honour pre-
 “ ferring one another. And let us all mind what is said by the
 “ Spirit of God, Col. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15. Put on therefore,
 “ as the Elect of God, (holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercies,
 “ Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering; forbear-
 “ ing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a
 “ Quarrel against any : Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye :
 “ And above all these Things, put on Charity, which is the Bond of
 “ Perfectness. And let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to
 “ the which also ye are called in one Body.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| “ Subscribed at <i>Dunfermline</i> , | } | RALPH ERSKINE. |
| “ June 14th 1746, by | | |
| “ Subscribed at <i>Stirling</i> , | } | J. A. FISHER. |
| “ June 13th 1746, by | | HENRY ERSKINE. |
| | | JOHN M’CARA. |
| “ Subscribed at <i>Edinburgh</i> , | } | WM. HUTTON. |
| “ June 18th 1746, by | | WM. ROBERTSON. |
| “ Subscribed at <i>Dunfermline</i> , | } | J. A. WARDLAW. |
| “ June 14th 1746, by | | |

ANSWER to REASON IX.

THis *ninth* Reason is properly of Service to lead away from any
real View of the Sentence, so as the same may be abused
 with the greater Freedom. It consists mostly, in venting a Flood
 of *groundless Reflections* against the Synod, upon a Mistake or Mis-
 representation of what they have done : And as there is nothing
 of *real* or *fair* Argument in it, the Synod needs not take up Time
 in exposing sundry of the Reflections therein cast upon them ;
 as these will, after what has been said before, sufficiently expose
 themselves to any considerate, unprejudiced View.

The Method in which some Scripture-*Texts* and *History* are
 here managed, might deserve a particular Review, were it any
 Thing to the present Purpose.-----But, upon the Whole of
 what is in this Reason, the following Remarks may now suf-
 fice.

1. Our Brethren, in the *written Protest* prefixed to their *Reasons*, come out very *broadly* against the Sentence of Synod; as being contrary to the *Word of God*, our *Standards of Truth*, the *Practise of the Church of Christ* in her purest Times; to that brotherly *Love, Regard and Forbearance* that the Members of Judicatures, and all Christians, ought to maintain toward one another; contrary to our *Covenants*, National and Solemn League; and to our *late Renewing* of said Covenants. These are indeed *high Points* of Charge, and our Brethren come in this *ninth Reason* to instruct them: But alas! when all comes out, instead of levelling against the *Sentence*, the Levelling is all against the *Synod* for making it. Moreover, the first of the above Articles, *viz.* That the Decision is contrary to the *Word of God*, is a Thing that deserved to be *separately* and *particularly* instructed: But when our Brethren come to essay this, they are obliged, upon the Matter, to *drop* it, by jumbling it in with the *fourth Article* about brotherly *Forbearance*; so as only to accuse the *Synod* instead of their *Sentence*, of walking contrary to the *Word of God*, on the Head of brotherly *Forbearance*.

2. The Synod then is accused, as having, by their Sentence, gone contrary to the Rules of *brotherly Love, Regard and Forbearance*: And for making this out, there is a *Comparison* laid with the *Forbearance* that was used about some Observances of the *Ceremonial-Law*, during the Transition from the *Mosaick* to the *Christian Dispensation*: And to make the *Parallel* run stronger, it is dreadfully supposed, That Christians were *forborn* and allowed of by the Apostles, in swearing by solemn Covenant to observe *the whole Law of Moses*.-----But, passing Remarks upon this and other Things said on that Head, there is no Sort of *Comparableness* betwixt the said Case and the present; particularly in these Respects, that an *Oath* has nothing in it of itself *indifferent*, and that the swearing of the religious Clause, as it comes necessarily to be used and applied in this Period, is a Thing that *never was lawful*.

But there is no Need for insisting here on these Things; because the whole Argument now managed about *Forbearance* is *quite off* the Point. For, though the Apostles did, for some Time, forbear with some Observance of *legal Ceremonies*, in themselves indifferent; yet they did not forbear to declare the Doctrine of the *Priesthood and Resurrection* of Christ, as the *End of the Law for Righteousness*; Nor did they forbear to warn against any Use of these *Ceremonies* in Opposition to *Christ*, when declaring in this Respect, *If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*. Tho' the Apostles did not propose, That People were to be got off

all at once, from every Practice of legal Ceremonies; yet they made Haste in declaring the Truth of Christ, and bringing out that Light which was to be effectual for extinguishing all these ceremonial Observances. There was no *Forbearance* here; no Forbearance about declaring the Truth, in Matters which were in themselves Matters of *Sin* and *Duty*, of a *moral* Nature.

How comes it then, that our Brethren should argue at this Rate? Have the Synod ever taken one *harsh Step* toward them, in dealing with them about their present Practice? Has there been any *Want* of Forbearance here? And whatever Forbearance may be pled for, in dealing tenderly as to a *Prosecution* and *Following-out* of the Sentence; yet, must Arguments of brotherly Love and Forbearance be pled against uttering the *Doctrine of the Truth*, in declaring what is *Sin* and *Duty*, on the Matter of solemn Oaths? This is indeed a *very new* Way of arguing: And the Doctrine of Love and Regard to *Men* is carried a *new Length* indeed, when it is pled, That, on this Account, a Judicatory should *forbear to say* that a Thing is *sinful*, and a *Profanation of the Lord's Name*, when they see it plainly to be so. The Synod desire to esteem their Brethren, to honour them, and to deal tenderly with them; but certainly they may be excused from tampering with their own Consciences for the Sake. of any, in forbearing to say that a Thing is *sinful* when it manifestly is so, tho' their Brethren do not reckon so.

And indeed, our Brethren had little Reason to complain of *Non-forbearance*, when, on *their Account* merely, a Sentence was forbore at sundry Meetings of Synod.

3. The Text, *Phil.* iii. 15, 16, is sadly *perverted*, in applying it to the present Case; as if it taught, That a Judicatory should not *tell their Mind*, if some be *otherwise minded*. Moreover, it is just according to the Scope of this Text, that the Synod have been proceeding; when the Meaning of their Sentence is generally no more, than a calling their People to *walk by the Rule* of what they have *already attained*, in Opposition to a Swearing which *contradicts* and *condemns* these Attainments.

4. It is a surprising Affair, to give out as if the Words of the *Covenant*, *Anno* 1633, had been framed for admitting of these who maintained the Lawfulness of *Episcopacy*, and the five Articles of *Perth*; when yet *these very Things* are, in the *Covenant*, called *Corruptions* and *Novations*; and the Matter then forbore, was a *publick Determination* about them, as contray to the national *Covenant*, while the Covenanters were not then in a *judicative Capacity*; as is well observed by Mr. *Wilson* in his *Defence* of that Period, pag: 239.

The Flood of Reflection, otherways vented here, against the Synod and their Sentence, are so manifestly unreasonable, that they need not be now insisted upon. Only, whatever our Brethren think, others must be allowed to reckon, That the *present Affair* was the *most momentous* of all Overtures before the Synod; in Regard it was to small Purpose what should be done about *this and the other Particular* of our Work, if the *whole of the Testimony* among our Hands was to be left in *Debate*, upon the Head of a *Swearing* that *contradicts* and *condemns* the same.

REASON X.

“ **A** Nother Reason may be added, namely, that by condemn-
 “ ing the religious Clause of the Burgeſſs-Oath, relating to
 “ the present Settlement and Security of the true Religion, as if it
 “ were sinful; we evidently condemn our selves, and our own judi-
 “ cial Declaration on that Head: For the true Religion which
 “ we our selves presently profess, is what we have owned and
 “ acknowledged to be presently secured and defended, by the pre-
 “ sent civil Government over these Lands. This is evident,
 “ Because if the Religion we Seceders and seceding Judicatories
 “ do profess to be our Religion, be indeed the true Religion; and
 “ if what we call our Religion, comprehends Doctrine, Worship,
 “ Discipline and Government; then we have already judicially
 “ declared and published to the World, *Act anent Mr. Neirn,*
 “ Page 50. *That such Security is given by the present civil Govern-*
 “ *ment, unto our Religion, Lives and Liberties, as no People now on*
 “ *Earth enjoys the like.* Thus, the true Religion, which we our
 “ selves profess to be our Religion, and which is authorised and e-
 “ stablished by the Laws of this Realm, is what we declared but
 “ three Years ago, to be thus secured and defended by Law: And
 “ how much more we have Reason, since that Time, to say that
 “ our Religion, Lives and Liberties, have been practically defen-
 “ ded by the Sword of the present civil Magistrate, so far prospered
 “ of God for quelling a wicked antichristian Insurrection, the
 “ whole Inhabitants of the Isle of *Britain* are Eye and Ear-
 “ Witnesses.----If thus we owned that our Religion is secured,
 “ when all that we could mean was the same that is declared in the
 “ religious Clause of the Burgeſſs-Oath, to be the true Religion
 “ presently professed and authorised by the Laws of this Realm;
 “ how the Synod could come so soon to change their Mind, and
 “ reckon that the true Religion thus professed and authorised, is
 “ not our Religion, and consequently that our Religion is not
 “ secured by the present civil Government; and how we could
 assert

assert as above, and now assert the contrary, yea, and make it sinful to say what we then said; these have to account for who have pushed on such a rash Decision.

“ Besides, while our defending the King, in the Defence and Security of the true Religion, is the only religious Limitation in what is called our Covenant-Allegiance, which the present simple Allegiance is supposed to want, and so said to be sinful or unlawful because unlimited; it is to be remarked, That as a simple Allegiance being necessary in it self limited by the Law of God and Nature, is yet more comprehensive of all our religious and natural Duties we owe to a Magistrate, than merely to defend him, according to the Word of the Covenant-Limitation; so the King’s defending and curing the true Religion, cannot be supposed to be a just Limitation of our Oath of Allegiance to him, so as to make it unlawful to swear Allegiance, unless he be employed in the Defence thereof: For this were to suppose, on the one Hand, great Iniquity in our Reformers, who took that limited Allegiance, as some call it, by taking the Covenant; while yet at the same Time they knew, that the King, instead of appearing for the Defence of the true Religion, was appearing with Sword-in-hand to destroy it; and, on the other Hand, such a Supposition fore-said would infer a Charge of great Iniquity and Ingratitude, yea, and a practical Opposition to these covenanted Principles in us, to make it unlawful to take a simple Allegiance to our present Sovereign, under whose Government we not only acknowledge, as above, our Religion has such Security, as no People on Earth enjoys the like, but also, who is actually appearing so remarkably with Sword-in-hand for the Defence of it. From all which it is evident, our Reformers, by their swearing to defend the King in the Defence and Preservation of the true Religion, never designed any limited or circumscribed Oath of Allegiance to the King: But merely, because not only the Church, but also the State, who had the Power of the Sword in their Hand, joined together in that Covenant; therefore, in their swearing to defend the King’s Person and Authority, they express what was their own Resolution, as well as what was the King’s Duty, namely, to act in the Defence and Preservation of the true Religion, Laws and Liberties of the Nation: Hence that Part of the Covenant was rather an Assurance than an Allegiance; assuring the King that they had no Design against his Person or Authority, but rather to defend the same; and assuring him also of their Design how they were resolved to defend him, namely, in that Way of acting, which was their Duty and his both, that is, in the Defence and Preservation of their

true Religion, Laws and Liberties: And hence, besides this
 Covenant-Assurance, our Reformers made no Scruple of taking
 the civil Allegiance at the same Time, as is proven above: So
 that, as no Argument can justly, or, with any Shew of Reason,
 be drawn from our Covenants against a simple Allegiance to
 our present Sovereign; so the Brethren of the Synod, that push-
 ed such a sinful Decision about the religious Clause of the Bur-
 gess-Oath, have thereby only condemned themselves for hav-
 ing said or passed an Act, when constitute in the Name of
 Christ, declaring that our Religion, which is the Religion we pre-
 sently profess, as well as our Lives and Liberties which we pre-
 sently enjoy, have such Security given to them by the present
 civil Government, as no other People now on Earth enjoys the
 like.

This Reason here added to the 17 Pages above, is subscrib-
 ed at *Dunfermline*, the 24th Day of *June*, 1746, by
 RALPH ERSKINE,
 J. A. WARDLAW,

ANSWER to REASON X.

THis *tenth* Reason does indeed shew Good-will to overthrow
 the Sentence; but it must remain a Cypher as to any
 Success that Way. The Bulk of what is said here, turns aside
 unto the *Spirit* of the *eighth* Reason, going entirely out of Sight
 of the present Question: Wherefore, the Synod have now no
 Manner of Business therewith, but in referring to what has been
 said on that *eighth* Reason.

As to any Thing further here, it wholly turns upon a groundless
 Notion, as if there were any *Inconsistency*, betwixt acknowledging
 thankfully this plain Truth, that such Security is given, by the
 present civil Government, unto our Religion, Lives and Liberties,
 as no other People now on Earth enjoys the like; and yet decla-
 ring, that there is a *Sinfulness* in homologating, by a general Oath,
 and engaging to abide at and defend to Life's End, the pre-
 sent national Profession and Settlement of Religion, considered un-
 der all the *Defections* and *Corruptions* thereof which we testify
 against. When the Associate Presbytery made the foresaid
 Acknowledgment about the present Civil Government, as to the
 Security given to our Religion: they reckoned it consistent enough
 herewith, to be displaying a Testimony against *Defections* and
Corruptions in the foresaid Profession and Settlement of Religion:
 And it must be as consistent with the foresaid Acknowledgment,
 to declare against an Oath which condemns that Testimony.

Upon the whole, our Brethren have never, all along, touch upon the proper Question in Controversy; viz. *Whether swearing the religious Clause in some Burgeſſes-Oaths, by Soldiers, as it comes neceſſarily to be uſed and applied in this Perion, diſagreeable to the preſent State and Circumſtances of the Teſtmony among Seceders, for Religion and Reformation; and inconſiſtent, particularly, with entering into the Bond for renewing our Covenants: Wherefore, their whole Conduct, in this Affair, manifeſtly UNREASONABLE.*

ADDITIONAL ANSWER to REASON IX.

Though the Answer already made by the Synod unto the ninth Reason of Proteſt, be ſo far ſufficient, after what was ſaid before, That nothing further is needful for expoſing the *Unreaſonableneſs* thereof to any conſiderate and unprejudiced View: Yet, becauſe many are diſpoſed to take other Views of the Matter; and becauſe the Speeches here uttered are, with Reſpect unto ſuch, of an evident Tendency to *impoſe* upon ſome, to *harden* others, and to promote the preſent *Degeneracy*, by throwing up a *thick Miſt* upon Presbyterian Principles, and the Work of bearing Witneſs for CHRIST; it ſeems therefore expedient, that ſome further Answer thereunto be now added.

The Brethren begin this Reason with an high Reflection upon the Act and Sentence of Synod, as appearing to them of *glaring and manifeſt Sinfulneſs*; particularly from ſome Reaſons which they mentioned as ſupporting their Diſſent when they entered it, and which they come here to enlarge upon: But theſe Reaſons, even as now enlarged upon, are ſo far from warranting the above Charge of *glaring and manifeſt Sinfulneſs*, that themſelves are *deſtitute of all Foundation*; as will appear upon a brief Review thereof. And,

1mo. The Act and Sentence of the Synod is charged, as *contrary to that brotherly Love, Regard and Forbearance, that the Members of Judicatories, and all Chriſtians, ought, according to the Word of God, to exerciſe one towards another.*

Among the Articles of Reason that were mentioned by the Brethren, for ſupporting their Diſſent when they entered it, (as may be ſeen by turning back to Page 27, at the Foot, and Page 28, at the Head) The *Fiſt* was, that the Sentence is *contrary to the Word of God*; and the *Fourth* was, That it is *contrary to that Brotherly-Love, Regard and Forbearance that the Members of Judicatories, and all Chriſtians ought to maintain towards one another*: But as, inſtead of attempting a particular and ſeparate Proof of that

that *First* and *main* Article, it comes here to be slipped in under the *Fourth*, which, when now begun with as above, has this Clause incorporated with it, *according to the Word of God*; --so, in the Brethrens Enlargement upon the present Article, an Use is made of some *Texts of Scripture*, about *Brotherly Love, Regard and Forbearance*; and accordingly, as appears from the Beginning of the last Paragraph of that Enlargement, this is given out for Proof of the Sentence being *contrary to the Word of God*. The Charge then of its being *contrary to the Word of God*, doth here sink into that, of its being *contrary to the Brotherly Love, Regard and Forbearance, which ought to be exercised, according to the Word of God*: And yet there is nothing here produced from Scripture, upon the Head of *Forbearance*, that hath any real *Applicableness* to the Case in Hand; as appears from the former Answer, and may be further evident in a little. Again, the Brethrens whole Argument here, about *Forbearance*, depends immediately upon this Point, that the Sentence was passed *against their Inclination*; so that if the passing of it had proved *agreeable their Inclination*, there had been no Room for the Charge as here laid, of its being *contrary to the Word of God*:

And it may at least be said, That so wide a Charge of being *contrary to the Word of God*, had need to be supported here by a more *decent Reason*, than that of being *contrary to the Inclination of Men*; when the Question in Debate has not any Face of being about a Thing of itself *indifferent*.

But, for evidencing the pretended *Contrariety* of the Sentence unto that *brotherly Love, Regard and Forbearance*, which ought to be mutually exercised; an Argument is managed, from that *Forbearance* which was once used about an Observation of the *ceremonial Law*. Now, the Nature, Circumstances and End of what Allowance was made for the *Jewish* Converts unto Christianity, in the Matter of *ceremonial* Observations, during about *forty Years* after our Lord's Resurrection, together with the Mystery of divine Sovereignty in that Allowance, is a Subject whereof a particular Examination needs not to be essayed here.

