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ART. I.—*The Life of Robert Blair, Minister of St. Andrews, containing his Autobiography from 1593 to 1636, with a Supplement to his Life, and Continuation of the History of the Times to 1680.* By his son-in-law, Mr. William Row, Minister of Ceres. Edited for the Wodrow Society, from the Original Manuscript, by Thomas McCrie, D.D. Edinburgh: Printed for the Wodrow Society, 1848.

ROBERT BLAIR was a remarkable man, and lived through a large part of a century, in very eventful times. His history has not, hitherto, been so well known, as that of other Scottish worthies; but by the exertions of the Wodrow Society, it has recently been brought to light. He was born at Irvine, in the year 1593, and was the youngest of four brothers; the names of the other three were John, James, and William: the two eldest rose to be chief magistrates of Irvine, and William was first a regent in the University of Glasgow, and afterwards minister of Dumbarton.

Robert entered the University in the year 1611, and took his degree of A.M. in 1614. After teaching two years in the public school, he succeeded his brother as one of the Regents

in 1616: During the time he was Regent he received license to preach. When he first came out as a preacher, it so happened, that on a certain occasion he had the celebrated Robert Bruce, of Edinburgh, as one of his hearers. After the sermon, he sought the judgment of that eminent man on his performance, whose censure he never could forget. It was this: "I found your sermon very polished and digested; but there is one thing I miss in it, to wit, the Spirit of God—I found not that." This made a deep impression on the mind of Mr. Blair, and he often spoke of it to others. It had a most salutary effect; for it led him to consider, that it was something else to be a minister of Jesus Christ, than to be a knowing and eloquent preacher.

In 1623, Mr. Blair was involved in a dispute with Dr. Cameron, the learned principal of the University of Glasgow, and, being weary of teaching philosophy, he accepted a call to be minister of Bangor, in Ireland. In his autobiography, he relates many interesting particulars of his experience, and of his various trials, both before and after he entered the ministry, which we have no reason to notice. His various exercises and trials, in his spiritual state and progress, he has detailed at great length: some abridged extracts from these it may be proper here to insert.

"Before I enter upon the trouble I underwent at Glasgow, it is expedient to declare, how the Lord prepared me for the same. And first, I did find great sweetness in worshipping the Lord for some considerable space; so that I did not apprehend any great difficulty. But when I began to set closer on duties, as in sanctifying the Lord's day, I did meet with such opposition by the wanderings of my own mind and injections of Satan, that the more I aimed at watchfulness and circumspection, the less freed I came; so that I knew not what to do. To slack my endeavours I durst not, and to bind them more I could not; and when I endeavoured it, I was beaten back with loss: and so, for some time, I walked in heaviness. My brother, who had been my teacher, finding me in this case, by my frequent sighs, inquired what ailed me? Was I in doubt about my soul's salvation? I said, I am not. I have Christ for my righteousness, and by his merits I hope to be

saved. What can trouble you then, said he. I answered, this troubleth me, that I cannot serve the Lord my God cheerfully and constantly; especially on his own day, as, sometimes, I have been able to do. He laboured partly to encourage, and partly to drive me out of this heaviness; but it had no effect. I continued in heaviness, until, on a certain Lord's day, the Lord spoke to my soul by his Spirit, out of the 71st Psalm, "I will walk in the strength of the Lord, and will make mention of thy righteousness even of thine only." Thereby, great light shined within my soul, disavowing the ignorance and darkness, wherein I was walking, and that when the Lord first taught me to rejoice, I observed not that I was mostly upheld by the hand of the Lord, but my thought was that I had gotten a stock of grace in my keeping, that would suffice to carry me through all difficulties. And then, I looked upon this as my own, which no doubt provoked the Lord to blast all my efforts, and to withdraw his gracious assistance; that, so I might learn what I was, and what was my own; to wit, weakness, folly, wandering, deadness, backsliding, &c. Then did I see, that the strength whereby to walk with God, was not committed to my keeping, nor at my command, but in thy hand, O Lord! Who didst withdraw from me, that thou mightest again embrace me. Then did I experience the truth of that scripture, 'The Lord is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation.' This did the Lord teach me, that the stock and strength of sin was in myself; yea, that I carried about with me a body of sin and death—a bitter root of sinning—sin abounding and bringing forth fruit unto death—that, although God had quickened the soul, yet the principle of sin sought to reign and frequently prevailed; so that the new creature was assaulted and carried captive, hindered from doing good, and carried away to evil; and that strength to resist was to be looked for from a Preserver and Deliverer. Then I perceived, that sin, which had appeared to be dead, had too much of vigorous life, which appeared most evidently when the spiritual law urged obedience, according to Rom. vii. 8, 'Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, for without the law, sin was dead.' Then, O Lord, thou wast pleased to humble thy ser-

vant, and to drive me out of myself, to teach me not to trust in myself, but in God who raiseth the dead. Then began I to learn the meaning of that, 'When I am weak then am I strong,' 2 Cor. xii. 10. The Lord gives proof of his power, when he makes a discovery of weakness. If any think this was no great manifestation of an important truth, I answer, it is one thing to know a truth naturally or notionally, and another to know it spiritually. Between these there is a difference in kind or species. His true spiritual knowledge is affectionate and practical: as it flows from the Spirit of God, so it carries with it a current of holy affections, and stirreth up to endeavours and earnestness in holy practice.

"Thus began I in a serious way to study the person, the nature, and the offices of the Mediator; how he is made to us of God, not only wisdom as the great promised Prophet, righteousness as our Justifier, but also sanctification as our King to reign in us, and working that which is well-pleasing in his sight. Comfortable then was the consideration of his human nature, wherein He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; for upon this ground we are invited to come to the throne of grace, that we may 'obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' And so our Saviour was made fit to be a sacrifice to satisfy for sin; and to be our friend to whom we might have recourse for sanctification to help us against all temptations. So also the consideration of his divine nature proved very comfortable, as by that He is able to subdue all his own enemies, and through abundant grace, to bring us to the possession of the promised inheritance, and to make us kings and priests unto the Father. And so now when the fulness and riches of Christ were laid open, O gracious God! how sweetly and satisfyingly did this refresh the soul of thy poor servant! But I perceived, that as Christ had an inward kingdom, so also he had an external kingdom, where He governed by his appointed officers and servants. This put me to a new examination of church government; considering first the scriptures, and then authors who had discussed this subject. In searching the scriptures, I did find that our Saviour, upon several occasions, did forbid lordship and domination even to his apostles, and, consequently, to all that shall at any time bear office in

his kirk. The apostle Peter also—on whom they pretend to build their hierarchy—forbids all such domination. ‘Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but ensamples to the flock.’ 1 Peter v. 3. And wherever bishops are mentioned in the New Testament, no other thing is meant than pastors, presbyters, or ministers: so that bishop and presbyter, in the language of the Holy Spirit, is nothing else but two names for one and the same office, which is acknowledged by the most learned of the prelatie party. They, therefore, ground the superiority of bishops on the ancient custom of the kirk. But it may justly be counted a profane conceit that Christ has not appointed the substantial of government, whereof officers are a principal part—and it contradicts the perfection and sufficiency of holy scripture. And as to antiquity it is no absurdity to call every substantial change, after the closing of scripture, a corrupt novelty. And as to the pretence, that it was introduced to keep unity, it is evident, that the remedy was worse than the disease; and the argument would be still stronger for a universal bishop.”

