

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

REMARKS BY STANTON BELFOUR PRESIDENT, HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SERVICE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SUNDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 1969

I bring greetings from the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary on the occasion of its 175th Anniversary.

It is fitting and proper that the Seminary looks to the Rock from which it was hewn. The Seminary has had its own road from Emmaus — here in Beaver County, New York, Newburgh, Philadelphia, Monmouth, Allegheny City, Xenia in Ohio, and now East Liberty in Pittsburgh. Here we come today — to look at the Rock — to raise our Ebenezer as a witness and to give thanks to God for what has been wrought here.

The road is indeed long from the commission to Dr. John Anderson 175 years ago in 1794 to begin theological instruction in the Upper Ohio Valley. The monument here to his labor is assuredly an Ebenezer stone for the site of the log cabin where it all began.

Anniversaries are landmarks in the life of any institution. Today we rejoice in the service of this Seminary and its numerous antecedents. It is a great story. The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania salutes your endeavors to preach the Gospel through your graduates. We look backward and around and ahead for other days for jubilee.

You are celebrating history here beyond recall. You are making history. Armed with the look backward and around, one has no fear of change. But the Seminary will change in the years ahead. It will have new leaders and professors and new students in the classes. The profile will be new.

For anniversary the words of Thucydides are appropriate as he praises famous men:

They received, each for his own memory, praise that grows not old, and with it the grandest of all sepulchres, not that in which their mortal bones are laid, but a home in the minds of men, where their glory remains fresh to stir to speech or action as the occasion comes by. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men: and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth; but lives on far away, without visible symbol woven into the stuff of other men's lives.

A home in the minds of men — let that be yours for this day — so that we may weave into our lives the strong bound thread which holds us all together, yesterday and tomorrow, formed by today. Truly, truly, then, there is a balm for Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

*Here I raise my Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.*