

EDMUND J. JAMES

THE CENTENNIAL OF THE BEGINNING  
OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE CITY  
OF WASHINGTON. . . . .



ILLINOIS LIBRARY  
DEC 6 1916

1895.

*The First Presbyterian  
Church, November 17th  
to 22d, 1895, . . . .  
Washington, D. C. . .*

THE LIBRARY OF THE

APR 15 1932



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.

**MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 18th.**

**Rev. A. W. PITZER, D. D.**

**PRESIDING.**

FELLOW PRESBYTERIANS:—With hearty good will and grateful appreciation I accepted your kind invitation to preside on this occasion and participate in these observances.

I belong to the youngest branch of the great Presbyterian family; our corporate existence dates only from December, 1861, when the Southern General Assembly came into being in Augusta, Georgia.

I have never seen the time when I had any apology to make for being a Presbyterian. Not that I care for a name or a denomination "*per se*," but believing as I do with all my soul that Presbyterian doctrine, polity and worship are fully and firmly founded on scripture; nay more, that the Presbyterian Church is nearer the pattern given in God's word than any other, so far from apologizing for the Presbyterian Church or disparaging her confession or government, I rise up before God and men and call her blessed.

Prior to 1861, your church was our church; your faith, our faith; your fathers, our fathers. In dogma, in tradition, in history, in blood we were one. For years I have advocated the warmest fraternity and the closest and most cordial co-operation in all Christian work.

At the General Assembly at Atlanta, Georgia, in 1882, I inaugurated a movement for fraternity, and aided in formulating a basis on which such fraternity could stand with stability and honor; that basis was in brief—“*receding from no principle; but withdrawing all aspersions on Christian character.*”

Had that fraternal offer been adopted by the Springfield Assembly without the addition of the unfortunate “*explanation,*” it is my own belief that before this day the reunion would have taken place on the basis of the concensus of the standards of the two bodies.

But, brethren, after all we are one in the two great works committed to us by our Blessed Lord. Dr. W. M. Paxton in his sermon before the Presbyterian Council in Philadelphia, in 1880, speaking to the representatives of all the branches of the Presbyterian family in the world, called special attention to the fact that this church was a “*witnessing church.*” Our Lord says—“Ye are my witnesses.” We testify for Him during the period of His bodily absence. We testify in our creeds, our confessions, our catechisms, in our lives, and this testimony has been heard in the flames, and it has been sealed with blood. Whenever and wherever the fire has been hottest and the conflict fiercest, there has been seen in the forefront the heroes and standard bearers of the bonnie blue flag.

When Dr. Radcliffe was installed Pastor of New York Avenue Church, President Patton said

at the beginning of his sermon—"We Presbyterians are a '*preaching*' church; we believe in '*preaching*.'" Others may magnify the altar, the ritual, the music, or something else; we magnify "*preaching*." That is our business; that is what we stand for as a church in this lost world. It has pleased God that men shall be saved by the foolishness of "*preaching*."

To bear witness then to the facts, the truths, the duties set forth in the infallibly inspired scriptures of the old and new Testaments; and to do this by oral preaching is the glorious mission of the Presbyterian branch of the Holy Catholic Church. Ye are witnesses unto me; preach my Gospel.

These anniversary exercises began yesterday with a masterly and magnificent historical address by the beloved pastor of this people who for forty-three years has gone in and out among us, honored of all for his steadfast devotion to the church of his choice.

We have with us this evening one whose reputation as a successful minister on the banks of the Missouri river reached across the continent to the Pacific and the Atlantic; who was called to one of the leading churches in the great city of New York; whose worth and services made him moderator and orator at the Centennial General Assembly, and it is now my pleasure to introduce to this audience, Rev. Dr. Charles L. Thompson, pastor of Madison Avenue Church.