“This may seem to be a digression; but it is not. For I profess that as I gained any progress in piety from the influence of the grace of Christ, I also attained unto further confirmation of the truth of the government of his kirk, by his appointed officers, and not by other intruders and usurpers, to whom I durst not give the accustomed titles of honour.

“But now, to open up the practical light wherein the Lord did lead me in these times. Having heard of the practice of some diligent Christians who daily took brief notes of the condition of their souls, I followed the same course, using an obscure way of writing, and kept it up about sixteen years; so that every Lord’s day, the notes of the preceding week were considered and laid to heart; and at the end of every month the whole.

“But now I found some new obstruction to arise; and I was again put to a stand with great sorrow, wondering what would be the outgate. Sometimes I thought deeper humiliation for not improving a discovered Christ, would clear the way to me. At another time, I thought that more diligence would clear the way; and if ordinary diligence carried not

the matter, extraordinary would do it. But still the obstruction remained, to my great astonishment. Then that great oracle, so often set down in holy scripture, 'The just shall live by his faith,' sounded in my ears.

"This led me to search through the scriptures, where I did find great weight laid on that grace, both in order to our justification and our sanctification. But I was not satisfied with what I did read in our divines, who described rather the high degrees attainable in this life, but gave not a description of it that agreed with it in all degrees. But when that Treatise of Faith, penned by Ezekiel Culverwell, came forth, I was thereby much satisfied with his views of the nature of faith. The description of old given of faith, that it is an assurance of the love of God in Christ, though it be true that many attain and comfortably enjoy it, and though it be true of a high degree of faith, yet argues not to all degrees of saving faith. Hence many gracious and sound believers, who have received Jesus Christ and rested on him as he is offered to them in the word, have been perplexed, and feared that they were not believers at all. On the other hand, many secure unhumiliated unbelievers, who have not so believed as to love holiness and hate sin, out of self-love, without the warrant of the Word, conceit themselves to be beloved of God. I perceived also that many who make a right use of faith, in order to their justification, make no direct use thereof in order to their sanctification. I now found that the living of the just by faith reached further than I before conceived, and that the heart is purified by faith.

"If any think, what! knew I not till then, that precious faith, being a grace, was not only a part of holiness, but did set forward other parts of holiness? I answer, I did indeed know; and so avowedly made use of faith as a motive to stir up holiness, according to the apostle's exhortation, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord,' (2 Cor. vii. 1). But I had not before that learned to make use of faith as an instrument to draw holiness out of Christ, the well of salvation; though it may be I had both heard and spoken of it by way of a transient notion; but then I learned to purpose, that they who

receive forgiveness of sins are sanctified through faith in Christ our glorious Saviour, as Paul taught, (Acts xxvi. 18). Then I marvelled not that my progress met with obstruction for not making use of faith for sanctification. I hoped then to make better progress, with less stumbling; but not long after, encountering difficulties, I wondered what discovery would next clear the way. Then I found that the Spirit of Holiness, whose appropriate work it was to sanctify, had been slighted, and so grieved. For, though the Holy Spirit had been teaching, and I had been speaking of Him and to Him frequently, seeking the pouring out of the same; yet that discovery was to me a new practical lesson; and so I laboured more to crave, cherish, and not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit; praying to be led into all truth, according to the scriptures, that blessed guide; and by that heavenly comforter, I sought to be comforted in all troubles, and sealed up thereby in strong assurance of my interest in God.

“About that time the Lord set me to work to stir up the students who were under my discipline, earnestly to study piety, and to be diligent in secret seeking of the Lord; and my gracious Lord was pleased herein to bless my endeavours.”

Mr. Blair's situation, as regent of the College of Glasgow, became embarrassing and unpleasant, on account of his opposition to the measures adopted by the court to bring the Scottish church into conformity with the church of England. Mr. Boyd, the principal of Glasgow college, while he extolled Blair's talents, took pains to prevent his getting a pastoral charge; for he was tired of teaching philosophy, and wished to devote himself to the ministry of the gospel. And when Dr. John Cameron* was sent down by the court to recon-

* This Cameron was a very remarkable man. Though he was born in Scotland and died in Scotland, he spent the greater part of his life in France. While at the University of Glasgow, he had as his classmates the two Rivets, from whom he learned to speak the French language. At the age of 20 he went to France, (1600), and was made professor of theology at Sedan. After this he accepted a pastoral charge at Bordeaux, where he had as his colleague another Scotchman, Mr. Gilbert Primrose. While there he was involved, together with his colleague, in a difficulty with the government of France, the consequence of which was their being forbidden to preach there any longer. The king signified to the Protestant synod, met at Charenton, that it was his will that neither of these ministers should be preferred to anything in the church, or to a pro-

cile the ministers of Scotland to the prelatical innovations, he for a while took the place of Boyd, as principal of the college, and was more inimical to Blair than his predecessor. He was a man of extraordinary abilities and great learning.

Mr. Blair wishing to converse with some eminent ministers, among whom were Daniel Dickson and Robert Bruce, who were confined in prison in the north of Scotland, on account of their refusal to comply with the late innovations in religion, which were attempted to be imposed by authority on the Scottish church, took a journey into those parts, and enjoyed much and satisfactory intercourse with these eminent servants of God. He was particularly satisfied with his visit to Bruce, who was so kind as to give him a full account of the various incidents and experiences of his life, in a manuscript book, from his own hand.

On his return, he found Dr. Cameron exceedingly displeased with him for having taken this journey, as he believed that Blair was engaged in carrying on some design, in cooperation with those ministers, in opposition to the innovations in religion, which he had undertaken, at the king's request, to promote. The difference between them was also increased by the part which Mr. Blair took in disputation, on some points on which Mr. Cameron supported opinions repugnant to the revealed doctrines of the church. Mr. Cameron also delivered lectures in explanation and vindication of the "Perth Articles," of which lectures Blair took full notes; and to which he prepared an answer.

Mr. Blair was now fully resolved to relinquish his situation

fessorship in any of their universities. Cameron therefore left France, and came to London, where, being found favourable to prelacy, king James sent him down to Scotland, to reconcile the Presbyterians to the innovations in religion, which he contemplated. But being entirely unsuccessful, he returned again to France. His fame as a theologian was great, and he became professor of theology at Montauban, and also at Saumur. Here he attempted to introduce a new theory of divinity, taking a middle course between Calvinism and Arminianism; for while he held the doctrine of gratuitous election, he maintained also the doctrine of universal grace and universal redemption. His lectures were published at Saumur, and his system was carried out by his disciples, Amyrald and Testard. Having preached the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance at Montauban, during the civil wars, he was attacked by a mob: heroically opening his breast, he said to one who murdered him, "Strike, you villain," on which the man knocked him down. He was taken care of by a woman, and was carried to a village where he died, aged forty-eight.

in the university of Glasgow; and Mr. Cameron, notwithstanding his previous hostility, used all his powers of persuasion to induce him to remain. For some time, however, Providence opened no field for his labours which appeared satisfactory. He was strongly induced to go to France; but while he was meditating a voyage thither, he received an invitation to Ireland, from lord Claneboy, patron of the church of Bangor, in the county Down. Having laid the matter before God in prayer, he was led to see that it was the will of God that he should accept this invitation; although his prejudices against the country were very strong. Upon landing, after a stormy night, and much suffering by sea-sickness, he fell in with a company of Irishmen at their cups, which confirmed his preconceived dislike. But being invited by the patron to preach, he did so for several successive sabbaths, after which several ancient men came to him, and assured him that his ministry was very edifying to them, and requested that he would continue to labour among them; and said, if the stipend furnished by the patron was not sufficient, they would make up the deficiency. He was also urged by the incumbent of the parish who then lay on his death-bed, not to leave the parish, but to pursue his preaching as he had begun.