However, as the Question then was about the Work of abolishing a general System of *divine Ordinances*, which had endured through many Ages, a Thing that *never had or can have any Parallel* in the World; and as the Lord did, in an *extraordinary Way*, direct and carry on the *gradual* Proceedure of that *extraordinary Work*: It may appear, even at first View, very *extravagant and unbecoming*, to manage an Argument now from that Case; except in the *general and moral* Affair, of making Allowance for weak Consciences or prejudiced Minds, in Things of themselves *indifferent*.

It is indeed certain That the *legal Ceremonies* were Things of themselves *indifferent*: And it being as certain, That an *Oath*, especially a *religious Oath*, is of a quite other Nature; being, of itself, either morally *Good* or *Evil*, *Sin* or *Duty*, a special *Glorification* or a special *Profanation* of the Lord's Name: It is therefore far from being a *due* or *decent* Comparison which is here made, betwixt *Forbearance* about the Observation of these *legal Ceremonies*, and about the swearing of a *Burgeſs-Oath* in its religious Clause. Neither can it any Way serve for justifying this Comparison, to tell that, as *the Observation of the Jewish Ceremonies was once lawful*; so, with as little Reason can it be denied, that *the Clause condemned by the Synod was likewise once lawful*: For, according to what has been noticed before, the Thing condemned by the Synod is not generally the *religious Clause* of some *Burgeſs-Oaths*, but, particularly, such a *swearing* thereof as at present among *Seceders*, which is justly refused to have been ever lawful: And tho' that Observation of the *Jewish Ceremonies* which took Place in the Days of the Apostles, was materially *the same* which had taken Place before; yet the *present swearing* of the foresaid Clause is, by no Means, materially *the same* which took Place in former Periods, particularly of Reformation; for, the very *Matter* of the Oath in that Clause, differs as much now from what it was then, as the national Profession and Settlement of Religion in these Times of *general Reformation*, did differ from what is the national Profession and Settlement thereof in this Time of *general Defection*.

But moreover, in what is now brought forth, about the Observation of *legal Ceremonies* and about *mutual Forbearance*, some *strange Doctrines* are contained.

In discoursing upon the mutual *Forbearance* which was exercised among the *Converts to Christianity*, about the Observance of *legal Ceremonies*, the Brethren do indeed grant an *Exception*, that such *Forbearance* was not exercised in the Case of mingling the Observance of these Ceremonies with the Righteousness of Christ in the Matter of Justification before God: And no more is needful, than an Improvement of this *Exception*, for overthrowing the whole of their present Argument about *Forbearance*; because the ceremonial Observances in the Christian Church were then *not sinful*, unless in the foresaid Case, about which mutual *Forbearance* was not exercised; but the whole of their present Argument for mutual *Forbearance* is stated upon this Principle, that these ceremonial Observances about which the said *Forbearance* was then exercised, were then *sinful* Observances: And it would have been as reasonable and decent, to argue that such

Forbearance was then exercised, even in the Case of *mingling these Observances with the Righteousness of Christ*, as to argue that it was exercised in the Case of *denying Christ and his Righteousness altogether*; which the Brethren really do, when they argue as these ceremonial Observances about which this Forbearance was exercised, had even plainly enough denied *that Christ was yet come in the Flesh*.

It is evident, That the Observation of *legal Ceremonies*, among the *Jewish Converts to Christianity*, about which the Apostle and Saints in Scripture exercised a mutual Forbearance, is taught by the Brethren, to have been an *unlawful or sinful Observation*. For, they speak of it as having been *once lawful*, which insinuates that it was *then become sinful*; yea, while they speak of it as having been once *unquestionably lawful*, they also speak of it as being then become *unquestionably sinful*; for they tell, that the Sin thereof which they mention, was a Thing whereof *there was sufficient objective Evidence unto all*: And accordingly they plead, that the Case of Forbearance about the Observation of these *Ceremonies*, was *parallel* to the Case of Forbearance about swearing the religious Clause of some *Burgess-Oaths*; even upon Supposition of its being *granted*, that the said swearing is, with *sufficient objective Evidence unto all*, a Thing *sinful*, yea as having a *Matter sinful* made the *Subject* of the Oath.

Again, it is as evident, that the fore-said Observation of *legal Ceremonies* is taught by them to have been *very sinful*. They tell, that it was *virtually, and upon the Matter, a saying, that Christ the Substance was not yet come in the Flesh*; that this was the *Intention of the Work, whatever was the Intention of the Worker*; that the *Apostles themselves* their having understood this to be the *Case, is clear*; yea, that *there was sufficient objective Evidence hereof unto all*. Something indeed might have been spared from the *Witness* of the Expression, *sufficient objective Evidence unto all*: Because God doth nothing in *vain*, or *more than he accounts sufficient*; but he had not brought out *all* his Evidence unto *all*, about abolishing of these *legal Ceremonies*, till the *Temple of Jerusalem* was entirely demolished, after which no mutual Forbearance was exercised about that Observation. However, if there was *sufficient objective Evidence* of the Thing *unto all*, then it was *even plain enough*: And, as it may well be supposed that we all agree in rejecting the *Popish Doctrine*, as if Man's Actions were *specified by their Intentions*; therefore, if the *Intention of the Work*, in these *Ceremonial Observances*, was (tho' not *formally*, yet) *virtually, and upon the Matter, and even plainly enough, a saying that Christ the Substance was not yet come in the Flesh*; it

ust follow, that the *Persons* observing these Ceremonies were *plainly and plainly enough* chargeable with denying that *Christ was yet come in the Flesh*.

Now it is alledged, that, until the Temple at *Jerusalem* was entirely demolished, *viz.* about the Space of *Forty Years*, the *Apostles* and *Saints* in *Scripture* exercised a mutual *Forbearance* concerning the said *Observation* of legal Ceremonies, whereby the *Observers* were plainly enough denying *Christ* to be *yet come in the Flesh*: That is, they exercised this *Forebearance* for so long a Time, even about a publick *Practice*, whereby *Persons*, under the aggravating *Mask* of a *Profession* of *Christ*, were *plainly enough* denying that *Jesus is the Christ*, denying the *Lord* that *ought them*, and counting the *Blood of the Covenant* an *unholy Thing*. Yea more, as it is supposed, that there was formal *Covenanting* among these *Persons*; so it is alledged, that the mutual *Forbearance* was exercised, even in the *Case* of their necessarily *engaging*, by the *solemn Oath* of the *Covenant*, that they would *continue* in the above dreadful *Practice*: And the *Forbearance* which is alledged to have been exercised by the *Apostles* as well as others upon that *Head*, was a *forbearing* any *Condemnation* of such a *Practice*, and any *marring of Communion* thereby.

All this inevitably belongs unto the *proper* and *genuine Sense* of what is now taught concerning the mutual *Forbearance* which was exercised about the *Observation* of *Jewish Ceremonies*; and belongs thereto without any greater *Stretch*, than is proper and usual in *explaining* any *Text* of *Scripture*: And all the *Reason* alledged, why the *Apostles* and *Saints* went such an *astonishing* Length in their *Forbearance*, is, That the *Thing* was but *newly* *unparrelled*, and *never* *formely* *Matter of Debate*, as having been *once unquestionably lawful*; tho' indeed it was *unquestionably never* *lawful*, to *deny* that *Christ was yet come in the Flesh*, after *once* he actually *was come*.

It is needless to enlarge upon the dreadful *Nature* and *Consequence* of such *Doctrines*: Only, if what is thus alledged, of the *astonishing Length* to which the *Apostles* and *Saints* carried their *mutual Forbearance*, should *bold*, and hold as a *Precedent*; this would give more *Advantage* to the *Friends* of *Catholick Communion*, and to the *Adversaries* of *SECESSION*, than probably they ever yet dreamed of.

But then, it is *altogether refused*, that the *Observation* of *legal Ceremonies* about which the *Apostles* and *Saints* in *Scripture* exercised a mutual *Forbearance*, was *any Way sinful*. The *Persons* who were allowed of for a *Time* in observing these *Ceremonies*, had by *no Means* any *Intention* of saying thereby that *Christ*

was not yet come in the Flesh: And considering that the Obligation and Force of the *Ceremonial Law*, as to its fixing such a Intention upon the *Work* itself, was then ceased and *void*; it is therefore very unreasonable to alledge, as if, in this Case, the *Work* could have any such Intention when the *Worker* had not. In *moral* Actions indeed, which are measured by the eternal and invariable Rule of the *Moral Law*, the *sinful Intention* of the *Action* still remains, whatever he intended by the *Agent*: But it is absurd to pretend, that any Intention could cleave to a *ceremonial Action*, which was not fixed upon it either by the *ceremonial Agent* or by the *cerimonial Law*: Wherefore it is altogether refused, that that Observation of *Jewish Ceremonies* about which the mutual Forbearance was then exercised, was either *virtually*, or, upon the *Matter*, by the Intention of the *Work* more than of the *Worker*, a Saying that *Christ the Substance was not yet come in the Flesh*. And it is evident that the said Observation was then *noways sinful*: For, as the Apostles themselves joined in the Practice, when Occasion required; so the Apostle *Paul*, by the Spirit of God, commends his doing so, as in *1 Cor. x. 20*.

What further shall be offered here, on this Head, shall be in the Words of two eminent Divines. Mr. *Henry*, in his Commentary on *Acts* *xxi. 24*. says, "The ceremonial Law---was not become *unlawful* as yet, to those that had been bred up in the Observation of it, but were far from expecting Justification by it; it was *dead* but not *buried*, *dead* but not yet *deadly*." And Dr. *Owen*, in his *Preface* to his Commentary on the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, says, concerning the Observation of *Mosaical Rites*; "Some,----from a *pure Reverence* of their original Institutions, either being not fully instructed in their Liberty, or by Reason of Prejudices not readily admitting the Consequences of that Truth wherein they were instructed, abode in their Observation, without seeking for *Righteousness* or *Salvation* by them:---These the Apostles bore with in all Meekness; yea, and using the *Liberty* given them of the Lord, to avoid offending of them, joined with them in their Practice, as Occasion did require:----Nor was *Mosaical Worship* utterly to cease, so as to have no *Acceptance* with God, until the *final Ruin* of that Church foretold by our Saviour."

But another Piece of strange Doctrine is now taught by the Brethren; *viz.* That the Synod at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* *xv.* went the Length of enjoying, for a Time, some Observance of the ceremonial Law by the Gentiles: That is, (according to their above Doctrine about such Observance,) the *Gentiles*, for the Sake of Harmony with some *Jews*, were enjoined to practise, for a Time, some

some plain Denial of Christ!---- However, the said Assertion about the Synod at Jerusalem, is impugned and overthrown by Calvoine against the Papists, in his Institutions, Lib. iv. Chap. x. Art. 21. And as he there proves, from a plain Contradiction of the Context in teaching otherwise, the Decree of that Synod, about abstaining from Meats offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from Things strangled, was an enjoining, not any Observance of the ceremonial Law, but an Observance of the moral Law, in abstaining from giving Offence to weak Brethren, about some Things of themselves indifferent.

Thus it appears, That, as the Brethrens present Argument, from the mutual Forbearance which was sometime exercised about the Observation of Jewish Ceremonies, is very unreasonable and unbecoming; so, in what they bring forth about that Case, for giving it a Face of Applicableness to the Case in Hand, some strange Doctrines are contained: And tho' they be not supposed to adopt nakedly that plain and proper Sense of their Argument; yet here is an Evidence, how readily one falls into a Mire, through violent Opposition to a Matter of plain Truth and Duty.

But, for further Evidence of the strange Doctrines now advanced, the mutual Forbearance which is urged in the present Case must be particularly considered. It is pled, That there ought to be a mutual Forbearance about the Case of swearing the religious Clause of some Burgefs-Oaths, even upon Supposition of its being granted, That the said Swearing would be doing a Thing that is, virtually and upon the Matter, a sinful receding from ANY PART of the Testimony of the Day, which we are professing to hold; yea, a doing so with sufficient objective Evidence unto all, that is, a doing so plainly enough: And they expressly teach the Warrantableness of such Forbearance in a Matter sinful, even when it is made the Subject of a solemn Oath.----- Now, what is the Forbearance pled for, in such a Case? It is even a forbearing to condemn and declare against a present Swearing the foresaid religious Clause, tho' granted to be a plain enough Backsliding from any Part of the Testimony of the Day, and to have a Matter sinful made, plainly enough, the Subject of the Oath; it is even a forbearing to warn Professors against such Backsliding, and such Profanation of the Lord's Name; and a forbearing to take any Order, that Persons already concerned in such a sinful Oath be not admitted into the Bond of the Covenant, in a Way of justifying and adhering to that other sinful and contradictory Oath.----- Again, wherefore should such Forbearance be exercised? It is even because, under a Pretence of Novelty in the Thing, some have different Sentiments from the Synod, and cannot see with the Synod,

in

in this Matter : And there must be such Forbearance, because of these different Sentiments and Sight, even supposing the Matter to be of *sufficient objective Evidence unto all*, that is, *plain enough* for any who are not *uncommonly blind or prejudiced*, a plain enough *Backsliding and Profanation of the Lord's Name*.

Such is the Doctrine of *mutual Forbearance* now advanced. Instead of a due Forbearance with Persons, in the Manner of reclaiming them from the Evil, where themselves allow it to be practicable; there is now urged a Forbearance with the *Evil itself*, yea the dreadful Evil of a *sinful Oath*, even supposing it to be *evidently enough* sinful in the Way of Backsliding or *Apostasy*; -----so as it should still be let by *unmedaled-with, unheeded, and tolerated*, under a Pretence of Novelty in the Matter, because of different Sentiments : And, if such a Scheme of Forbearance were followed out, what terrible *Laodicean and Latitudinarian Deeps*, it must natively stand in, may be obvious enough to every one's Meditation.

According to the Brethrens Reasoning, if it have any *consistent* Sense, Matters of *Truth and Duty* must be *subjected* to the Will and Pleasure of Men ; so as, if Brethren and Fellow-Christians shall *agree and harmonize* about making any *new Stand* for Truth and Duty, it is well, that Stand may then be made ; but if some shall have *different Sentiments*, tho' in a Point of the greatest Weight, and of *sufficient objective Evidence unto all*, yet all must be huddled into a Grave of *Charity, and mutual Forbearance*, according to the sad Application, which is made of the Texts, *Phil. ii. 1, 3. Eph. iv. 1, 2. Prov. iii. 5, 7*. If a Judicatory shall adventure to give any other Kind of Justice to such a Point of Truth or Duty, this will be *a lording it over their Brethren*, and a *manifest Reflection upon the Dispensation of God toward the Church while here below*, in his bestowing *different Measures of Light* upon the Members thereof ; as if different Measures of Light in the Church, did require us to be *indifferent and mute* about Matters upon which there is a Difference. And as it is objected against the Synod's Sentence, That it *necessarily obliges them, according to the Rules of Discipline, to censure their Brethren and Fellow-Christians*, if continuing of different Sentiments ; therefore it must be a *bad Sentence*, were it for no more than that it cannot consist with a *Latitudinarian Scheme*, but will allow the Truth and Ordinances of Christ to retain their *proper Controul* over Men.

Thus, the important Doctrine about *holding that Fast which we have*, about *contending earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, about *not suffering Sin to lie upon our Brother*, and about *humble Subjection to the Means of Light and the Ordinances of Christ*

Christ, must come to be sadly undermined by a new Scheme of Forbearance.

Many obvious Enlargements upon the *awful Import* of the above Doctrines, shall be forbore here : Only, it cannot be a *good Cause* which needs such Doctrine for the Defence thereof : And it is exceedingly mournful, that such *Schemes* should be breaking forth in the *Secession*. It is not with us as in *Months past* ; when Doctrines come to be brought forth, that have such a manifest Tendency to throw up a *thick Mist* upon *Presbyterian Principles*, and the Work of *witnessing for Christ*.

2dly, After the Freedom that has been used with *Scripture-Precept* and *Example*, it needs not be surprising to find that our subordinate *Standards* and *Covenants* come to suffer no less *Violence*, under the Attempt of shewing the Sentence to be contrary thereunto. And as, in the foregoing Article, the great Plea is for a *licentious mutual Forbearance* ; so, the same Thing is pursued in the following Articles, under an Out-cry about a *Term of Communion*, a *Pain* and *Penalty*.

As to the Charge, that *falling in with the Judgment of the Synod is made a Term of Communion*, all that could have been reasonably said, amounts to this,---That it may be supposed, the Synod will reckon themselves obliged to use due Pains with all concerned, for their Satisfaction with and Observance of the *Duty declared*, without *tolerating* a countumacious Transgression thereof. And indeed, considering the real Nature of the Case, That the present swearing of the religious Clause, doth materially and plainly amount unto a *solemn Abjuration* of the *whole Secession-Testimony* which is *avouched* in the *Bond* of the Covenant ; if the Synod's Sentence about that swearing were to be blamed for any Thing, it should be for being laid *too modestly* and *softly*, in Condescension to some Brethren : And it must look strange to every intelligent and impartial View, that such a Noise should be made against the Synod, for *taking Order* that these under their Inspection be not *allowed* and *tolerated*, to AVOUCH and ABJURE *promiscuously*, the *whole Testimony* among their Hands.


