miniſters into the communion of the church, and reſtore them to their reſpective charges; but with this expreſs direction, “that the ſaid ſynod ſhould not take upon them to judge of the legality or formality of the former procedure of the church judicatories in relation to this affair, or either approve or cenſure the ſame.” As this appointment neither condemned the act of the prece­ding aſſembly nor the conduct of the commiſſion, the ſeceding miniſters conſidered it to be rather an act of grace than of juſtice, and therefore they ſaid they could not return to the church-courts upon this ground; and they publiſhed to the world the reaſons of their refuſal, and the terms upon which they were willing to return to the communion of the eſtabliſhed church. They now erected themſelves into an eccleſiaſtical court, which they called the As*ſociated Preſbytery,* and preached occaſionally to numbers of the people who joined them indifferent parts of the country. They alſo publiſhed what they called an Act, *Declarations and Testimony,* to the doctrine, worſhip, government, and diſcipline of the church oſ Scotland, and againſt ſeveral inſtances, as they ſaid, of defection from theſe, both in former and in the preſent times. Some time arter this ſeveral miniſters of the eſtabliſhed church joined them, and the Aſſociated Preſhytery now conſiſted of eight miniſters. But the general aſe ſembly which met in 1738 finding that the number of Seceders was much increaſed, ordered the eight miniſters to be ſerved with a libel, and to be cited to the next meeting of the aſſembly in 1739. They now ap­peared at the bar as a conſtituted preſbytery, and ha­ving formally declined the aſſembly’s authority, they immediately withdrew. The aſſembly which met next year depoſed them from the office of the miniſtry; which, however, they continued to exerciſe in their reſpective congregations, who ſtill adhered to them, and erected meeting-houſes, where they preached till their death. Mr James Fiſher, the laſt ſurvivor oſ them, was, by an unanimous call in 1741, tranſlated from Kinclaven to Glaſgow, where he continued in the exer­ciſe of his miniſtry among a numerous congregation, reſpected by all ranks in that large city, and died in 1775 much regretted by his people and friends. In 1745 the ſeceding miniſters were become ſo numerous, that they were erected into three different preſbyteries, under one ſynod, when a very unprofitable dispute divi­ded them into two parties.

The burgeſs oath in ſome of the royal boroughs of Scotland contains the following clauſe: “I profeſs and allow with my heart the true religion preſently profeſſed within this realm, and authoriſed by the laws thereof. I will abide at and defend the ſame to my life’s end, renouncing the Romiſh religion called *Papistry* Meſſrs Ebenezer and Ralph Erſkine, James Fiſher, and others, affirmed that this clauſe was no way contrary to the principles upon which the ſeceſſion was formed, and that therefore every Seceder might lawfully ſwear it. Meſſrs Alexander Moncrief, Thomas Mair, Adam Gib, and others, contended on the other hand

that the ſwearing oſ the above clauſe was a virtual re­nunciation of their teſtimony. And this controverſy was ſo keenly agitated, that they ſplit into two different parties, and now meet in different ſynods. Thoſe or them who affert the lawfulneſs of ſwearing the burgeſs oath are called *Burghers,* and the other party wſho con­demn it are called A*ntiburgher Seceders.* Each party claiming to itſelf the lawful conſtitution of the *Aſſociate Synod,* the Antiburghers, after ſeveral previous ſteps, excommunicated the Burghers on the ground of their fin and of their contumacy in it. This rupture took place in 1747, ſince which period no attempts to effect a reunion have been ſucceſsful. They remain under the juriſdiction of different ſynods, and hold ſeparate com­munion, although much of their former hoſtilſty has been laid aſide. The Antiburgſhers conſider the Burgh­ers as too lax and not Efficiently ſtedfaſt to their teſ­timony. The Burghers on the other hand contend that the Antiburghers are too rigid, in that they have introduced new terms of communion into the ſociety. The Antiburghers having adopted ideas with regard to what they call *covenanting,* wſhich the Burghers never approved @@(a), have been in uſe of renewing in their ſeveral congregations the Scottiſh Covenant, by cauſing their people formally ſwear to maintain it. In other reſpects the differences between the two parties are not material. The Antiburghers are moſt numerous on the north of the Tay, and the Burghers on the ſouth of it.

What follows in this article is a further account of thoſe who are commonly called the *Burgher Seceders.* Theſe have a greater number of people in their com­munion than the Antiburghers, and for ſome years paſt they have greatly increaſed in the ſouthern and weſtern diſtricts of Scotland. As there were among them from the commencement of their ſeceſſion ſeveral ſtudents who had been educated at one or other of the univerſities, they appointed one of their miniſters to give lectures in theology, and train up candidates for the miniſtry. Meſſrs William Willon miniſter at Perth and Alexander Moncrief miniſter at Abernethy were their proſefſors of theology before their ſeparation from the Antiburgſhers.

Since that period Mr Ebenezer Erſkine miniſter at Stirling, Mr James Fiſher miniſter at Glaſgow, Mr John Swanſton miniſter at Kſhroſs, and Mr John Brown miniſter at Haddington, have ſucceeded each other in this office. At preſent (1794) Mr George Eawſon miniſter at Selkirk is their profeſſor of theology, and there are between thirty and forty ſtudents who at­tend his lectures annually. The number of their mi­niſters is about an hundred, and each of their congrega­tions contain from two hundred and fifty to three thouſand perſons; and there are among them at preſent more than twenty vacant charges. Where a congrega­tion is very numerous, as in Stirling, Dunfermline, and Perth, it is formed into a collegiate charge, and provi­ded with two miniſters. They are erected into ſix dif-

@@@(a) This is the account which the Burghers give of their own notions reſpecting the covenant. One of the moſt enlightened of their opponents, however, aſſure us that they acknowledge covenanting to be a *moral duty,* and that the ſolemn vows of our anceſtors are obligatory. But ſince the breach in the ſynod they have never engaged in this work; giving, as their reaſon, that this is not the proper ſeaſon.