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# CENTENNIAL MEMORIAL

ENGLISH

PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION,

HARRISBURG, PA.

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GEO. B. STEWART, *Editor.*

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I am expressing your sentiments as well as my own—that it has never seemed to me as if our brethren of the Pine Street Church were really a separate Church. They shared our common worship for sixty-five years: there have been, and there are, so many ties between us, and those ties have been so intimate and so continuous during the last thirty-five years, that it never has seemed as if the churches were separate, but rather as if they were parts of the same congregation worshipping in different buildings. In that spirit I would like to present to you a gentleman whose name and face are not only familiar to you all, but are known and honored wherever the Presbyterian faith is honored throughout the land; I would like to call upon him as one who was formerly an associate pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Harrisburg—Dr. Cattell.

REMARKS BY DR. WILLIAM C. CATTELL.

I have taken a couple of days out of a very busy life, and have traveled many miles that I might be present at this Presbyterian reunion. For here in Harrisburg the happiest years of my life were spent. I have indeed happy memories of other places where I have lived, especially of Easton, where, among a refined and cultured people, I spent nearly thirty years, engaged in a work that awakened my highest enthusiasm, and that brought me into intimate relations with beloved colleagues in the Faculty and with the young and joyous life of college boys. Yet, I say frankly to you here, as I say everywhere, that my heart is in Harrisburg. It was only four brief years that I lived here, but those were years in which I occupied a position which I believe to be

the most blessed and delightful that can fall to the lot of man. I was the Pastor of a kind, loving, united people. So long as I live shall I cherish in my heart of hearts the memory of their love and loyalty which made my sacred work among them a supreme joy. I can say now, after the lapse of thirty years, what I said in my last words to them from the pulpit as I turned away from my happy home here to resume my college work at Easton: "I thank my God upon *every remembrance of you.*" That was the text, as some of you may recall, from which I preached my farewell sermon.

But the memories which have so endeared Harrisburg to me are not exclusively those connected with the people of my old pastoral charge. I had not lived here long without finding that in this "mother church," at whose invitation we are here to-night, were some of the most lovable people that ever lived.

Let me remind you that Harrisburg, in 1860, was only a large town, containing not much over fifteen thousand inhabitants. What were then open fields are now streets of closely-built houses. The palatial residences, everywhere to be seen now, were then unknown. The life here, a generation ago, was plainer and simpler than it can be in the great and busy city to which Harrisburg has now grown. People got to know each other easily. Neighbor was another name for friend, and the "neighborhood" was widely extended. It was, therefore, not long before the young Pastor of the Pine Street Church found that there were other good people here besides those of his own fold, although they, first and last and always, were the nearest to

his heart. Naturally, he found these good people, first of all, and the most blessed of them all, in the old "mother church," and the friendships formed among them I have sacredly cherished all these years.

And so I rejoice to be here to-night. Many, indeed, of those I loved in this Church, and in my old pastoral charge have gone to the better land. Yet many remain. And it has been a great joy to me, as I passed through these crowded rooms, to take one and another by the hand—the two congregations so intermingled that those from one could hardly be distinguished from those of the other. Their kind greeting will be a precious memory to me for the rest of my life.

Yonder is my dear and honored brother, Dr. Robinson, who, as Pastor of this Church, so cordially welcomed me to Harrisburg nearly thirty-five years ago. We were both young men then. In his presence I should hardly dare to say about him all that is in my heart. But this I dare say While he has been called to a high position as a professor in one of our oldest theological seminaries, and the whole Presbyterian Church holds him in deserved honor, his old people here, and all of us who knew him, claim him to be in a special sense "*our* Doctor Robinson." Our respect for him and our personal love strengthen as the years go by.

And what shall I say of Dr. DeWitt, the venerable senior Pastor of this Church when I came to Harrisburg? I looked up to him with a reverence I have felt for few men. Of all those articles of historic interest collected in the adjoining room well worthy of days of careful study, nothing has so attracted me as the portrait of this venerable man. I stood

long before it to-day, gazing upon those benign and well-remembered features, and recalling his rare and beautiful old age as he went in and out among the people whom he had so lovingly and so faithfully and so ably served for nearly half a century. Even in the declining years of his life he was a preacher of rare power. I recall a sermon I heard him preach shortly after I came to Harrisburg. A large tent was pitched upon the Capitol grounds in which meetings were held after the manner of the evangelistic services now so common. The patriarch took for his text, "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." Never shall I forget the deep impression made upon the great assembly as the silver-haired man, with a voice trembling with emotion, and in language of classic purity characteristic of all his sermons, pleaded with his hearers to accept God's mercy so fully and freely offered in the gospel. All around me were men in tears!

