

THE REV. DR. SMELLIE'S JUBILEE.

The Guelph Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Canada held a special meeting in Melville Church, Fergus, on Thursday, 15th April, more particularly to celebrate the Rev. Dr. Smellie's jubilee.

The following account of the proceedings has been largely drawn from the Fergus News-Record.

The Rev. George Smellie began his ministry as a licentiate of the Church of Scotland in April, 1835, in the parish of Ladykirk, Orkney, where he was ordained in 1836, and laboured until his removal to Canada in 1843. He was inducted to St. Andrew's Church, Fergus, in December of that year, succeeding the Rev. A. Gardiner, who died in 1841. At that time there was no other Church in the village; but in 1844, Mr. Smellie and most of his congregation throwing in their lot with the portion of the Church favourable to the principles of the Free Church of Scotland, arrangements were made for building Melville Church, though worship, joined in by most of those remaining in their old connection, was continued in the old church until the new church was completed in 1846 and opened by the late Rev. Dr. Burns, of Toronto. At that time Mr. Smellie's regular pastorate included Elora, Alma, Crennock and Douglas (now Belwood); but, as in the case of other pioneer ministers of our Church, his ministrations extended over a much wider field. It used to be a joking remark with him that his charge reached from Fergus to the North Pole, and the elder members of his family have vivid recollections of the accounts given them on his return from long and toilsome journeys, often taken in the depth of winter to insure good roads, through the country north to the Georgian Bay.

When Dr. Smellie was settled in Fergus the communion roll numbered 275. When the congregation entered Melville Church it numbered 361. In subsequent years it soon rose to considerably above 400, the body of communicants occupying the whole available space in the church; but by the settlement of ministers in newly-formed congregations in the neighbourhood, as well as by the opening of places of worship by other denominations, the roll was again diminished, and ever since it has oscillated between 300 and 400. The communicants number at present 345. There have been from first to last nearly 1,400 persons admitted as members of Melville Church. Four elders entered Melville Church with Mr. Smellie; and twenty-eight others have been since ordained, of whom, fourteen are now living, and eleven are still in connection with the congregation.

Dr. Smellie has baptized over 1,400 children during his incumbency, and has married probably 600 couples.

The church and manse have both been enlarged since 1846, and under God's good hand are occupied still to the satisfaction of everybody, by the good old minister, now a Doctor of Divinity. Here a large family has been brought up, now widely scattered; but of the survivors, all within reach, were present in the old house on the occasion of the celebration of the jubilee.

With the exception of the year 1863, Dr. Smellie has enjoyed almost unbroken health, and has been able to discharge the full duties of his office, until the occurrence of an accident which, for ten weeks previous to the jubilee service, had confined him to his room, and which now necessitated his being carried into the church, though his appearance and strength of voice were such as to encourage the hope on the part of all that he might soon occupy his accustomed place.

The Rev. J. K. Smith, of Galt, was chosen Moderator *pro tempore* in the absence of the Rev. J. C. Smith, of Guelph, from sickness. There was a good meeting of the Presbytery, and Dr. Reid, Dr. Gregg and the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, Dr. Smellie's son in law, from Toronto and Dr. Ure, from Goderich, were present. The Synod of Hamilton and London sent the Rev. W. S. Ball, formerly of Guelph, and the Rev. W. T. McMullen, of Woodstock, as a deputation to partake in the jubilee. A good many letters of apology were read from various ministers and others of high standing in the Church.

About twenty minutes to three the jubilee services were commenced by the Moderator giving out a psalm of praise, followed by reading several passages of Scripture and a very comprehensive prayer offered up by Dr. Torrance, the esteemed and now venerable Clerk of Presbytery.

THE PRESBYTERY OF GUELPH'S ADDRESS.