This part of Ireland had been settled from Scotland, by emigrants who were not generally of the best character, though there were among them some respectable and worthy people. Their first preachers were not generally men of evangelical character; and it was on these accounts that Mr. Blair was prejudiced against the country. But he found here before him some preachers of excellent character, particularly Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Ridge. There had also been there a certain Mr. Hubart, from England, who had been a pupil of Mr. Cartwright, but he had lately died.

“The bishop,” says Blair, “understanding that I was opposed to be episcopally ordained, had the liberality to permit the ceremony to be performed by presbyters, in his presence.” Accordingly, Mr. Blair received ordination by the laying on of the hands of Mr. Cunningham, Ridge and others. And the former parson, old Mr. Gibson, having died, Mr. Blair was

inducted into the parish by lord Claneboy. When he first administered the Lord's supper, as he says, my lord Claneboy and his lady insisted on kneeling, against which Mr. B. strongly protested; but the matter was accommodated by their consenting to sit in their pew.

Mr. Blair relates a remarkable case of an attempt to assassinate him, by a man instigated, as he declared, by the devil, who had frequently appeared to him. But when he came into the presence of Mr. Blair, he was seized with such a trembling, that he was unable to carry his murderous purpose into effect; and, upon being questioned, confessed for what purpose he had come. Soon afterwards he was taken ill, and died in great agony of mind.

There was at this time, a certain Mr. Glendinning, settled at Carrickfergus, an eccentric, injudicious man; but possessed of a loud voice and much zeal, and making great pretensions to learning, by referring to books which he had never read. He attracted no small attention to his preaching; and in fact preached the terrors of the law so forcibly, that many persons were brought under deep conviction of sin; but he was unable to guide them aright, or to open to them the plan of salvation. This awakening, however, gave opportunity to Blair, Cunningham and Ridge, to preach the gospel to many who were inquiring what they must do to be saved. Glendinning, becoming envious at the popularity and success of the other ministers, began to vent some very extravagant opinions, pretended to new revelations, declared that the day of judgment was at hand, and acted in the most fanatical manner. On one occasion he thrust his foot into the fire, pretending that it would suffer no injury; but Mr. B. plucked it out.

In the year 1630, the Holy Spirit was poured out abundantly upon the churches in the north of Ireland. The narrative of this revival is given by Fleming in his "Fulfilling of the Scriptures," and by Reid in his History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It will not be necessary, therefore, to enter much into detail, respecting this remarkable work of grace. The preaching of Blair was a principal instrument in the hand of God in carrying it on. One experience which he had of extraordinary assistance in preaching, as related by

himself, it will be worth our while to contemplate; especially as it will serve to show, in a clear light, the piety and humility of the man. It was on a Monday after communion, at which a very numerous congregation had assembled. The preacher for that day having, on some account, failed to be present, Mr. Blair without preparation, was reluctantly constrained to occupy the pulpit. He says, "In my preface, before prayer, I promised a blessing from God to them that would ask it—a thing I never did before nor since—after calling on the name of the Lord and earnest wrestling with Him for his presence. The Lord so carried on the business, that only one proposition was offered to me to speak of, and no more, until the closing of that point; then another edifying point was suggested from the text, and so various others until the glass was run. In all this, I was but the voice of one crying. There was a prompter that suggested to me, even He that sent me to preach the gospel. But when the hour-glass was ended, three points, all weighty and concatenated together, were presented to me, the uttering whereof was almost (as I suppose) as much as all the rest. I hastened to my chamber, that I might meet with nobody, but that I might hide me in my chamber, and spend some time in admiration. I feared applause, whereas there was nothing in me but a voice. Yet I was surprised, as I was stealing away, by that ancient minister, Mr. Bryce, of Broadisland. He, perceiving the haste I was making, cried after me, "Of a truth the Lord was with you;" and I, turning, cried to him, "Sir, God forgive you your backdrawing." I continued in my chamber until called to dinner, and sat silent, except when something was asked me. After dinner, I heard an honourable gentleman saying to another, he wished the speaker had spoken till sunset, the hearing of which sent me out of the room."

At this time the attention of the people was so much awake that they were never weary of hearing. "They," says Blair, "hung upon us, still desirous to hear more. No day was long enough; no room was large enough. Then said I, in the hearing of many, 'Our tide has run so high, that there will be an ebb. No doubt a restraint is near; our trials are hastening on.'"

In the revival of religion which was now so remarkable in the north of Ireland, every thing, for a while, was conducted with solemnity and good order; until, after it had gone on for some time, a number of persons became the subjects of swooning and various bodily agitations; which our author thinks was a device of Satan to bring the work into discredit; for upon careful examination, the persons thus affected appeared to be ignorant of the doctrines of religion, or to have no just views of truth during the time that they were the subjects of these bodily agitations. The ministers, therefore, did not encourage these extraordinary effects on the body, as any sign of true religion; but rather discouraged them; although some truly pious persons were also affected in this manner.

Blair, and his friends in the ministry, in the north of Ireland, were peculiarly situated as to their ecclesiastical relations. For, while they were fixed in their opinions against prelaey, they were under the authority of the bishop of the dioecse. Echlin, the bishop, at first, appeared to be friendly to Blair, but after a while he began to lay snares for him. One instance of which was, that he wrote to him to be ready to preach at Archbishop Ussher's triennial visitation; but before the appointed day came, he sent him word, that another would perform that service. This was intended to leave him in uncertainty as to what would be expected of him; and that he might have some occasion to quarrel with him; as his private oral message contradicted his written appointment. Mr. Blair, however, prepared a discourse, which he delivered in the presence of all the bishops and clergy. His text was, "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not." Among other things, he undertook to show "that Christ, our Lord, had instituted no lord bishops in the kirk, but only presbyters and ministers, both to teach and govern." This, he undertook to prove, 1st, from the scriptures; 2d, from the testimonies of purer antiquity; 3d, from famous divines, who have been working reformation for 1300 years; and lastly, from modern divines, both over sea and in England. And he closed with the testimony of Archbishop Ussher himself. No remarks were publicly made on the discourse.

The bishop, having been defeated in his first attempt to ensnare Blair, contrived another trap more dangerous. Knowing that one of the judges, the Lord Chief Baron, who came, yearly, to the circuit, was a violent urger of English conformity, he wrote to Blair to have a sermon prepared by the time of the assizes. This was the more dangerous, because, it being Easter; the judges, according to custom, would communicate. Mr. Blair prepared himself by prayer and meditation, and then committed the matter to the Lord, who has the hearts and mouths of all in his own hand. He was also required to preach on the day before the communion; which was unprecedented. On the Lord's day, he preached in the morning, but said nothing about the sacrament, as his duty was not to administer it. He then returned to his chamber; and, in the evening, one of the judges sent for him, and said, he was well satisfied with his sermons, both on Saturday and on the Lord's day; but said, that he had opened a point he had never heard before, viz: "the covenant of redemption, made with the Mediator, as head of the elect church." He entreated him to go over the heads of the sermon. Then he opened his bible, and he and Blair went through all the proofs cited; and he said he was so well satisfied, that he protested, if his calling did not confine him to Dublin, he would gladly come to the north, to enjoy such a ministry. And this pious judge, as Blair understood, sent for the bishop, and exhorted him to lay aside his ill-will to Mr. Blair, and to be careful to put no hindrance in the way of his ministry.

