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Quarter-Centennial

—OF THE—

PITTSBURGH

R. P. Congregation.

1866 to 1891.

QUARTER-CENTENNIAL

OF THE

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OF THE

COVENANTER CHURCH.

1866 TO 1891.

THE COVENANTER PUBLISHING CO.
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ADDRESS BY PROF. D. B. WILLSON.

DEAR FRIENDS:—Your pastor has kindly asked me to make some remarks at this Quarter-Centennial of the Pittsburgh congregation. It gives me great pleasure to be here. Many important memories of my own life are linked with the history of this church. Your minds go back to 1865, when you were organized, on October 31st., and to 1866, when Dr. A. M. Milligan became your pastor, on May 14th. Those years are full of significance to me as well. I graduated from the University at Philadelphia in 1860, when events were fast hastening on to civil war; and when it came, I was for some years in the service. At the close of the war, in 1865, I came to Allegheny to begin my studies for the ministry, which I had had in view for a long time. During my seminary course the upper room of the Fourth Ward School House on Penn Avenue, where you worshipped, became very familiar to me. I was away in the summer of 1866, until its closing day; and returned in answer to a telegram, to find that my father had died five hours before my arrival; that is, on Friday, August 31st. The burial was in Philadelphia on the Wednesday following, that is, September 5th. On the intervening Sabbath, our bereaved household united with you in worship, when Dr. Milligan, discoursed of death, and treated, in connection with his sermon, the work of father's life. You see, then, how when the year 1866 is recalled, memory has its story for me, connecting our family life with your congregational history.

On the 15th of April, 1868, I was licensed to preach, along with David Gregg and W. J. Gillespie; and my first discourse after licensure was in the same upper room, on the Saturday before your communion, that spring. Two years after, that is, in 1870, I became pastor of Allegheny congregation; and thus

for the following fifteen years, till he was called away by death, the labors of your pastor, in the ripe years of his strength, were familiar to me. We recall the Synod of 1871, and the subsequent joint covenanting and communion of the Allegheny and the Pittsburgh congregations in this building.

It was my privilege to be Secretary of the Local Auxiliary of the National Reform Association during the early part of those years, and many of you remember the full meetings throughout these two cities and in the vicinity, when Dr. Milligan spoke with eloquence and power, commanding attention and assent from many hearers. Those were sowing times. Nor were his labors local. He travelled widely, and the history of National Reform, East and West, is closely associated with him. He labored in season and out of season.

Meanwhile this congregation grew—grew in numbers and in influence, until its faith and zeal and liberality became known throughout the church. It is certainly a matter of rejoicing that Dr. Milligan found in you a people ready to uphold his efforts in every good work. This is of great importance in the life of a faithful, witnessing pastor. At the time of the death of Dr. J. R. W. Sloane, a member of the Third New York congregation in attendance at the funeral told a reporter of his pastor's maintenance of a testimony against human slavery in that great city, in the face of great opposition. The reporter naturally spoke of the devotion of a people who would support such a pastor as sharing in the honor of the triumph of the right. So it is with you. Dr. Milligan found in you a willing people, devoted to the reforms he advocated and the testimony he upheld.

Is this an occasion of self-gratulation, or of thanksgiving to God? God receives from you the praise. How instructive to us is the 29th chapter of 1st Chronicles! Much treasure had been given for the house of God. "Then the people rejoiced,

for they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord." Then the king said: "Now, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what, is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

There is none abiding. Thus every occasion, as this, is of mingled joy and sadness. When I was a young man, seven of our family connection were in the Covenanter ministry. Of that generation, but one remains, and I am the only one of the generation that followed, who has engaged in the same service of the ministry. The church will live and prosper, with or without us. We are not her creditors. One of her most efficient ministers, Dr. Sloane, has said, that he was indebted to the church, not the church to him. To her he owed instruction in divine truth, in the great principles that she maintained.

Let us then remember that it is of God's grace that he makes use of us. He bestows honor upon us when he calls us into his service. "Be not high-minded, but fear." The cause shall triumph. The relation that we bear to it is of vast importance to ourselves. The great matter is service—the serving of the Lord Jesus Christ. "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than dwell in tents of wickedness." Much remains to be accomplished. Souls are to be saved; great reforms are yet to be carried forward to victory. In all this you are to bear a part, but not in your own strength. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?"

You have passed through a week of commemorative service, closing with the observance of the communion. This will be helpful to you, for all such celebrations mean not only thankfulness for the past, but also acceptance of the future, in a re-

dedication of strength bestowed, to coming labor. You now give yourselves anew to the testimony of Christ.

THE COVENANTER CHURCH AND REFORMS.

BY REV. DR. W. J. ROBINSON.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:—I most heartily thank your pastor for the kindly words with which he has introduced me, and I assure you that I cordially reciprocate his kindly sentiments. I have a profound respect for the Covenanter church. In my childhood and youth, and through all the years of my ministry, I have been most intimately associated with its ministers and members. And I count it a privilege to have the opportunity of testifying to the high type of Christian character and activity which its history furnishes. For fidelity to Scripture truth, strength of conviction, and courage in its maintenance; for faithfulness in the application of the truth to the individual, family, church, and state; and hence for sterling integrity of character in its individual members; for the best fruits of culture and discipline in the family life; and for an intelligent adherence to truth, and earnest zeal for its promotion in church life, the Covenanter church, stands in the very front rank among the churches of our land. It has often been asserted that a doctrinal church and a doctrinal ministry are of necessity impracticable; that by their very adherence to what is called, very flippantly, “a dry and dead orthodoxy,” they are out of touch with the thoughts and activity of the living world around. The Covenanter church is a standing answer to this assertion. Firm and unmovable against all assaults,