

olve to support the majority of the people in the choice of a minister.— Having agreed to this they proceeded to procure votes for Mr. Boston.

But these precautionary steps were disregarded, and the king presented the Rev. John Bonar, of Cockpen, to the Parish. In other circumstances this excellent minister, descended from the Torphichen marrowman of the same name, and progenitor of a numerous family of eminent christians and of several distinguished ministers, would have been cordially received by the people. But he was the Patron's choice, and not the people's, and they were not to be driven from the course they had adopted by any candidate, although as deserving as the object of their own selection.

The case of Mr. Bonar's translation was brought before the Assembly, where, feeling that it would be hazardous, from the excited state of the people, to induct him, it was not supported; and in the meantime he received and accepted a call from Perth. In a short time after this Mr. Douglas, of Kenmore, was presented to the parish of Jedburgh; but he, it appears, met with universal opposition. Mr. Bonar had been supported by the Provost, the councillors, and the chief heritors of the town and Parish, but Mr. Douglas was opposed by all the authorities, and by the whole Parish, with the exception of five individuals. God was hereby preparing for the christian people a more signal triumph in defence of their ecclesiastical rights. The Commission enjoined that the translation should be prosecuted. The Presbytery, however, refused to act, and protested against the Commission in language at once bold and faithful. The following is its tenor:—

"The Commission have ordered the Presbytery to proceed in the transportation of Mr. Douglas according to the rules of the Church, when all the rules of the Church forbid it. They must transmit the presentation, and the few subscriptions for the presentee, under the name of a call from the Parish, when the whole Parish, except five, are openly declaring against him. They cannot make out a process of transportation without reasons to support it, when they cannot find one for it, and all the reasons in the world against it. When he comes to be admitted, he must make a solemn declaration of his steadfast adherence, not only to the doctrine and worship, but to the whole discipline of the Church of Scotland, as founded on and agreeable to the word of God; when it is evident he could never come there but by the breach or neglect of some of the most important articles of it: that zeal for the glory of God, love to Jesus Christ, and a desire of saving souls, are his chief motives and inducements, and not worldly designs and interests, when, to say the thing in the softest terms, no body will believe him: and that he has had no undue hand, either by himself or others, in procuring his transportation, when all the world sees the evil is owing altogether to his absolute acceptance of and resolute adherence to his presentation. He must, after all this, be gravely asked, whether he closes with this call, and is willing to take the pastoral charge of that people: and they must be asked, whether they receive and submit to him as their minister; and if they permit, it must be taken for granted they do, when all present know that they do not. But this is not all: This must all be done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, solemn addresses must be made for his blessing on his own ordinance, and his blessing on him whom he has thus set over that congregation; and he admonished to feed the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer!"

Yet the Assembly of 1757 ordered that Mr. Douglas' induction should be gone on with at all hazards, and hence the people saw that their privileges were to be sacrificed by the resistless arm of the civil power. A deputation, therefore, from the Parish of Jedburgh was now sent to Mr. Boston, to ascertain whether he would be willing to become their minister, and to leave the Establishment. They found that his mind had been, from various causes, on which we do not enter, prepared for such a step.

"The people now," says Dr. Struthers, "saw their way clear to erect a place of worship where they might enjoy the ministrations of him whom they had already called in the sight of God, though thwarted by the power and devices of man. The first meeting was held for this purpose on the 30th May, 1757, and is described as 'a meeting of the magistrates, town council, several heritors, and inhabitants of the town and Parish of Jedburgh, to concert upon proper measures for raising and

erecting a Meeting-house in this town.' Boston's consent having been secured to become their minister, they drew out a more formal call for subscription by the people, and appointed Committees to go through Jedburgh and the various adjoining parishes, Minto, Hawick, Lalliesleaf, Maxton, Crailing, Morebattle, &c., to collect subscriptions for building the house. Ground was purchased. Some gave money. The farmers sent their servants and horses to cart the materials for the building.— Wood, iron, and glass for the windows, came from various quarters.— Those who had no gift gave so many days' labour; and in the incredibly short period of little more than six months from the first meeting, the church was built, seated, and its pulpit filled by Mr. Boston."

But let us trace the steps leading to this happy consummation. It was necessary that Mr. Boston's connection with the Parish of Oxnam, and the Church of Scotland, should be dissolved; and that his induction to Jedburgh should take place with as much ecclesiastical order as circumstances would permit. When, therefore, the Presbytery met at Jedburgh, on the 7th December, 1757, he gave in his demission in the following terms:—

"The demission of me, Mr. Thomas Boston, minister at Oxnam, humbly sheweth, Albeit there are several things in the National Church which have been, all along, disagreeable to me, yet the present method of settling vacant churches, by the mere force of presentations, which has been so long persisted in, and is at every year prosecuted more vigorously, is so diametrically opposite to all the laws of Jesus Christ about that matter, has such a manifest tendency to fill the Church with naughty members, to mar the edification of the body of Christ, and in fine, utterly to destroy the dying remains of religion in the nation, that I can no longer sit a member of the present judicatories of this Church, but must leave my place there that I may take part with the oppressed heritage of God: When I entered on my ministry in the National Church, more than twenty years ago, even then with concern I beheld violent settlements authorised by the General Assemblies thereof. But in those days there was a very considerable number of members who opposed such violence, and they were by their number and influence a pretty good balance against those who favoured them. Hence, when the General Assembly, or their Commission, had authorised a violent settlement, the next Assembly was readily composed of such members as were inclined to check and control these tyrannical measures. But, alas! the times are visibly altered to the worse! The bulk of those worthy men who opposed the encroachments complained of, are, it is likely, removed to their rest and reward. The evidence heretofore, that for a course of years past, we find one Assembly after another changing their members, but never changing their tyrannical measures in settling vacant churches. Those who adhere to the ancient principles and practice of the Church of Scotland, in this matter, are now reduced to such a small and inconsiderable handful, that they are quite run down by the numerous opponents, and have it not in their power to reform those crying abuses, nor to do justice to the oppressed, while they continue in the communion of the Church. Upon these and other considerations, which afterwards may be made manifest, I judge it my duty to give up the place which I hold as a minister of the National Church, and at the same time to continue in the full exercise of that ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, as God, in his providence, may give me opportunity. Therefore, wit ye me, the said Mr. Thomas Boston, to have demitted and laid down, like as I hereby *simpliciter* demit and lay down my pastoral charge of the parish of Oxnam, and deliver over the said parish into the hands of the Reverend Presbytery of Jedburgh, within whose bounds it lies, craving that the said Rev. Presbytery may, upon this my demission being lodged in their clerk's hands, and read in their presence, find the said parish vacant, and cause the same to be declared in due form, and proceed to the settlement of a gospel minister therein, with all convenient speed. Upon all which I take instruments and crave extracts.

(Signed) T. Boston

This document is evidently couched in language at once faithful and decisive, as well as respectful to the Court. After it was read, however, as was almost to be expected, every member, excepting the elder from Jedburgh, objected to receive Mr. Boston's demission. But as he had taken this step, after mature and serious deliberation, he was firm in adhering to his purpose, and he vindicated his resolution by reading an ar-