

the slightest alteration or concession on the part of the nonconformists. They still entrenched themselves in the old watchword of the covenant, and in the substance of the oath thus expressed in their own language, "*that not a hoof nor a hair of the Scottish model should be changed*;" and when, after having submitted to them, at the close of the last conference, his propositions in writing, he received at last, a month afterwards, at the house of Lord Rothes, this short and dry answer, as he terms it:—"We are not free in conscience to close with the Bishop of Dumblaine, as satisfactory," he took his leave of them, and of his hopes together, in this pathetic and powerful appeal:—

"My sole object has been to procure peace, and to advance the interests of true religion. In following up this object, I have made several proposals, which I am fully sensible involved great diminutions of the just rights of episcopacy. Yet, since all church power is intended for edification, and not for destruction, I thought, that, in our present circumstances, episcopacy might do more for the prosperity of Christ's kingdom by relaxing some of its just pretensions, than it could by keeping hold of all its rightful authority. It is not from any mistrust of the soundness of our cause, that I have offered these abatements; for I am well convinced that episcopacy has subsisted from the apostolic age of the church. Perhaps I may have wronged my own order in making such large concessions: But the unerring discerners of hearts will justify my motives; and I hope ere long to stand excused with my own brethren. You have thought fit to reject our overtures, without assigning any reason for the rejection, and without suggesting any healing measures in the room of ours. The continuance of the divisions, through which religion languishes, must consequently lie at your door. Plore God and man I wash my hands of whatever evils may result from the rupture of this treaty. I have done my utmost to repair the temple of the Lord: and my sorrow will not be embittered by compunction, should a flood of miseries hereafter rush in through the gap you have refused to assist me in closing."

It is interesting to add here the extent of his offers then made, from his own account of the conference.

"It was declared to them, that the difference betwixt us should be freely referred to the Scriptures first of all, and next to the judgment and practice of the primitive church; and to the whole catholic christian church in succeeding ages; and to the most famous and most leading persons of the late Reformation, as Calvin, Luther, Melancthon; yea, and to the reformed churches abroad, even to those that at present have no bishops; and last of all to the presbyterians of England; and that if from all these, or any of these, they could justify their continuing divided, even after these offers made, then it should be yielded to them as a thing reasonable. Yea the person that propounded this, further offered them, that if, before the noble and judicious persons then present at the time of such a conference, they should produce strong and clear reasons for their opinion and practice in this point of difference, as now it stands qualified, he would forthwith resign his present station, and become their proselyte, and would unite and act with them, and if he were called to it, would suffer with them."

This work of the bishop was now almost closed; and the rest of his story may be told in a few words. Wearied, disconsolate and almost broken-hearted by this fruitless controversy; bowed down by