As to the Charge, that the signifying a Satisfaction with the Judgment of the Synod is required *under no less Pain and Penalty than of being secluded from the Privilege of entering into the Bond* ;---the Terms, *Pain* and *Penalty* are very *unbecoming* here, when all the Matter is, That the Synod cannot allow of entering into the *Bond*, but *after the due Order*, especially in a Case so very important. Moreover,

1. It is unaccountable that the Synod should be charged here, with attempting to force their own Light upon the Consciences of others, contrary to Confess. Chap. xx. §. 2. Jam. iv. 12. Rom. xiv. 4. and Confess. Chap. xxxi. §. 4.-----As if they were claiming Lordship over any Man's Conscience, when only determining ministerially against a Practice which plainly cannot be continued with a good Conscience: And as if they were offering to make themselves the Rule of Faith or Practice; when the Reason given for the Direction in their Act, is not that themselves have Light about it, as if this might satisfy others, but it comes to this, That a present Swearing the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths is inconsistent with the Testimony among Seceders, particularly with an Entering into the Bond;-----which Reason will stand valid, true and plain, after all the Endeavours of raising Dust about it.

2. They charge the Sentence with being contrary to Confess. Chap. xxii. §. 4. because they reckon it appears from the Tenor of their Reasons, That what is sworn to in the Clause is not sinful; tho' yet there be not one Word in all their Reasons, so much as offering to make appear, That the present national Profession and Settlement of Religion, sworn to therein, are not sinful.

We are indeed told, That the Thing sworn to is given as the only Criterion of the true Church, Confess. Chap. xxv. §. 2. describing the visible Church from all these that profess the true Religion: And this same Point will be found amplified with an high Tone, in the third of the following Reasons. But, beside what is replied there, it may be observed here, That the above Remark must be taken, either as a Fling upon the Sound of Words, or as introducing a dangerous, latitudinarian Text, viz. That every Profession of the true Religion, which is made in, and makes belong unto the visible Church, may (as in some Burgeſs-Oaths) be fully approved of, sworn to, and espoused for a joint Profession; and if so, then there ought to be no Seceſſion from any particular Church, however defective and corrupt her Profession be, as long as it may still be owned for a Profession that makes her belong unto the general Body of the visible Christian Church; which may come to cut off all Seceſſion, except from the Church of Rome.

N. B. Turn over immediatly to Page 138; as, through a Mistake about what this additional Answer might extend unto, the remaining Part thereof comes to be transferred to that Place.



ANSWERS by the Associate SYNOD,

T O

REASONS of PROTESTATION, by the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine, &c.* against the SENTENCE of said Synod, at *Edinburgh, April 9th, 1746*, concerning a religious Clause in some *Burges-Oaths*.

“ REASONS of PROTESTATION, Mr. *Ebene-*
 “ *zer Erskine* against the Sentence of the Rev^d. the *Associate*
 “ *Synod*, met at *Bristow, April, 1746*, condemning the first
 “ Clause of some *Burges-Oaths* as sinful; where he not being
 “ present, craved of the Synod when met at *Stirling, Sept.*
 “ *1746*, that the said Sentence might be reversed, the same
 “ was absolutely refused; whereby he found himself obliged,
 “ for his own Exoneration, to concur with the Rev^d. Bre-
 “ thren, who dissented from, and protested against the fore-
 “ said Sentence, when it was past at *Edinburgh*: The Reasons
 “ of which Protest, entred by Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine*, were to
 “ be given in to the Moderator Mr. *Thomas Mair*, against the
 “ first of *February, 1747*; and are as follow.

“ MR. *Erskine* having seen and perused a distinct Copy of
 “ the *Reasons of Protestation*, given in already to the
 “ Moderator of the Synod at *Edinburgh*, in *April 1746*, by seven
 “ Members who were present at passing of the said Sentence, he
 “ fully agrees therewith, and adheres unto the same, as if here
 “ repeted; only, for their Illustration and Confirmation, he offers
 “ the Considerations, or *Reasons* following.

REASON I.

" I Cannot help thinking it a Piece of the highest Presumpti-
 " on and Self-confidence, for thirteen Members of the ASSO-
 " ciate Synod, when the one Half of the constituent Members and
 " more were absent, and that in the Face of a Protestation
 " by so many Members present, to push on a Condemnation of
 " the first Clause of some Burges-Oaths as sinful; when they
 " knew very well, that the Lawfulness of the Oath, and of that
 " Clause of it in particular, was a Thing *hactenus judicata*.
 " already determined with the greatest Solemnity, by the Church
 " of *Scotland* in the purest Times of the Reformation. None can
 " doubt of its being thus sustained by *John Knox*, or other wor-
 " thy Reformers, who first compiled it: As little can any doubt
 " of its Approbation by these reformed *Burghs*, who received it
 " and retained it ever since. But besides this, it bears the evi-
 " dent Approbation both of Church and State in this Land, at
 " the Renovation of the national Covenant; while Burgeses, e-
 " qually with Men of other Characters sacred and civil, are
 " admitted to swear and subscribe the Covenants, without the
 " least Hint given of what is alledged in the Sentence of the said
 " thirteen Brethren, that there is an Inconsistency betwixt the said
 " Clause of the Burges-Oath and the Oath of the Covenant.
 " But this is not all; the said Burges-Oath hath not only the
 " Approbation of this Church and Nation, but of all the three
 " Nations, in their Solemn League; where Burgeses are also ad-
 " mitted with equal Solemnity to swear. I cannot say but it ar-
 " gues a vast Assurance in the above thirteen Members, to state
 " themselves in a direct Opposition to such a glorious Cloud of
 " Witnesses, and that without the least Apology for differing
 " from their far superior Judgment and Determination. It is but
 " a sorry Apology to say, Though it might be lawful in their
 " Days, yet it becomes sinful in our Day, thro' the Variation of
 " Circumstances. For, as the Law of God and Truth of God is
 " ever the same, in all Periods and Revolutions of the World;
 " so it will be found, That what is once crooked in Point of
 " Truth and Duty can never be made straight; and what is
 " once straight and agreeable unto the Law and Testimony can
 " never be made crooked: And I apprehend it will try the united
 " Strength of our above Brethren, to bow and crook that which
 " was found straight in the Days of our Reformation. But it yet
 " heightens my Admiration at the Assurance of these Brethren,
 " That they, in their Sentence, not only condemn the said first
 " Clause

Clause of the Oath as sinful; but have the Boldness to impose their Judgment, materially if not formally, as a Term of Communion upon the whole Church of the Association, within the three Kingdoms; so as to declare all that differ from their Judgment incapable of entering into the Bond of the Covenant, and consequently incapable of holding Communion with us in any of the sealing Ordinances of the new Testament; which makes indeed a very strange Catastrophe and Overturn, from what took Place in the Days of our Reformation: In the Days of our Reformation, none could be admitted in these Burrows, either to their Civil Privileges, or to their Church Communion, without swearing the Burgeſs-Oath: But now, according to the Decision of the thirteen Brethren, no Man can be admitted to Church Communion with us, if he has sworn it, or hereafter swear it, unless he acknowledge his Sin in so doing. I fear that this turning of Things upside down, shall in the Event be as the Potters Clay.----Suppose, the whole Associate Synod had been as one Man in the Condemnation foresaid, yet it would make any indifferent and impartial Person suspect they had lost their Road, when they did not, according to the Command of the great Shepherd, go forth by the Foot-steps of his Flock; but, on the contrary, saw them taking a quite opposite Road: But much more Ground would he have for such a Jealousy, when he saw but thirteen Men of the Associate Synod, by a clandestine Reference and as clandestine a Determination, carrying a Matter, in a thin Meeting by a scrimp Majority of four Votes, not only against the Mind of their Brethren, but against the whole Flock of Christ that have travelled the Road to Glory before us. If these Brethren alledge they are following the Flock in this Road, they are hereby challenged to shew the Print of their Feet; any one of the Lord's Witnesses, Martyrs, Confessors, Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries or Assemblies, that ever travelled the Road they are into. Has the promised Conduct of the Spirit of Truth to lead into all Integrity and Truth, failed to the whole Flock since the Reformation? Surely it has failed as to this Matter, either on their Part, or else on the Part of the Brethren concerned in carrying this Sentence; for it is impossible that the foresaid condemned Clause of the Oath can be both sinful and lawful, or lawful in one Period, and sinful in another; since the Law of God is eternal and unalterable in all Periods, as was said above. Will any Man, in his right Senses, believe that the whole Flock of Christ since the Reformation have wandered out of the Way of Understanding;

“ and that these Brethren, by some new Light, have found it
 “ Especially when there is not one Text of Scripture, or one Ar-
 “ ticle of our approved Standards, or yet the Testimony of any
 “ one of the Lord’s Witnesses, alledged as the Ground and
 “ Foundation of their Sentence. ’Tis only a *Thus saith the*
 “ *Lord*, and not the *words* *even* of any Man or Society of
 “ Men since the Apostles Times, whether general or particu-
 “ lar, that can impose a Rule of Faith or Practice upon the Church
 “ of Christ, as these Brethren have attempted to do. The Doc-
 “ trine of implicate Faith and blind Obedience, was exploded at
 “ our Reformation from Popery, and abjured by solemn Cove-
 “ nant, and even by the condemned Clause of the Burgeſs-Oath;
 “ God forbid that it ever return to us, or we to it.

A N S W E R to R E A S O N I.

AS to the Reverend Mr. *Erskine’s* Preamble, wherein he ex-
 presseth his Adherence to the Reasons formerly given in
 by his protesting Brethren who were present at passing the
 Sentence, there is not Necessity of saying any Thing here, but
 that these Reasons have been sufficiently answered.

The Synod are sorry to find their Brother Mr. *Erskine* expres-
 sing himself in such strong Terms against the Synod; accusing
 them of the *highest Presumption* and *Self-Confidence*, to push
 on a Condemnation of the Burgeſs-Oath in its religious Clause,
 when, saith he, *the one Half of the constituent Members and more*
were absent. But our Reverend Brother may remember, that
 the Synod did take very deliberate Steps in this Affair. It was
 delayed from the Synod that met in *March 1745*, to the
 Consideration of a Synod to meet *pro re nata*, at *Edinburgh*, in
 the Month of *May*, that the Brethren might have due Time
 to consider thereupon; and the first Day of that Meeting was ap-
 pointed to be observed as a Day of Humiliation, that we might
 look to the Lord for Light and Direction in the Matter; which was
 observed accordingly. The Synod continued then *two Weeks*
 together, most of their Time being spent in reasoning upon this
 Affair; and, after all, they adjourned to *Stirling* against the
 Month of *September*, without coming to any Decision.---The
 Matter came again under Consideration at *Stirling*, when it
 was again delayed; and the Synod was appointed to meet at the
 same Place, for that Business in *November* following.---Accord-
 ingly the Synod met on the said Occasion, when they spent a
 Week in reasoning upon this Affair; and a Proposal being made
 to continue together next Week, and that the *Tuesday* should be
 observed

observed in publick Humiliation and Prayer, this was accordingly essayed; and that Week being likewise spent in Reasoning upon the Affair, nothing further was done therein. It came again under the Consideration of the Synod at *Edinburgh, April 1746*: And the Synod being sensible that it had been fully reasoned upon, and that there were weighty Reasons for coming to some Determination about it, agreed to continue together next Week, in order to bring the same, by the divine Direction, to some Issue. This was agreed to by the Synod after some Reasoning on the first Week, at a fuller Meeting than they ever had upon it before; and if the Synod was not so full on the second Week, at passing the Sentence, it was the Fault of Members who went off without Leave asked and given, and therefore is not to be imputed to the Synod, nor to the Members who, according to their Duty, attended that Meeting: And it can be made evident, that of *Twenty eight* Ministers belonging to the Synod, there were *Twenty three* present the first Week; and that the Difference betwixt the Number of Ministers present the first and second Weeks was but *three*: And it is evident, That the Presence of all the constituent Members of a Synod is not to be expected; as likewise it is certain, that this Meeting of Synod was duly called and constitute, and had therefore full Powers to determine in what came under their Consideration. From all which it appears, That our Reverend Brother Mr. *Erskine's* Charge against the Synod, for *bulging* the Affair, as he terms it, and for *high Presumption* and *Self-Confidence*, is destitute of any Foundation.

Several Things are further alledged by Mr. *Erskine*, upon this his first Reason, on which a few Observations may be made. And particularly, no Argument has been produced to prove that Mr. *Knox* compiled the *Burgess-Oath* in its religious Clause; and the Supposition which the Swearer makes in that Oath, of often perjuring himself in *breaking* his Oath, obliging himself to pay a Piece of Money so often as he breaks; makes it more than probable that the said Clause was never laid by that great Man as it now stands. Again, Mr. *Erskine* pretends, That this Clause of the *Burgess-Oath* bears the Approbation of *Church* and *State* at the Renovation of our national Covenant; while *Burgesses*, as well as others were admitted to swear and subscribe the same; and that it had the Approbation of the *three Nations*, while *Burgesses* were admitted to swear the Solemn League: But all that our Brother has advanced, or can be said upon this Head, amounts to no more than this, That our Reformers, in no Period of this Church, took the *Burgess-Oath* under Consideration in any of their Courts; so far, at least, as to pass any Sentence about its

its *Lawfulness* or *Unlawfulness*; and it can never follow from this, that they determined it to be *lawful*: And tho' we have no Ground to doubt, but that these who took the *Mason-Oath* were admitted, as well as Burgeses, to swear the national Covenant, and Solemn League; it does not follow, That our Reformers determined the *Lawfulness of the Mason-Oath*, but that they never made any judicial Determination whether it was lawful or not. Besides, these Arguments of Mr. *Erskine's* will never prove, That these who have sworn the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants, in which we swear to *contend* and *testify* against the defective and corrupt Profession of Religion in the established Church, can, in a *Consistency* with this Oath of the Bond, swear that Clause in the Burges-Oath; in which they swear, That they *profess*, and allow with their Heart, the true Religion *presently professed* in this Realm, and authorised by the Laws thereof, and that they shall *abide* at this *Profession* to their Life's End; that is, To swear an *Approbation* of the Profession of Religion in the established Church, and yet swear a *Testimony* against it. Our Reformers never had a Question of such a Nature about this Clause to consider; because the Circumstances of *their Times* differed so much from *ours*; and seeing the *Reformation* that was restored and made Advances in the Period betwixt the *Years* 1638 and 1550, is *buried* in the present national Profession and Settlement of Religion: So that these Arguments of Mr. *Erskine's*, cannot possibly conclude.

As to the Treatment our Brother gives the Synod, in calling them frequently by the Name of *thirteen Brethren*; and the *intemperate Heat* that runs thro' the whole of his Paper; it is not necessary to say any Thing, but in recommending to him to think more *coolly* of his Conduct; and to take it as a Hint to himself, that he has *left his Way*, when he is become so *unlike himself*, in this Conduct and Behaviour.

Mr. *Erskine* says, The *Divine Law* is *invariable*: But however, the *Circumstances of the Church* are not *invariable*; and we all know the *Profession* of Religion is very *variable*. As to the Reflections our Brother makes, about imposing a *new Term* of Communion; the Act and Sentence of the Synod dips no further in that Matter than to *warn* their People against such Swearing; and to prescribe as necessary for those who have inadvertently sworn that Clause, to see, and in some suitable Manner *express* a Conviction of their Mistake through Inadvertency in swearing the same, before they be admitted to swear the Bond for renewing our Covenants, which contains an open Testimony against the Burges-Oath in this Clause: And the Synod was under

er an absolute Necessity to use this Caution; that People might not, rashly and by Ignorance or Mistake, bind their Consciences by two Oaths contradictory to one another. As for many strong Expressions of Mr. Erskine's; it is better to pass by them, than bring out Reflections upon our Brother, seeing the Cause itself does not suffer by the strongest Words that bear no Argument in them.

R E A S O N II.

AS the above Sentence of Syned casts a Slur upon the whole Witnesses of the Reformation, as guilty of swearing contradictory Oaths and Covenants; so this Decision was gone into, with a manifest Neglect and Contempt of the Barrier-Acts of the Reformation, made by our wise and worthy Forefathers, on Purpose to prevent Debates and Divisions about Novations or new Things that might readily start up in the Church. In the Year 1639, The general Assembly enacts and ordains, *That no Novation, which may disturb the Peace of the Church, and make Division, be suddenly enacted and proponed; but so as the Motion be first communicated to the several Synods, Presbyteries and Kirks, (or Kirk-Sessions), that the Matter may be approved by all at Home, and Commissioners may come well prepared, unanimously to conclude a solid Determination upon these Points in the General Assembly.*

“ The Design of this Act, (as is declared in the Preamble,) is, That the intended Reformation, being recovered, may be preserved and established. And so zealous were our worthy Reformers in that Period, as to this Matter, That this Act is expressly renewed, August 6th, 1641, with this express Addition, That Transgressors of this Act be censured by Presbyteries and Synods.

“ As these Barrier Acts were wisely laid, for preserving the Reformation attained to, and for preventing Rents and Divisions; so it is highly probable, had the Synod walked according to this Rule as to the Matter in Hand, all the Disputes, Divisions and Offences that have ensued since this Affair came upon the Carpet, had been happily prevented. But tho' this was urged by us, yet our Brethren discovered such an extraordinary Keeness of Spirit, that no Motion of this Nature could be at all listened unto; until at Length, without Regard to Barrier Acts or the Peace of the Church, at a certain Juncture when they found they had a Majority of Members on their Side, they

“ carry

“ carry their Point, as was said, by a poor Majority of
 “ Four.

“ But I'm jealous that our Brethren have made more haste
 “ than good Speed, in so doing; for what if it shall be found,
 “ That the Neglect and Contempt of these Barrier Acts, is not only
 “ an Inroad upon the Right and Privilege of the diffused
 “ Church, plainly pointed at in the foresaid Barrier Acts, but also
 “ a Breach of the Oath of the Covenant which they and we have
 “ sworn with uplifted Hands to the Majesty on High.