When Primate Ussher came to town, Blair's patron introduced him to the archbishop, who treated him courteously, and invited him to be one of his guests, while he should remain. He inquired of him, what was his mind concerning justifying and saving faith. He answered that, in his opinion, "the receiving Jesus Christ as he is offered in the gospel," is the essence of saving faith. With this he was well satisfied, confirming the same in a large discourse. He spoke kindly and encouragingly, and said that if any thing should occur to interrupt their successful ministry in the north, it would break his heart. "They think," said he, "to cause me to stretch out my hand against you, but all the world shall never make me to do it."

“Beside our other helpers we had from the Lord, Mr. John Livingston was sent over to us. He was a man of a melting, generous spirit, and was greatly desired by the godly people of Torpichen, where he had preached as an assistant to another, but was opposed by the Bishop. Old Bishop Knox, of Raphoc, however, refused no honest man, after hearing him preach. By this chink, he and others got entrance, and the Lord was pleased greatly to bless his ministry, both within his own charge and without it, wherever he had a call to preach. But he was not permitted to continue long. Likewise Andrew Stewart, a well studied gentleman, and fervent in spirit, was settled at Donagore, and prospered well in the work of the Lord. But his ministry also was of short continuance, for he died in the midst of our trials.”

Mr. Blair, about this time, had a contest with a certain Englishman, who had drunk in the opinions of the Arminians, and was exceedingly self-confident. By much appearance of zeal and devotion, he insinuated himself into the favour of many, and particularly won over to his side, Mr. Rowlie, a respectable gentleman, who was solicitous to have him enter into conversation with the brethren, at one of our Antrim meetings. “The brethren insisted that I should encounter this boasting polemic. Accordingly, I went to Antrim, though indisposed with a bad cold, and there I found Mr. Freeman and his partner, waiting for us to enter on the disputation. He insisted on choosing both the subject and order of discussion. The subject selected by him was reprobation. We told him, that this was an unsuitable topic to begin with; but yielded to his wishes, and he offered his first argument, which was easily answered, and retorted on himself. The second, had the same issue. He continued to manifest a jocund humour, telling us that he would soon come on with the strength of his arguments. But then, the Lord did smite him with such confusion, that he spoke nonsense; so that the scribe could set down nothing of it. All the hearers were sensible of this; and some fell a laughing; but his patron turned to me and said, ‘You know what he would be at, set it in order, and give an answer to it.’ To whom I replied, ‘How can I know, seeing he knows not himself? But now,’ said I, ‘as it

is late, and you all see him in confusion, let him recollect his thoughts, and we shall meet in this place, the next morning.' In the morning, going to the place, and not finding him, I went to his lodging, where I found him with his patron, writing out arguments from an Arminian author. I snatched the book out of his hand, and asked him whether he believed that all events came to pass according to the determined counsel of God; to which he gave a flat denial. Then said I 'Know ye not that it is written, He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord?' His answer was, that there was no such thing in the Bible. I desired his patron to turn to Acts, xvii, 26, 27. Then said Mr. Rowlic, 'We need no more disputation: I see evidently his ignorance of the scriptures. Mr. Freeman, I have followed you too long—here I renounce you, and will have no more to do with you;' and immediately departed. Being left alone with him, I gave him my advice seriously, which he, in his usual jocund way, seemed to wave. The ground of my apprehension was, that he knew nothing of the grace of Christ, and this event followed sadly; for he being deserted of the people who formerly adhered to him, turned more dissolute, and at last, as I was credibly informed, fell into mischievous practices."

The bodily exercises, before mentioned, were made an occasion of accusation against Mr. Blair and his coadjutors. One of his own charge, a dull and ignorant person, in the time of divine worship, made a noise, accompanied with spasmodic action of the body. Immediately he rebuked the lying spirit that disturbed the worship of God, charging the same, in the name and authority of Jesus, no more to disturb the congregation. And they had nothing more of the kind. "But Mr. Livingston and myself," says he, "being in Scotland, on a visit to our friends, on our return, we were both invited to assist an aged and infirm man, who was about celebrating the Lord's supper at the kirk of Shotts, where there was a great confluence of zealous people. A certain Mr. John Maxwell informed Mr. Leslie, by letter, of our presence, and an accusation was brought against us, that we taught the necessity of a new birth, by bodily pangs and throes. The bishop of Down,

having received some information from Leslie, of the part which Blair and Livingston took in the meeting at the kirk of Shotts; and the old calumny of their teaching a new birth by physical agonies, having been received; immediately, without further examination or trial, suspended not only Blair and Livingston, but also Dunbar and Welsh. Upon this, Blair made application to Archbishop Ussher, who wrote to Bishop Eehlin, which induced him to relax the suspension for the present, and they went on with their ministry as usual. But shortly a letter coming from court, in which the old accusation was renewed, the bishop, although well assured of the innocence of these ministers, cited them to appear before him, and required of them a subscription to the liturgy; which they refused, as not being required by any law or canon, in the kingdom of Ireland. Upon this refusal, the bishop deposed them from their ministry. When Archbishop Ussher was made acquainted with the fact, he expressed great sorrow, but said he could not help them.

There appearing no other method of relief, Mr Blair was urged by his brethren to lay the matter before the king. This he undertook, and during the journey was attacked by a painful disease; but in answer to prayer was almost instantly relieved. Indeed during the whole journey he experienced several remarkable interpositions of Providence in his behalf. By the favour of the secretary, his petition was presented to the king, then at Greenwich, and was favourably received; so that letters were written to Ireland, directing inquiry to be made into the facts, and if were they found as represented by the deposed ministers, to grant relief. They were addressed to the Earl of Strafford who was just gone to take the chief authority in that kingdom. Mr. Blair greatly rejoiced in his success, and hastened his return, but took Scotland in his way; where he visited Rutherford and some other dear friends.

While on his journey, he had one night a remarkable dream, in which he was informed of the death of his wife. When he awoke in the morning, the impression on his mind was so vivid, that he entertained no doubt of the fact; and opening his Bible, the passage that met his eye was, "Son of

man, I take from thee with a stroke, the desire of thine eyes : but thou shalt neither weep, mourn nor lament." The fact was just as it was represented to him ; his wife died that very night.

Many things of this kind are recorded in the experiences of the eminent ministers of those and former times. The reflections of Blair on the subject are solid and judicious. "If any reading these things shall stumble, that both now and hereafter, I have mentioned what hath been revealed to me of events to come, seeing revelations are now ceased, and we are to stick close to the revealed will of God, in the scriptures, for their satisfaction I answer, That if an angel from heaven should reveal anything contrary to the scriptures, or offer to add anything to that perfect rule of faith and manners, he ought to be accursed ; and much more if any man upon earth should do the same. But in the meantime it ought not to be denied, that the Lord is pleased sometimes to reveal to his servants, especially in a suffering condition, events concerning themselves and that part of the church of God wherein they live ; innumerable examples whereof might be produced, and not a few within this land, as in the case of the blessed martyr Wishart, Mr. Knox, Mr. Davidson, Mr. Welsh and Mr. Patrick Simson. This I write under protest, that I compare not myself with these I have now mentioned."

