

Death of the Rev. Mr. Roy.

It is with painful feelings we have to announce the bereavement the Church has sustained, by the death of the Rev. James Roy of the united congregations of St. George and Glen Morris. On the 15th of May, when on his way to assist the Rev. Mr. Ritchie of Ayr, he was struck with apoplexy, about two o'clock, p.m.—was found lying speechless by the wayside—was taken into a house near by—his old friend, R. Christie, Esq., was sent for, who, along with a medical man, arrived at eight o'clock—all we did that skill and kindness could effect, but he continued insensible, and at one o'clock on Sabbath morning, expired. He arrived in Canada in October, 1837, and was ordained in St. George in Oct., 1838. We believe he was in the 53rd year of his age. How melancholy to think of the nature of his death-stroke!—cut down, as in a moment, and when his bones were full of marrow, and the tide of vigorous health seemed to be coursing through his veins—and how very melancholy to think that he had to seek a couch on the grass by the wayside, and with no human friend beside him, to whom to tell his pain. It is true, Christian philosophy teaches us that it matters not where the Christian dies, but still there is an awful desolateness about death, when it comes as in the case of our departed brother. It is not our intention to give a biographical sketch—for this is only a notice—such a sketch being promised us by a competent writer, and which we expected to have had for insertion in this number; but now, we would simply add, that Mr. Roy was an unwearied labourer in the vineyard, and if not what many would call a popular preacher, he was certainly a very faithful and a very able one. He was a man of true piety, strong mind, large and warm heart, and liberal hand.

The remains of our brother were brought to the house of Mr. Christie, where he had resided since his ordination, and on the 18th were conveyed to the church-yard of St. George. There were eleven ministers of our Church present at the funeral. Religious services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Ferrier. The funeral company was very large—extending more than a mile—and gave evidence of the esteem in which this servant of Christ was held in that locality where he was best known.

What reason for gratitude as a Church have we, that so many of our ministers have been spared so long. Many have had their afflictions—some have been brought to the gates of death—yet, since 1833, only three have died. But now there is a voice coming in closer succession, not only reminding us of our mortality, but of the possible suddenness of our departure. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

Original Articles.

[FOR THE CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.]

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HISTORY.

BY THE REV. DR. FERRIER, CALEDONIA.

We have brought the narrative of our Church's history to the year 1740, when the General Assembly proceeded to depose the eight ministers of which the Associate Presbytery was now composed. We could willingly have dwelt longer on their prudential measures, their rapidly increasing strength, their faithful and noble delineation of the Assembly's authority, and their determination, through grace, to maintain the truth as in Jesus, in opposition to prevailing errors, that they might present to their country and the world, a pattern of ecclesiastical consistency, purity, and efficiency, which, with the blessing of God, might be an instrument of extensive and lasting good. But it is necessary to proceed with our narrative, omitting many things which, although interesting, might render it more tedious than we intended, or than our readers had contemplated or could wish.

It might almost have been considered as an act of blasphemy in the General Assembly to proceed, as they did, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and under presence of power given them by Him to depose from the office of the holy ministry, such eminently talented, pious, and devoted ministers, as those of which the Associate Presbytery was composed. And, as has been well remarked by Dr. McKerron, in his valuable History,—"It will be difficult to find in the records of any ecclesiastical court a sentence more unjust and tyrannical. What an idea are we to form, from this transaction, of the morality and justice of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at this period! The sentence of deposition which, in the frenzy of party-spirit they pronounced against the founders of the Secession—men of acknowledged worth and piety—and the grounds upon which this sentence was pronounced by them, will stand to future generations as a blot upon their annals, which no sophistry will ever be able to wipe out."

The act of deposition was in itself nugatory, especially as these ministers had already formally declined the authority of the Supreme court.—It had no effect in separating, or even in the least alienating the people at large from their beloved pastors. It rather strengthened and confirmed their pastoral relation, and increased their influence and usefulness.—It, however, deprived them of their Churches and emoluments; and the civil authorities were in several instances not backward to enforce that part of the Assembly's sentence which devolved on them. Some of the ministers, to the honor of the local authorities, were allowed to return to their pulpits till they could be otherwise accommodated. The Rev. Ralph Erskine, of Dunfermline, continued to preach in his Parish Church, till a new Church was built by the people who adhered to him. The same permission was granted to Mr. Thomson at Brantford. Mr. Moncrieff, of Abernethy, with his characteristic decision, declined to enter the Church and preached to his people in the open air. Mr. Fisher retained the use of his Church and manse for more than a year after his deposition, when legal steps were adopted to deprive him of both. He afterwards preached from a tent to his people, till, in a short time, he was translated to Glasgow.

But in some places, as Stirling and Perth, although the ministers were highly respected and beloved, the civil authorities ventured not to grant indulgences, but at once acted up to the rigour of the ecclesiastical injunction; and, as Dr. Thomson remarks, in these cases "the treatment occasioned scenes of touching pathos, and rising to the morally sublime."

At Stirling the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine was forcibly excluded from the place where he had been accustomed to officiate, on the very first Sabbath after the sentence of the Assembly. "The magistrates prohibited the ringing of the church bells to convene the people to worship; and Mr. Erskine, having gone up at the usual hour, found the church doors locked, and the congregation assembled around the sanctuary. Some proposed, in the heat of their indignation, that a forcible entry should be made, by breaking open the doors. This, however, Mr. Erskine would not permit; but lifting up the bible, which it was customary for him to carry to church, he protested, in a solemn manner, that he was pursuing the path of duty, and that not he, but his opposers, were unwearied for the events of that day. He then withdrew, attended by his congregation, to a convenient place in the neighborhood, where the services of the day were conducted in the open air. The spot selected for this purpose was a green eminence on the north side of the town, immediately beneath the frowning battlements of the castle, commanding a view of the Grampians in the distance, and looking down upon the smiling plains of the Forth. Imagination can scarcely conceive a finer scene than a congregation of worshippers assembled on such an occasion, and in such a spot. Mr. Erskine commenced the services of the day by giving out the first portion of the sixtieth Psalm. The verses selected by him were peculiarly appropriate to the circumstances in which the congregation were placed:—

'O Lord thou hast rejected us,
And scattered us abroad;
Thou justly hast displeased been;
Return to us, O God.

The earth to tremble thou hast made;
Therein didst breaches make;
Do thou therefore the breaches heal,
Because the land doth shake.

Unto the people thou hast things
Hast shew'd, and on them sent,