

MEMOIR OF MR RUTHERFORD.

THE REV. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD, a celebrated divine, was born about the year 1600, in the parish of Nisbet, (now annexed to Crailing,¹) in Roxburghshire, where his parents seem to have been engaged in agricultural pursuits. The locality and circumstances of his early education are unknown. He entered in 1617, as a student at the university of Edinburgh, where he took his degree of master of arts in 1621. Nothing has been recorded of the rank he held, or the appearances he made as a student, but they must have been at least respectable; for at the end of two years, we find him elected one of the regents of the college. On this occasion, he had three competitors; one of them of the same standing as himself, and two of them older. Of these, Mr Will, a master of the high school, according to Crawford, in his history of the university, "pleased the judges best, for his experience and actual knowledge; yet the whole regents, out of their particular knowledge of Mr Samuel Rutherford, demonstrated to them his eminent abilities of mind and virtuous dispositions, wherewith the judges being satisfied, declared him successor in the profession of humanity." How he acted in this situation, we have not been told; nor did he continue long enough to make his qualifications generally apparent, being forced to demit his charge, as asserted by Crawford, on account of some scandal in his marriage, towards the end of the year 1625, only two years after he had entered upon it. What that scandal in his marriage was has never been explained; but it is presumed to have been trifling as it weighed so little in the estimation of the town council of Edinburgh, the patrons of the university, that they granted him "ane honest gratification at his demission;" and at a subsequent period, in conjunction with the presbytery warmly solicited him to become one of the ministers of the city, particularly with a view to his being appointed to the divinity chair in the university, so soon as a vacancy should take place; and they were disappointed in their views with regard to him, only by the voice of the general assembly

of the church, which appointed him to St Andrews — Relieved from the duty of teaching others, Mr Rutherford seems now to have devoted himself to the study of divinity under Mr Andrew Ramsay, whose prelections, it is not improbable he frequented, during the time he acted as a regent in teaching humanity. When, or by whom Mr Rutherford was licensed to preach the gospel, has not been recorded; but in the year 1627, he was settled pastor of the parish of Anwoth, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. — Anwoth, before the Reformation, had been a dependency on the monastery of St. Mary's Isle; but was united *quoad sacra* to Kirkdale and Kirkmabreck, and the three parishes were under the ministry of one clergyman. In consequence of "this most inconvenient union," the people of Anwoth had sermon only every alternate Sabbath. It was now, however, disjoined from the other parishes, and a place of worship had been newly built for their accommodation: which, though the parish of late has erected a new and more elegant church, is still preserved, and regarded for the sake of the first occupant, the subject of this memoir, with a kind of religious veneration. The disjunction of the parishes had been principally effected by the exertions of John Gordon of Kenmure, afterwards created Viscount Kenmure, who had selected the celebrated John Livingstone to occupy it. Circumstances, however, prevented that arrangement from taking effect; and "the Lord," says Livingstone in his memoirs, "provided a great deal better for them, for they got that worthy servant of Christ, Mr Samuel Rutherford." Of the manner of his settlement, we know no particulars; only that, by some means or other, he succeeded in being settled without acknowledging the bishops, which was no easy matter at that time. Perhaps no man ever undertook a pastoral charge with a more thorough conviction of its importance than Rutherford; and the way had been so well prepared before him, that he entered upon it with great advantages, and his endeavours were followed by very singular effects. The powerful preaching of Mr John Welsh, aided by his other labours of love, had diffused a spirit of religion through all that district which was still vigorous, though he had left Kirkcudbright seventeen years before.

Rutherford was accustomed to rise every morning at three o'clock. The early part of the day he spent in

prayer and meditation; the remainder he devoted to the more public duties of his calling, visiting the sick, catechising his flock, and instructing them, in a progress from house to house. "They were the cause and objects," he informs us, "of his tears, care, fear, and daily prayers — He laboured among them early and late; and my witness," he declares to them, "is above, that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all, as two salvations to me." Nor were his labours confined to Anwoth. "He was," says Livingstone, "a great strengthener of all the Christians in that country, who had been the fruits of the ministry of Mr John Welsh, the time he had been at Kirkcudbright;" and the whole country, we are told by Mr M'Ward, accounted themselves his particular flock.

In the month of September, 1634, Mr Rutherford lost his great patron, John Gordon, who had been created in the previous year Viscount of Kenmure, and a storm was now brooding over him which was soon to drive him from his station at Anwoth. The see of Galloway in the meantime became vacant by the death of Lamb, who was succeeded by Sydeserff, bishop of Brechin, an Arminian, and a man of the most intolerant disposition. This appointment gave a new turn to affairs in that quarter. A person of sentiments altogether opposite to those of the people of Kirkcudbright, was forced upon them, while their old and valuable pastor was forbidden the exercise of any part of his office.² Nor did Rutherford escape. He had been summoned before the high commissioners in the year 1630, at the instance of a profligate person in his parish. Sydeserff, bishop of Galloway, had erected a high commission court within his own diocese, before which Rutherford was called and deprived of his office in 1636. This sentence was immediately confirmed by the high commission at Edinburgh, and he was sentenced before the 20th of August to confine himself within the town of Aberdeen till it should be the king's pleasure to relieve him. The crimes charged against him were, preaching against the Articles of Perth, and writing against the Arminians. The time allowed him did not permit of his visiting his friends or his flock at Anwoth; but he paid a visit to David Dickson at Irvine, whence he wrote, "being on his journey to Christ's palace at Aberdeen." He arrived at his place of confinement within the time specified: being accompanied by a

