heritors. The Act itself had been passed by the Assembly, although the presbyteries to which it had been previously submitted as an overture had disapproved of it by a large majority ; and in accordance with a previous Act (1730), which had taken away even the right of complaint, the protests of the dissentient majority were refused. In the following October Ebenezer Erskine *(q.v.),* minister of Stirling, who happened to be moderator of the synod of Perth and Stirling, preached a synod sermon, in the course of which he took occasion to refer to the Act in question as in his opinion unscriptural and unconstitutional.@@1 Some of his expressions were objected to by members of synod because “ tending to disquiet the peace of the church and impugning several Acts of Assembly and proceedings of church judicatories,” and after long and keen debate it was resolved that he should be censured for them. This judgment, on appeal, was affirmed by the Assembly in May 1733, whereupon Erskine protested to the effect that he held himself still at liberty to teach the same truths and to testify against the same or similar evils on every proper occasion. This protest, in which he was joined by William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff, and James Fisher, ministers at Perth, Abernethy, and Kinclaven respectively, was regarded by the Assembly as contumacious, and the commission of Assembly was ordered to procure its re­tractation or to proceed to higher censures. In November accordingly the protesting ministers were severed from their charges, their churches declared vacant, and all min­isters of the church prohibited from employing them in any ministerial function. They replied by protesting that they still adhered to the principles of the church, though now obliged to “ make a secession from the prevailing party in ecclesiastical courts,” maintaining their continued right to discharge all the duties of the ministerial and pastoral office “ according to the word of God, the Con­fession of Faith, and the constitution of the church,” and appealing to the “ first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.” In De­cember 1733 they formally constituted themselves into a presbytery, but for some time their meetings were devoted almost entirely to prayer and religious conference. In 1734 they published their first “ testimony,” with a state­ment of the grounds of their secession, which made pro­minent reference to the doctrinal laxity of previous General Assemblies. In 1736 they proceeded to exercise “judicial powers” as a church court, published a “judicial testi­mony,” and began to organize churches in various parts of the country. Having been joined by four other min­isters, including the well-known Ralph Erskine, they appointed Mr Wilson professor of divinity. For these acts proceedings were again instituted against them in the Assembly, with the result that, having disowned the authority of that body in an “act of declinature,” they were in 1740 all deposed and ordered to be ejected from their churches. Meanwhile the members of the “Associate Presbytery ” and its adherents steadily increased, until in 1745 there were forty-five congregations under its jurisdic­tion, and it was reconstituted into an “ Associate Synod.” A violent controversy arose the same year respecting the religious clause of the oath taken by burgesses in Edin­burgh, Glasgow, and Perth (“ I profess and allow with my heart the true religion presently professed within this realm and authorized by the laws thereof ”), and resulted in April 1747 in a “breach,” when two bodies were formed, each claiming to be the “Associate Synod”; those who condemned the swearing of the burgess oath as sinful came to be popularly known as “ Antiburghers,” while the other party, who contended that abstinence from

it should not be made a term of communion, were desig­nated “ Burghers.” The Antiburghers not only refused to hold further friendly conference with the others, but ultimately went so far as to pass sentences of deposition and the greater excommunication on the Erskines and other ministers who held the opposing view.

The Associate (Antiburgher) Synod held its first meeting in Edinburgh in the house of Adam Gib *(q.υ.)* on April 10, 1747. It grew with considerable rapidity, and in 1788 had ninety-four settled charges in Great Britain and nineteen in Ireland, besides a presbytery in America. For purposes of organization it was formed in that year into four provincial synods, and took the name of “ The General Associate Synod.” The “ new light ” controversies as to the province of the civil magistrate in matters of religion led to the publication of a revised testimony in the “ voluntary ” sense in 1804, and in consequence M'Crie, the historian of Knox, with three other brethren, withdrew to form the Constitutional Associate Presbytery.

The Associate (Burgher) Synod held its first meeting at Stirling on June 16, 1747. The number of congrega­tions under its charge rapidly increased, and within thirty years there were presbyteries in connexion with it in Ireland and North America, as well as throughout Scotland. In 1782 the American presbyteries took the designation of the Associate Reformed Church in America. About the year 1795 the “voluntary” controversy respecting the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion arose within this synod also, and a large majority was found to have adopted “new light’’ views. This led in 1799 to the secession of the “ Associate Presbytery,” which in 1805 took the designation of the Associate Synod or Original Burgher Synod.@@2

In 1820 the General Associate or Antiburgher Synod (to the number of 129 congregations@@3) united with the 154 congregations of the Associate or Burgher Synod. The body thus constituted, “The United Secession Church,” had increased by 1847 to 400 congregations, the whole of which united in that year with the Relief Synod to form the United Presbyterian Church.

(2) *Relief Church.—*The Presbytery of Relief was con­stituted in 1761 by three ministers of the Church of Scotland, one of whom was Thomas Gillespie *(q.v),* who had been deposed by the Assembly in 1752 for refusing to take part in the intrusion of unacceptable ministers. The number of congregations under its charge increased with considerable rapidity, and a Relief Synod was formed in 1773, which in 1847 had under its jurisdiction 136 congregations; of these 118 united with the United Secession Church in that year. The Relief Church issued no distinctive “ testimonies,” and a certain breadth of view was shown in the formal declaration of their terms of communion, first made in 1773, which allowed occasional communion with those of the Episcopal and Independent persuasion who are “ visible saints.” A Relief theological hall was instituted in 1824.

See M'Kerrow, *History of the United Secession Church,* 1841 ; Struthers, *History of the Relief Church,* 1843 ; Mackelvie, *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church,* 1873.

UNITED PROVINCES. See Holland.

@@@1 The passing of the Act was certainly unconstitutional ; it was rescinded in 1734, “ because not made according to former Acts.”

@@@2 The majority of this synod joined the Church of Scotland in 1839. The small minority which still retained the name joined the Original Seceders (see next note) in 1842, the resultant body assuming the designation of United Original Seceders. A small majority (twenty- seven ministers in all) of the Synod of United Original Seceders joined the Free Church in 1852. A synod of this name still exists, having under its jurisdiction four presbyteries, with twenty-nine charges (of which two are in Ireland).

@@@3 A dissentient remnant (eight congregations) of the General Asso­ciate Synod united with the Constitutional Associate Presbytery in 1827, the resultant body being called the Associate Synod of Original Seceders.