“ None will deny, but that they and we are sworn to maintain
 “ and preserve the covenanted Reformation of *Scotland*; and if so,
 “ we're certainly bound to take all Methods, and to use all Means
 “ for its Preservation, and to avoid every Thing that may be de-
 “ trimental or prejudicial thereunto. Now, if the foresaid Bar-
 “ rier Acts are of no Use, and have no Subserviency toward
 “ the Preservation and Establishment of the Reformation, and pre-
 “ venting Divisions; either they were in a miserable Mistake in
 “ making such Barrier Acts, or else the Synod in a miserable Mis-
 “ take (I mean the *thirteen* Members above who made the Major-
 “ rity) in adventuring to overtop these Acts in their Decision,
 “ when strenuously and importunately urged to forbear any Sen-
 “ tence until the said Barrier Acts should be observed, so as both
 “ Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions might form a deliberate Judg-
 “ ment thereupon. I'm afraid, That, by a too hasty rolling of
 “ the Stone, they have made it return upon them to their own
 “ Hurt.”

A N S W E R to R E A S O N II.

AS to Mr. *Erskine's* Second Reason, it has already been an-
 swered, That there is a great Variation of the Circum-
 stances of the Church, in her different Periods; so that he has
 alledged, without any Ground, that the Sentence of the Synod
 casts a *Slur* upon the whole Witnesses of the Reformation, as
 guilty of swearing contradictory Oaths and Covenants. Neither
 can it be admitted, That the Decision of the Synod was gone in-
 to with a manifest *Neglect* and *Contempt* of the Act of Assembly
 1639, ordaining that *no Novation which may disturb the Peace of
 the Church, and make Division, be suddenly enacted and pro-
 posed; but so as the Motion be first communicated to the several
 Synods, Presbyteries and Kirks, or that the Matter may be ap-
 proved by all at Home, and Commissioners may come well prepared,
 unanimously to conclude a solid Determination upon these Points in the
 General Assembly.*

For, to set the Matter in a proper Light, it must be considered, that what these Acts speak of, (*viz.* an approving of the Matter at home, in the several Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, that Commissioners may come well prepared, unanimously to conclude a solid Determination,) must, in the Nature of the Thing, relate to Overtures concerning Matters of Order and Government, and not of Doctrine; because Kirk-Sessions, which are noticed in this Act, are not properly Judges concerning Doctrine, as Synods or other superior Judicatures; in regard they are mostly made up of Ruling Elders; whose Province is to cognolce upon Matters of Discipline and Government. We find the Assembly 1697, enacting, *That before any Assembly of this Church shall pass any Acts which are to be binding Rules and Constitutions to the Church, the same Acts be first proposed as Overtures to the Assembly; and being by them past as such, be remitted to the Consideration of the several Presbyteries of this Church, and their Opinions and Consent reported by their Commissioners to the next General Assembly following, who may then pass the same in Acts, if the more general Opinion of the Church thus had, agree thereto:* And we had several Overtures concerning Order and Government transmitted to the Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland, since that Act, which were never passed into Acts of Assembly. But the Matter under Consideration, is not a Question about Order and Government, but a Question about Doctrine; about what is Truth or Error; about the Agreeableness or Disagreeableness of a present swearing the religious Clause in some Burges-Oaths, unto the Oath of the Covenants; and about these who have adopted a Testimony against the sinful Defects and Corruptions in the present national Profession and Settlement of Religion, their swearing, in the religious Clause of some Burges-Oaths, a manifest Approbation thereof: Nor can it be reasonably questioned, that, in such a Matter of Doctrine and Case of Conscience, the supreme Judicatory are the proper Judges. And tho' Novations in Order may be forborn, without any great Loss; as was seen in the Overtures that were transmitted and never approved, and it was for the better that some of them, at least, were not turned into Acts: Yet, in Questions relative to Truth and Error, Sin and Duty; where the Honour and Glory of God, and the Consciences of Men are nearly concerned; something ought to be speedily determined; especially when the Question turns upon so weighty and grave a Point, as the Consistency or Contrariety of swearing a Clause in some Burges-Oaths, with the Bond for renewing our Covenants.

Our Reverend Brother speaks in strong Terms about the *Acts* 1639 and 1641, concerning Novations, calling them frequently *Barrier-Acts*: But it has been already answered, That these Acts respected Overtures to be transmitted to Presbyteries, or likewise *Sessions*, relating to *Discipline, Order and Government*, and not to Questions about *Doctrine, Truth and Error*, and Cases of Conscience, about what is *Sin*, or present *Duty*. The first Synod that met at *Jerusalem*, determined the Question they met upon, under the Conduct of the divine Spirit; and no such Proposal was made as that of transmitting the Affair to all the Presbyteries and Elderships under their Inspection, to advise upon it deliberately among themselves, before the Synod should consider it. The General Assembly of this Church, when they took before them the *Confession of Faith* composed by the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, debated and determined thereupon, as they were guided by the divine Spirit, when constituted in the Name of Christ; without remitting any *one Article* thereof, to be first handled and considered by Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions: But had they taken this Course, they had receded from the *Word* as their Rule in that Matter; they had opened a Door to *Secularism*, and endless Confusion; and, in that Case, we have Ground to think the said Confession of Faith had not been adopted by the Church of *Scotland*, to this Day.

Moreover, the Synod has, in the present Affair, walked agreeably to our *Confession of Faith*; which contains That *it belongeth to Synods ministerially to determine Controversies of Faith, and Cases of Conscience*.

Having thus observed the true Meaning of these *Acts* about Novations; there is no Need of saying any Thing further, as to what Consequences Mr. *Erskine* comes to deduce, from his mistaking their true Sense and Meaning, and from his Misapplication of them. It is to be regreted, That our Reverend Brother should discover his Temper so far, as in saying, That *at a certain Juncture, when they found they had a Majority of Members on their Side, they carry their Point by a poor Majority of Four*: For as the Question was stated betwixt *Decision and Delays*, and as sundry Members interfered not then in the Reasoning; it was known to no Body, when the Question was put, how it would carry: And that the Matter had been fully heard and considered; that there were weighty Grounds for proceeding to a Decision; and that the then Meeting of the Synod for further considering, and for deciding the Affair in some Shape or other, under the divine Conduct, was agreed upon and appointed by universal Consent; has all been

shown above : So that the Reflections now thrown out are wholly roundless.

R E A S O N III.

3th. **T**HE Effence or Substance of what is sworn in the "condemned Clause of the Burges-Oath, is, That the Swearer *professes that he allows with his Heart the true Religion presently professed within this Realm, &c.* I know not if these *thirteen* Brethren who carried the condemnatory Sentence against this Clause of the Oath as sinful, did duly consider before their Sentence, that both they and we have, by solemn Covenant, adopted these very Words, (abstracting from the Word *presently*), as the true and faithful Description of the visible Church of Christ, the Family of God out of which there is no Salvation, See *Conf. of Faith*, Chap. 25. *Seet.* 2d, and *Larger Cat.* in Answer to that Question, *What is the visible Church?* The Answer is, *That it is a Society made up of all such as in all Ages, and Places of the World, do profess the true Religion, and of their Children.* Now, if these Words be lawful in our approved covenanted Standards, I would gladly know what makes the same Words sinful, when adopted or transferred into the Burges-Oath; for the whole of the first Clause anent Religion is condemned, without Exception, as sinful.

"I know it is said by some, that the Oath is sinful, because these Words, *profess the true Religion*, are too vague and indefinite, and do not afford a distinct enough Idea of what the true Religion is. But, if they be so in the Burges-Oath, they must be so likewise in the Confession of Faith, and Catechism; there being nothing added to these Words in our Standards to limit them, in the Description given of the visible Church of Christ. Every Man who has sworn the Covenant or Bond, has sworn and said, before God and the World, [I believe with my Heart, that the visible Church of Christ in *Scotland*, (or any other Place of the World), consists of all these who profess the true Religion, and their Children.] This being the Case with us all who have entred into the Bond, it is out of Time to tell us they are too indefinite.

"Others tell us, That the Snake lies in the Word, *presently* professed, &c. as if this Word or Clause, were an Homologation of the present State of Religion in the established Church, under the Countenance of Civil Law and Authority, against

“ whose Defections we have listed up a Testimony, and from
 “ whom we have made a Secession; and therefore this Clause
 “ does not agree unto, or consist with, an entring into the Bond
 “ for renewing our solemn Covenants.

“ Unto all which it is answered, (*First*,) when, at the re-
 “ newing of the Bond, we all swear, that the visible Church
 “ of Christ in *Scotland*, consisted of all who professed the true
 “ Religion; did we not swear *in verbis de presenti*, as well as the
 “ Man who swears the above religious Clause of the Burgess-Oath?
 “ (2.) Altho’ we made a Secession from the Judicatories of the
 “ established Church, yet we never made a Secession from the
 “ visible Church of Christ in *Scotland*, or from those who pre-
 “ sently profess the true Religion in *Scotland*; by no Manner of
 “ Means. (3.) The Profession of the true Religion, both in
 “ our Standards and the Burgess-Oath, instead of including, they
 “ exclude all past, present or future Defections therefrom; and
 “ therefore can be no Homologation of the Defections of the e-
 “ stablished Church: And this being the very Case, what a
 “ noble Handle might the Associate Synod and Presbyteries have
 “ made of this Clause, with all the consciencious Burgers con-
 “ cerned in it, thro’ *Scotland*; to adopt a Testimony for the true
 “ Religion of the Reformation, in Opposition unto all the De-
 “ fections from it by the established Church; seeing they had al-
 “ ready sworn materially to do so, by the first Clause of their
 “ Burgess-Oath? Whereas, instead of this, by the Decision of
 “ the Synod protested against, a Bar and stumbling-Block is
 “ cast in their Way, by putting an uncharitable Gloss upon the
 “ Words of the Oath, which they will not bear, either as they
 “ stand in the Oath itself, or in our approved Standards. (4.)
 “ Whereas it is alledged, that these Words, [*The true Religion*
 “ *presently professed within this Realm, and authorised by the Laws*
 “ *thereof*], must needs have a Relation to the Church establish-
 “ ed by Law: In answer to this, it is to be carefully observed,
 “ what it is that the Civil Law authorises with Relation to Re-
 “ ligion, either now or in former Periods since the Reformation.
 “ It is not simply Men professing what they please, that are autho-
 “ rised by the Laws of this Realm; but Men professing the true Re-
 “ ligion, or professing the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Presby-
 “ terian Government of the Church of *Scotland*. As for the present
 “ Defections of the Judicatories, either in Point of Doctrine, Wor-
 “ ship, Discipline or Government, altho’ they be screened by those
 “ in Authority, and too much patronized by them in their Way;
 “ yet these Defections and Corruptions have no Authority from
 “ the Laws authorising the true Religion, and the Profession
 “ thereof;

“ thereof ; the very contrary is the Truth. For, if it should
 “ please God to pour out a Spirit of Reformation upon our Sovereign King *George*, and our Parliament and Rulers, they could
 “ oblige the Judicatories, by the Laws that are in Being, to reform the Defections and Corruptions we testify against. (5.)
 “ It is owned, That in many that are even among the best Acts of civil Authority since the Reformation securing Religion, there are Clauses that are evidently sinful; but is either the civil Authority itself, or their Acts in Favours of the true Religion, to be rejected on the Account of these sinful Imperfections? Sure I am this is no Reformation-Principle; otherwise our reforming Fore-fathers had never made so great Account of these Acts of Parliament, in Favours of Religion, mentioned or quoted in the Preamble of the National Covenant, *Anno* 1638; in which Acts of Parliament there are a great many bad Things, as well as good Things; but they had learned, and so should we, to distinguish between Good and Evil, and to take the Benefit of what was good in these Acts, and to forbear the evil. (6.) These very Words which define the visible Church by the *Profession of the true Religion*, are Words which the Law authorises in the Ratification of our *Westminster Confession of Faith*; and therefore, it must be a Truth that is sworn, when we swear to the true Religion presently professed and authorised by Law.”

A N S W E R to R E A S O N III.

THE Way in which Mr. *Erskine* has laid this *Third Reason*, opens a Door for a very easy Answer unto it. He argues, That the Words, *professing the true Religion*, are to be found in the *Confession of Faith*, as well as in the *Burgefs-Oath*; but he acknowledges that the Words, *presently professed*, are not in the *Confession of Faith*; and neither are the Words, *authorised by the Laws of this Realm*: But these Words, *professing the true Religion*, and these other Words, *the true Religion presently professed in this Realm, and authorised by the Laws thereof*, are Words so widely different, that there can be no just Reasoning from the one to the other: And this may be a sufficient Answer to the Argument, and to all that he has said upon this *Reason*, as he has thought fit to branch it out.

He alledges, That the *Profession of the true Religion*, both in our Standards and in the *Burgefs-Oath*, doth exclude all *Defections*, past, present, or future; so that it can be no Homologation

tion of the Defections of the established Church: And (adds he) *this being the very Case, what a noble Handle might the Associate Synod and Presbyteries have made of this Clause, with all the conscientious Burgers, to adopt a Testimony for the true Religion, in Opposition to all the Defections from it by the established Church; seeing they had already sworn materially to do so, by the first Clause of their Burgeſs-Oath.* But before Mr. Erskine had advanced this, he should have considered that the Associate Synod, in their *Bond* for renewing our Covenants and according to the *Confession of Sins* prefixed thereto, have agreed, that all who are admitted into the said *Bond*, whether Burgeſſes or others, shall swear, that they shall, according to their several Stations, Places and Callings, contend and testify against it, as among the Defections of this Land; That “ when the Estates “ of the Nation were met in a free Parliament in the Year 1690, “ our Presbyterial Church-Government was settled according to “ its civil Establishment in the Year 1592, and all the Steps “ of Reformation attained to in that covenanting Period be- “ twixt 1638 and 1650, were neglected and past by; yea, in “ the said Settlement of Presbytery, all that was done against “ a covenanted Work of Reformation, in the first Session of “ Parliament of King *Charles* after his Restoration, is left un- “ touched; particularly the infamous *Act Reciſſory*, whereby all “ the Acts and Deeds of the foresaid covenanting Period are de- “ clared null and void, is never repealed; also that impious and “ wicked Act, the second Act of the second Session of the same “ Parliament, declaring null and void the Proceedings of that “ faithful Assembly at *Glasgow* in the Year 1638, and all other “ Acts and Deeds of that reforming Period, stands in the Body “ of our *Scots* Laws to this very Day:” And that they shall, in like Manner, contend and testify against it as among the Defections of this Land, That, “ when the first General Assembly “ of this Church did meet, the same Year 1690, They sat down “ upon the above civil Establishment, without remonstrating against what was defective in the same;---nor did they, by “ any express Act, assert *Zion’s King* to be what he is, *the alone King and Head of his Church*;---neither did they assert the divine Right of Presbytery, nor the intrinsic Power of the “ Church, with respect to the calling of her national Assemblies; which are two special Branches of the Redeemer’s glorious Headship in and over his Church.” *Act for renewing the national Covenant, &c. Pages 116, 101 and 102, compared.*

Now, it is impossible that any Man can refuse, with any Shew of Reason, that the *Profession* of Religion sworn to in the *Burgeſs-Oath* is no other but the Profession of Religion according to the *civil Eſtabliſhment* thereof in the Year 1690, and as it *preſently* ſtands; becauſe *that*, and no other, is the Profession of Religion within this Realm *preſently authoriſed* by the Laws thereof. And it would be a moſt ſinful *Impoſition* upon conſciencious Burgeſſes, to draw them into ſuch a Snare, as to ſwear that they *profefs*, and *allow with their Heart*, the true Religion *preſently profefsed* within this Realm, and authoriſed by the Laws thereof; and yet at the *ſame Time* to ſwear that they will *contend* and *teſtify againſt* the *preſent Profefsion* of Religion, which is made according to, and conſequent upon the foreſaid Settlement of Church and State; wherein particularly, the late covenanting Period, the divine Right of Presbytery and the inſinck Power of the Church, are receded from and *buried*.

As to what Mr. *Erskine* alledges, that our Rulers could oblige the Judicatories, by the Laws that are in Being, to reform the *Defections* and *Corruptions* of the Church which are teſtified againſt by thoſe of the Seceſſion; it is answered, for Inſtance, That it is very certain there are *no Laws* in Being that could oblige the Judicatories to reform from their *Defection*, in ſitting down upon the *Revolution-Settlement*, without remonſtrating againſt what was defective in the ſame; by which Defection, the covenanting Period, the divine Right of Presbytery, and the inſinck Power of the Church, are given up and buried: And this ſad Defection is manifeltly teſtified againſt by theſe of the Seceſſion, in the *Act* and *Teſtimony*: Nor will Mr. *Erskine*, by any Endeavours, be ever able to make it *conſiſtent*, for the Seceders to ſwear an *Approbation* of this *Profefsion* and *Settlement*, in the Burgeſs-Oath; and to ſwear a *Teſtimony againſt* the ſame, in the Bond for renewing our Covenants. And though there may be *bad Things* as well as *good Things* in ſome of the beſt Acts of Parliament, and we may take the Benefit of what is *good* in theſe Acts; yet this will never prove that we ought to be guilty of ſo *bad* a Thing, as to ſwear a *general Approbation* of ſuch Acts as have been mentioned, and to ſwear *two Oaths*, the one of which is *inconſiſtent* with the other.

