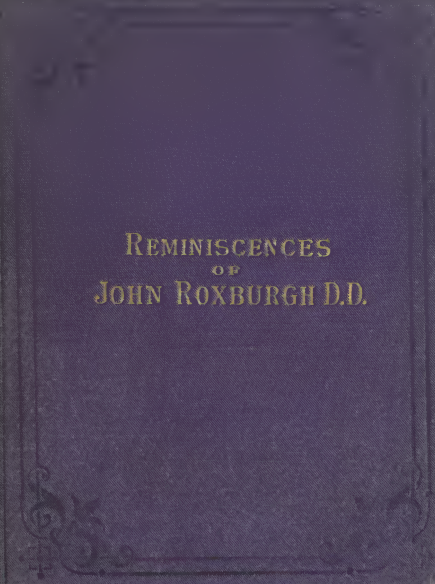


27

REMINISCENCES
OF
JOHN ROXBURGH D.D.



ABS.1.86.1

Free St. John's Congregation,

GLASGOW.

ADDRESS

TO THE

REV. DR. ROXBURGH

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIRING FROM THE ACTIVE
DUTIES OF THE MINISTRY.

MINISTERIAL REMINISCENCES

BY REV. DR. ROXBURGH.

*Printed for Circulation amongst the Members of the Congregation,
past and present.*

GLASGOW: THOMAS MURRAY & SON.

1875.

"AT EVENTIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT."—*Zechariah.*



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.

A Congregational Meeting of Free St. John's, Glasgow, was held in the Church on Tuesday evening, 23d November, 1875, for the purpose of presenting an Address to the Rev. Dr Roxburgh, in name of the Office-bearers and Congregation, on the occasion of his retiring from the active duties of the ministry. An additional element of interest was imparted to the meeting by Dr Roxburgh having kindly undertaken to read some "Ministerial Reminiscences." The audience included a considerable number of former members of the Congregation.

The Rev. GEORGE G. CAMERON presided, and commenced the proceedings by conducting devotional exercises. After making a few

remarks suitable to the occasion, and expressing his own cordial interest in the object for which the meeting was held, he called upon Mr William Keddie, convener of the Committee on the arrangements for the meeting, to read the Address, as follows:—

TO THE

REV. JOHN ROXBURGH, D.D.

WE, the Office-bearers of Free St. John's, acting in our own name, and as representing the Congregation, avail ourselves of the earliest opportunity of unitedly expressing our deep sorrow that the state of your health has constrained you to retire from the pastoral oversight of this flock.

There are occasions, and this is one of them, in the experience both of congregations and individuals, when the free expression of affection and esteem can neither be suspected of insincerity nor construed into adulation. Nearly an entire generation has come and gone since you entered

upon your ministry here, and there are not many now remaining amongst us who were instrumental in inducing you to accept of this pastoral charge; but we are well assured that the cordial esteem which was felt towards you personally by the Congregation of that time, and the high appreciation in which your ministerial usefulness was held, have been inherited by the present members and adherents of Free St. John's, who now proffer you the grateful tribute of sincere and loving hearts.

Amongst us there are still a few who remember you as a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, working zealously in the Home Mission field in this city, when Home Missions were in their infancy. They can recall the expectations which your successful college career led them to entertain of your future usefulness in the Church, and how these expectations were realised when you became an ordained minister in another part

of the country. When the spirit of purity and enlargement had begun to influence the Ecclesiastical Courts, the active part you took in the vindication of the Christian liberties of the people was known throughout the Church. In times of controversy and division within the Established Church, as well as beyond its walls, you earned the credit of maintaining your views of ecclesiastical polity ably and earnestly, without forfeiting the confidence and respect of brethren with whom you differed.

In a happier period, when our beloved Free Church had settled down to her proper work, and was occupied in building up the waste places of the land, you gave a willing consent to an invitation from the General Assembly (which marked its sense of your public services by conferring upon you its highest honour), and went forth upon the Church's great Home Mission enterprise throughout Scotland, pro-

secuting that which you felt to be a congenial cause with assiduity and success; and, it is to be feared, with a too unreserved devotedness of labour and strength, which left a permanent impression upon your health.