deputation from his parish of Anwoth. His reception in this great stronghold of Scottish episcopacy was not very gratifying. The learned doctors, as the clergy of Aberdeen were called *par excellence*, hastened to let him feel their superiority, and to display the loyalty of their faith by confuting the principles held by the persecuted stranger. The pulpits were every where made to ring against him, and Dr. Barron, their principal leader, did not scruple to attack him personally for his antipathy to the doctrines of Arminius and the ceremonies; "but three yokings,"—Rutherford afterwards wrote, "laid him by, and I have not been since troubled with him." Notwithstanding the coolness of his first reception, he soon became popular in Aberdeen, and his sentiments beginning to gain ground, the doctors were induced to petition the court that he might be removed still farther north, or banished from the kingdom. This last seems to have been determined on, and a warrant by the king forwarded to Scotland to that effect; the execution of which was only prevented by the establishment of the Tables at Edinburgh, and the consequent downfall of episcopacy. In consequence of these movements, Rutherford ventured to leave Aberdeen, and to return to his beloved people at Anwoth, in the month of February, 1638, having been absent from them rather more than a year and a half. His flock had, in the mean time, successfully resisted all the efforts of Sydeserff to impose upon them a minister of his own choosing. He was also a delegate from the presbytery of Kirkcudbright to the general assembly, which met in that city in November, 1638, and was by that court honourably assoilzed from the charges preferred against him by the bishops and the high commission. To the commission of this assembly applications were made by the corporation of Edinburgh to have Mr Rutherford transported from Anwoth, to be one of the ministers of that city, and by the university of St. Andrews to have him nominated professor of divinity to the new college there. To the latter situation he was appointed by the commission, greatly against his own mind, and to the no small grief of the people of Anwoth, who omitted no effort to retain him. The petitions of the parish of Anwoth, and of the county of Galloway on this occasion are both preserved, and never were more honourable testimonies borne to the worth of an individual, or stronger evidence afforded of the high estimation in which his ser-

vices were held. The public necessities of the church, however, were supposed to be such as to set aside all private considerations, and Rutherford proceeded to the scene of his new duties in October, 1639. On the 19th of that month, having previously entered upon his labours in the college, he was inducted by the presbytery as colleague to Mr Robert Blair in the church of St. Andrews, which seems at this time to have been no very pleasing situation. In the days of Melville and Buchanan, the university was the most flourishing in the kingdom; now it was become, under the care of the bishops, the very nursery of superstition in worship, and error in doctrine: "but God," says one of Rutherford's pupils, "did so singularly second his indefatigable pains, both in teaching and preaching, that the university forthwith became a Lebanon, out of which were taken cedars for building the house of God throughout the land." In the Assembly of 1640, Rutherford was involved in a dispute respecting private society meetings, which he defended along with Messrs Robert Blair and David Dickson, against the greater part of his brethren, who, under the terrors of independency, which in a short time overspread the land, condemned them. It was probably owing to this dispute, that two years afterwards he published his "Peaceable Plea for Paul's Presbytery," an excellent and temperate treatise; equally remote from anarchy on the one hand, and that unbending tyranny which presbytery has too often assumed on the other. In 1642, he received a call to the parish of West Calder, which he was not permitted to accept, though he seems to have been desirous of doing so. He was one of the commissioners from the general assembly, where his services were acknowledged by all parties to have been of great importance. The other commissioners from the general assembly of the church of Scotland, were permitted to visit their native country by turns, and to report the progress which was made in the great work; but Rutherford never quitted his post till his mission was accomplished. His wife (for he married the second time after entering upon his charge at St. Andrews,) and all his family, seem to have accompanied him. Two of his children, apparently all that he then had, died while he was in London. He had also along with him as his amanuensis, Mr Robert M'Ward, afterwards minister of the Tron church, Glasgow, and who was banished

