

Our Centenary

1953

To journey safely to a centenary is probably as inspiring as to reach it. Nearly any date in 1953 could be regarded as our centenary date and the 1st November (our Centenary Service) has no claim to particular importance beyond the fact that it appears to be convenient for most of our members.

Meditating on the idea of one hundred years of worship and witness some of us felt no doubt that when the hour would arrive, we would feel the thrill of it and burst forth into a paean of praise and triumph. We are, I hope, duly thankful for the past witness of this congregation and its saints, but I think it would be true to say that there has been very little clapping of hands and no particular boasting that we are one hundred years old. The majority of our members by national temperament and tradition are unlikely to betray deep feelings of this kind, but it is hardly the explanation of the calm and sober manner in which our one hundredth year has been received. I feel that the explanation lies in the fact that we have had a whole year of excitement or perhaps we might say a few years of excitement. We have had two or three years of excitement in the Presbyterian sense and our centenary happens to be one of those years. Also the thought of our achievement in the rebuilding of our church has not yet receded into the background.

I suppose this is what we ought to do now. We should think of the heroes of the past and thank God for them and with a brief thanksgiving for those in the present and our good fortune in having a building worthy of our history and traditions, we should go up into this terrific age with a song in our hearts and a dedicated mind and ready hand to work the works of God.

It ought to be stressed that in the rebuilding of our church we have done a comparatively easy thing. In fact anyone could erect a church building and by one method or another even pay for it as we have done. All that is easy but the real work of the church comes after that kind of activity. The preaching of the Everlasting Gospel in an age like this, the teaching of the young and the attempt to introduce them to the things of our faith and to encourage them to appreciate the things of goodness, beauty and truth, the building up of men and women in faith and hope and comfort (to mention but a few of the things we ought to do) is more difficult than erecting beautiful buildings.

I believe that most of us feel that instead of being at the end of our task, we are really at the beginning of it, instead of having completed a difficult operation we have only accomplished what any community with average resources might have done, our real tasks await us. Perhaps that is why we have accepted so calmly this centenary year. It may be that there is arising within us a new sense of our vocation and task as members of the Body of Christ. At any rate this is the prayer of all who have our deepest interests at heart. May it be abundantly answered in the coming days and years.

C. McCurdy