It is matter of congratulation to us to be connected with a Congregation which was so closely identified with the historical event of the Disruption. The first minister of St. John's, Dr Chalmers, conducted the triumphant host of the Ten Years' Conflict into spiritual freedom. Its second minister, Dr Macfarlane, made a costlier sacrifice for conscience sake on that occasion than was in the power of any other clergyman of the Establishment. The third minister, Dr Thomas Brown, led the great bulk of our Congregation into the Free Church, and presided as Moderator over the second Disruption General Assembly. And it fell to your lot, Dr Roxburgh, to employ your practical sagacity

in completing our Congregational organisation, and your hearty earnestness in imparting animation and vigour into all its plans of usefulness.

Although we can no longer enjoy your stated ministerial services, we trust still to have the privilege of occasionally welcoming you back to the pulpit when your health and convenience permit. While mourning the virtual dissolution of the tie which has so long bound us in the endearing relation of pastor and flock, we shall cherish in our hearts the remembrance of the mature Christian wisdom and experience, the Scriptural purity, the fervour and tenderness of your pulpit ministrations; the cordial interest you evinced in the spiritual and temporal welfare of our families; your paternal sympathy with the young, and your solicitude for their godly upbringing; the uniform friendliness and courtesy of your intercourse with your office-bearers; and,

in a word, your constant endeavour, in season and out of season, in the strength of your manhood and amidst the infirmities of declining years, to make full proof of your ministry amongst this attached and grateful people.

Dr ROXBURGH replied:—

I should do injustice to the truest and deepest feelings of my heart, did I not acknowledge in the warmest terms my most grateful sense of the kindness that dictated this Address.

After twenty-eight years of service and duty among you, to receive an Address couched in such affectionate terms, and breathing such sentiments of personal esteem and regard, is

indeed a reward for many cares and labours, and makes this one of the happiest occasions of my life.

At the same time, you will not credit me with so much self-esteem as to suppose that I can appropriate the eulogistic expressions of this Address as if they were due to my personal merits. But what I may not accept as a deserved tribute, I can accept as a generous and heart-felt expression of your love and esteem. As such, I do accept your Address with a most grateful sense of your kindness. It will help to cheer me when looking back on the history of the long and affectionate relationship that has subsisted between us as Pastor and People; and it will be read with interest, and I trust with profit, by my children, and my children's children.

Thereafter, having explained that the subject of the following address—Ministerial Reminiscences—had been suggested to him by one of the Office-bearers as a subject appropriate to the occasion of the meeting, Dr ROXBURGH proceeded as follows:—

MINISTERIAL REMINISCENCES.

I MUST ever account it one of the most precious of the many precious blessings and privileges which a gracious God has bestowed on me, that my lot was cast at a time of wide-spread religious revival and awakening. My ministry began shortly after Scotland had entered on one of those great religious revolutions which, in every age, have left their mark on her national history. I was thus brought, in early life, into contact and companionship with men with whom one—especially a young man—could scarcely associate without becoming assimilated to them in their spirit and principles; without, at least, being impressed with a sense of the responsibility connected with valuable opportunities of improvement, enjoyed by means of their friendship

and intercourse. Young persons of the present day, with their superior advantages, can scarcely realize the spiritual deadness which overspread this country during the last century. It has been well called the *middle* or *dark age* of the Scottish Church. Her pulpits were for the most part occupied by "moderates"—a term which one who seems to have known them well, interpreted as meaning, "men who had a very moderate share of zeal for God; and who consequently contented themselves with a very moderate degree of labour in their Master's vineyard." Worldly in spirit, and often careless in life—more concerned for the fleece than for the spiritual good of the flock—their teaching from the pulpit consisted of a kind of paganized Christianity—moral essays which might have befitted the lips of a Socrates or a Plato, but which completely ignored all the vital and peculiar doctrines of the Gospel; while, in the Church Courts, their authority and influence were uniformly employed to enforce the claims of a high-handed patronage,

in opposition to the Christian rights and religious interests of a down-trodden people. No wonder that under the ascendancy of such a party in the Church there followed throughout the land a fearful departure from evangelical truth, and a fearful decline of the evangelistic spirit. Unsound theology, intrusion of unacceptable presentees, and religious indifference went hand in hand. So much was this the case, that so recently as 1796—only four years before the commencement of the present century—in a discussion in the General Assembly on the subject of Missionary Societies, they were denounced by influential members of the ruling party as “highly dangerous in their tendency to the good order of society at large;” and it was gravely affirmed, that “the funds would certainly in time be turned against the constitution!”