The Rev. Dr. Middlemiss, of Elora, then arose, and read the following address to Dr. Smellie, from the Presbytery of Guelph:

To the Rev. George Smellie, D.D., Minister of Melville Church, Fergus:

DEAR SIR,—Your brethren, the ministers and elders of the Presbytery of Guelph, believe that their word is not needed to assure you that it is with sentiments at once of great respect and of sincere Christian affection that they congratulate you on the completion of the fiftieth year of your service in the ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first time the Presbytery is called to take notice of such an experience, on the part of any of its ministers; and, though some of us are growing old in the ministry, a long time may elapse before it is called again to note a similar experience. It is not, however, the mere fact of the continuance of a ministry for half a century that we are to-day called to record. Unusual and noteworthy as the fact is, it is the character of your long ministry that is uppermost in our thoughts, in the service of thanksgiving by which we celebrate the unusual occurrence of the completion of a fifty years' ministry. For nearly forty-five years your name has been intimately and honourably identified with the Presbyterian Church in this country—your personal exertions and sacrifices having contributed in no small measure to its progress and establishment—and throughout the land, from the time that most of us can remember till now, the mention of your name has been suggestive of all that is exemplary in the Christian pastorate. Coming into the Province on the eve of an event that divided the Church in its early days, and having now many years survived the union of all the branches in this Dominion of the Church of the Scottish Reformation, no differences of opinion in relation to the changes that have taken place, have, at any time, or in any degree, affected the general high estimate of your character as a Christian minister, and of your value to the Church as a counsellor.

Your brethren of the Presbytery, after a season of no little anxiety, rejoice greatly that, having been forbidden by your serious and trying illness to meet with them, according to their desire, on the fiftieth anniversary of your ordination, you are now so far recovered as to be able, on this, the fifty-first anniversary of your licensure, to join with them in their thanksgivings to God for your long and useful ministry, and for the hope, now again, as we trust, unclouded, that, though you have seen some years of the decade that few live to see, your best days are

yet in the future; and that the people who have so long looked up to you may yet experience no little Christian quickening and edification through your ministrations. That you may "still bring forth fruit in old age"; that Mrs. Smellie may be yet long spared to adorn the place that she has so long filled with an exemplariness, in all respects, worthy of your own, and that both of you may have the ever-growing happiness of seeing your children filling their several places in a manner worthy of their inheritance of a highly-honoured name, is the sincere and earnest prayer of your brethren of the Presbytery.

Signed in the name and by the order of the Presbytery of Guelph, this 15th day of April, 1886, by

J. K. SMITH, A.M., Moderator A. L. ROBERT TORRANCE, D.D., Pres. Clerk.

The Rev. Dr. Reid, of Toronto, in presenting Dr. Smellie with

A VERY HANDSOME CLOCK,

purchased by the members of the Presbytery, said:

DEAR DR. SMELLIE,—An unexpected honour has been conferred upon me, and an unexpected pleasure is afforded me by the Presbytery of Guelph, in my being asked to be the medium, as the mouthpiece or the hand of the Presbytery, of putting you in possession of the valuable and beautiful timepiece on this table, and which is presented by the ministers and elders of the Presbytery as a token of their respect and affection and of their hearty congratulations on your being permitted in the good providence of God to reach the fiftieth anniversary of your ordination as a minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I presume I have been selected to discharge this very pleasant duty, on the ground of seniority, as I am the oldest minister present, and one who has been for the longest time connected with you in church and ministerial relations. Not many ministers are permitted to see jubilee services, and not many have the privilege of having had such a long pastorate as you have had as minister of Melville Church, Fergus. I do most heartily congratulate you on this most interesting occasion. I congratulate you on being permitted to see, under very pleasant circumstances, the fiftieth anniversary of your ordination, and I congratulate you on your long, happy and successful pastorate. I most fully sympathize with every sentiment so well expressed in the address from the Presbytery, which has just been read by Dr. Middlemiss, and I can assure you, my dear brother, that I believe every minister in the Church who knows you would most cordially concur in every sentiment and expression. I congratulate you on having an attached and affectionate congregation, which has never gone back, but has always been making progress, and on having around you dutiful and affectionate sons and daughters who have grown up in the manse, and are honoured and useful members of the Church and of society. I trust you and Mrs. Smellie may be permitted to return from the Old Land with increased health and strength, and that you may be long permitted to note the hours on this beautiful timepiece, until the time shall come when you shall enter into the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