Mr. Blair returned to his place at Bangor, and was received with great joy, on account of his success in obtaining a favourable letter from the king ; not indeed that this removed the sentence of deposition, under which the ministers lay ; but as recommending a reconsideration of the matter, and a restoration, if the facts should be found correct, as stated by Mr. Blair. But when this letter was presented to Lord Strafford, who had just arrived in Dublin, he paid no attention to it ; but began immediately, in the most vituperative style, to speak against the church of Scotland. This was a sad disappointment to the ministers ; but the Lord overruled it for their relief. For Sir Andrew Stewart, making a visit to the lord-deputy, after praising his other acts, convinced him that he had acted improperly in treating a respectable minister so roughly ; and inquired of him how Blair had conducted him-

self in his presence; he said, humbly, modestly and cautiously. "But now," said he, "let us help it the best way we can;" and he wrote to the bishop of Down, to give them indulgence for six months. This was an unexpected relief. Mr. Blair, when he heard it, was fourteen miles from home, but he hastened to his people, and found a great congregation assembled, not only of his own flock, but of the neighbouring parishes, to whom he preached a sermon from the words of Hezekiah, "What shall I say? He hath spoken unto me and himself hath done it, I shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul." (Isaiah xxxviii. 15.)

"These six months," says Mr. Blair, "were well improved, and by the blessing of God the people made more progress in God than ever before." By means of the same excellent gentleman, who had obtained for them this indulgence, another six months would have been added, had it not been for the interposition of bishop Bramhall, who, on account of their refusing to kneel at the Lord's supper, induced the lord-deputy, to withhold the letter which he had written. "We, therefore," said Mr. Blair, "celebrated the Lord's supper and delivered up our people to the Great Bishop of our souls, from whom we had received our charge. And being convened a third time, we received a sentence of deposition; at which I cited the bishop Echlin, to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, to answer for that wicked deed. To which he replied, 'I appeal from justice to mercy.' 'But,' said I, 'your appeal is likely to be rejected, because you act against the light of your conscience.' Soon after the bishop sickened, and when the physician inquired into his complaint, he said, 'It is distress of conscience.' The physician said, 'For that I have no cure.' When the physician reported this to the Viscount of Airds, he charged him never to speak of the matter; but the Viscountess, being present, replied, 'No man shall get that report suppressed, for I shall bear witness of it to the glory of God, who did smite that man for suppressing Christ's witnesses.'"

After making some ineffectual attempts to obtain the liberty of preaching, these pious ministers, having heard that many of the English were going to New England, to escape from

the religious oppression to which they were now subjected, also began to think seriously of emigrating to America: and a number of other persons being willing to cast in their lot with them, it was determined, to build a vessel to convey them to the new world. They were much encouraged in their design, by the conversation of Mr. Winthrop, son of the governor of Massachusetts, a gentleman of extensive information, who had travelled much on the continent of Europe. Mr. Blair having been left a widower, with three helpless children, thought it expedient to take a second wife, and accordingly, he selected a pious woman of a good family, of whom all he says is, that she bore him nine sons and a daughter.

The company who had agreed to transport themselves to America, thought it expedient, while the vessel was building, to send two of their number, Mr. John Livingston and Mr. William Wallace, to go before them and visit New England, and to fix on a place for their settlement. But this measure failed, in consequence of Mr. Wallace not coming to the place of embarkation at the appointed time; for the first ships had sailed before they were ready; and afterwards for fourteen days contrary winds prevented, so that they were unable to reach London in time. And Mr. Wallace falling sick, his physician advised him not to enter on the voyage at so late a period.

The company, however, persevered in their determination to prosecute their voyage to America, and on the 9th of September, 1606, they loosed from Loch Fergus; but from the commencement of the voyage, they experienced unfavourable weather, and were long detained by contrary winds. And at length, when they were unable to go forward, after being more than half way over the Atlantic, they met with a tremendous storm, which so shattered their vessel, that after much earnest prayer and consultation, they came to the conclusion to turn back. The number of persons on board was about a hundred and forty. Their pecuniary resources were much impaired by this voyage; for they had invested their money to a considerable extent in provisions, and in goods which they expected to sell to advantage in the colony. Notwithstanding the prohibition of the bishop, both Mr. Blair and Mr. Livingston

found means of preaching somewhere every Sabbath. Their enemies, however, soon found out their places of residence, and an information was lodged against them; upon which an order was issued to apprehend them. A pious servant overheard a direction given to another servant, to have a horse ready to go to the north, early in the morning, to bring down the deposed ministers to Dublin. This servant, whose name was Andrew Brown, immediately went and hired a horse and rode all night, and brought word to Messrs. Blair, and Livingston of the intention to arrest them; on which they immediately passed over into Scotland.

Here they were kindly received by the Rev. Daniel Dickson, minister of Irvine, and were frequently employed by him in preaching to his people. On a sacramental occasion, when many assembled, and not a few of their friends from Ireland, both Blair and Livingston preached at Irvine. Mr. Cunningham also came over, and died at Irvine, at the house of Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Cunningham's end was peaceful. From his dying bed he gave many pious counsels to his friends, and to the whole presbytery of Irvine, who visited him. His epitaph was written in Latin, by Mr. Blair. For some time, Mr. Blair preached in Irvine and its vicinity, and also in Edinburgh; but the persecution by the prelates, being very hot through the land, against all who refused the service-book and a compliance with the Perth articles, Mr. Blair determined that he would emigrate to France; for he had received an invitation to become the chaplain of Col. Hepburn's regiment, then stationed on the continent. His friends in vain endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose; for he actually set off to go to France. The boat, however, on which he embarked, having a company of Highlanders who were exceedingly profane and offensive in their discourse, he was much annoyed, and felt it to be his duty to reprove them. On which one of them was so enraged, that he attempted to kill him with his dirk, but was prevented by his companions. Having reached the ship, he resolved that he would not go in company with such a crew, and requested to be put on shore. Here, he met with a signal deliverance, which he attributed to the guardian care of angels. For, as

he attempted to leave the ship, his foot slipped, and he fell down the side of the vessel, and must have been drowned, had it not been for one of the lines of the vessel, which providentially happened to be there to receive his hand. While he was hanging by the side of the vessel, he had these reflections: "I have often read and preached, that the good angels are ministering spirits, sent forth by God to serve and preserve them that shall be heirs of salvation. I knew that truth notionally; but now experimentally. Now I find that true which is written, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands.' Though it cannot be proven from scripture that every one has a tutelary angel, yet it is certain that the good angels do many kind offices for the people of God; especially to his ministers and ambassadors, which we do not see nor remark to know; especially when we are in danger, in our infancy or old age."

When Mr. Blair returned to Edinburgh, his friends received him joyfully. A sister of his former wife brought him paper, pen and ink, and entreated him to write a petition with his own hand, to the secret council, for liberty to preach; and promised that the women would present it to some member of the council, as he passed along to the place of meeting. He consented, and when it was finished, it was committed to one of the oldest women among them, who attempted to put it into the hands of Traquair; but he, fearing that it contained something which would not be agreeable to the council, put her aside, declining to take the paper; on which Barbara Hamilton, his former wife's sister, taking the petition, seized Traquair by the arm, and said, "Stand, my lord, in Christ's name, till I speak to you." He, looking back, said, "Good woman, what would you have from me?" "There is," said she, "an humble supplication of Mr. Blair, for liberty to preach the gospel. I charge you to befriend the matter, as you would have God to befriend you in your distress and at your death." He promised to do what he could; and accordingly, the request was granted by the council. Thus we see that the Scottish women were more resolute in seeking relief, than the men. Mr. Blair, being thus providentially prevented

from going to France, and having obtained liberty to exercise his ministry, received and accepted a unanimous call from the town of Ayr; and much about the same time, Mr. Livingston, his companion in labour and suffering, received and accepted a call from the church at Stranmaer, in the same neighbourhood. As towns were situated near the western coast of Scotland, many of their friends came over from Ireland, and took up their residence among them. At one time, there came over five hundred persons. Besides, others who did not remove to Scotland, brought over their children to be baptized. As many as twenty-eight of these were baptized at Stranmaer in one day.