But low and apparently hopeless as the state of things was, God had mercy yet in store for our Church and country. The blood of the Scottish martyrs was not to continue for ever

to be like water spilt on the ground. Their noble contendings for Scriptural truth and purity and freedom, were no longer to remain fruitless. A new era in the history of Scotland was about to commence. Moderatism, discomfited and disgraced, was at length to decline and retire; and the tide of national opinion and sentiment, which had so long flowed in opposition to the truth, was to set in favour of vital spiritual religion.

Now, when God has a great work to do in the world, He commonly raises up a great instrument for the doing of it. Thus, in apostolic times, when the glorious Gospel had to be propagated throughout the world in the face of Jewish bigotry and intolerance, and the Pagan world was to be shaken to its centre, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, endowed with such marvellous gifts of nature and grace, was brought on the field, and made mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan, and the overthrow of the sys-

tems of superstition and idolatry which claimed the earth as their own.

Thus again, when the errors and corruptions of the Papacy were to be exposed—when the nations were to be emancipated from the slavery of soul in which that anti-Christian system had so long held them, and were to be taught to bow to the authority of the Word of God as the only rule of faith and manners, men qualified for the work were raised up in the person of Luther in Germany, and John Knox and Andrew Melville in Scotland.

In like manner, at the period of the second Reformation in this country, when the imposition of the liturgy and an Episcopalian ritual by a tyrannical Court was to be withstood, and Presbytery confirmed and perpetuated as the chosen form of religion of the Scottish people, Alexander Henderson was drawn forth from his obscurity in the sequestered parish of Leuchars, and ushered on the public stage, the eloquent,

undaunted, and triumphant champion of the Presbyterian cause.

Even so, when the desolate wastes of our national Zion had to be built, and provision made for the religious instruction of a population long suffered through criminal neglect to lapse into a state of practical heathenism; when, as it has been expressed, the lowest storey of the social fabric had to be elevated out of the miry clay in which it had become embedded; when the rights of the Christian people and the freedom and independence of the Church had to be maintained against the reckless and ruthless usurpations of the civil power; and, when at last a scheme had to be devised for the sustentation of a ministry who had cheerfully forfeited their earthly all at the call of duty to their Heavenly King, Thomas Chalmers appeared on the field, the wise counsellor, the resolute leader, the able financier, and eloquent orator, all in one.

This memorable event took place in 1815, when Dr Chalmers was inducted minister of

the Tron Church, Glasgow. At that time I was nine years of age. His removal to St. Andrews took place about eight years after, namely, toward the close of 1823, by which time I had reached my seventeenth year. I was therefore fully competent, in so far as my time of life was concerned, to mark the stages of the religious revolution that was in progress, to appreciate the importance and value of the principles which it involved, and to throw myself into it with intelligent and entire sympathy. And it was this sympathy with the cause of vital spiritual religion, as expounded and enforced by Chalmers and other ministers of a kindred spirit, that determined me to devote myself to the work of the Christian ministry.

Having completed my studies at the University of Glasgow, I was licensed by the Presbytery of this city as a preacher of the Gospel on the 12th May, 1831. This I have always regarded as the commencement of my ministry. For, although not ordained until the 20th February,

1834, I was as constantly and laboriously employed during the interval in the service of the Church as ever I was afterwards. Never can I forget the sense of a dark, uncertain future that came over me on the day when my old and beloved friend, Dr Smyth, as Moderator of the Presbytery for the time, admitted me on the roll of the Church's Probationers. Up to that time, I had had one definite object in view, namely, to qualify myself for license: but now that liberty to preach had been conferred on me, in what sphere was it to be exercised? I had no patron to cheer me with smiles of encouragement; and the right of the Christian people to choose their own ministers was practically recognised in a comparatively small number of congregations. Perhaps a feeling of distrust mingled with such reflections. If so, how was it rebuked! From that day to this I have never been out of harness, except during a few months of serious illness, brought on by overwork in promoting the interests of