In reply, Dr. Smellie said that before attempting to respond to the very kind and brotherly address of the Presbytery, it became him, with all humility, wonder and gratitude, to acknowledge the favour and forbearance of Almighty God in sparing him so long, and permitting him to complete

HALF A CENTURY IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

—a term of service which, though he hopes he may be able to say in the words of a brother minister, "I trust that I have not lived altogether in vain," he is conscious has been characterized by manifold deficiencies and shortcomings. In addressing the Presbytery, he had to say, not only that notwithstanding differences of opinion, which of necessity occasionally arise, a uniform good understanding had prevailed between him and all his brethren. But that on the present occasion, he had to tender his most sincere and cordial thanks to them for thinking of any demonstration of this kind; for condescending to appoint a special meeting in Fergus, for appearing here to-day in such goodly numbers, for the terms of fraternal affection contained in the address just now read; and, above all, for the substantial and handsome gift, by which they had provided the means of perpetuating the memory of their great and brotherly kindness.

THE CONGREGATION'S ADDRESS.

Mr. A. D. Ferrier, accompanied by Messrs. Robert Phillips and Wm. Castell, then came forward and read the following address from the congregation.

Address to the Rev. G. Smellie, D.D., from the congregation of Melville Church, Fergus:

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—As it has pleased the Almighty to spare you to complete the fiftieth year of your service as a minister in His Church, we, the undersigned, on behalf of the congregation of Melville Church, have very great pleasure in congratulating you on this memorable occasion. More than forty-two years of that ministry have been spent in this place, and very many who were present at your induction to St. Andrew's Church, Fergus, have passed away; but we are happy to say that there are still many who were present at your entrance into ministerial life in Fergus. We may safely say that from the commencement of your ministry here, up to this time, there has been unbroken harmony (save at the Disruption in 1844) between minister and people. Differences of opinion there may have been; but, under the good hand of God, no break in the mutual attachment of minister and people has ever taken place. You have baptized many of your present flock, you have united a goodly number in the holy bonds of matrimony, and in the course of Providence you have officiated at the funerals of many. We happily feel assured that your ministrations have advanced the cause of the Master to a large extent, and the Church of Christ has had many recruits from the young people of your flock. Although over the threescore and ten, we hope and pray that it may please the Almighty to spare you yet for many years of usefulness in His Church. Understanding that, God willing, it is the intention of yourself and Mrs. Smellie to revisit your native land during the ensuing summer, we would respectfully request your acceptance of this purse and its contents, along with this short and imperfect address, as a small token of our regard for yourself and Mrs. Smellie, whose unwearied and faithful services are highly appreciated by all connected with Melville Church. We are grateful to the Almighty for so far blessing the means for restoring you to your wonted health and strength after your late serious affliction, and we trust the cure under His good hand may soon be complete. We pray heartily that the good Lord may prosper your journeyings by land and by sea, may watch over and protect you from all danger, and after your anticipated visit to the dear native land shall have been happily accomplished, may restore you again to your home and your attached people in this place.

(Signed)

Fergus, 15th April, 1886.

