

he mentions that "some were sore vexed, and one in a rage went out of church." And so convinced was Boston that it is the sole prerogative of God, to open up fields of usefulness to his ministers, that he never could be prevailed on to do anything which could possibly be construed into seeking a call for himself. But after many disappointments, he was ordained in 1699 over the small parish of Simprin, in the neighbourhood of Danse, with the entire concurrence of both patron and people; where, for eight years, he made full proof of his ministry, and showed that he was a workman that needed not to be ashamed.

The parish of Simprin was very small, being chiefly confined to one village. But Boston—studied as carefully, and visited from house to house with as much fidelity, as if he had committed to him the spiritual oversight of thousands. He catechised the parish once a year; frequently visited the sick; held a prayer-meeting once a week, either in his own house or in the church, and in summer, preached twice every Sabbath. At communion seasons, many from the neighbouring parishes went to hear him, and to participate in the ordinance. At the communion celebrated, just before his translation to Etterick, his own parishioners bore a very small proportion to the strangers. Such unwearied labours awoke the hostility of many of the neighbouring clergy, and as is usually the case with little minds, and always with unsanctified hearts, they endeavoured to depreciate the excellence they could not imitate. But in spite of the malice of men, he was highly honored by his Divine Master. He preached, at the commencement of his ministry, those discourses which afterwards form the substance of the Fourfold State; a book which is read wherever the English language is spoken. He imitated the example of our blessed Lord and his apostles, who preached repentance before they exhibited the gospel—who announced the nature and extent of the disease, before they pointed to the only efficacious remedy—and thus shut men up, as close prisoners, to the righteousness which is of God by faith.

About a year after his ordination, Boston was married to Catharine Brown, a pious lady to whom he had been engaged, when a preacher. And here he showed how truly he did everything in the fear of the Lord. He made the subject a matter of secret prayer before making proposals to the lady; and a little before his marriage, we find the following entries in his journal, April 23rd, 1700. "This day I set myself to spend some time in seeking light from the Lord in that point (his marriage).—I prayed twice, but was in no good case, and so could not fall on what I aimed at. I tried it again, and after a while, I got my feet fastened; the Spirit did blow on me, and the matter was laid out before the Lord: and my conscience told me that I did sincerely desire God's determination in the case; which desire I saw as the sun at noon." June 28th, 1700. "I spent some time this day in prayer, with respect to my marriage mainly; was solidly affected with it, and helped to believe; and have hitherto felt my spirit bettered thereby, keeping somewhat more closely with God than before." Immediately after his marriage, he retired to his chamber, and poured out his heart before God. A union so sanctified by prayer, could scarcely fail to be a happy one; and hence Boston wrote the following character of his wife, not in a feverish dream of youthful excitement, but thirty years after his marriage. "Thus was I," says he, "by all wise providence yoked with my wife, with whom I have now (1730), by the mercy of God, lived thirty years complete; a woman of great worth, whom I therefore passionately loved and inwardly honored; a stately, beautiful, and comely personage, truly pious and fearing the Lord; of an evenly temper, patient in our common tribulations, and under her personal distresses; a woman of bright natural parts, an uncommon stock of prudence; of a quick and lively apprehension in things she applied herself to; great presence of mind in surprising incidents; sagacious and acute in discerning the qualities of persons, and, therefore, not easily imposed upon; modest and grave in her deportment, but naturally cheerful; wise and affable in conversation, having a good faculty at speaking, and expressing herself with assurance; endowed with a singular dexterity in dictating of letters; being a pattern of frugality, and wise management of household affairs, therefore entirely committed to her; well fitted for, and careful of the virtuous education of her children; remarkably useful to the country side, both in the Merse and in the Forest, through her skill in physic and surgery, which, in many instances, a peculiar blessing appeared to be com-

manded upon from heaven; and, finally, a crown to me in my public station and appearances."

After his marriage, few exciting incidents appeared in Boston's life, during the time he remained in Simprin. In March, 1702, he was a member of the first General Assembly, held in the reign of Queen Anne. The Earl of Seafield was the Lord High Commissioner, and Mr. George Meldrum was chosen Moderator, as the man who would be most acceptable to him. Queen Anne, on several occasions, showed an ardent desire to introduce popery into the kingdom, and constitute it the established religion. With this design, it was determined to reduce the power of the Church Courts, and to prevent them from passing any act inimical to popery. When, therefore, a motion was made, asserting the intrinsic power of the Church, it was set aside on the plea, that it was of no use to claim a power which they already possessed, and which was not called in question. No doubt, some high-toned churchman would urge, that to make such a declaration of the Church's independence as that proposed, would be "an unnecessary and ultraneous vaunting of high Christian principle," and to please a party, the resolution was dropped. But no concession short of absolute submission could satisfy the commissioner. Some days afterwards, an overture was presented for preventing Protestants marrying with Papists, and as soon as a motion was made for its recomittal, the Commissioner rose and, in the Queen's name, dissolved the Assembly. This extraordinary step took the Assembly by surprise; the Moderator left the chair, and even the votes of the dissentients could not be marked. "This was one of the heaviest days," says Boston, "that ever I saw, beholding a vain man trampling on the privileges of Christ's house, and others crouching under the burden."

In 1704, an incident occurred which excited a remarkable influence on Boston's future life. While visiting in Simprin, he saw two little books above the window head, the one, "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," the other, "Christ's Blood Flowing Freely to Sinners." He purchased the Marrow, carefully read it, and preached the doctrines which it contained. It struck at the very foundation of that low Arminianism and Pelagianism which was preached in the Church of Scotland, and at a subsequent period, originated the United Secession. A curious compound of faith and works, of law and gospel, was then preached. The sentiment which was continually in the mouths of theologians of this school, was: Do what you can for your own salvation, and Christ will do the rest; just as if God would ever put man on a way of saving himself, and thus pour dishonor on Christ's finished work. In fact, salvation from its commencement to its close, must be wholly of grace. In the elegant language of Harvey, "It is not like a fringe of gold bordering the garment; not like an embroidery of gold decorating the robe; but like the mercy-seat of the ancient tabernacle, which was gold—pure gold—all gold throughout." In opposition to this doctrine, it was maintained that some qualification, on the sinner's part, is necessary in order to his coming to Christ. Sometimes it was maintained in the gross form, that certain works were necessary; and, at other times, repentance and faith were changed into works, and thus, under the guise of evangelical sentiment, doctrines were publicly taught, which Paul would have designated "another gospel." The chief propositions contained in the Marrow, and for which Boston afterwards contended in the General Assembly, are added to his autobiography, and are as follows:

1. "It is the duty of all that hear the gospel, upon the revelation of Christ therein, without looking for any previous qualification in themselves, instantly to believe in him for salvation, both from sin and wrath, that only by so doing, will persons be enabled in a gospel manner to forsake sin—that it is inconsistent with the method of gospel grace, and absolutely impossible for a man to forsake his sins, in a way of gospel repentance, (which kind of forsaking only can please God,) till the Spirit determine him to come to Christ as a Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance and remission of sins.

2. "That though there is no universal atonement, yet in the word there is a warrant given to offer Christ to all mankind, whether elect or reprobate, and a warrant to all freely to receive him, however great sinners they are, or have been.

3. "That in justifying faith, there is a real persuasion in the heart of the sinner, that Christ is his, and that he shall have life and salvation by him, and that whatever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he