our Home Mission Scheme. First, I was engaged to supply for a time an infant congregation in Manchester, which afterwards grew into the leading Presbyterian congregation of that town. Next, I was appointed, along with the Rev. Mr Munro, afterwards of Manchester, to supply St. David's of this city, during the interval that elapsed between the translation of Dr Welsh to the Chair of Church History in the University of Edinburgh and the settlement of Dr Lorimer as his successor. Thereafter, I was one of six probationers who, sympathising with the views of Dr Chalmers on the subject of Church Extension and the recovery of the lapsed masses, made a free tender of our services to as many of the city clergy, to help them in overtaking the work of their overgrown parishes. We were called parochial missionaries, to distinguish us from the ordinary city missionaries; and when we met to consider the answer of the ministers to our proposals, the first letter opened was one

from Dr Black of the Barony, in which he did me the honour to select me as missionary for his parish; whence I have been accustomed somewhat to value myself on having been the first of the order of parochial missionaries in the Church of Scotland. In this character, a district, including the well-known Cowcaddens, was assigned me as the sphere of my operations, from which was originally gathered the Congregation that was afterwards accommodated in Cambridge Street Church, the first contributions toward the erection of which consisted of penny-a-week payments from my humble and attached flock.

I continued to labour in the Cowcaddens, in so far as I can now remember, for about eighteen months or two years. And never was I more useful or happier in my work than during this period of my ministerial history. Valuable experience in dealing with souls in every variety of state was acquired. Every poor creature reclaimed from vice and irreligion, and brought

into habits of regular and devout attendance on the means of grace, was like a brand visibly plucked out of the fire. You saw your work prosper before your eyes. While you thus met with a present reward of your labours, you felt stimulated to increased and more hopeful efforts for the recovery of the still careless and ungodly: and, at the same time, occasion was often given to admire how God in His providence helps the work of the Christian Missionary by events which dispose even the most hardened to listen to the warnings and invitations of the Gospel, or to welcome its hopes and consolations.

But I was now to be removed to a more prominent position: and this came about in the following manner:—In the course of the autumn of 1833, on the morning after my return from a walking excursion in the Highlands, I received a letter from my friend and former minister, Dr Welsh, couched in these laconic terms: “Put two of your best sermons in your pocket, and come

in to Edinburgh on Saturday first. Mrs Welsh and I will be happy to see you at No. — Melville Street." This summons admitted of only one reply, namely, my personal compearance at the place and time specified, though I was in a state of utter uncertainty as to what all this meant. And the uncertainty was only partially relieved in the course of the evening by the information, that I was to preach in St. George's at both diets of worship on the following day. It only remained for me to prepare myself for the formidable undertaking, which I did accordingly. And so, to curtail my story, before the Sabbath had passed, Dr Welsh at length informed me, that Mr Martin, minister of St. George's, was about to proceed to Leghorn for the benefit of his health—that an assistant was wanted to supply his place—and that he (Dr W.) had recommended me to the Kirk Session for this office. The Session was to meet next day, to determine, after having heard me, whether I was likely in their opinion

to prove competent for the charge; and thereafter Dr W. would inform me of their deliverance. Well, the result was that next day I found myself nominated unanimously as assistant to Mr Martin of St. George's, Edinburgh. It was not without fear and trembling that I contemplated the arduous and responsible position in which, all unsought by me, I was thus placed. And you will readily sympathize with the sense of relief which I experienced, when, on the morning of the 10th October, just when in the act of starting for Edinburgh, to enter on my duties there, I received a formal communication from Dundee, intimating my cordial election as assistant and successor to the venerable Dr Peters of that town. In consequence of a controversy that arose between the Presbytery and Town Council of Dundee, as to pecuniary arrangements, my time in Edinburgh was prolonged until February, 1834, when Dr Candlish succeeded to the assistantship in St. George's, and entered on that brilliant and beneficent

career, the memory of which will in all time coming associate his name in the mind of his countrymen with that of such men as Knox, and Melville, and Henderson, and Chalmers. I could foresee what was coming, and in the confidence of friendship told him so; but in his modesty and ignorance of his own gifts, he smiled at the prediction with "a good-natured leer of incredulity." It interested me much to learn that he referred to this conversation during his last illness.