And as, though theſe Words, *profefs the true Religion*, be a Part of the Definition of the viſible Church in the Confefſion of Faith; yet, ſeeing the true Religion is not there circumscribed, by being the true Religion *preſently profefsed in this Realm*, and *preſently authoriſed by the Laws thereof*, there cannot be ſo much as the Shadow of an Argument in this Obſervation of Mr. *Erskine's*: So
altho'

altho' these very Words which define the visible Church by the *Profession of the true Religion*, are Words which the Law authoriseth in the Ratification of our *Westminster* Confession of Faith; yet it will not from this follow, that it is warrantable for Seceders to swear the religious Clause of a Burgeſs-Oath: Because it is certain, that while the Law keeps by the foreſaid Words of the Confession, as to the visible Church in general; it is evident from the Law itself, that no *better* can be understood by the Law, as to the Profession of the true Religion, than *ſuch* a Profession thereof as is *conſiſtent*, particularly, with burying the late covenanting Period, the divine Right of Presbytery, and the intrinſick Power of the Church.

R E A S O N I V.

“ 4to. U Nto all that has been ſaid, I ſhall add, That, from
 “ firſt to laſt, there appeared ſo much Paſſion and
 “ Partiality, ſo much of a lying in wait to catch Advantage for
 “ carrying their Point, in thoſe Brethren (at leaſt ſome of them)
 “ who carried the above Deciſion, as convinces me, that there
 “ was more of Party-Intereſt in the whole Matter, than any
 “ Thing of true Zeal, which is always accompanied with Meek-
 “ neſs of Wiſdom and mutual Forbearance. If there was not
 “ ſomething of this in the Caſe in Hand, how came it about, that
 “ the two Brethren who had paſſed an ultroneous Sentence a-
 “ gainſt the Burgeſs-Oath at *Ceres*, pushed a Reference of that
 “ Affair to the Synod, in a Meeting of four Miniſters and one
 “ Elder, when they knew that their Presbytery, at two full Meet-
 “ ings before, had reſuſed to refer it to the Synod? And yet,
 “ even then they carried the Reference only by the Vote of one
 “ Elder, who lived upon the Spot, at *Abernethy*; the other two
 “ Miniſters preſent diſſenting from the Reference. What can
 “ ſuch Management be called by impartial Obſervers, but a mere
 “ Party-catch? Much after the ſame Manner was the Deciſion
 “ carried at *Edinburgh*, *April* laſt Year. When the Synod were
 “ together in a Body the firſt Week, thoſe Brethren were very
 “ ſmooth, and ſeemed inclined to liſten unto Overtures of Peace:
 “ But on the ſecond Week, when ſome Members were not re-
 “ turned from their Charges, which they went to ſupply on Sab-
 “ bath, and by that Means they had a Majority; no Overtures
 “ for Peace or Unanimity at all were propoſed, or, when propo-
 “ ſed by thoſe who are now Diſſenters, could be liſtened to by
 “ them; but a preſent Deciſion was pushed with the greateſt Vi-
 “ olence; as is more fully cleared in the Narrative of the Rea-
 “ ſons

sons of Dissent and Protestation of the above seven Members present. This was the common Method of the corrupt Party in the Judicatures of the Establishment, from which we have seceded, to steal a March upon those who were called the honest Side. Wo's me that I have seen the same fraudulent Practice followed in the Associate Synod, especially after solemn Covenanting.

How melancholy is it, to see one of the first *four*, who lately witnessed and contended against the Judicatures of the established Church, and made a Secession from them, destroying again what he then built, and contradicting the Testimonies he did then bear against the Judicatures in Conjunction with his other three Brethren?

He and they at that Time witnessed against the Judicatures, *for interposing the Authority of the Church in Things not evidently founded upon the Word of God, and their excluding all from their Judicatures who had not Freedom to comply with their arbitrary Measures*; whereby they trode in the Steps of the publick Resolutions against the Protesters. See Mr. Ebenezer Erskine's and Mr. Fisher's Representation given in to the Commission, August 8. 1733, the printed Copy, Page 15.

He and we at that Time jointly complained and testified against the Judicatures, for adventuring to determine a Point which, so far as we knew, was not at that Time determined by this Church in any of her Acts of Assembly, namely, *That Ministers are not, upon some proper Occasions, to declare from the Pulpit the Evil and Sinfulness of a particular Act of Assembly, &c.* See Mr. William Wilson's and Mr. Alexander Moncrieff's Representation to the Commission of Assembly, August 8th 1733, printed Copy, page 36. He and we at that Time reckoned it essential to the Validity of a Law, That the Mind of the diffused Church should be had, and that Commissioners from Presbyteries, &c. should act in a Consistency with the Judgment of their Constitutents; That all Overtures which are designed to be passed into Laws, be first transmitted unto Presbyteries for their Opinion thereupon; That if Commissioners from Presbyteries can *de jure* act, independent of their Constitutents, a particular Assembly may overturn our Presbyterian Constitution, &c. We cannot imagine, that Men, by being Members of Assemblies, have *ipso facto* a Privilege to lord it over God's Heritage, or to act in an absolute and arbitrary Manner. See more to this Purpose, page 18 and 56 of Mr. Wilson's and Mr. Moncrieff's Representation. How that Brother, or others, will be capable to reconcile his Testimony

“ against the Judicatures then, with his and their Proceedings
 “ now, when they have the Helm of a Majority on their Side,
 “ he and they are best able to tell. For my Part, I cannot pre-
 “ tend to reconcile them.

“ Was it unwarrantable for the Judicatures of the Church in
 “ theſe Days, when we were Pannels before them, to interpoſe
 “ the Authority of the Church in Things not evidently found-
 “ ed on the Word of God; and yet lawful now to condemn the
 “ firſt Claufe of ſome Burgeſs-Oaths, as ſinful, without adducing
 “ one Text of Scripture, or one Article of our approv'd Stand-
 “ ards, to which it is repugnant?

“ Was it unwarrantable for the Judicatures to exclude all who
 “ had not Freedom to comply with ſuch arbitrary Meaſures?
 “ And yet is it lawful now to caſt out all from the Duty of Co-
 “ venanting, and conſequently from Church-Communion, who
 “ cannot ſee the Sinfulneſs of the condemned Claufe of the Bur-
 “ geſs-Oath?

“ Was it unlawful at that Time for the Judicatures to deter-
 “ mine in a Matter never before determined in any Acts of Af-
 “ ſembly? And yet can it be lawful now to determine the ſaid
 “ Claufe of the Burgeſs-Oath ſinful, when that Matter was not on-
 “ ly never determined to be ſinful, but, on the contrary, ſuſtained
 “ to be lawful through all the reforming Periods, as was cleared
 “ in the firſt Reaſon?

“ Was it unlawful for the Judicatures to break through the
 “ Barrier-Acts of Reformation, and to make Laws of publick
 “ Concern to the whole diffuſed Church, without firſt referring
 “ theſe Matters to Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions? And yet
 “ can it be lawful for thirteen Members, by way of a Catch, to de-
 “ termine in a Matter of publick Concern, and to impoſe their
 “ Decision upon the whole Church, as a Term of Miniſterial
 “ and Chriſtian-Communion, while yet the Mind of the diffuſed
 “ Church was never asked, yea when a Motion to this End was
 “ ſtrenuouſly oppoſed, particularly by the Brother who teſtified
 “ againſt the Judicatures as above?

“ I own theſe Things are Paradoxes to me, which I am not
 “ capable to reſolve.”

A N S W E R to R E A S O N IV.

WHereas Mr. *Erskine*, in his *fourth* Reaſon, complains of
 ſome of his Brethren, for alledged *Paſſion* and *Partiali-
 ty*, this Reflection has been ſufficiently cleared before; but it
 were to be wiſhed that more of a Spirit of Meekneſs, and leſs of
 Temper, had appeared in this very Paper of his. As he ſees

meet to load two of his Brethren, with passing an ultroneous Sentence against the Burgeſs-Oath, and unduly pushing an Overture of that Affair to the Synod; and as he alledges, that the Associate Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, at two full Meetings before, had refused to refer it to the Synod: The Synod have Reason to think, that it will appear from the Minutes of the said Presbytery, that the Question concerning the Overture of this Affair to the Synod was never before the Presbytery, till that Meeting, when the Reference was made; and though it was a thin Meeting, yet it was still the Presbytery; and it was their Duty to expedite the Business belonging to them, of which this was a Part, to refer that Affair to the Synod as proper Judges in such a Case of Conscience, especially as no other Meeting of the Presbytery could be had before the ensuing Meeting of Synod, while he determining this Question was necessary for regular Procedure in the Work of renewing our Covenants. And the Brethren having acted in the whole of this Affair, as they conceived was their Duty to do in a Case of Conscience, which at best was very doubtful; the Synod having upon just Grounds determined, as in their Act and Sentence, the Unlawfulness of swearing the Burgeſs-Oath in its religious Clause, have thereby cleared these Brethren from the groundless Reflections cast upon them in this Matter. Concerning what is alledged by Mr. *Erskine*, as to mere *Party-Catch*, the Synod with more Caution and Sobriety had been used about such Reflections; and they refer to what is said above, for vindicating the Procedure of the Synod on the second Week, in determining the Question that was under their Consideration, and with a View to the determining of which they had continued their Meeting that Week. In what he says with reference to *Overtures of Peace*, he might have spared himself that Trouble; for the Synod having justly determined, as in their Act and Sentence, the Sinfulness of swearing the Burgeſs-Oath in its religious Clause, it is evident that these Overtures were all unsuitable and vain; seeing there could not possibly be any *Midst* betwixt *Sin* and *Duty* in the Case under Consideration, betwixt the *Consistency* and *Inconsistency* of presently swearing that *religious Clause* and swearing the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants: And it was by no Means in the Power of the Members of Synod, to *compromise* and take up Matters among themselves, wherein the Glory of God and the Peace of Mens Consciences were so deeply concerned.

The Synod find no Ground for Mr. *Erskine's* Reflection upon one of the *first four* who witnessed against the Judicatures of the established Church: For though he joined in witnessing against

them, for interposing the Authority of the Church in Things not evidently founded upon the Word of God; yet it is very consistent therewith, that he should join this witnessing Synod, in condemning a present swearing the *religious Clause* of some Burgeſs-Oaths, as the ſame is evidently *inconfiſtent* with entering into the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants; which is therefore a Practice evidently condemned by the *Word of God*, and contrary to our received Principles; yea a Practice even *ſubverſive* of the Principles upon which all human Societies are founded and do ſubſiſt; for if Men were once taught to uſe ſuch a finful and indecent *Freedom* in the ſwearing of ſolemn Oaths, all human Societies ſhould come to be diſſolved, and there ſhould be no more Faith among Men, nor ſhould one Man put any Truſt and Confidence in another. And whether this Point of Sinfulneſs was ever determined in the Church *before*, as the Brother argues it was not, is a Matter of no Moment; for the Synod have found, upon the juſteſt Grounds, that the ſaid Practice is *condemned* by the *Word of God*; and ſeeing God in his Providence has now brought this Work of Darkneſs to Light, we are to have *no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs*, but ought *faithfully to reprove them*.

Mr. *Erſkine* proceeds to affirm, that the ſaid Brother, with others, reckoned it eſſential to the Validity of a Law, that the Mind of the diſſeſed Church ſhould be had; and he cites to this Purpose, *Page 18 and 56* of Mr. *Wilson's* and Mr. *Moncrieff's* Representation; but he ſhould have ſaid *Page 18* of Mr. *Erſkine's* Representation, and *Page 56* of Mr. *Wilson* and Mr. *Moncrieff's* Representation ought not to have been added, ſeeing *no ſuch Thing* is to be found in the ſaid *Page*: But upon all this, the Synod refers to what has been ſaid above, in Answer to Mr. *Erſkine's* Objection concerning what he calls the *Barrier-Acts*, which plainly coincides with what he advances here. As to his Complaint, that *Texts of Scripture* were not adduced in condemning the preſent ſwearing of the foreſaid Clause; the Synod have laid their Sentence in ſuch Terms, as may Point out to all the Equity of their Judgment about the *Inconfiſtency* of ſwearing the *religious Clause* of a Burgeſs-Oath, wherein particularly the Revolution-Settlement and Profeſſion of Religion are *approved*, with ſwearing the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants, wherein that Settlement and Profeſſion of Religion are *teſtified againſt*: And if the Synod had come to cite *Texts* for condemning the Practice of ſwearing ſuch *contradictory* Oaths, they might have tranſcribed and improv'd the whole *moral Law*, yea the whole *Doctrine of the Bible*. It was not therefore for want of the Canon

of *Scripture* to support the Sentence, that the Synod did not cite any particular Texts ; but because, as may be seen from inspecting the *Acts of Assembly*, it is not ordinary for *Judicatories* to take into their Sentences a Scheme of the *Scripture* Grounds thereof, and to enumerate the *Texts* of *Scripture* by which they are supported, where it may well be supposed that they are founded upon the *general Strain of Truth and Doctrine* contained in the Holy *Scriptures*.

And now, Mr. *Erskine's Paradoxes*, some of which he repeats once and again, are easily *resolved*, as may be to the Satisfaction of those who are intelligent and unprejudiced in the Matter.

R E A S O N V.

“ **M**R. *Horn*, having considered and approved the above
 “ Reasons contained in this Paper, he, in Conjunction
 “ with Mr. *Erskine*, adds what follows.

“ In Regard that we humbly conceive, That this Act of the
 “ Synod is contrary both to the Unity enjoined by the Apostle,
 “ *Rom. xv. 5, 6.* and also to the Comfort of the Church of
 “ God, and the ultimate End of what ought to be designed by
 “ every Member thereof, namely, the declarative Glory of God ;
 “ as appears from the above quoted Text of *Scripture*, where
 “ the Apostle prays for the Unity of the Members of the Church:
 “ *Now, the God of Patience and Consolation*, says he, *grant you to*
 “ *be like minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus ;*
 “ *that ye may with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God.* The
 “ following Things seem plainly to appear from this Petition of
 “ the Apostle for the Unity of the mystical Body : In which
 “ Petition he not only describes that Unity he prays for, *one*
 “ *Mind and one Mouth*, but also shews how much God would
 “ be glorified by such an Union ; and in which he addresses
 “ God for it, under these two very remarkable Titles, *The God of*
 “ *Patience and Consolation* ; Thereby, I say, he plainly intimates
 “ the following Things. *1st*, How great Need there is of the
 “ Exercise of Patience, in maintaining Unity in the Church of
 “ God ; and that their Unity greatly depends upon the Exercise
 “ of Patience one towards another : And this he begs the God
 “ of Patience to give them. And, to endear this Grace of Pa-
 “ tience to them, *2dly*, He joins with it another Title of God,
 “ *viz. the God of Consolation* ; wherein he points them to that
 “ abundant Comfort that would result to themselves from such
 “ a blessed Unity, continued in, and maintained by the mutual
 “ Exercise of Patience and Forbearance one towards another.

“ And

* And this he enforces from the Pattern and Example of Christ ;
 “ and tells them, That God would be eminently glorified there-
 “ by. But this Act of the Synod, as it is a determining of the
 “ Point of the Sinfulness of that which many of our Brethren can-
 “ not see to be sinful, and as it cuts off a waiting for them till
 “ they come to see the same ; nay is a determining of a Questi-
 “ on which is entirely new, and anent which, though we differ
 “ from our Brethren, yet they cannot accuse us of refusing from
 “ any attained-to Point of Reformation ; nay a Question that
 “ was never decided by any Judicature : This Act, we say, being
 “ the determining of such a Question, and the declaring the same
 “ sinful, must therefore be plainly opposite to this Text of Scrip-
 “ ture ; as also to what the Apostle prays for, 1 Cor. i. 10.
 “ Now, I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus
 “ Christ, that ye all speak the same Thing, and that there be no
 “ Divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in
 “ the same Mind, and in the same Judgment. The Duty, as here
 “ enjoined, is exclusive of its Opposite, Schisms and Rents. But
 “ the Act of Synod manifestly makes a Schism ; (for it is plain,
 “ that the greater Part are divided as to their Sentiments even
 “ with Reference to that first Clause of the Burgefs-Oath, and
 “ also with Reference to the Synod’s Act concerning that first
 “ Clause ;) and therefore is contrary to this Text ; which im-
 “ plies Harmony and Agreement of Judgment, Hearts, and
 “ Language, that they all speak the same Thing ; and wherein this
 “ is enjoined by the strongest Motives and Arguments. Now,
 “ to conclude, since it is plain, That this Act of the Synod is a
 “ dividing Ministers and People in their Judgments, disturbing
 “ and distracting the Minds both of Ministers and the Lord’s
 “ People, and profiting none ; it seems evidently not to be an-
 “ swering the Ends of the Edification of the Body of Christ, and
 “ of the declarative Glory of God, and to the Comfort of none
 “ of the Lord’s People ; but to the Grief of the Hearts of not a
 “ few of the Lord’s People ; while, by our Contests and Jang-
 “ lings, many of them have been made to say, *Oh ! that I had*
 “ *Wings like a Dove, that I might flee far hence, and be at rest ; or,*
 “ *Wo’s me that I sojourn in Meslech, &c.* And since this Act seems
 “ to be diametrically opposite to the above quoted Texts of
 “ Scripture, as also to *Philip. ii. 2.* we cannot but look upon
 “ it as sinful ; and therefore cannot but crave the Rescinding
 “ thereof. ”

“ Stirling, 16th }
 “ January, 1747. }

EBENEZER ERSKINE.

DAV. HORN.