for nonconformity at the Restoration. Mr Rutherford exerted himself to promote the common cause, not only in the assembly, but by means of the press, in a variety of publications, bearing the impress of great learning and research, combined with clear and comprehensive views of the subjects of which they treated. The first of these was the "Due right of Presbytery, or a Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland," a work of great erudition, and which called forth a reply from Mr Mather of New England; one of the best books that has yet been produced on that side of the question.—The same year he published "Lex Rex," a most rational reply to a piece of insane loyalty emitted by John Maxwell, the excommunicated bishop of Ross. Next year, 1645, he published "The Trial and Triumph of Faith," an admirable treatise on practical divinity; and, in 1646, "The Divine Right of Church Government, in opposition to the Erastians." In 1647, he published another excellent piece of practical theology, "Christ dying and drawing Sinners," which was followed next year, though he had then returned to Scotland, by a "Survey of Spiritual Antichrist," written against Salmarsh, Dee, Town, Crisp, Eaton, and the other Antinomians of the day. In 1649, he published at London a "Free Disputation against pretended Liberty of Conscience," particularly directed against the Independents. All of these productions are highly honourable to the talents of the author, and place his industry and fertility of mind in a singularly favourable point of view. Rutherford, in returning to the former scene of his professional and pastoral labours, must have felt agreeably relieved from the business and the bustle of a popular assembly, and hoped, probably that now he might rest in his lot. Far otherwise, however, was the case. He was, in January, 1649, at the recommendation of the commission of the general assembly, appointed principal of the New college, of which he was already professor of divinity; and not long after he was elevated to the rectorship of the university. An attempt had also been made, in the general assembly of 1649, to have him removed to the university of Edinburgh, which, Baillie says "was thought to be absurd and so laid aside." He had an invitation at the same time to the chair of divinity and Hebrew in the university of Hardewyck in Holland, which he declined; and on the 20th of May, 1651, he was elected to fill the divi-

ity chair in the university of Utrecht. This appointment was immediately transmitted to him by his brother, Mr James Rutherford, then an officer in the Dutch service, who, by the way fell into the power of an English cruiser, and was stripped of everything, and confined a prisoner in Leith, till he was, through the intervention of the States, set at liberty. As he had, in consequence of this disaster nothing but a verbal invitation to offer, Rutherford refused to accept it. James Rutherford returned directly to Holland, and the magistrates of Utrecht, still hoping to succeed, sent him back with a formal invitation in the end of the same year. Rutherford seems now to have been in some degree of hesitation, and requested six months to advise upon the subject. At the end of this period, he wrote to the patrons of the college, thanking them for the high honour they had done him, but informing them, that he could not think of abandoning his own church in the perilous circumstances in which it then stood.

The whole of the subsequent life of Samuel Rutherford was one continued struggle with the open and concealed enemies of the church of Scotland. After the Restoration, when, though infirm in body, his spirit was still alive to the cause of religion, he recommended that some of the Protesters should be sent to the King, to give a true representation of the state of matters in the church which he well knew would never be done by Sharpe, whom the Resolution party had employed, and in whom they had the most perfect confidence. When the Protesters applied to the Resolution party to join them in such a necessary duty, they refused to have any thing to do with their more zealous brethren; and when these met at Edinburgh to consult on the matter, they were dispersed by authority, their papers seized, and the principal persons among them imprisoned. This was the first act of the committee of estates after the Restoration; and it was composed of the same persons who had sworn to the Covenant along with Charles ten years before. The next act of the committee, was an order for burning "Lex Rex," and punishing all who should afterwards be found in possession of a copy. The book was accordingly burnt, with every mark of indignity, at the cross of Edinburgh; a ceremony which Sharpe repeated in front of the new college, beneath Mr Rutherford's windows, in St Andrews. Rutherford was at the sametime deprived of his situation in the college, his stipend confiscated, himself confined to his own house, and

cited to appear before the ensuing parliament, on a charge of high treason. Before the meeting of parliament, however, he was beyond the reach of all his enemies. He had long been in bad health, and now the utter ruin that he saw coming on the church, entirely broke his spirit. Sensible that he was dying, he published, on the 26th of February, 1661, a testimony to the Reformation in Great Britain and Ireland. This testimony occupies ten octavo pages, and is remarkably clear and particular. Of his last moments we can afford space only for a very brief account. He seemed to enjoy a singular rapture and elevation of spirit. "I shall shine," he said, "I shall see him as he is: I shall see him reign, and all his fair company with him, and I shall have my share. Mine eyes shall see my Redeemer; these very eyes of mine, and none for me. I disclaim," he remarked at the sametime, "all that ever God made me will or do, and I look upon it as defiled or imperfect, as coming from me. But Christ is to me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Of the schisms that had rent the church," he remarked, "those whom ye call Protesters are witnesses of Jesus Christ. I hope never to depart from that cause, nor side with those of the opposite party, who have broken their covenant oftener than once or twice. But I believe the Lord will build Zion, and repair the waste places of Jacob. Oh to obtain mercy to wrestle with God, for their salvation!" To his only surviving child (a daughter) he said, "I have left you upon the Lord; it may be you will tell this to others, that the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places. I have got a goodly heritage. I bless the Lord that he gave me counsel." His last words were, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land; and he expired on the morning of the 20th of March, 1661, in the sixty-first year of his age.

Mr Rutherford was unquestionably one of the most able, learned, and consistent presbyterians of his age; while in his Familiar letters, published posthumously, he evinces a fervour of feeling and fancy, that, in other circumstances, and otherwise exerted, would have ranked him among the most successful cultivators of literature. Wodrow has observed, that those who knew him best, were at a loss which to admire, his sublime genius in the school, or his familiar condescensions in the pulpit, where he was one of the most moving and affectionate preachers in his time, or perhaps in any age of the church.