You will excuse me for giving you here a short account of my first personal interview with Dr Chalmers. When I had arrived in Edinburgh on that 10th October, 1833, I proceeded forthwith to report myself to Dr Welsh, when, after some words of friendly greeting, he said, "But I must take you and introduce you to Dr Chalmers." Both Doctors were members of St. George's Kirk Session. Having been shewn into his room, Dr Chalmers soon after joined us, and forthwith got into earnest

conversation with Dr Welsh on some college matters, during which I sat apart, and amused myself looking out on what was passing in the street. At length, starting to his feet, the great man with the utmost cordiality bade me welcome, and, shaking me by both hands, added, "And now, sir, I know myself what it is to be a stranger in a strange land: and I do trust that whenever you have an evening to spare, you will come and spend it in the bosom of my family." I seldom needed to avail myself of the free access to his domestic circle thus granted me with such thorough kindness of heart; for during the whole time of my stay in Edinburgh there were few weeks in which I did not visit his house by special invitation. From this time forward he honoured me with his friendship; and I counted myself highly favoured on one occasion in having him for some days as a guest under my roof in Dundee. It has been said that no man, however exalted, is great in the estimation of his

valet; and this is accounted for by the latter having so many opportunities of narrowly scrutinising the personal weaknesses and inconsistencies of his chief, when freed from the restraints imposed by the conventional rules of society. But, in the case of Dr Chalmers, they who were admitted to intimate intercourse with him, the closer that intimacy grew, had the more need to beware of a temptation to hero worship; for, in all that was ennobling and fitted to inspire love and admiration, in all that was grandly simple and real, he was higher by the head and shoulders than any other man I have ever known.

This brings me down to the time of my settlement in Dundee, where, on the call of the people, I was ordained a minister of the Gospel in February, 1834, and continued to labour until my translation to Free St. John's, Glasgow, in May, 1847—a period of upwards of 13 years. This period was remarkable as embracing the whole history of the Ten Years' Conflict, with the

addition of between three and four years of the time of the building up of the Free Church. My experiences during that time were the same as those of every faithful Disruption Minister, and call for no special notice here. It was a time of much anxiety and many trials, when, in addition to their ordinary pulpit and pastoral duties, ministers had to submit to all the toils and sufferings which were involved in a long resistance to unhallowed and harassing inroads by the Civil Courts on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church. We were like the builders of the walls of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah: "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon."

To one event only would I refer as having occurred during the period in question, because of my immediate and personal interest in it. I mean the building of St. Peter's Church, Dundee, which, viewed in connection with its consequences, may justly be said to have con-

stituted a new and memorable era in the religious history of that town. When settled in Dundee, I was placed over a population, according to my recollection, roughly estimated at about 10,000 souls; with an aged colleague, much and justly venerated because of his character, but wholly disabled for ministerial or pastoral work. In these circumstances, I felt overtaken and paralyzed, and that the first duty I owed to the people of my charge, and to myself, was to take steps forthwith to effect a division of labour. While in this frame of mind, and passing one day through my parish, I observed three women conversing earnestly together, one of whom called to me, "When are you coming to see us?" I stopped and explained to them, that I had as yet been wholly unable to visit their district, and that I hoped they would make allowance for my many important duties. "Ay, (replied the spokeswoman of the company) but I'm important!" This incident determined me without

loss of another day to set about the erection of a church-extension charge in the district. My office-bearers heartily concurred and co-operated; and with their assistance, and that of many sympathizing and liberal-minded fellow-townsmen of Dundee, a plain, substantial, and commodious church was built in the west end of St. John's Parish, which was no sooner opened for public worship than all the sittings were let.

Now came the delicate and difficult matter of choosing a minister. Among the candidates for the new charge were three young probationers, all bosom-friends of one another; and full of admiration of one another's character and gifts; and all of whom soon rose to positions of distinguished usefulness and honour in the Church. These were R. M. M'Cheyne, A. N. Sommerville, now minister of Anderston Free Church, Glasgow, and And. A. Bonar, now of Finnieston. We would have been thankful to the Lord of the vineyard for any one of the