But Mr. Blair was not permitted to remain quietly at Ayr, for the General Assembly of 1636, of which he was a member, having deposed the bishops, ordered that he should be translated to St. Andrews; but he was so reluctant to leave Ayr, where his labours began to be blessed, that he ventured to disobey the order, hoping that the next Assembly would permit him to remain. In the mean time, the king's army approached the borders of Scotland, on which the Covenanters collected their forces and marched to meet them. Blair accompanied the Covenanters as chaplain, as did many other of the evangelical ministers of the Church of Scotland. But when the armies came near together, a negotiation took place, which terminated in a compromise; and no blood was shed.

The Assembly of 1639 censured Mr. Blair for not obeying the order of the former Assembly, and peremptorily resolved, that he should immediately be transported to St. Andrews; and at the same time ordered that Mr. Rutherford should take charge of the college, from which Spottiswood had fled. But Mr. Rutherford made it a condition of his going, that he should be associated with Blair in the pastorate of the church. They accordingly both removed to St. Andrews, about the same time.

In the year 1642, the General Assembly appointed Mr. Blair to visit the churches in the north of Ireland. He found the state of religion to be greatly deteriorated since he left the country, but there was a universal hunger for the word; so that he preached once every day, and twice on the Sab-

bath; and in some places the assemblies were so large that no house could contain the people. Mr. Row, who writes the supplement to the autobiography of Blair, informs us, that he had conversed with some aged people, who had heard Blair's discourses on this visit, who said, "that in their lifetime, they never heard the gospel so powerfully preached, and pertinently applied; and that they never saw such commotion and heart-melting, with greatest abundance of tears, among hearers."

Finding the charge of the parish of St. Andrews too onerous, as many of the parishioners lived in the country, Mr. Blair resolved to get a new parish formed out of the old. And, as a new church and stipend for another minister would be required, he relinquished a part of his own salary, and employed a zealous, active man to solicit voluntary contributions for the object. This enterprise was successful. The new parish was named Cameron, and the people called Mr. Nairn to be their pastor. It is recorded, that he found the people of St. Andrews, when he came to them, in a very unfavourable state. The poor were ignorant and superstitious, and the rich exceedingly profane, irreligious and prelatical.

In the year 1643, commissioners from the English Parliament and from the Westminster Assembly were sent to propose and promote a closer union between the two kingdoms, and uniformity in religion. Mr. Blair was a member of the committee to whom this matter was referred; the result of which was the SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT, to be sworn individually, by ministers and people, by magistrates and citizens, in both kingdoms. This proposal was received by the pious in Scotland with great joy. "Such a torrent of overflowing affection," says Row, who was present, "I never saw on any other occasion. When the aged ministers were asked their opinion, their feelings were so strong that they were unable to speak, while the tears rolled down their cheeks. And Blair declared, "that a solemn covenant for reformation and uniformity of religion, for the three kingdoms, came up to his highest wishes when he indulged his most sanguine anticipations."

Mr. Blair took a very active part in the contest between the Scottish forces and those of the king; and at the battle at

Longmarston, in which Prince Rupert's army was defeated, he was present. He soon, however, returned to his parish, at St. Andrews, and as the plague was at Edinburgh, the parliament sat at St. Andrews, before whom Mr. Blair often preached. Several persons of distinction were imprisoned there, as traitors to the country, whom he often visited in prison: and his conversation with one of them, Nathanael Gordon, was attended, apparently, with very happy effects. For this person manifested deep repentance for the course which he had pursued, and for all the sins of his life; so that Mr. Blair, at his earnest request, obtained for him a remission of the sentence of excommunication under which he lay; and attended him on the scaffold, where he was greatly satisfied with his conduct.

In the year 1646, the General Assembly met at Edinburgh, and Mr. Blair was elected Moderator. By this Assembly, three persons were chosen to go to Newcastle, where the king then was, to deal with him, respecting taking the Solemn League and Covenant, and establishing Presbyterian government. The persons selected were Robert Douglas, Andrew Cant, and Robert Blair. They immediately repaired to the king; and on their first introduction, Andrew Cant, who was zealous, forward, and of a fiery temper, very unseasonably addressed the king, and charged him with being a favourer of popery. Blair interposed, and said, "We think this neither a fit time nor place to speak to your majesty." The king, looking at him, said, "That honest man speaks wisely and discreetly;" and appointed the next day for an audience, in his chamber. From this time, the king manifested a particular regard for Mr. Blair, more than for any other of the Scottish ministers, who from time to time attended on him.

The object of this commission to the king was, as has been said, to induce him, if possible, to gratify the wishes of the Scotch Kirk, by signing the Solemn League and Covenant; and Blair and Alexander Henderson, who was already with the king, went so far as on their bended knees, and with tears, to entreat him to comply. But their efforts were not successful; he refused to the last. It is wonderful, that these good men should have so earnestly urged the king to do a thing which

was against his conscience. But in those days, no allowance was made for a diversity of opinion, even in regard to church government. The committee of estates, also, sent nine commissioners to treat with the king, in relation to the same thing; but he still refused to comply with their wishes. Mr. Blair now returned to his charge, and Alexander Henderson, being sick and overburdened with sorrow and grief, came to Edinburgh and died there, August 19, 1646. As soon as the king heard of the death of Henderson, who had been his chaplain, he appointed Blair as his successor. Upon the reception of his patent, he was thrown into much perplexity respecting his duty, and deferred an answer, until he had sought, by wrestling prayer, guidance from the Father of light. He also consulted his friend, Mr. David Dickson, who advised him to go. Mr. Blair now left his charge at St. Andrews, in obedience to the king's orders, and repaired to New Castle. Here, in the performance of his arduous duties, he was most faithful and diligent. He prayed in the king's presence and that of his attendants, twice every day; preached twice every Lord's day, morning and evening, in the presence of the king. But his most painful duty was, dealing, in conversation, with the king, with whom he had many debates, respecting prelacy, the liturgy, and forms of prayer; in all which, he urged his majesty to comply with the earnest wishes of his Scottish subjects. But after finding that the king was proof against all his arguments and entreaties, he returned home to St. Andrews. But in the next year, 1647, he returned to Newcastle, with a view of dealing yet further with the king; for the Scottish nation was resolved not to receive him, unless he would subscribe the Solemn League and Covenant, by which both nations were now united in a solemn bond. The king received him very graciously, and while many flocked around to hear a debate between him and the king, his majesty disappointed them, by conversing very pleasantly, and even facetiously, with Mr. Blair; and directed him to come to him in his chamber, where Mr. Blair renewed his arguments and solicitations; but the king pleaded conscience, and particularly his coronation oath, and said, that he would sooner lose his crown, and even his life, than violate his conscience.

In the disputes which arose about the Engagement, among the Scotch people, Blair took a middle course, and exerted himself to reconcile the parties. And, although he did not altogether succeed, his mediation was productive of much good, by moderating the long-continued animosities of one party against the other.

