

NOTICES

CONCERNING

ARCHBISHOP SHARP,

WITH THE ACTS OF HIS FIRST DIOCESAN SYNOD AT ST ANDREWS,
CONTAINING A DIRECTORY FOR DISCIPLINE AND WORSHIP.

JAMES SHARP, Archbishop of St Andrews, was born in the Castle of Banff, May 1613. His father was William Sharp, sheriff-clerk of Banffshire; and his mother was Isabell Lesly, of the family of Kininvy. He was educated at the university of Aberdeen; and for some time attended, as a visitor, the universities of England. Having returned from England, he was made professor of philosophy at St Andrews. Afterwards he was minister at Crail; after that, professor of divinity at St Andrews.*

He was consecrated Archbishop of St Andrews in the Abbey Church of Westminster, 15th December 1661; his death happened 3d May 1679. His first synod was held at St Andrews the second Tuesday of October 1662. It met on that day, in conformity

* Keith's Catalogue of Scotch Bishops, p. 26.

to the act and proclamation which had been issued by the privy council.*

The presbytery of Perth, for the first time under the ecclesiastical government which had lately been established, met at Perth, October 29. 1662.†

The moderator of presbytery appointed by the Archbishop was Mr Henry Guthrie, minister of Kilspindie, the same who once had been minister at Stirling, who, after the death of Mr George Halyburton, was made Bishop of Dunkeld, and who wrote the history commonly called Guthrie's Memoirs.‡

But as some churches in the bounds of the presbytery of Perth belonged to the diocese of Dunkeld, Mr George Halyburton, minister of Perth, and Bishop of Dunkeld, when he was present at the meetings, acted as moderator, till the time that he resigned his charge at Perth.§

Bishop Halyburton was moderator at the meeting of the presbytery of Perth, January 14. 1663, when an abstract of the acts of the new diocesan synod was received and recorded.||

As it may be reckoned an authentic document of the state of the Scotch Church at that period, I have made the following transcript from the registers of the presbytery of Perth.

Perth, 14th January 1663.

The Acts of the Diocesan Synod were this day produced, and read, and appointed to be registrate. The tenor whereof follows.

The acts of the late synod of the diocie of St Andrews.

1st, My Lord Archbishop and the synod, considering how necessary it is that ministers be assisted in the exercise of discipline

* Wodrow's Hist. vol. i. p. 123. App. xxxiv. † Presb. Regist. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. || Ibid.

within their respective congregations, do appoint, that in every congregation the several ministers shall assume and chuse a competent number of fit persons, according to the bounds of the parish, to oversee the manners of the people; to assist in session for bearing down profanity and disorders, and advancing of good order in the congregation; and also for taking care of the collections for the poor, and distributing of what is collected to their necessities.

Parochial Fines.

2d, That, for the lifting of the customary mulcts from persons convict of scandal, the minister and session within burgh may interpose with the magistrates that they may exact the fines according to law, and deliver them to the session, to be employed for the use of the poor; and that for the landward, the former way used by parishes may be continued. And if they find it not effectual, that the minister and session may make their address to the Lords of his Majesty's Council, that they may be pleased to grant a commission to some persons in the parish for uplifting their fines, to be employed to the use of the poor and pious works.

Presbyteries.

3d, That there shall be, within the several precincts within the diocie, that formerly were [presbyteries], meetings of the ministrie of their respective bounds, for exercise of their gifts as formerly; for putting to tryal young men who offer themselves to be probationers; for trying the gifts and abilities of such as are presented to churches, (their presentations being transmitted to the several meetings by the Lord Archbishop); for trying and examining of scandals referred to them by particular sessions, and proceeding towards the censure of the same. That no sentence of excommunication against any person be pronounced, nor sentence of suspension or deposition against any minister, without acquainting the Lord Archbishop, and having his authority to it.

4th, That each presbytery take notice of schoolmasters, preachers in families, and expectants, within their bounds, the first diet of their meeting after the synod; and that their names and testimonials be sent to my Lord Archbishop by the moderators of the several meetings of the ministers; and that it be intimated to them, that none of them officiate without my Lord Archbishop's licence. Schoolmasters and preachers.

5th, That henceforth the way of worship prescribed by the directory should cease; and that the former way of reading Scripture before sermon by readers (where they may be had) be used. Worship. Readers. And that in towns there be public prayers and reading of Scripture to the people by the readers morning and evening. Also, it is to be recommended to magistrates in burghs, that they labour to have grave persons, and of good conversation, who may be employed in the reading of the word.

6th, Also, that ministers shall ordinarily use the Lord's Prayer in divine worship; and that, when children are presented to be baptised, that the parents, or they who present, be required to give a public account of the confession of their faith as formerly. Lord's Prayer. Baptism. Also, that, in singing of psalms, use be made of the Doxology so anciently and universally practised in the Church of Christ. Doxology.

7th, That the books of the several presbyteries within the diocie be sent in to the Arch-Dean before the third Tuesday of November, to be visited by the committee appointed for that effect. Presbytery books.

8th, The synod books of Fife and Angus are to be sent to the Lord Archbishop before the third Tuesday of November. Synod books of Fife and Angus.

9th, That the several ministers search what Papists are within their bounds; and that, with the first conveniency, they give up their names to the Archbishop, shewing their carriage, or if there has been any process against them. Papists.

10th, The moderators of the several presbyteries chosen by the Archbishop. Moderators of Presbyteries.

- Bursars. 11th, It is recommended to the several presbyteries, that they be carefull to have the bursaries which be within the New College filled with hopefull, able, and pious young men ; and that they shall take care of the timeous payment of the proportions laid upon the parishes ; and to be answerable for this to the next meeting of synod.
- Supply of charity. 12th, Giles Moncrieff, relict of umquhill — Bennet, minister at Auchtermuchty, recommended for charitable supply to the several presbyteries, who had been a great sufferer, and recommended by his Majesty to the Parliament, who have recommended her to the Archbishop and synod.
- Ibid. 13th, Colonel Ramsay, a distrest gentleman, recommended by the presbyteries for supply ; that such course be taken for collecting for him, according as his case has been represented.
- Fugitive. 14th, Janet Fyffe, fugitive from discipline in Langforden [Longforgan], to be enquired for by the ministers.
- Supply. 15th, Mr Alexander Robertson is recommended for supply.
- Next meeting. 16th, Next meeting of the synod at St Andrews, second Tuesday of April next.
- Sic subscribitur*, Extract, Mr George Ogilvie, scribe to the synod.

NOTE.

It appears, from Wodrow's Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. page 123, that the other diocesan synods in Scotland made acts to the same purpose as above.

Extracted from the Ecclesiastical record of the Presbytery of Perth, by the Reverend Mr James Scott, Vice President of the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth.