

him in the name of Christ, not to leave the good way in which he had begun to walk. He condemned Episcopacy more than even Mr. Blair did; and drawing his head towards his bosom, with both his arms, he blessed him; which conduct being so unlike himself, and his speech so different from his usual, made a person standing by, say "An angel is speaking out of the Dean's bed to Mr. Blair." After a few days he died, and Mr. Blair was settled in his place. In regard to his ordination, the following singular fact is related. He went to Knox, the Bishop of the diocese, told him his opinions, and said, that ordination by one man did not accord with his principles. But the Bishop, informed before-hand of his great talents and piety, answered him as follows, "Whatever you account of Episcopacy, yet I know you account Presbytery to have a divine warrant. Will you not receive ordination from Mr. Cunningham and the adjacent brethren, and let me come in among them in no other relation than a Presbyter;" for on no lower terms could he be answerable to law. This Mr. Blair could not refuse, and he was accordingly ordained about the year 1623.

Being thus settled, he found his charge very great, having above 1200 persons come to age, besides children, who stood much in need of instruction.—His labours, however, were correspondingly arduous. He preached twice a-week, besides on the Lord's day, and on these occasions he had great freedom and support granted him, and was the instrument of much good to others.

He became a chief mean in that great work which appeared shortly thereafter, at Six-mile water, and other parts in the counties of Down and Antrim; and that not only by his own ministry, in which he was both diligent and faithful, but also by the great pains he took to stir up others to the like duty.

Shortly after the commencement of his ministry, he met with a most notable deliverance; for staying in a high house at the end of the town until the manse should be built, and being late at his studies, his landlady went into a room under which he lay to bring him a candle, and discovered, to her astonishment, that a joist immediately under his bed had taken fire, which, had he been in bed as usual, the consequence, in all probability, had been dreadful to the whole town, as well as to him, the wind being strong from that quarter; but by the timely alarm being given, the danger was prevented, which made him give thanks to God for this great deliverance.

When he first celebrated the Lord's supper, his heart was much lifted up in speaking of the new covenant, which made him in the view of a second administration of that ordinance, resolve to go back to that same inexhaustible fountain of consolation; and coming over to Scotland about the time, he received no small assistance from Mr. Dickson, who was then restored to his flock at Irvine, and studying and preaching on the same subject.

But it was not many years that he had liberty thus to exercise his office. In harvest 1631, he and Mr. Livingstone were suspended by the then Bishop of Down; but upon recourse to Doctor Usher, who sent a letter to the Bishop, their sentence was relaxed, and they again went on in their labours, until May 1632, when they were deposed from the office of the holy ministry.

Upon his return, the king's letter being slighted by the deputy, who was newly returned from England, he was forced once more to have recourse to Archbishop Usher. The good Archbishop shed tears that he could not help them; but by the interposition of Lord Castlestuart with the King, they got six months' liberty. Shortly after this, however, in November 1631, he was convened before the Bishop, and the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him. After sentence, Mr. Blair rose up, and publicly cited the Bishop to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, to answer for that wicked deed. Upon this the Bishop appealed from the justice of God to his mercy; but Mr. Blair replied, "Your appeal is like to be rejected, because you act against the light of your own conscience." In a few months afterwards he fell sick; and the physician inquiring of his sickness, he after some time's silence, with great difficulty said, "It is my conscience, man." To this the Doctor replied, "I have no cure for that;" and in a little time after, he died.

After his ejection, Mr. Blair preached often in his own and in other houses, until the beginning of 1635. Matters still continuing the same, he engaged with the rest of the ejected ministers in their resolution of building a ship, on purpose to go to New England, an enterprise which, as already mentioned, afterwards miscarried. Having got about 300 or 400 leagues from Ireland, they encountered a terrible hurricane, which forced them back to the same harbour from whence they loosed; the Lord having work for them elsewhere, it was fit their purposes should be defeated. Mr. Blair continued four months after this in Ireland, when upon information that he and Mr. Livingstone were to be apprehended, they immediately took shipping, and landed in Scotland in 1637. During the summer after his arrival, he was as much employed in public and private exercises as before, mostly at Irvine and the country around, and partly in Edinburgh. But things being then in great confusion, because of the service-book being urged upon the ministers, his old inclination to go to France revived; and upon an invitation to be chaplain of Col. Hepburn's regiment in the French service, new enlisted in Scotland, he embarked at Leith; but some of the recruits, who were mostly Highlanders, being desperately wicked, and threatening upon his reproofs to stab him, he resolved to quit the voyage, and calling on the ship-master to set him on shore, without imparting his design, a boat was immediately ordered for his service; on this occasion he met with yet another deliverance, for his