ANS-

WE come now to Mr. *Erskine's* last Reason of Protestation, in which, (as likewise the foregoing) he is joined by Mr. *Horn*. It is in general that they conceive this Act of the Synod is contrary to the *Unity* enjoined by the Apostle, *Rom. xv. 5, 6*. And the Answer is easy, That this Unity enjoined by the Apostle is an Unity according to *Christ Jesus*; an Unity to the Glory of God, that we may *with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God*. But it can by no Means be an Unity according to *Christ Jesus*, to be united in allowing, That those who profess his Name by *testifying against* the present national Profession and Settlement of Religion, in which particularly the late covenanting Period is buried, and who *swear* to this their Testimony in the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants, should also *homologate* and *approve* of the said Profession and Settlement of Religion, in swearing the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths. And it is most evident, that we cannot *with one Mouth glorify God*, in the Way of swearing a *Testimony against* the said Profession and Settlement conjunctly with our Brethren Seceders in the Bond for renewing our Covenants, and *likewise* of swearing or allowing to swear an *Approbation* of the said Profession and Settlement, in the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, conjunctly with the Members of the established Church, from which we are in a State of Seceſſion; seeing this would be so far from *glorifying* God, that it would be an evident *dishonouring* of God by *contradictory* Oaths, and a Breach of the *third* Commandment in the very Letter thereof, *by taking the Name of the Lord our God in vain*. And thus, our Brethrens reasoning from the above and other Texts of Scripture, relating to the Unity of the Church, is nothing to the Purpose in Hand; seeing the Union that ought to be in the Church is an *holy* Union, *the Unity of the Spirit*, and an *Union in the Truth as it is in Christ*, who is the Centre of this Union of the Members of the Church one with another. And, if the Act of the Synod seems, in the Opinion of our Brethren, to be opposite to the above and other Texts of Scripture quoted by them; this is wholly owing, not to any Inconsistency of the Act with these *Texts* of Scripture, with which and every other Text of Scripture it doth uniformly agree; but it is entirely owing to the Brethrens *misapplying* these Texts of Scripture, and perverting them to Purposes *most alien* from the Scope thereof, or from the holy Ends and Purposes of the Spirit of God in dictating them.

the Point of the Sinfulness of swearing this Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths; when many of our Brethren cannot ſee it to be ſinful; that it cuts off a waiting for them till they come to ſee the Sinfulness of it; that it is a determining of a Queſtion which is entirely new; and that they cannot, in their differing from others in this Affair, be accuſed of reſiling from any attained-to Point of Reformation. But it is answered, That it is hoped theſe Brethren may, by the *due Uſe of Means*, in a ſhort Time come to ſee a Thing ſo plain and obvious, as the Matter under Conſideration; namely, that it is highly *inconſiſtent*, and therefore *ſinful*, That Men ſhould ſwear an *Approbation* of, and *Satisfaction* with the preſent national Profeſſion and Settlement of Religion in *one* Oath, and alſo a *Diſapprobation* of, and *Diſſatisfaction* with the ſame in *another* Oath. Again, the Brethren were long waited for, even from the Meeting of the Synod in *March* 1745, till their Meeting in *April* 1746; when, after long and tedious Reaſonings upon the Affair, and that in different Meetings of Synod *pro re nata*, they found it then neceſſary, for different weighty Reaſons, to come to ſome final Concluſion as to the Matter that had been ſo long under their Conſideration. And ſeeing, according to our Confeſſion of Faith, it belongs to Synods to determine in Controverſies of Faith and Caſes of Conſcience; it muſt of Conſequence be their Duty, to give their publiſk Judgment as to what of this Sort comes before them, whether it be entirely *new*, or *not*: But if the Argument of *entirely new* had any Weight in it, it would prove of Courſe, that there ought not to be any *new* Acts of Synod or Aſſembly, ſo as their Buſineſs here would be no other than to revive *old* Acts and Decisions; and whoever adopts ſuch an Opinion, this Principle of his muſt certainly be *entirely new*. And however thoſe who maintain the Conſiſtency of ſwearing the religious Clause in ſome Burgeſs-Oaths among Seceders, may pretend otherways; yet, when the Caſe is duly conſidered, it will be found, That they are *reſiling* from the Teſtimony which we have eſpouſed and avouched. And it is evident, that they turn aſide from the plain and neceſſary Duty incumbent upon them, of *calling up the Way* to the Lord's People, and *removing Stumbling-Blocks* out of it; when they pretend a Neceſſity for *poſtponing* and *delaying* the Queſtion, concerning the *Conſiſtency* or *Inconſiſtency* of ſwearing the religious Clause in ſome Burgeſs-Oaths, with entering into the Bond for renewing our Covenants: Tho' the Seasonableneſs of the Duty of renewing our Covenants had been determined ſome Years ago; and this Queſtion, has, in the Courſe of Providence, caſt up

a Bar in the Way, which ought therefore of Necessity to have been removed, as the Lord should direct the Synod when the Matter came before them.

The Brethren pretend. That this Act of the Synod manifestly makes a *Schism*; *Because*, say they, *the greater Part are divided as to their Sentiments with Reference to that first Clause of the Burgeſſs-Oath, and alſo with Reference to the Synod's Act concerning the first Clause.* But it has not appeared as yet, and we hope never ſhall, that the greater Part either of the *Ministers* or *People* are divided as to their Sentiments, in Opposition to the Decision of this Affair: And if ſome of the People are divided this Way, they have the protesting Brethren to thank for it, who have endeavoured to *darken* Things moſt plain in themſelves, by their groundleſs *Cavilings* againſt the Sentence of the Synod, which is founded upon the moſt evident Grounds, from the holy Scriptures and our received Principles. But the Brethren are greatly miſtaken, when they load the *Act* of the Synod with the *Schism*; ſeeing *they* are the *Persons* themſelves who have been and are contributing their Endeavours, to a violent and groundleſs Rent in the Church of Chriſt.

Now, to conclude, ſince it is plain, That this Act of the Synod has determined a Caſe of Conſcience, which did caſt up in the Courſe of Providence, as a Bar in the Way of the neceſſary and reaſonable Duty of renewing our Covnants; and ſeeing the ſaid Act is evidently moſt neceſſary and reaſonable, and is founded upon the moſt juſt and warrantable Grounds; the two Brethren Proteſters, as well as others, ought to *receive this Decree of the Synod with Reverence and Submission, not only for its Agreement with the Word of God, but alſo for the Power whereby it is made, as being an Ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his Word*; as is expreſſed in our Confefſion of Faith, Chap. 31. Art. 3. And their Practice is moſt unwarrantable; in diſturbſing and diſtracting the Minds of the Lord's People, by writing and drawing up ſuch *groundleſs Accuſations* againſt the Synod, and allowing *Copies* of them to be ſpread in ſome Cities and moſt populous Places of the Kingdom; which cannot tend to answer the Ends of the Edification of the Body of Chriſt, and of promoting the declarative Glory of God.

The foregoing Reasons, with the Synod's Answers thereto (which are excluſive of the Notes and additional Answer), from Page 23^d, are extracted by

N. B. *What follows, on this and the next two Pages, is to be taken in immediate Connection with Page 112, as completing the additional Answer to Reason Ninth.*

3. The Argument about Forbearance, from the Practice of the Church in the Days of the *Apostles*, has been considered already. And with Reference to the Practice of our own Church *Anno 1638*, it is *amazing* to find alleged, yea and pled from as a *commendable Thing*, That the *Covenant* was *purposely* framed for admitting those who *justified*, or *maintained the Lawfulness* of, *Episcopacy* and the *five Articles of Perth*: For this is *expressly contrary* to the *express Letter* of the *Covenant*; as, in the very *first Sentence* thereof, there is a solemn Engagement to forbear the *Practice* and *Approbation* of these Things, in reserving the publick Determination of them to free Assemblies then in View,---- according to what has been noticed before, and is explained in *Mr. Wilson's Defence*, Page 239; nor are the Words cited of Masters *Dickson* and *Henderfon* disagreeable hereto, when once the Brethrens *Parenthesis* toward the Close thereof, is *taken out*. But it is no Wonder that the Brethren make such an ado against the Sentence of Synod, as to the Order thereby taken with some *Burgessees*, about admitting them into the *Bond* of the *Covenant*; when they come thus to recommend an *Union in Covenanting* with *stout Episcopalianians*.

The Brethren proceed next to bring the Synod under most groundless Impeachments, of *Covenant breaking*, and of *arbitrary* and *dogmatical Conduct* beyond the just Power of Ecclesiastical Judicatories: But, as sundry Reflections thrown out under these Articles have been obviated already; so, these *Articles* themselves will be found exposed, the one in the *Introduction* and the other in the *Appendix*.

This Paper of Reasons is concluded with a pretended Strain of *Lamentation*, which yet is a gross *Invective* against the Synod, about the Method of Procedure in the present Affair. Some foul *Misrepresentations* here laid, as to plain Matters of Fact, have been cleared in the *Review* of the *Preamble*: But there is yet further Appearance here of a strong Humour for getting the Synod's Conduct *blackned*, and the pretended Iniquity thereof *aggravated*.

The Cavil is renewed, of *more than ordinary Keemness of Spirit* in carrying on this Matter; the Point in Controversy is represented as of *small Consequence*, tho' a solemn *Oath* about the Cause of Christ; the Debate is quarrelled for the *Newness* thereof, tho' indeed the Matter properly in Debate, had *no Being* in any other *Caureh* or any former Period: And these Things are roundly *alleged*

alleged as giving *Reason* to fear that the Sentence is wholly of the Devil.

Again, for supporting the injurious Charge of *more than ordinary Keeneſs* in the Matter, ſundry Things are mentioned as having been upon the *Anvil*; and then it is added,— *All theſe and other important Affairs of far greater Concern, could not be admitted to enter into the Conſideration of the Synod, as appears from their frequent Protests againſt the Synod's Sentences delaying the Matter.* However, the preſent Affair was certainly of the *greateſt Concern*, when immediately concerning the *whole* Teſtimony among our Hands. And tho' there were *two Diſſents*, there was never but *one Proteſt* againſt *delaying* the Affair: But theſe Diſſents and Proteſt were never any Way againſt taking *other Matters* into Conſideration, as this was done at each Meeting without any Oppoſition; nor was ever a Delay moved or gone into, for the ſake of getting *other Matters* conſidered, but merely becauſe of the Brethrens Oppoſition in *this* Matter. Further, by *other important Affairs*, they muſt certainly mean other Overtures before the Synod, beſide theſe which they now mention: And how the Synod is wronged on this Head, may be ſeen by turning back to *Page 33*. In the next Place, that the Overtures now mentioned were not admitted ſo much as to *enter* into the Conſideration of the Synod, is ſo far from holding, that *Committees* were appointed to prepare Draughts of Questions for *privy Cenſures*, and of Rules for *parochial Viſitations*; and the expeding of this Work was *twice* recommended to theſe Committees; and ſome of the Brethren now *Proteſters* were on *each* of theſe Committees, but never moved *one Step*, about a Meeting of theſe Committees, or a preparing any Thing for the Synod on theſe Subjects: And as to the Overture from the Associate Preſbytery of *Glaſgow*, about Profeſſor *Leechman's* Sermon, it freely entred into the Conſideration of the Synod, ſo as to be received into their *Minutes* at their firſt Meeting; but no farther Propoſal about it was afterwards *made*, far leſs *oppoſed*.

Moreover, when it is told, that the other Things now mentioned were then upon the *Anvil*, but not admitted to *enter* into the Conſideration of the Synod; this plainly ſignifies that Members were ſo far left in the Caſe, as to make *no Account* of theſe weighty Affairs, but to *oppoſe* the Conſideration thereof, when tabled before them: Whereas, theſe Affairs relative to the late *Antichriſtian Rebellion*, were never then *introduced*, or ſought to be introduced into the *Minutes*; but they were the Subject of *deliberate Conference* in Synod, and as much was done in them as was then practicable, or could conſiſt with the *Difference of Sentiments*

iments betwixt the Brethren now protesting and other Members, upon these Subjects: And as to an Explication of the *lesser Catechism*, tho' it had been sometimes occasionally hinted at in Conference, yet it was never formally moved *in Synod*, till their Meeting at *Stirling* in *September* last Year, when a Course was taken accordingly. — After all, if such criminal Steps were taken, how can the Brethren excuse themselves, for having given *no Testimony* against them, by Dissent or Protest, at the Time?

But further, they tell that the Sentence was carried, *over the Belly of their strongest Entreaties for a Delay till a full Meeting*: Whereas, at the Meeting where it was carried, they had neither *strong* nor *weak* Entreaty, nor *one Word* about a Delay, till it was just coming to a Vote; nor was there even then so much as *one Word* about delaying *till a full Meeting*, but of delaying because none of the *other Overtures* which they had proposed as a Medium for preventing a Rupture could be gone in with; as their Motion at that Time, in the Minutes, expressly bears, — and as is explained before, Pages 39, 40

The Brethren do next tell, what it is they all along wanted, *viz.* to have the Affair, even the *Consideration* thereof, *delayed, until we should come to see Eye to Eye* therein: And this is very agreeable to the foregoing Doctrine of Forbearance, tho' not to Presbyterian Principles; as it imports that *Unanimity* is preferable to *Equity*, even about maintaining the Testimony espoused; and that the *Minority* in a Judicature should *still* prevail over the *Majority*, even after much Deliberation and Delay, and in a Case where Conscience is deeply affected.

As to the dismal Effects and Consequences wherewith the Sentence is loaded, it can have no proper Tendency to produce them, but the contrary; and therefore they must all be chargeable upon the *Opposition* which is made thereto.

As to the *Expostulation* in the Close of the Paper, it may be remembered, that *brotherly Love* and *Charity* did oblige to *pass*, and do as much oblige to *support* the Sentence; for giving a Check unto, and reclaiming from, the *dangerous Course* of the Opposition made thereto.

Finally, *That* Desire of Peace and Unity which the Brethren profess, doth necessarily require the Sentence to be *removed out of the Way*, so as not to make the smallest Grain of *Allowance* for these whose Consciences are as much straitned on the *one Side*, as theirs can be on the *other*: But, if their After-Insistings for the *reversing* of the Sentence, had been in a *fair, open* and *explicite* Way, Matters had not come to such a melancholy Pass, as that where they now stand.

A P P E N D I X

Containing

A Brief ILLUSTRATION of the Associate Synod's Sentence, concerning the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths.

THe *Reasons* of Protest, againſt the Sentence of the Associate Synod concerning the religious Clause of ſome Burgeſs-Oaths, are ſo evidently made up of Things quite foreign to the true State of the Queſtion, with grievous Miſapplications, groſs Miſtakes, unjuſt Representations and injurious Reflections; that there would be need of ſome Apology for the Length of theſe *Answers* which have been made unto them; were it not that, as the Matter now ſtands, *Pretences* come to be much *preſumed on*,-----and the Truth embarked in the preſent Controverſy comes, with too many, to be in Hazard of ſuffering, even by the Sound of *Words* and the Weight of *Subſcriptions*.

In the foregoing *Answers*, not only are the *Reasons* overthrown, but the *Sentence* thereby oppoſed is *illustrated*: However, it may not be amiſs that, for the *further Illustration* thereof, ſome Things be now reſumed and briefly enlarged upon.

Toward the Cloſe of the ninth Reason, the Synod is charged with *very arbitrary and dogmatical Conduct*, in paſſing ſuch a Sentence, *when yet at the ſame Time they have not ſhown how this religious Clause comes neceſſarily in this Period to be uſed and applied, nor in what Reſpects it is inconſiſtent with entering into the Bond for renewing our ſolemn Covenants, nor have in the leaſt ſhown, from the Law and Teſtimony or approven Standards agreeable thereto, how the Conſcience is bound to what they are requiring*: And hereupon the Synod is accuſed of tranſgreſſing *the Extent of the Power of Eccleſiaſtical Judicatories* according to our old *Confess. Art. 20*, in its ſuſtaining Eccleſiaſtical Jurisdiction *ſo far as the Council PROVETH the Determination and Commandment that it giveth by the plain Word of God*, and rejecting the ſame in *Conſtitutions repugning to the Word of God*.

However, it is evident that the Brethren had no Shadow of Reason for charging the Synod with ſuch arbitrary and dogmatical Conduct, *toward them*; for much *Patience* was uſed with them, ſundry *Delays* were gone into — merely on *their Account*, many and long *Reasonings* were had-----merely for *their Satisfaction*; and thus, before the Sentence paſſed, the Matter

thereof

thereof was explained to them, ——— as also, its full Agreeableness unto and Foundation in the *Word of GOD* and our approved *Standards*, according as the Nature of the Thing could require and admit of, was manifested to them, ——— so as might have been *more* than sufficient. Again, as to *others* who should come to be concerned therewith, tho' the Synod did not take a Scheme of these Reasonings and Proofs into the Body of their *Sentence*, it was to be taken for granted in common Course, that Members were to use *due Pains* for removing the Difficulties of any, about *Acquiescence* in and *Obedience* unto the same: And further, the Synod were to have *due Occasion* for *explaining* and *vindicating* their *Sentence*, in dealing with the *Protestations* against it.