In the year 1648, Messrs. Blair, Dickson and Guthrie were sent, by the Commission of the General Assembly, to confer with Cromwell, who was then in the country with an invading army. Blair had seen Cromwell before, and had taken up a very unfavourable opinion of him. Cromwell made a long speech to them, "with a fair flourish of words, and not without tears." Mr. Blair answered him, by saying much in few words. He told him plainly, that nothing stood in the way of a reformation and uniformity of religion in England, but only his army. On this occasion, Mr. Blair put three questions to Cromwell. The first was, whether he was in favour of monarchical government? Cromwell answered that he was, and was also in favour of the king and his posterity. The second question was, whether he was in favour of toleration? He said he was not. And the third was, what was his opinion respecting the government of the church? Cromwell replied, "O, Mr. Blair, you article me too severely. I cannot give you an immediate answer to this. I must have time to deliberate." When they came out, Mr. Dickson said, "I am very glad to hear this man speak as he does." Mr. Blair replied, "And do you believe him? If you knew this man as well as I do, you would not believe one word he says. He is an egregious dissembler, and a great liar." Cromwell soon after returned to England, with the greater part of his army.

In 1649, Mr. Blair was sent to London to promote reformation; but now all power was usurped by the army; and strong measures were taken against the king, which issued in his trial and condemnation; against all these proceedings Blair protested; as did the other Scotch commissioners. Mr. Blair being in London, as one of the commissioners of the church, joined cordially with the other commissioners, both of the church and estates, in a protest against the whole proceedings of the men who arraigned, tried and condemned the king.

Indeed, the spirit of loyalty was so strong in Blair, that he declared that he would be as willing to lay down his head on the block, as he ever was to lay it on a pillow, if he might be permitted to die with the king, for whom personally he seems to have entertained a high esteem. The king also felt a particular regard for him; and, when cruelly debarred of the privilege of having the services of his own chaplains, expressed an earnest wish to see Blair; who, on being informed of the king's request, was very solicitous to go; but was not permitted to see him by those who were his persecutors. He declared, that if he had had access to the king, he would have advised him not to submit to a trial; nor to answer to any charges, and when condemned not to walk on his own feet to the scaffold. He speaks of his accusers and judges as cruel murderers.

The Scottish commissioners, both of the church and state, as soon as the king was dead, declared the prince Charles to be the legitimate king. And it was resolved, that Mr. Blair and others should be a delegation to the king, in Holland, to inform him of their allegiance, and that the Scotch people considered him the legitimate heir to the throne. But when they were about to sail, they were prevented by the ruling powers. When this was made known in Scotland, other persons were appointed to represent both the church and state, who immediately crossed the sea, and repaired to the young king. The parliament, fearing that the Scotch commissioners might still attempt to go to the king, sent them down to Scotland under a guard. By his frequent journeys, and hardships in them, Mr. Blair's health was much broken. During this last journey to England, he was greatly afflicted with the gout; but he was not a man to spare himself. After this, however, he was unable, as formerly, to attend the judicatories of the church; yet he was a member of the General Assembly of 1649. When the commissioners, sent to Holland, brought over the young king, Mr. Blair conversed with him at large, and gave him much good advice.

When the Scotch rulers of church and state had got the king into their power, their first step was, to induce him to swear to the Solemn League and Covenant, which he did, with

apparent seriousness and sincerity, in the following solemn form of words, viz: "I, C. R., King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, defender of the faith, do assert and declare by my solemn oath, in the presence of Almighty God, the searcher of hearts, my allowance and approbation of the National Covenant, and faithfully oblige myself to prosecute the ends thereof in my station and calling; and for myself and successors shall covenant and agree to all acts of Parliament, enjoining the National Covenant and the solemn League and Covenant, and fully establishing Presbyterian Government, the Directory of Worship, the Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms of the kingdom of Scotland, as they are approved by the General Assembly and Parliament of this kingdom; and that I will give my royal assent to acts and ordinances of Parliament passed or to be passed, enjoining the same in my other dominions; and that I shall observe these in my own practice and family, and shall never make any opposition to any of these, or endeavour any change thereof." What a comment on this solemn oath is the conduct of this same king, when restored to power!—Soon after this ceremony, the coronation of the king took place; on which occasion, the coronation sermon was preached by Mr. Robert Douglas, from 2 Kings, xi. 12.

Cromwell, however, coming into Scotland, with his well disciplined army, proceeded to defeat and scatter all the Scottish forces which had been raised to defend the king, and restore him to his throne. Still, the Scottish parliament took measures to collect another army from the north. But an unhappy division arose respecting the discipline of persons who should be admitted to office and to join the army. The parliament were anxious to unite, as far as possible, the whole nation in defence of the king and country. They therefore proposed the following query to the commissioners of the General Assembly, then sitting at Perth: "What persons are to be admitted to rise in arms and join the forces of the kingdom, and in what capacity for defence, against the common enemy?" The commission, after serious deliberation, returned the following answer: "That considering it a necessary duty, both by the laws of God and nature, to use all lawful means in de-

fence of the liberty, lives, and estates of the people against the common enemy; and considering that the forces are so routed and scattered, and that there cannot be raised any competency of forces out of those parts of the kingdom that's free, unless there be a more general calling forth of the body of the people than hath been before; therefore, in this case of so great necessity, we cannot be against the raising of all sensible persons, and permitting them to fight for defence of the kingdom; excepting such as are excommunicate, fore-faulted, notoriously profane or flagitious, and, such as have been, and continue still, obstinate and professed enemies and opposers of the covenant and cause of God."

This answer grievously offended such as had declared themselves against any conjunction with those formerly debarred. Many of the presbyteries, also, were dissatisfied, and wrote letters to the Commission, expressing their dissent from the answer to the query. Mr. Blair was not present at that meeting of the commission; but he did not show any dislike to their answer, and had several debates with the warm opposers of the act. As he remained some time at Perth, he preached there, and in his sermon, we are told, alluded to the unhappy division among the ministers, respecting the answer returned to the parliament by the commission, and their resolutions on the subject. He said, "There are some that say, Give us religion well secured, become of the king what will; and there are others that say, Give us the king well established on his throne, become of religion what will. But blessed be God there are some, both ministers and others, who wish well both to religion and the king; giving to God what is God's, and to Cæsar what is Cæsar's." It was a prominent trait in Mr. Blair's character to be moderate, and avoid extremes; steadily to steer betwixt dangerous rocks on either hand.

This difference of opinion among the leading and most eminently pious ministers of the Church of Scotland, instead of being reconciled, increased, greatly disturbed peace, and hindered all combined and successful action against the common enemy, by whom the country was then invaded. The presbytery of Stirling came out strongly against the resolutions, and the Commission, which next met at St. Andrews, in

January, 1651, appointed Mr. Blair, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. John Smith, Mr. Wood, and Mr. Sharp, to confer with Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Wetherford, and others, who were opposed to the resolutions. Mr. Blair, on account of infirmity, was not able to attend; but the conference produced no favourable result.

The king being about to go to the north to expedite the raising of troops, Mr. Blair, sensible that his own end was approaching, took this occasion of speaking freely and kindly to him, in regard to his future conduct. At the same time, he expressed freely what he liked and disliked in his royal father, of whom he entertained a more favourable opinion than most of his brethren. He said, "that he was a good king, badly used."

