

heritors to induce Mr Fraser to remain with them. It had just been finished, when it caught fire through the carelessness of one of the workmen. When Mr Fraser saw the flames bursting through the roof of the new structure, in the erection of which he had doubtless taken a deep interest, he said to his wife :—"This will never do ; I must use the little Erse (Gaelic) I have, it seems, and go and preach Christ in my native country." The good lady took the same view of the destruction of the church, regarding it as a providential indication of duty, and cheerfully acquiesced in what was to her almost a second sentence of banishment. Mr Fraser was admitted minister of Alness in 1696, and laboured there with great fidelity till his death in 1711.* Among the Papers of the Kilravock Family is preserved a letter written by Mr Fraser as Moderator of the Synod of Ross, to the Baron of the day, earnestly remonstrating with him for his conduct as Sheriff of Ross, in conducting a parliamentary election at Fortrose so as to encroach on the sanctity of the Lord's day. It is a document of considerable vigour and point, dignified in tone, and in every respect creditable to the character of the writer as a minister ; but I fear the Baron was not deeply impressed by it. It is docketed in his own handwriting, "A Comical Synodical Rebuke." Mr Fraser's son James, author of the well-known treatise on Sanctification, an exposition of the sixth and seventh chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, which the Exegesis of the nineteenth century has produced nothing to supersede, died minister of his father's parish in 1789.

In all the cases of persecution subsequent to 1680,

* Preface to Fraser's "Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification."

that notorious statute of the Parliament of 1681, technically called "the Test," played an important part. Taken in connection with another Act of the same Parliament, by which the succession to the Crown was secured to the Popish Duke of York, the test, declaring, as it did, that "the King's Majesty is the only Supreme Governor of this realm, over all persons and in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as civil," was regarded with great alarm. Wodrow very properly characterises this oath as "a medley of Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism;" and even the Duke of York himself acknowledged to Argyll, that "no honest man could take it." Yet it was prescribed as a condition of office to all functionaries, military, civil, or ecclesiastical, and as a test of fidelity to all whose loyalty was suspected. The great offence of the nonconformists was their refusal to take this oath. They were not singular in refusing to take it. The more respectable of the Episcopal clergy of Moray had great difficulty in swallowing it. Mr Hugh Rose of Nairn evaded subscription for a year, but when the matter was pressed, and it became necessary to choose between the enjoyment of his benefice and the answer of a good conscience, he took the Test. To their credit, eight of his fellow-diocesans chose the other alternative, and demitted their charges rather than subscribe. Their names deserve to be recorded—James Stuart, at Inveravon; Alexander Marshall, at Dipple; William Geddes, at Urquhart; James Horn, at Elgin; Alexander Cumming, at Dallas; James Smith, at Durris; William Speed, at Botriphnie; and John Cumming, at Auldearn. Nor were these the only clergymen in the diocese of Moray who abandoned their livings rather than do violence to their convic-

tions. There were others who broke completely with Episcopacy and joined the outed ministers. Conspicuous among these were Alexander Fraser of Daviot, and Angus M'Bean of Inverness. The former repudiated Episcopacy long before the passing of the Test Act, and for deeper reasons than it supplied. He appears to have been in orders for six or seven years before coming to the saving knowledge of the truth. We do not know through whose instrumentality the change was effected, though we may conjecture that he was indebted to the guidance of Hogg, M'Killican, and Ross, who were at that time within reach of him; but the immediate result was, that he severed his connection with the system under which he had been introduced to the ministry, and joined those who were suffering persecution for their testimony to the truth. We find him at Brodie Castle, taking counsel with its lord, and evincing clearer views of duty, and greater decision of character, than his adviser. Under date 2nd January 1677, Lord Brodie writes:—"Mr Alexander Fraser and others were here. I perceive that Mr Alexander did not hold it lawful to compear (before the Earl of Moray, and a Committee of the Privy Council), for it did infer an owning of the civil magistrate to be judge in matters of religion; and that it was as the High Commission, and bishops made judges. I expressed my dislike of the opinion, but thought it free for any to appear or not as seemed most for the honour of God, or his own good." He preached frequently among the Presbyterians of Ross and Moray in the summer of 1675, and was one of M'Killican's assistants at the Obsdale Communion. The hospitable mansion of Lethen sheltered him for a time, and he appears to

have lived for several years on a farm in the neighbourhood of Castle Grant. As might have been expected he was peculiarly obnoxious to the Prelatists; and it was probably for harbouring him that the Laird of Grant was fined so heavily by the Commission which sat at Elgin in 1685. The latter part of his life Mr Fraser passed in the parish of Croy. One wonders how he contrived to elude the grasp of his enemies when his fellow-labourers all fell into their hands. It was not his lot to endure the severer trials of imprisonment or banishment; but we cannot take into account the privations involved in his wandering from place to place, depending for his support, as it would appear, upon the liberality of those friends—themselves a persecuted people—who loved him for his principles and honoured him for his sacrifices, without realising that persecution for the truth, even in that its mildest form, was a severe test of conviction and fidelity.

To Angus M'Bean, a member of the good old Highland family of Kinchyle, belongs the distinction of being the last who suffered for nonconformity in Moray, if not in Scotland. His conscience and his heart were with the godly Presbyterians from the very first, and it was with great reluctance that he consented to receive Episcopal orders. He began his ministry in Ayr. Many of the curates settled in the parishes of the West were North-Countrymen, and far from being a credit to their native district, in character or in literature.*

* Gadderer of Girvan, a man of some note in his day, was, I suppose, more respectable than the majority of Norland curates settled in the West. He returned to his native parish of Urquhart after 1688, and officiated among the Episcopalians of the district till his death in 1714. The first sentence of the epitaph on his tombstone in the Churchyard of Urquhart, runs thus:—"In spem