But even abstracting from these Things, the foresaid Quarrel with the Synod's Conduct is very unreasonable; considering that the Things held forth in the Sentence are, of themselves, most *plain* and *obvious*. Every Person who allows himself to think *coolly* and *freely* upon the religious Clause of some Burgesses-Oaths, must readily perceive that it is of a *current* Nature, respecting what is *still* the *present* National Profession and Settlement of Religion, and necessarily undergoing *Changes* in its *Matter* and *Meaning*, just according as the said Profession and Settlement come to be changed; so that it must come *necessarily*, in *this* Period, to be *used* about and *applied* unto what is *now* the *present* National Profession and Settlement of Religion, among the Hands of the established Church, taking up Religion under *that Form* and no otherwise. This is a Matter so very clear from the Words of the Clause itself, that there can be no Difficulty about it, but from *unnatural* Distinctions and Refinements, where the Mind is some how *byass'd* unto the Study or Entertainment of them: And if the Clause comes necessarily, in this Period, to be used and applied as above; then all the *other* Parts of the Act and Sentence must *inevitably* follow, in a most *native* and *obvious* Course. Thus, there can be no Darkness about the Synod's Act, but from the Tendency which the Opposition made unto it has, to *darken* a Matter of itself very *plain* and *easy*, by getting Peoples Minds engaged in a Puddle of Things *foreign* to the Purpose, so as to *divert* them from any *near* and *naked* View of the Case. And, considering the *Plainness* of the Matter, with the palpable *Dependence* thereof upon our *received* Principles; as it is *shameful* that there should have been such Reasoning and ado, first for preventing and then for overturning the Act; so, the more Need there shall be of having *much said*, for satisfying *Seceders* about it,

t, the more of a Blot of *Degeneracy* mult they bring upon their Memories.

As to the Use now made of a Citation from *Art. 20* of our old *Confession*, about the *Extent of the Power of Ecclesiastical Judicatories*; it is too visible, from the Connection of the Argument in the *ninth Reason*, that, under the Colour of quarreling with an imaginary *Stretch* of Power, there is an *Encroachment* upon Presbyterian Principles, concerning the *just Power and Constitution* of Ecclesiastical Judicatories, as they stand in Opposition to *Anarchy and Independency*. Moreover, as the Brethren have yet laboured in vain, to show that the Sentence is any way *repugnant* to the Word of God; so, it came out from the Synod, manifestly *founded in and proven by the plain Word of GOD*, as much as *any Act* about *any Oath* could possibly be.

For adverting herto, these Things are to be remembered. ----- The *Act* begins with a *Proposition*, and proceeds in two *Conclusions* therefrom. The *Proposition* is, That "a Swearing the *religious Clause* of some Burges-Oaths, by any under the Inspection of the Synod, as the said Clause comes necessarily in this Period to be used and applied, does *not agree* unto the present State and Circumstances of the Testimony for Religion and Reformation, which the Synod, with those under their Inspection are maintaining; particularly, it does *not agree* unto, *nor consist* with an entering into the Bond for renewing our solemn Covenants." Now, let it be for once supposed, that the above *Proposition* is *true*; then it immediately and inevitably follows, That the Synod have given out the two *Conclusions* made therefrom, duly *proven* by the *plain Word of GOD*. For, they have duly proven, that the *present Testimony* among Seceders, is agreeable to, founded in, and necessarily arises from, the plain Word of God; as also, that this is the Case with the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants: Wherefore, they have *thus proven* the *first Conclusion*, that it must be a *sinful Thing, unsafe* to the Conscience, for Seceders to swear *disagreeably* to that Testimony, and *inconsistently* with that Bond; and *thus also* have they *proven* the *second Conclusion*, that it must be *indispensible Duty* to take Order for the *Remedy* of such an Evil, at the Admission of those concerned into the *Bond*, as is prescribed in the *Act*: And so, all *this* is given out duly *proven from Scripture*, in the Proof of our received Principles, which is to be taken for *granted*.

The whole remaining Difficulty and Quarrel, then, must be about the foresaid *Proposition*: But there is one Thing, concerning it, which the Synod give out duly *proven from Scripture*, in our *Confession of Faith*, Chap. xxii. Art. 4. viz. *An Oath is*

to be taken in the plain and common Sense of the Words, without Equivocation or mental Reservation. And after this, what is there in the said Proposition, or in the whole Act, that remains to be proven? Nothing indeed but this Point, *viz.* That a Swearing the religious Clause, as it comes necessarily in this Period to be used and applied, *hath a Sense and Meaning* which is *disagreeable* to the foresaid Testimony, and *inconsistent* with the foresaid Bond. Now, the Question here is wholly about the *present Sense* of the Clause, about what is the *plain and common Sense of the Words*, as it comes necessarily to be now used and applied; and so, it is a Question wholly about a *Matter of Fact*, whether such a *Burges*, at such a Time, *did swear disagreeably* to the Testimony and *inconsistently* with the Bond. But such a Point, about the *Meaning of our Words*, and about a *Matter of Fact* happening among us, is, in the Nature of the Thing, absolutely *incapable of Scripture-Proof*.

It certainly never entred into any Body's Mind, to seek *Scripture-Proof*, That the Oath of Abjuration *homologates* the united Constitution; and as little did it enter into any Body's Mind, at the Assembly *Anno 1638*, to seek *Scripture-Proof*, that the National Covenant, when it was first sworn, abjured *Prelacy* as well as *Popery*: For it would evidently be most *absurd* to suppose that such Points, about what is the *Meaning and Matter of Fact* in any Oath of human Composure, are to be any otherwise determined than by the *Judgment and Understanding* of Men; while the only Use of *Scripture* in such a Case, is to clear up the *Lawfulness or Unlawfulness* of the Thing, after once it is so determined *what the Thing is*.

It is therefore very plain and obvious, that the Synod have given out their Act, *manifestly proven by the plain Word of GOD*, in every Point, except as to what is the *present Sense and Meaning* of the Words of the Oath in the religious Clause, which is *such a Point as is utterly incapable of such Proof in any Oath*: Wherefore, they have given out their Act, *manifestly thus proven*, as much as *any Act about any Oath can possibly be*.

Again, as all the Quarrel with the Matter of the Act must now come to turn upon this Question, *How the said Clause comes necessarily in this Period to be used and applied?* Or, *What is presently the plain and common Sense of the Oath in that Clause?* The Synod might indeed be well excused from swelling their Act with a Discussion and Explication of *this Point*; in regard it may well be reckoned obvious enough to every Person who gives himself Leave to think soberly upon the Clause, that the same comes *necessarily in this Period to be used about and applied unto* Religion;

Religion, under the *present National Profession and Settlement* thereof, as among the Hands of the *established Church*, swearing to Religion under *that Form*, with *Approbation* thereof, and no otherwise; which is most plainly *disagreeable* to the *present Testimony* among *Seceders*, and *inconsistent* with entering into the *Bond*.

But this Question, about the *present Sense and Meaning* of the Oath in its religious Clause, shall be somewhat further enlarged upon here; not as if it were of itself *dark or dubious*,-----but for clearing up the *Mist* which has been so unaccountably raised upon this very plain Subject: And so the present Essay is for indicating the *plain and common Sense of the Words*, which the present *Imposer* of the Oath not only *may* but *must* have, if he act not *absurdly and ignorantly* in the Administration thereof. Wherefore,

FIRST, *A present swearing the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, doth necessarily contain a general and full Approbation of the present National Profession and Establishment of Religion as among the Hands of the established Church.*

It being immediately plain, that the *Profession* of Religion mentioned in the Clause is the *National Profession*, or the *Profession* which is made by, and is among the Hands of, the *National or established Church*; and it being immediately plain, that the *Authorising or Establishment* mentioned in the Clause, is the *Establishment* which is given to, and is among the Hands of, the said *established Church*, in her *Profession*: That a present swearing the foresaid Clause, doth necessarily contain a *general and full Approbation* of this *Profession and Establishment*, is most evident from the following obvious *Considerations*.

1. The Oath is administrated by *Members* of the established Church, and generally unto *Members* of that Church, who are declared *Approvers* of the said *Profession and Establishment*, in Opposition to the whole present *Testimony* against the *Defections and Corruptions* thereof: Wherefore a concurring with them, as is expressly done by that Oath, in their *Acknowledgment* of the said *Profession and Establishment*, must be a concurring with them in their *Approbation* of these.

2. The Oath in the religious Clause, must necessarily be designed, for giving *Confirmation or Assurance* to the *Imposers* thereof, about the *Swearer's cleaving* to the *true Religion*: But he cannot thereby give them *any Assurance* about *this*, further than he gives them Assurance about *what* is his *Profession* of the true Religion; because it is only by *what Profession* he makes of

it, that *his cleaving* unto it can be particularly measured and known. Now, as there is *no Profession* set before him in the Clause, but the *present National Profession* under the civil *Establishment*; therefore *his swearing* the Clause cannot possibly give any Assurance what is *his Profession*, unless he thereby *approves* the said Profession and Establishment, so that otherwise his Oath must be *in vain*.

3. The *true Religion* is not sworn to in the Clause, *abstractly*; as indeed it could not be, without great *Absurdity* and *Sin*; because by the Words *true Religion*, *abstractly* taken, there could be no Certainty, whether the Person means *Protestancy*, *Popery*, *Judaism*, *Mahometanism*, or *Paganism*. But as the *true Religion* is defined in the Clause, by the *present National Profession* and *Establishment* thereof; and as it comes there to be sworn to with *that Definition*, or under *that Form*, it would therefore be a Piece of glaring *Absurdity* and *Deceit*, to pretend that the *Thing defined* is there sworn to, without *approving* the *Definition* there used, and the *Rules* by which it is there defined, *viz.* the foresaid *Profession* and *Establishment*; for this would plainly be to *swear* without *approving* the *Oath*.

4. The Clause openly imports this *Affertion*, That *the true Religion* is *presently professed* in this Realm, and *authorised* by the *Laws thereof*: So that the Swearer does therein *mention*, *acknowledge*, and *bear witness* unto the present National Profession and Establishment of Religion, without the least Hint of finding any Fault with them: But what an absurd and dreadful Affair would it be to pretend, that such a *mentioning*, *acknowledging*, and *bearing witness* unto these Things, solemnly before GOD, doth not import an *Approbation* of them?

5. It is immediately plain, that the Thing *approved of* is the Thing *authorised*. Now, it is not the *true Religion*, *immediately* or *in itself*, which is to be understood as the Thing *authorised*; because the *true Religion*, *immediately* or *in itself*, can so little derive or receive any *Authority* from human Laws, that any Conception of its doing so would be evidently *blasphemous*. But it is the *true Religion*, *mediately* or in the *present National Profession* thereof, which must be understood as the Thing *authorised*; wherefore it is *immediately* the said *Profession* which is authorised: And so, the Thing which must be understood as *immediately approved of*, is the *present National Profession*; and an *Approbation* of *this*, must necessarily include an *Approbation* of the *Establishment* which it *puts up with*.

6. In swearing the Clause, a Person expressly gives Assurance, not only about his *Principles of Religion*, but also about his *Profession*

profession of Religion, while he says, I PROFESS: And as to what the Profession is which he takes up in these Words, it can be nothing else but the *present National Profession*: For it would be a most awful *Juggling*, to pretend that he means *one Sort* of Profession, by the Words *I profess*, and *another Sort* of it, by the Words *professed in this Realm*; while he utters all these Words in one Sentence, without the least Hint of any different Meaning thereby. Wherefore, the Swearer *expressly* takes up the *present National Profession*, considered under the *present Establishment*, for his Profession, without any Limitation or Exception; and so he cannot but thereby *approve* of them.

7. The Oath, in its religious Clause, is openly of a *general* Nature, a *general Deed* about Religion, offering a *general* and *faithful* Account of a Man's *whole* Profession about Religion; so that it leaves *no Room* for ascribing to him any Thing *less*, any Thing *more*, any Thing *else* of Profession, than according to that which is comprehended and exhibited in the Oath, *viz.* the *present National Profession* considered under the *present Establishment*; and when the Oath leaves Room for *nothing different or contrary* in the Matter, it cannot but *approve* of these.

Thus it is most evident, that the Oath must necessarily *approve*, not simply the *true Religion* which is presently professed in this Realm, and authorized by the Laws thereof, but likewise, yea *first* and *immediately*, that very *Profession* and *Establishment*. Moreover, the said *Approbation* is as evidently *general* and *full*; seeing the Oath is of a *general, unexcepting* Nature; and seeing the said Profession considered under the said Establishment, is therein *sworn to, adopted* and *allowed with the Heart*, for being *abole* at and *defended to Life's End*: This being an *Approbation* so *full*, that evidently the Oath can mean nothing, if it mean not a *swearing Enmity* and *Opposition, during Life*, to the *whole* present Testimony among *Seceders*, against the *Defections* and *Corruptions* of the fore-said Profession and Establishment. And so,

SECONDLY, The fore-said Approbation of the present National Profession and Establishment of Religion is necessarily an Approbation of them in their *present complex State*.

The Oath is so essentially of a *current* Nature, *still* taking in its very *Meaning* from the *present State of Religion* in the fore-said Profession and Establishment, so as to be *successively altered*, just according to the *successive Alteration* of these Things; that the fore-said Approbation of them must necessarily be in *eying* them *still* as they *presently are*; without any *Regard* to what they *once were*, but according as may be *still* found in what they *pre-*

sently are : And the Oath is of such a *general* and *unexcepting* Nature, as must approve of these Things in their present *complex State*.

Now, the said *National Profession* being that which is made by the *national* or established Church, her present Profession, in the *complex State* thereof, must be understood as comprehending or having incorporated with it, *all these Defections and Corruptions* which she is charged with in the present Testimony among Seceders ; so that the foresaid Approbation of her Profession must be an Approbation of *all these* ; according to what has been evidenced before, *Pages 76, 77, 78, and 79.*

It would be very *absurd* and *erroneous*, to distinguish betwixt her *Profession* and *Practice* ; with a Pretence that the said Defections and Corruptions belong only to her *Practice*, so as not to be *approved* in approving her *Profession* : For, as the Profession signified in the Oath, by the Words *presently professed*, and which is here treated of as approved thereby, is directly her *subjective Profession*, or that which she *actually makes* ; the foresaid Approbation of this Profession, whether the Word be taken in a *narrow* or *large* Sense, must evidently be an *approving* of *all these Defections and Corruptions*. Though the Word were to be taken in its *narrow* Sense, as meaning only her *doctrinal* Profession ; yet all the heinous Evils which she is charged with in Matters of *Gospel-doctrine*, are Evils which *openly lie* in this Profession ; and as to the *other* Defections and Corruptions in the prevalent Course of her publick Management, these are Evils which *openly cleave* unto this Profession, depriving it of the Soul and Efficacy, the Saviour and Ornament, which it ought to have from a *suitable* Course of publick Management, so as to make it *openly a dead* and *rotten* Profession, as in *Tit. 1. 16.* Wherefore still, the general and full Approbation of her *Profession* must evidently *approve* of *all these Defections and Corruptions*, because it *openly justifies* her Profession from the Charge of being thereby vitiated, and rendered an *undue* Profession.— But further, if the Word be taken, as it ought to be, in its *large* and ordinary Sense, including both *Words* and *Works*, as to the publick Language and Effect thereof ; her *Profession* must *comprehend* all these Defections and Corruptions, For they make up the *prevalent Course* of her publick Management, having a *publick Language and Effect*, to the Dishonour of Christ and his Cause ; so that they must be *Evils of her Profession*. And likewise, it is by the *due Profession* of a Church, that she is the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, *1 Tim. iii. 15.* as manifesting, supporting, and maintaining the Truth : Wherefore these Defections and Corruptions, as they all concur

a darkning, overthrowing, and burying the Truth, as to the Doctrines and Ordinances of Christ, must therefore be *Evils of her Profession*.

Moreover, what is it we must understand, in general, by the actual *Profession* of a Church, if we would mean agreeably to Scripture or Reason? It is just the *publick Declaration, Exhibition, and Representation* which she makes to the World of the Truths, Doctrines, and Ordinances of Christ, in the whole prevalent Course of her publick Management; or, in other Words, it is the *publick Testimony* which she maintains for Christ and his Cause, in Opposition to the Errors and Abominations of the Time: But the foresaid Defections and Corruptions do all concur in *marring and corrupting* what Declaration, Exhibition and Representation the established Church makes, or what Testimony she maintains, that Way; wherefore they must all be *Evils of her Profession*. Again, it is by the Management of the Church, in her *judicative Capacity*, that the *Authority and Government of Zion's King* is represented and manifested among Men, according to *Psal. cxxii. 5. Jer. iii. 17.* But the foresaid Defections and Corruptions are all chargeable upon the Management of the established Church in her *judicative Capacity*; wherefore they are all chargeable upon the *Profession* which she makes of the Authority and Government of *Zion's King*, and so must all be *Evils of her Profession*. In the next Place, the *publick Standards* that have been received in a Church, are her *Profession* only *objectively*, or the *Matter* professed; but as to the *Profession* *subjectively*, or the *present actual Profession* of the established Church, which is the Thing now treated of, what must it signify in general? It must signify just what *present actual Maintenance* of these Standards she is making in her publick Capacity and Course of Management; so that these ancient Standards can no way be reckoned a *Test* of her present actual *Profession*, any farther than she is thus *actually maintaining and supporting* them: But the foresaid Defections and Corruptions do all concur, as an open Course of *subverting and backsliding* from these Standards; wherefore they must all be *Evils of her Profession*: And thus, our ancient *publick Standards* are by no Means a proper *Test and Bond* of the actual *Profession* of the established Church in her present Situation, which is the general Ground of the present *Secession* from her,-----as is largely manifested by Mr. *Wilson*, in his *Defence*, Chap, ii.-----And further, an open *maintaining and avowing* of *attained-to Reformation*, must certainly belong to the *Profession* of a Church: But the foresaid Defections and Corruptions do all concur to make up an open Course, in the established Church, of *backsliding* from

and *burying* Reformation once attained to; wherefore they must all be *Evils of her Profession*.