three. But it appertained to the congregation to choose their own minister; and we were saved all perplexity in the matter by their cordial call given in favour of Mr M'Cheyne. The steps preliminary to his settlement having been gone through, I presided at his ordination on the 27th November, 1836; and alas! was called to preach his funeral sermon so soon as 2d April, 1843. He had completed the sixth year of his ministry, and was only in the twenty-ninth year of his age. His precious life was short; but he was an aged saint in Christian experience. The years of his ministry were few; but into them was compressed a lifetime of ministerial usefulness. I often dwell on the recollection of his saintly character, as the rarest and most attractive embodiment of Christian excellence I have ever seen; and never can I forget the happy and profitable hours spent with him in the private intercourse of life, or in devising and prosecuting measures with a view to the public good. In particular, it was

during the course of his ministry (1837), "Provincial associations" in behalf of the cause of church extension were formed by authority of the General Assembly's Church Extension Committee, embracing every county in Scotland; and of that which embraced the county of Forfar, Mr M'Cheyne was appointed secretary, and myself convener. We were likewise frequently associated in the advocacy of the freedom and spiritual independence of the Church against the encroachments of the civil power; and in the prosecution of both causes many were the rides and drives we had together; to which he makes this pleasant reference in a letter addressed to me from Jerusalem, when on his mission to Palestine and the Jews:—

"My Dear Friend,—I am sure you will be glad to hear from your brother in the ministry, in this land trodden by the feet of 'God manifest in the flesh.' My thoughts wander continually to the spot where God first counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

where, for two years, he made me a happy minister of the Gospel, and where, I believe, I have many praying friends who will not forget me so long as I live. In these sweet remembrances—whether in the vales of Italy, or on the mighty waters, or in the waste howling wilderness, or in this land of promise,—you and your family have their constant place. I doubt not also that you often think and talk of me. When some church extension expedition has turned out well, you will say, ‘What would our travelling friend say to this?’ Or when the liberties of our Church are infringed, and the arm of unhallowed power is raised against her, you perhaps think a moment, ‘How will our traveller bear this?’”

After what I have said of this devoted young minister and most lovable Christian, you will easily understand with what a feeling of sorrow and sadness I must have penned the following sentences, which occur in a notice I wrote of his death: “He has been taken away in the

midst of his days and of his usefulness. But he has left behind him a sweet and fragrant memory that will be cherished for many generations. His name will survive in connection with the revival of vital spiritual religion, not in this town only, but throughout Scotland; and his manifold labours, his eminent graces, and saintly and apostolic spirit, short as his interesting and active course has been, will mark him out in history as the second Willison of Dundee. He was, indeed, the object of an esteem and reverence altogether singular toward so young a man, and which had their foundation in the deep and universal conviction of his perfect integrity of purpose,—his unbending sincerity and truthfulness,—his Christian generosity of spirit, and in the persuasion that he was a man who lived near to God, as was evident from his holy walk, his spiritual and heavenly-minded frame, and his singularly amiable and affectionate temper and disposition. In his zeal for the cause in which the Church

is engaged he was most exemplary. His spiritual mind had a quick and strong perception of the connection of the great principles for which she is contending, with the interests of vital godliness in the land. His views concerning the issues of the controversy, as regards the fate of the Establishment, and the guilt and consequent danger of the country, were remarkably dark; but as respects the imperishable interests of the Gospel, he rejoiced in the assurance, 'We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.'"

But it is time that these reminiscences were brought to a close. To you I do not need to give any account of myself or my ministerial experiences after my translation to Glasgow. These twenty-eight years have been spent in going out and in among you: some of you have been brought up from your childhood under my ministry; and I have nothing to tell you which you do not already know. Moreover,

you have been pleased to express yourselves with regard to my humble services in that most kind and touching Address which you have presented to me, and which leaves me nothing to say. And yet there is one thing I cannot pass by in silence at such a time and on such an occasion as this. Need I say that I refer to the solemn and impressive lesson of our mortality as taught in the recent removal by death of so many beloved fathers and brethren. When I was settled in Glasgow in 1847, and for long after, the following were living, active, and prominent members of Presbytery and of the Christian community:— Dr N. Paterson, Robert M'N. Wilson, Dr Lorimer, Dr Smyth, Dr Forbes, Dr Henderson, William Arnot, Dr Buchanan, Dr Gibson. Several of these were among my oldest and most intimate personal friends; but all of them, together with a numerous company of other beloved and revered brethren in other quarters of the vineyard, have not been “suffered

