

ing occasion, his mind was guided and encouraged by the words of his Saviour, occurring vividly to his mind, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

The sentence was pronounced by Dr. Cumming, with as much solemnity as if it had been warranted by gross immorality in practice, or error in doctrine, and pronounced in the sacred name of the Great Redeemer. It was couched in the words following:—"The General Assembly did, and hereby do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and head of the Church, and by virtue of the power and authority committed by him to them, depose Mr. Thomas Gillespie, minister at Carnock, from the office of the holy ministry, prohibiting and discharging him to exercise the same, or any part thereof, within this Church in all time coming: and the Assembly did, and hereby do, declare the Church and Parish of Carnock vacant, from and after the day and date of this sentence."

This sentence was listened to by Mr. Gillespie with dignified composure, and he solemnly replied as follows:—

"Moderator—I desire to receive this sentence of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, pronounced against me with real concern, and awful impressions of the Divine conduct in it; but I rejoice, that to me it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

The calmness and dignity of this reply, showing Mr. Gillespie to have possessed much of the meekness and gentleness of Christ; presents a remarkable contrast with the precipitance in which his case was conducted, and with the haughty violence of his accusers. It has often been remarked, that there is little of gratitude or generosity in a public body, and that the very men who, in their individual capacity, could not move in oppressing an innocent person, will collectively inflict upon him the severest injuries. We have known Church Courts, composed of men of feeling and principle, who, when professing to judge in their collective capacity, set all the rules of justice and charity at defiance, where, perhaps, only their prejudices were touched, and thereby their party zeal kindled without any tangible cause. In the case before us, the Court was far advanced, and still advancing, in corruption, and the men who composed it were more distinguished for a proud spirit of party, than for religious zeal; and therefore it was less wonderful that they should combine against a minister who had no superior in their Church for piety and conscientiousness, and for faithfulness in his master's service. Some members of the Assembly treated Mr. Gillespie's reply with scorn, and gave visible indication of their disdain. But it is said that a murmur at any such indecency ran through the house, and a feeling of sympathy burst out from different quarters, in the expression, "Alas the good man!"

Every way considered, this was a very rash and summary process.—Mr. Gillespie had joined the Church of Scotland, as a Church that was free and independent. He had even taken exception to the Formula as requiring a full assent to the Confession of Faith, by expressing his dissent from the article on the civil magistrate's power. For it appears that then, and at other stages, the Church of Scotland did allow such exceptions to be taken as were felt necessary for the exoneration of conscience—a reproof to some of their supercilious successors in our own day, who, rather than allow this harmless indulgence, take dishonest shifts that they may pretend to hold the Confession entire. Mr. Gillespie having been brought up among Dissenters, was allowed to subscribe the Confession with the very explanations which our own United Presbyterian Church authorizes respecting the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. This is a fact worthy of notice, as it identifies the views on this subject held by Mr. Gillespie, and others of his period, with our own; showing that ours are not new, and that the founder of the Relief Church, and his associates, as well as the early fathers of the Secession, were men of clear discernment, of scrupulosity of conscience, and of enlightened, liberal sentiments.

"The sentence pronounced on him," says Dr. Struthers, "and the mode in which it was done, have been justly held to be painfully blasphemous. It was pronounced after prayer to God—in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—by virtue of the power and authority which He had granted to the Assembly! And he was stripped of his office as a minister, and cast out of his Church, not for heresy or immorality, but because he would not violate the dictates of his conscience, in being active in forc-

ing a minister, according to the Patronage Act, upon a reclaiming congregation. Hogue and Bennet, in their history of Dissenters, have said, 'All the blasphemies in the army and navy, for twenty years past, have not equalled the profaneness of this one act of the General Assembly, composed of the ministers and elders of the Church of Scotland.'

"On the very day on which he had been deposed, he left Edinburgh and returned to Carnock. He submitted to the sentence to its full extent. He readily renounced all the temporal emoluments arising from the legal establishment. As he entered the gate leading to the manse, before which there was a little plot of grass, his wife appeared at the door to welcome him, his first words were, 'I am no longer minister of Carnock.' Her reply was short, pithy, and affectionate,—'Well, if we must beg, I will carry the meal pack.'"

Where now, it may be asked, were the five ministers who joined Mr. Gillespie in the Representation and who were in the same condemnation with himself of refusing to take part in the induction to the Parish of Inverkeithing? Why did they accompany him thus far, and as it were, stop short by the way? What should have been expected from them in regard to this issue of the cause? Should they not have boldly declared their determination to make common cause with Mr. Gillespie to the very last—to share in his sentence, or, if not, to withdraw from the Establishment from which he was so unjustly excluded, and unfurl, along with him, the banner of Relief? Yes, they were cowards to decline advancing; they were selfish, and studied their own ease and convenience, and not the interests of religion, in not accompanying their friend at every hazard. Had they stood nobly along with him, as the three brethren stood with Ebenezer Erskine, in the generation preceding, they would have shared in his honours, and their combination might have rendered them, to a still greater extent, the instruments of good. "But," says Dr. Struthers, "they had not the same sternness of principle as Gillespie. Some of them, such as Fernie of Dunfermline, merely feared the people." It appears that others of them did make something of a determined stand. For it is said, "Being desirous to mix mercy and lenity with their judgment, the Assembly renewed upon the Presbytery the injunction of admitting Mr. Richardson, and empowered the Synod of Fife to consider the excuses of those who did not attend, and if not satisfied therewith, enjoined their suspension from the exercise of their offices in all Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, &c, and until they shall, respectively, testify their sorrow for their disobedience to its acts and ordinances." Three of the five ministers positively refused to take any part in the induction. These were Messrs. Spence, Hunter, and Daling; and in consequence, the Assembly's strangely limited sentence fell upon them. Excepting in their own consciences, they were suspended from all judicial functions, and this anomaly continued for thirteen years, when, in consequence of great alarm at what was called the progress of schism, these ministers had the sentence removed, and were restored to the exercise of all their judicial functions.

Mr. Gillespie was the only one of the six who could stand out with conscientious firmness against the whole host of his rash and haughty opponents. Never shrinking from duty when the course was clear, he went straight forward, leaving all consequences to God. He had been trained in the best school for imbibing the principles of unbending integrity, combined with enlightened liberality of christian sentiment. He studied under the celebrated Dr. Doddridge, at Northampton, England, by whom he was greatly respected and beloved. "There was a strong congeniality of sentiment between them, and there can be no doubt that the influence of the English non-conformist, confirmed Gillespie in his views of christian communion, and of the rights of congregations.—Doddridge was in the full zenith of his usefulness, a man of consummate ability, and of great influence, faithful in supporting the standard of a pure christianity, amid abounding defections, and at the same time singularly free from a sectarian spirit; dispassionate, cool, and forbearing; disposed to love the image of Christ wherever it appeared, and looking for the defence of the truth, not to the sword of the magistrate, but to moral and spiritual weapons. Sympathy of feeling and similarity of views, were the motives which brought Gillespie to Northampton, and the result of his sojourn there was to impart to his principles a strength and consistency, which carried him triumphantly through great trials at a subsequent period of his life. What Providence has work for men to perform, they are often prepared for it long before the time, by in-