Thus it is plain, that the *present Profession* of the National Church in the complex State thereof, must be understood as *comprehending* or having *incorporated* with it, *all these Defections and Corruptions* which she is charged with in the present Testimony among *Seceders*; so that the general and full Approbation of *her Profession* must be an Approbation of *all these*.

Again, the present *National Establishment* of Religion in the *complex State* thereof, must be understood as *comprehending* or having *incorporated* with it, *all these Evils* of the present civil Government which are complained of in the present Testimony among *Seceders*. For all these Evils are openly *concerning Religion*, to the Prejudice thereof; wherefore they must necessarily be considered as *publick Sores* taking Place in, and *publick Wounds* given unto, the foresaid Establishment of Religion: And further, all these Evils are still *unreformed*; so that they must necessarily be considered as *Wounds still remaining* and *Sores still running* in the said Establishment. Wherefore all these Evils must be understood as comprehended in or incorporated with the said Establishment in its present complex State; so that the general and full Approbation of *this Establishment*, must be an Approbation of *all these*.

Moreover, as to open Matter of Fact, the foresaid Profession generally *complies with* the Establishment, in its present complex State; and this Establishment is a general *Safe-guard, Support and Defence* of the Profession, in its present complex State: Wherefore the foresaid Evils of *both* are so *complex and interwoven*, that *all these* must come to be approved of, in the general and full Approbation of *each*.

Now, the foregoing *Conclusions*, about all the publick Evils of Church and State which we testify against, their being homologated or approved of by a present swearing the religious Clause of some Burgees-Oaths, are openly *inevitable*. And indeed the whole is very obvious, from this one *Consideration*, That as this is a Time of *general and growing Defection*, both in Church and State, so as a publick formal Testimony against it ought to be steadily maintained; therefore a *general Oath* about the *present State* of Religion in this Church and Nation, not including the least Hint of finding any special Fault therewith, must include a *sinful Silence* on that Occasion about the same, which must amount unto an *homologating* or *approving* all the *publick Evils* thereof that are testified against in the *Secession*.

Thus

Thus it has been cleared, how the foresaid religious Clause *comes necessarily in this Period to be used and applied.* And, upon the whole, these two Things in general are most obvious. On the one Hand the Oath, in presently swearing that Clause, hath a very *sinful Deficiency* of Reduplication; because, though it be really a *general Deed* about Religion, so as it must, in the Nature of the Thing, *exclude* what it doth not *comprehend* about the State of Religion,-----yet it cannot *come up to* or *comprehend* the *present Testimony* among Seceders; seeing the Clause doth not expressly renounce any Thing but *Popery*,-----and seeing the present Testimony among *Seceders* doth not belong unto the present *National Profession* and *Establishment* of Religion which the Oath generally versant about. But it was otherwise in former Periods of *general Reformation*; because then, all the Testimony of the Day, if not *expressly* comprehended in the Clause, was yet *materially*, when belonging to the *then* National Profession and Establishment which the Clause did reduplicate upon.-----But, on the other Hand, the Oath, in presently swearing the religious Clause, hath a very *sinful Reduplication* upon the *present National Profession* and *Establishment* of Religion, containing a general and full Homologation or Approbation of them, in their *present complex State*: So that *all* the publick Evils, Defections and Corruptions of Church and State which are testified against in the *Secession*, (seeing they all belong to the said Profession and Establishment, and (though not to the *true Religion*, yet) to the *Injury* which the true Religion suffers, *under* that Profession and Establishment),-----are openly *homologated*, or *justified* and *approved* of, by that Oath.

And thus, the said Oath stands in *full* and *direct Opposition* unto, so as to be *materially* a *solemn Abjuration* of, the *whole* present Testimony in the *Secession*, as it is displayed against these publick Evils and Abominations of the Time; yea, even as it stands displayed, in a Way of *Secession*, against the *practical Inconsistencies* and *Vices* of the Age: Because if, according to the Oath of the religious Clause, the established Church be maintaining a *due Profession*, or a *due Testimony* for Christ and his Cause; then, as there *ought not* to be any *Testimony* against her, there ought to be *no Secession* from her, nor any *Testimony* maintained in a *Way of Secession*. And accordingly, the said *Oath* is as much *inconsistent* with the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants, as an open *material abjuring* of the *Secession-Testimony* is inconsistent with a formal *avouching* thereof. Wherefore what is asserted in the

Synod's

Synod's Sentence, about the Nature of a *present swearing the religious Clause*, is very *plain and certain*.

But moreover, in Agreeableness to what has been shown already, a present swearing of that Clause must be a swearing *close and constant Communion* with the *established Church*. For, seeing it is a swearing *fully in her Favour* against the *Secession*, it must be a swearing *fully in Behalf* of that *Communion*: As, in the next Place, the *established Church* and her *present actual Profession* are, in the Nature of the Thing, wholly *inseparable*; and therefore the swearing, that one *professes*, and *shall abide at and defend to his Life's End*, this her Profession, or Religion considered in this her Profession, must be a swearing that he *professes*, and *shall abide at and defend the same*, *with her*, in the fore-said *Communion*. And this might be further instructed, by sundry Arguments taken from a *Conjunction* in the Oath with the *Members* of the *established Church*. Nor can it be of any Moment here, to object, That *Seceders* are *well known*, at their swearing the Oath, *not to be* of the Communion of the *established Church*, or *Approvers* of her publick Case and Course; for this can never alter the plain *Nature* of the Oath, and it can only mean, that they are then known to be *openly dissembling and contradicting* their own *Profession*.

And thus, according to all that has been now said, the Synod's *sentence*, in the several Parts thereof, concerning the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, is *evidently most just and necessary*.

And tho' the *precise Subject* of the Sentence, *viz. a present Swearing the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths, by Seceders*, as the said Clause comes necessarily in this Period to be used and applied, is a Thing which had not properly a *Parallel* in any former Periods; yet, by all *Parity of Reason*, the Synod's Conduct about that Matter is in the *old Paths, where is the good Way*, so that they have walked in a *Way cast up, and gone forth by the Footsteps of the Flack*.

That this eminently holds, with respect to the Example of the Church of *Scotland* in her last reforming Period, hath been discovered already, *Pages 50, 51, 52, 75, 78, 80*. And it as eminently holds with respect to *Scripture Example and Rule*, in *Hos. iv. 15. Though thou Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven, NOR SWEAR, THE LORD LIVETH.*

As to *Israel* and *Judah*, they were of *distinct ecclesiastical Capacities*, or *two Churches*, in respect of publick formal *Communion*: And, as that of *Israel* was the Church of the *Majority* in the Kingdom of the *ten Tribes*; so that of *Judah* was the

Church

Church of the *Minority*, in the Kingdom of the other two Tribes. Again, these two Churches were generally of *one Religion*, inasmuch as it was materially the *true Religion* which took Place in both. Further, the Church of the Majority in *Israel* was exceeding *corrupt*; as indeed the Root of their publick Corruption did ly in their being of any distinct Church-state from *Judah*, considering the peculiar Situation of the visible Church under the *Mosaick OEconomy*: So that their *national Profession* and *Establishment* of Religion were exceedingly *corrupt*, in a Way of *Apostasy* from and *Opposition* unto the just Order, Purity, and Maintenance of divine Worship and Institutions which had been once attained to and avouched; and thus, the *true Religion* did suffer very *awful Injury*, under *their national Profession* and *Establishment* thereof: But the Church of the Majority in *Judah* were in a State of religious *Seccession* from them, inasmuch as they were still adhering to the Temple at *Jerusalem*, according to the just Order and Purity of divine Worship and Institutions there. And these Things are so plain, from the Current of Scripture, that they need not here be further insisted upon.

Now, in the foregoing Text, *Judah* is called to stand fast in that State of religious *Seccession*, so as not to *symbolise* with them in their corrupt Case and Course: Particularly the Call is, *not to symbolise* with them in *religious swearing*,-----*Nor swear, The Lord liveth*. This Oath, *The Lord liveth*, was, in other Circumstances, *commanded*, as in *Jer. iv. 2*. And as that Oath was of a *general Nature*, it behoved, in due Circumstances, to be a general Avouchment of the *living God*, comprehending an *Avouchment of and Engagement* unto all that Worship and these Institutions by which he was *manifested*, and in the Observance whereof he was to be *acknowledged*, as *the living God*, in Opposition to the dead Idols of the Nations: And so it behoved to be an Oath *homologating* the *publick Profession* and *Establishment* of the Religion of the *living God*.

But this Oath is here *forbidden* in *Conjunction* with those of the corrupt Church of *Israel* at *Gilgal* and *Bethaven*. And it is forbidden, as an Oath which behoved, in *these* Circumstances, to have a *Falseness* in it, according to *Jer. v. 3*. *Tho' they say, The Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely*. Even the *very Oath* would have a *Falseness* in it, as the Text expressly denotes. And it is impossible to conceive how the *Oath itself* could, in these Circumstances, have a *Falseness* in it, any other Way than as, in *these* Circumstances, it was an Oath *generally homologating* the *corrupt Profession* and *Establishment* of Religion in *Israel*, particularly with respect to the Service which was offer-

ed him at *Bethaven* and *Dan*, and the Manner of his Worship at *Gigal* and *Beersheba*. And that this was really the Case, appears from the Paraphrase given of the *Oath* in the foresaid Circumstances, *Amos* viii. 14. *They—swear by the Sin of Samaria, and say, Thy God, O Dan, liveth, and the Manner of Beersheba liveth.*

Now, if the said general Oath about Religion was thus *constructed of and forbidden*, merely from the Circumstances of swearing it in the foresaid *Conjunction* with those of the corrupt Church of *Israel*; it is still more evident, that the general Oath about Religion, in the *religious Clause* of some Burgeſs-oaths, ought in like manner to be *constructed of and forbidden*, as the Synod have done; because, over and above the present *similar* Circumstances of swearing it, it *expresly* takes up the *national Profession and Establishment* of Religion, in their present *complex State*.

C O N C L U S I O N.

It may not be improper to conclude this *Appendix* with some further Remarks upon the *eighth* and *tenth Reasons*, in *Pages* 88, 89, 100, 101, and 102.

As the Synod's Sentence cannot be got any Hit of by fair Reasoning; so, of all the *Artifices* which have been used against it, the one most *bare-fac'd*, and which contains the *bareſt Fetch*, is that of attacking upon the Head of the *Allegiance* to our present Sovereign, in the foresaid Reasons: For this can stand in no particular Connection with the Affair of the Sentence, and can have no better Tendency here, than to get *Amends* of the Synod. But how *unreasonably* they are loaded with the *Insinuations* upon that Head; has been declared in their *Answers* to these Reasons. However, a few Things shall be added, for discovering how the Synod are there *injured*, and the Reader *imposed* upon.

It is most injurious to bring out the *general Charge* against any in the Synod, of an *Opinion anent the Allegiance to our present Sovereign, contrary to the Testimony and Principles which we profess to hold*; when all the *Reason* alledged of this Charge is, that as to what is commonly called the *Allegiance*, and is declared against in our professed Testimony and Principles, they are not so *mysterious* as to see how it becomes *right* enough, *merely* by being laid in a *Burgeſs-oath*. And the Brethren have more Reason to take with the Charge of an *Opinion* in this Matter *contrary to the Testimony and Principles which we profess to hold*:

er, *That the Associate Presbytery in none of their Acts have ever* (what is here called) *a simple Allegiance unlawful, abstracting from the Act imposing the same,---is so far from holding,* at, beside their reasoning against it from the *Act* imposing the same, the *Strength* of their Reasoning did lean to the *Nature* of the *Truth* itself, compared with the *Burial* of our *Covenant-allegiance* by the *Act rescissory*, as is explained by Mr. Wilson, from the *Words* of the *Testimony*, in his *Defence*, Pages 319, 320.

It is also most injurious, to argue against the Synod, *That the King's defending and securing the true Religion, cannot be supposed to be a just Limitation of our Oath of Allegiance to him, so as make it unlawful to swear Allegiance, unless he be employed in the Defence thereof*: For there was no *Reason* to suppose, that ever such an *Opinion* entred into the *Mind* of any in the Synod: And as an *Oath of Allegiance*, upon due *Occasion* and *Necessity*, cannot, in the *Opinion* of *any body*, require *any better* Limitation than *Subjection* and *Obedience* doth; such a limiting of *Subjection* and *Obedience* to the *Sovereign* by his *religious Qualifications*, is directly *contrary* to the declared *Principles* of *all* in the Synod, as they *openly adhere* to what they have declared on that *Head*, in the *Answers* to Mr. Nairn. But whether than not have the Synod discredited on this *Head*, it must be done as by an *Argument* in the *tenth Reason*, amounting to its *gross Absurdity*, *That it would infer great Ingratitude, to make it unlawful to swear Allegiance to the King, unless he be employed in the Defence of the true Religion, when he is appearing remarkably for the Defence of it.*

But, again, the Reader comes here to be much *imposed upon*. The *plain Case* of our *Covenant-allegiance* is *darkned* by an *inconsistent* and *dangerous Maze* of Reasoning: For that *Case* obviously amounts to this, *That our Reformers* did thereby swear, that as their *main Aim* was to act in the *Preservation* and *Defence* of the *true Religion* and *Liberties* of the *Kingdoms*, so they were resolved to preserve and defend the *King's Person* and *Authority*, as far as the *Cause* of his *Person* and *Authority* could consist with and be subordinate to that *main Aim*: And therefore it was *properly* an *Allegiance*, according to our *received View* of it, in the *Testimony* and *Confession of Sins*; and our Reformers hereby designed a *limited* or *circumscribed Oath of Allegiance* to the *King*; and it was a *complete Allegiance*, so as (though not expressing, according to the *Citation* in the *Close* of *Reason* eighth, yet) comprehending all those *Duties* to the *King* which any *Allegiance* ought to do: And thus an *Argument* can be drawn from our *Covenant-allegiance*, against *all Allegiance*, which

stands in the same Limitation. And as to the Argument of our Covenanters swearing *another* Allegiance, it should have been proven, both that they did so *after* swearing the Covenant-allegiance, and that this would not have been *superfluous* Swearing. Wherefore the *new Style* now used, the *new Distinction* now made, and the *new Doctrine* now advanced, upon this Head, must fall to the Ground; as contrary to our *received Principles* on that Subject, in the *Testimony*, Page 39. and in the *Confession of Sins*, Page 101. And indeed, it must look strange among *Seceders*, to have a Distinction coined as at present, betwixt an *Assurance* and an *Allegiance*: All the proper Tendency whereof is to *impose* on the Mind, and to countenance a *vain Repetition* of Oaths; while an Assurance and an Allegiance cannot *really*, and in the *Nature of the Thing*, be *different*.

Moreover, as to what is here called the *simple Allegiance*, (which, in our received Style, is called a *general Oath* of Allegiance), we are told, that our *Ancestors* have *determined* in the Matter; and accordingly a Citation is pretended to be brought in these Words, *No honest Minister or Christian would scruple to take a simple Allegiance*: And for this we are referred, but in general, to the *Apological Relation*, upon the Head of the *Oath of Supremacy*; whereas it should be called, upon the Head of the *Oath of Allegiance*, in its civil and ecclesiastical Supremacy: But, after turning over upwards of 140 Pages of small Print, in the Place referred to, the Words are found thus: *There is no Minister or Christian who would scruple at the taking of the pure Oath of Allegiance*. Now, what is there called the *pure Oath of Allegiance*, (in opposition to the *Mixture* of ecclesiastical Supremacy in the Oath of Allegiance that was framed at the Restoration), is the Allegiance that our *Ancestors* had ado with *before the Restoration*, which is repeted in the *tenth Section* of that Book; an Oath which has the *Subject* thereof particularly *defined* and *circumscribed*, being an Oath upwards of *twenty Times* as large as the present general Allegiance. Wherefore the Practice of our *Ancestors* in the Matter of that Oath, or the fore-said Quotation about it, cannot possibly be a *Determination* about the *present Case*, further than this in general, That an *Oath of Allegiance is lawful*. And who disputes this? Who disputes, that the Principles of Subjection and Obedience which a Man may *say*, he may also *swear*, upon due Occasion and Necessity? But the Lawfulness of *this* or *that* particular Oath of Allegiance, in respect of how it is worded, qualified, and circumstantiate, is a quite other Subject. As to which it shall only be observed here, That, in the tenth Paragraph of the tenth Section

Conclusion,

ection of the *Apologetical Relation*, where the Oath of *Allegiance* framed at the Restoration is impugned, even as to the *civil Part* of it, because of the *Generality* thereof, it is said, "----All Divines and Casuists do grant, That an Oath must be taken in *his* Sense and Meaning in whose Favours, or for whose Sake and Safety it is conceived, and who tendereth it; and therefore it is not only *lawful*, but *necessary*, to enquire what Sense the *Acts* and *Actings* of Parliament do put upon it." And this *Conclusion* shall be shut up with another Citation from the eighth Paragraph thereof, *viz.* "Oaths being Matters about which much *Tenderness* and *Carefulness* ought to be used, it becomes *Ministers* to look well to this, — especially in a Time when *Snares* abound."

F I N I S.



Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.

W I W I A



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THAT *William Gray* is to print a New Edition of *Josephus's* History from the best Edition extant, with Maps, and likewise *Bennet's Memorial of Britain's Deliverances*; any who desire to have a Copy, or Copies thereof, must subscribe for them in Time, for he is to print no more than what are subscribed for.

Proposals for each of them are to be had at his Printing-house; and at several Booksellers Shops in Town and Country.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, do hereby declare that the above is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the records of the Court of the said County of ... State of ...