Dr. Smellie said this was a fresh call for thanks on his part, and though somewhat disconcerted by so much atten-

tion, he wished to say that the address and accompanying valuable gift were just another expression of the good-will and kindness which the congregation had shown toward him during the long course of his ministry among them. He had received many similar tokens of their regard. It was not merely in one case or in two that such had on different occasions been realized; he could count the instances by the dozen. And it was peculiarly gratifying at this stage to be again thus reminded of the good feeling which has hitherto subsisted. "I beg," continued Dr. Smellie, "to take this opportunity of thanking them also for their many kind calls and inquiries after my health during the weeks of my late confinement to the house. And as the present act of the Presbytery is to be regarded as a high compliment paid to the congregation, as well as a mark of respect to their pastor, I am happy to understand that they are ready to show their appreciation of the same by giving a cordial reception to the Presbytery, and an entertainment in the drill shed. I could have wished, did time and other circumstances permit, to give a brief sketch of my ecclesiastical life, and a history of this congregation, with a few statistics; also, some explanations regarding the lengthened pastorate to which reference has been made; for I presume that many outsiders account for it only on the ground that the congregation of Melville Church, Fergus, must be a long-suffering people, or that I never had an opportunity of getting out of this place. But I must reserve this."

Rev. Dr. Wardrope, of Guelph, in addressing the congregation, said: There is a drawback to the enjoyment of this day in the continued illness of our beloved friend, your pastor. It would have been to all of us a great satisfaction had he been among us in his wonted health. But in the affliction with which he has been visited, we recognize the hand of God. He doeth all things well. And by no one is this more heartily acknowledged than by our brother in honour of whom we are gathered here to-day. It is but seldom that an opportunity is afforded us of congratulating a minister on the completion of fifty years' service in the Gospel. It must, from the nature of things, be but seldom that such a jubilee occurs. I have been in the ministry over forty years, and it has never, until now, fallen to my lot to take part in, or even

TO WITNESS SUCH A SERVICE AS THIS.

The same could probably be said by most, if not by all, of you to whom I now speak. Of Dr. Smellie's fifty years' service, over forty-two have been spent in the pastoral charge of this congregation. It will be forty-three years next autumn since I first saw him, when he had just come from his native land. He preached on a certain Sabbath in the town in which I was then teaching, from a text which I remember to this day: 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' The preaching to you has been in line with what I then heard—the publishing of a full and free salvation through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There may be some here who remember his first coming to this place, and his entrance on the pastorate. By the circumstances in which we are this day met, you are led to think of many touching and many hallowed scenes which you have witnessed, or in which you have taken part, during the intervening years. You remember the baptism, and the first communion, and the marriage of many still among you, and of many who are among you no more. You remember times and occasions in which your pastor has rejoiced with you in your joy, and sympathized with you in your sorrow. You remember times of joy and times of sorrow and bereavement in his family. You remember what he has been to you amid the experiences, vicissitudes and the trials which these things represent. You remember words in season spoken by him in the ordinary intercourse of life, in chambers of sickness, by dying beds, and by open graves. You remember how, in this place, he has preached to you the Gospel of the Kingdom; beseeching you to be reconciled to God, exhorting and comforting and charging every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you to His kingdom and glory. I am not here, however, to pronounce an eulogy upon him, or upon his beloved partner in life, by whom all his efforts for your welfare have been seconded with such affectionate solicitude. I am here to make mention of the loving kindness of the Lord, who has so long kept you together in this relation as pastor and people. It is no common privilege to look back on such a relation, so long continued, with such unbroken harmony, and with so many tokens of the Divine blessing. I am sure your pastor will say that his ministry in the Gospel here has been blessed to his own soul; and I am sure many of you will say that it has been blessed to yours. This is what we all, as ministers of the Gospel, desire. If we come short of this,

WE MISS OUR AIM.

We are in the position that we occupy, not merely that we may be skilful expounders of the word, or wise administrators—although it is most desirable that we should be either, or both, of these—but that we may bring souls to Christ, whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. We would not have a single Sabbath to end, we would not have even a service like this come to a close, without some sinner being brought to the Saviour, or some believer being built up in his faith. And why may it not be? Why may not some here who are not far from the kingdom even now come in? That would make this a day to be remembered—a jubilee indeed. It would fill with greatest joy the heart of your pastor, whom we hope to see strengthened by God's grace yet to go out and come in among you. It would occasion joy in heaven among the angels of God. It would bring glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Rev. W. S. Ball, taking Dr. Smellie for a moment by the