The controversy respecting the resolutions became very warm. Brethren, hitherto united, were now engaged in dispute both from the pulpit and the press. Mr. Daniel Dickson wrote in favour of the resolutions, and was answered by Mr. Guthrie, in four letters, to which Mr. Dickson replied. Mr. Patrick Gillespie wrote against them, and Mr. James Ferguson in defence of them. After various fruitless conferences, to settle the dispute about the public resolutions, the General Assembly met at St. Andrews. Immediately after it was constituted, and before a moderator was chosen, Mr. John Menzies arose and moved, that none of the members of the Commission, who adopted the resolutions, should be allowed to sit as members in that Assembly. To which it was replied, that it would be much more reasonable to exclude from the Assembly those ministers who had preached and published against the acts of the highest judicatory of the church. As the majority of the Assembly appeared to be favourable to the resolutions, the opposers withdrew, and Mr. Samuel Rutherford drew up a PROTEST against the Assembly, to which twenty-two persons subscribed their names. Thus, the most able and pious ministers were warmly engaged in quarrelling with one another, about a matter which must now produce astonishment in every candid mind. The question between the parties was, "whether those persons who had acted inconsistently with their covenant engagements, should be permitted to

take part in the defence of the country?" And at the very moment that they were contending with one another, intelligence was received, that the enemy had landed, with a considerable force, at a neighbouring port; so that the Assembly consulted their own safety, by adjourning their sessions to Dundee. The Assembly, now convened at Dundee, summoned James Guthrie, Patrick Gillespie, John Menzies, James Simson, and James Nasmith, to their bar; and proceeded to depose from the ministry, Messrs. Guthrie, Gillespie, and Simson; and to suspend Nasmith. The breach between the parties was now wide, and apparently irreparable. Henceforth, the church was divided into two parties; the RESOLUTIONERS and the PROTESTERS. Blair tried much to reconcile the parties, being much respected by both, but he could not succeed.

The controversy, between the RESOLUTIONERS and PROTESTERS, continued without abatement, although the country was not only invaded, but conquered, by Cromwell. All effectual resistance to the English was prevented by these unhallowed divisions.

The General Assembly, in the year 1651, had a majority in favour of the resolutions; and a solemn warning against the Protesters was issued by that body. But the Protesters, so far from submitting to the supreme judicatory of the church, grew more violent in their opposition, and openly declared this Assembly to be no legitimate Assembly.

Again, in the year 1652, the state of parties was much as in the preceding year. And when the Assembly met at Edinburgh, July 3, 1653, after having sermons from those distinguished men, David Dickson and Daniel Douglas, before they had proceeded to any business, a company of British officers appeared in the house, and commanded them to disperse, as they were met without authority from the government either of England or Scotland. Mr. Dickson answered, that they acted under the authority of Jesus Christ. But the officers ordered them to march out after them, which they were obliged to do, and were led entirely out of the town; marching in a body, along the streets. The Protesters were prevented from presenting their protestation to the Assembly, in consequence of its being broken up. They then met by themselves,

but their meeting also was dissolved by a proclamation, requiring all ministers to depart from Edinburgh. Against this, they drew up a protest, and sent it to the commanding general of the English army.

During this whole controversy, Mr. Blair acted the part of a mediator and peacemaker, between the parties, but without effect. Oh, the folly and evil of religious bigotry!

Cromwell, being now securely seated in the highest place of power, wished to hold a consultation with some of the leading ministers of Scotland, in regard to ordering the affairs of their church. He therefore sent for Blair, Douglas, and Guthrie; but such was the state of Mr. Blair's health, that he was unable to undertake the journey; and, besides, he had not great fondness for the Protector. In all the attempts at bringing about a reconciliation between the two contending parties in the church, there was no man who so entirely agreed with Mr. Blair in his views and feelings, as the eminently pious and learned Durham. He laboured much to promote unity and peace among the brethren; but in vain. One of the heaviest judgments of God on any church is to be given up to angry contention; and the less important the matters in dispute, the more rancourous, often, does the polemical spirit of the parties become, and the more difficult is the restoration of peace. The Church of Scotland paid dearly, in a few years, for these unnecessary and unhallowed contentions; when prelacy came in upon them with intolerance and violence, and when some of those who had appeared zealous for truth, apostatized from the cause of presbytery. The General Assembly, in order to have an orthodox commentary on the books of scripture, appointed a number of the most distinguished divines, to expound particular books. Mr. Blair had assigned to him the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. With this appointment, he was not well satisfied: for he wished to employ his remaining days in the study and explanation of those parts of scripture which contained most of the gospel. He did, however, comply with the Assembly's order, and composed and preached a number of lectures on Proverbs; but whether the work was ever completed and published, does not appear.

After the introduction of prelacy, by authority of the Eng-

lish government, the zealous Presbyterians who would not yield their principles, were treated with unrelenting severity. Some of their most zealous and leading men were brought to the scaffold and suffered death, and, particularly, the Duke of Argyll and the Rev. James Guthrie; and the resisting Covenanters were persecuted and dragooned, in such a manner, that few persecutions have been more cruel.

Mr. Blair having felt it to be his duty, in a public discourse, to bear a faithful testimony against the prevalent errors of the time, and against the unfaithfulness of many ministers, was prosecuted for the same, by Archbishop Sharp—who was one of the apostates—and was put under restraint and forbidden to preach. For three years he abode at Kirkaldy, for he was not permitted to remain with his flock at St. Andrews, and finally he sent in a resignation of his charge. During this time, he suffered much from various diseases, particularly the gravel. While resident at Kirkaldy, many serious people and ministers came to see him, and to confer with him about the concerns of their own souls; and also respecting the state of the suffering church. And though prevented from preaching, he had religious service in his own house twice every day, and kept a solemn fast on the last day of every month. His inveterate enemies, however, would not allow him even this privilege, and caused him to be removed to an obscure village in an unwholesome place, near a marsh. Here the good man ended his days, in the faith and assured hope of the gospel, in the seventy-third year of his age. Two days before his death he was visited by Mr. Geo. Hutchinson, who upon leaving his bed-side said, “Truly, I think persecuted Mr. Blair is now dying a martyr. Is it not a martyrdom to be thrust from the ministry that was his delight, and hindered from doing good to his people and flock; and after he was driven from his place by the prelates, and especially by the malice and tyranny of Sharp, to be driven to this unwholesome place? Let others think what they will, I say Mr. Blair is dying, not only a persecuted minister, but a faithful martyr of Jesus Christ.” His death occurred August 27th, 1666.

The character given of him by Kirkton, in his history, is as follows: “This month Mr. Robert Blair, that godly and able

minister, departed this life in his confinement, whither he was sent by the state, at the bishop's request. He was a man of great piety, ability, and high experience; and though he died a sufferer, yet he died full of hope that the Lord would deliver Scotland, and very confident that God would rub (as he expressed it) shame on bishop Sharp, as it came to pass."

Few ministers have had a more eventful life; and few have spent their life in more troublous times; and perhaps none in modern times with a character more free from every stain. Mr. Blair was not only eminent as a minister of Christ, but had few equals in his day, as an elegant classical scholar. His Latin poetry places him near to George Buchanan, in this species of composition. A few of his poems are found in his life, by Rowe, from which our narrative has been taken. But his greatest praise is, that he, with his intimate friend and fellow-labourer, John Livingston, had an instrumental part in the conversion of a greater multitude of souls, than almost any others since the Reformation.

ART. II.—*Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical.*

By the Rev. William Henry Foote, D.D., Pastor of Presbyterian Church, Romney, Virginia. Philadelphia: William S. Martien. 1850. 8vo. pp. 568.

We have not the slightest hesitation in expressing our belief that Dr. Foote has in this work made an offering of inestimable value to our church. The experiment has proved that there may be rich gleanings even in fields which have been reaped by many and able hands. In every period of the history contained in this volume, and especially in the early parts, we have learnt much that we never knew before; indeed the filial veneration of the author, by leading him to unwearied collections from oral tradition, recondite manuscripts and rare volumes, has resulted in a treasure of unexpected facts, and has filled up some important chasms in our church-history. One consequence of this assiduity has been,