to continue by reason of death." And whereas, when first I became a member of the Presbytery of Glasgow, I occupied a kind of middle position among the brethren in respect to age, I am now the father of the Presbytery. It is with me the sunset of life; and a sad feeling of loneliness creeps over me when I recall the memory of other days, and the image of those who have gone before me. The night-clouds begin to gather around me; the time of infirmity and inaction advances on me apace; and the conviction has been forced upon me, that it is no longer for my own good, nor for the good of the Congregation, that I should persevere in the discharge of duties to which I have consciously become wholly unequal. In retiring from the post I have so long occupied, I do so with a deep and abiding sense of the great kindness and consideration I have uniformly met with at the hands of the office-bearers and members of Free St. John's. I do so with a heart overflowing with love and affec-

tionate interest toward all the flock,—with not the shadow of a shade of unpleasant feeling toward a solitary member,—and with the happy conviction that nought but kind and pleasant feelings and memories are cherished toward myself. I retire humbled by a sense of my unworthiness, and the remembrance of many defects and shortcomings; but confiding in the virtue of that sin-atoning blood, to the ever-full fountain of which it has been my privilege to direct sin-convinced souls. And I retire in a most hopeful spirit with regard to the future of St. John's. God has laid you as a people under a heavy responsibility. He has bestowed on you a man of rare gifts for the work of the ministry in all its departments—one to whose Bible expositions, and pulpit addresses, and, let me add, to whose devotional exercises, I look forward from week to week as a spiritual and intellectual feast—one, moreover, whose happiness is bound up with that of his people, and with the spiritual well-being and prosperity

of his charge—one willing to spend and be spent in his Master's service, and to whom it is a mental luxury to speak a kind word, or do a kind action, to the humblest of his fellow-Christians. Let not his spirit faint, nor his hands become feeble, through lack of sympathy and encouragement on your part. Continue to uphold him by your hearty co-operation and your united earnest prayers. Value his able, faithful, and instructive ministry, and wait diligently upon it. Help him to economise his precious time; for he who has not time to take in, cannot long continue to give out. Be forward to second him, even at the expense of means and ease and convenience, in his plans and efforts for the good of the Congregation, and for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad. And let grace go forth from you as a people in the communication of blessings, temporal and spiritual, to all around you. I do trust, and earnestly pray, that Free St. John's shall ever comprise in its membership, as it has

hitherto done, a large proportion of Christian workers, assiduous labourers in the mission-field which we inherit from the time of Chalmers and his noble company of earnest and devoted office-bearers. So shall the Congregation, which he founded, continue to perpetuate in this community the memory of his large-hearted benevolence, his spiritual energy, and Christian wisdom; and the living fire that animated him shall be transmitted with ever-increasing ardour from generation to generation.

In conclusion, one word of fatherly counsel and affectionate encouragement to my friends the Sabbath school teachers, and other Christian workers. This shall best be given by presenting to your minds' eye a picture fitted at once to teach you to magnify your office, and to direct you how to fulfil it. The biographer of that great and good man, whose name I have so often had occasion to introduce, referring to the close of his first session as professor of moral philosophy in St. Andrews, tells us, "As

soon as the bustle of the first session was ended, he threw himself with alacrity into the lowly office of a Sabbath school teacher. He went to work also in his own methodical fashion, by selecting a district of the town to which his labours were to be confined, visiting its families one by one, and inviting the children to join the class he was about to form for meeting at his own house on the Sabbath evenings. And there, in the midst of these poor children, sat one of the most profound and eloquent of men,—one at whose feet the great, the wise, and the accomplished had been proud to sit; while the striking picture is heightened by the fact that, even for these humble prelections and examinations, his questions were written out, and his explanations prepared, as if he had been to confront the General Assembly or the British Senate." On this picture of Christian humility and devotedness what words can be so appropriately inscribed as these, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Mr ALEXANDER OSBORNE, City Treasurer, moved that the meeting respectfully request Dr Roxburgh to allow his Ministerial Reminiscences to be printed along with the Congregational Address; a proposal which met with a very lively and general response.

Dr ROXBURGH intimated his consent, on condition that the circulation of his Paper should be limited to present and former members of the Congregation.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

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