There comes to me a pleasant memory connecting Dr. DeWitt with our own services in the new church dedicated in 1860. Dr. Gurley, of Washington City, preached in the morning, and Dr. Burt, of Baltimore, in the evening, when this church was closed and both congregations met together and sent their prayers and sacred songs heavenward from the same altar. The next day I called upon Dr. DeWitt and invited him to preach on the following Sunday morning. He at once, and with his usual courtesy, accepted the invitation. But I saw he was under the impression that I had invited him as "a supply" in view of my absence from

home that day, and I said to him: "No, Dr. DeWitt, I could not be away from my people when the very first sermon is preached to them in the regular ministration of the gospel after the exceptional exercises of the dedication. I shall be in the pulpit with you. But it is more fitting that this first sermon shall be preached by you than by the Pastor of the Church. You are the honored father of us all." And I shall never forget the pleased look with which the patriarch recognized that the invitation to him was intended, not to fill a vacancy occasioned by my absence, but to emphasize the high appreciation in which he was held by the community in which his whole ministerial life had been spent.

I should like to recall other pleasant memories I have of Dr. DeWitt and of the members of this Church whom I knew and loved in those far off days, especially among the elders; and I should not hesitate to name first of all that eminent man of God, Mr. James W. Weir. But there are other speakers to follow, and the reminiscences that crowd upon me would detain you too long.

But there comes to me a sad memory to which I must briefly refer—the civil war, which, during the last three years of my pastorate, transformed our hitherto quiet and peaceful town into one vast camp of soldiers. Their tents were pitched not only in the open fields around us, but in the public grounds and even in the streets. Preaching by their camp fires and ministering in the great hospitals soon established for the sick and wounded, all the pastors here found new and most sacred duties added to the work among



their own people. Our congregations upon the Sabbath day were at times almost broken up with the excitement and stir and confusion that everywhere prevailed. On that Sunday—I remember it well—when the skirmish occurred at Oyster's Point, but three or four miles from the city and we could plainly hear the booming of the cannon, the congregation of the Pine Street Church numbered exactly twelve! But in those dark days pastors and people in all the churches seemed to be drawn nearer to each other as all drew nearer to the throne to which their petitions were sent for that help of which we all stood in such need. The darkness around us deepened as the months slowly passed away. In fact, in the second invasion of Pennsylvania by the confederates under General Lee, Harrisburg became a beleaguered city. Intrenchments for its defense were thrown up on the opposite bank of the river—I myself worked upon them with pick and shovel! All the State archives were hurriedly removed for safety; women and children fled from their homes. The sentinels were still keeping watch and guard upon those outworks for the defense of the city when I took leave of this dear place in the fall of 1863—though in my farewell words from the pulpit to my beloved people, I could even then point them to the star of hope shining through the riven clouds of the war and betokening the near hour when the fratricidal strife would be ended and the restored Republic rise to a higher and nobler life.

But I will not detain you longer. Let me, as I take my seat, thank you, Mr. President, for your kind words of welcome this evening to the people of the Pine Street

Church as, with their first Pastor and the beloved man who now ministers to them in sacred things, they are gathered here with hearty congratulations, and best wishes and fervent prayers for the dear old mother Church. We highly appreciate such greeting from a man like yourself, whose Christian character and eminent endowments add luster to the high judicial office you hold. And upon all the congregation and their honored Pastor, whom I, too, like his own people, have learned to admire and love, I fervently invoke the continued and increasing favor of Almighty God.

The PRESIDENT: I need not remind you who was the first pastor of this Church. I do not intend to eulogize him after the address to which you had the pleasure of listening last night, but I may say that he must have been of remarkably good stock. Probably his harmonious balance of faculty was nowhere more admirably shown than in his selection of this congregation as one of his early fields of labor, and the congregation, I have no doubt, showed an equal balance of good judgment when they selected him as their first pastor.

We are exceedingly fortunate to-night in having two of his grandsons with us, who illustrate the excellence of the stock. Mr. Snowden's descendants have been distinguished in all the departments in which men can win distinction for themselves in civil, military and diplomatic life, and if there is any other position of trust or honor to which they have not yet attained, I am sure they are now upon the way to its attainment. I will call first upon General Snowden, grandson of the first Pastor of the Church.