

# Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter.

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## ORIGINAL.

### GROWTH OF THE COVENANTER CHURCH.

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On account of the high attainments, unpopular principles and strict discipline of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, her numerical growth has been slow, but her moral strength and salutary influence have been greatly increased. The odium cast upon her members for being "abolitionists" has changed into the plaudit of "champions" for the rights of humanity. The "ridicule" once made of them for advocating their principles of Bible civil government has changed to the "admiration" of those who have the grace to preach the rights of King Jesus over the nations of the earth. Covenanters are being more and more regarded for their convictions of truth, and the powerful effect their principles are having upon society. All that is needed for the reformation of society and the settlement of all controversies is a faithful application of the Word of God.

The Covenanter Church in America never was as strong, either numerically or doctrinally, as she is to-day. Of all times, certainly this is not the period for brethren to grow weak in faith, and doubt the practicability of the existence of the church. The outlook guarantees a speedy reformation in our beloved country, and the creation of such a moral sentiment that the social and national life of our land will be purified by the glorious principles which are proclaimed from the word of God. When the Reformed Presbyterian Church first received an organization in America, in 1774, there were four ministers, and probably four hundred Covenanters scattered over New York, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. There were many national and ecclesiastical struggles to pass through with in those days, and the influence of the church was not powerfully felt. At the coalition of 1782, there were five ministers, four of whom went into the union which formed the Associate Reformed Church, and the other minister had been silenced.

The church was left without a ministry, and in this disorganized state the members were greatly reduced by defection. At the reorganization of the Reformed Presbytery, in 1798, there were but three ministers, lately from Ireland, exercising their functions in this country.

But the church now began to grow rapidly, and continued in this flourishing condition until some of her ministry became learned and popular in the world, and then signs of weakness began to be manifest. The Lord looked upon the church as he did upon Gideon's army—there were too many men—and he thinned out of the ranks those who were unfaithful and had grown weary of testimony-bearing. At the division of the church in 1833, there were forty-four ordained ministers, twenty of whom abandoned the distinctive position of the Covenanter Church. The membership was about five thousand, and was divided into two nearly equal parts. The branch that was cut off soon withered and is almost dead, while the one adhering to the truth greatly increased its strength and usefulness. In 1837, there were twenty-five ministers and 4,300 communicants. In 1845, the first year partial statistics were published, there were forty-one ministers, and 2,077 members reported. Many large congregations did not report, and the probable number reached nearly 4,500. In 1851, there were fifty-two ministers, and 4,133, probably 5,000, members. In 1856, there were fifty-nine ministers, and but 3,702 members reported. The returns were very meagre and the actual number of members was nearly 6,000. In 1865, there were seventy-one ministers, and 7,667 members reported. In 1871, when the Covenant was renewed, there were eighty-nine ministers, and 8,868 communicants. In 1875, there were one hundred ministers, and 9,969 members. In 1885, there were one hundred and eleven ministers, and 10,745 members. This year, 1888, there are one hundred and eighteen ministers, and 10,970 members of the Covenanter Church. A slow but a steady growth. From the following tables the numerical growth of nineteen city and twenty country congregations is shown. Until 1865, the reports were inaccurate, some wanting, and the comparison is not so satisfactorily shown as it would otherwise have been had the reports been accurate and full.

CITY CONGREGATIONS.	1845.	1851.	1856.	1865.	1875.	1885.	1888.
Boston, 1st.....	....	....	34	82	240	218	251
Boston, 2d.....	....	....	....	....	81	122	138
Brooklyn.....	....	....	....	104	142	114	157
New York, 1st.....	180	226	185	145	300	190	115
New York, 2d.....	319	290	334	340	385	332	329
New York, 3d.....	....	240	....	298	304	285	239
New York, 4th.....	....	....	....	....	191	230	253
Newburgh, 1st.....	103	145	174	209	321	212	205
Newburgh, 2d.....	....	....	67	148	196	234	221
Syracuse.....	....	25	....	72	68	65	63
Rochester.....	....	116	103	98	124	95	91
Philadelphia, 1st.....	201	235	222	208	244	231	232
Philadelphia, 2d.....	94	209	249	240	233	270	294
Philadelphia, 3d.....	....	39	92	77	148	144	142
Baltimore.....	....	....	75	53	64	67	71
Pittsburgh.....	....	365	391	412	280	350	311
Allegheny.....	....	....	....	....	223	231	260
Cincinnati.....	....	....	....	37	38	55	40
St. Louis.....	15	30	....	60	51	35	27
Totals.....	911	1,920	1,926	2,593	3,533	3,490	3,438

COUNTRY CONGREGATIONS.	1845.	1851.	1856.	1865.	1875.	1885.	1888.
Ryegate and Barnet.....	139	157	153	183	149	120	109
Coldenham.....	96	....	56	46	55	69	71
York.....	....	130	139	175	190	115	124
Conoccheague.....	....	80	86	58	40	25	31
New Alexandria.....	....	92	156	188	165	141	158
Pine Creek, Union, &c.....	....	119	136	143	138	129	121
Monongahela & McKeesport... ..	....	123	119	101	117	72	73
Little Beaver.....	....	77	96	85	116	112	90
New Concord.....	....	....	....	177	184	125	137
Utica.....	116	....	....	68	100	96	101
Miami, (all in Logan Co.)... ..	123	....	....	264	289	316	287
Southfield.....	38	....	68	160	123	118	136
Bethel.....	120	150	....	121	85	84	85
Elkborn.....	109	120	....	190	183	178	171
Sharon.....	....	75	166	245	247	313	226
Vernon.....	....	64	....	51	70	56	62
Rehoboth.....	....	....	91	106	74	65	65
Clarinda.....	....	....	....	113	166	148	146
North Cedar.....	....	....	....	....	107	110	130
Winchester.....	....	....	....	....	120	127	152
Totals.....	741	1,187	1,256	2,474	2,718	2,419	2,475

There is a general falling off in the east, and a gain in the west. Those city congregations which are larger now than they ever were before are, 1st Boston, 2d Boston, Brooklyn, 4th New York, 2d Philadelphia, Allegheny and Central Allegheny. Those in the country which are now larger than ever before are, North Cedar and Winchester, in Kansas. Since 1875, there has been a loss in New York, and a slight gain in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Members are migrating from the larger eastern congregations and scattering over the vast west. In this way many are lost to the church altogether, and the work of giving others the ordinances is attended with a great deal of labor and expense. Undoubtedly there is a greater attachment to the principles of the church in the country congregations where the members are free from the alluring temptations incident to the city, and those in the country are more constant and interested readers of wholesome Covenanter literature. There is no cause for fear for the existence of the Covenanter Church in America. Her necessity as a distinct church is recognized, for she is the only one bringing her principles to bear practically upon the nation for its reformation. No more glorious work could be assigned to any church than the bringing of nations, as well as individuals, to the feet of Jesus. Never in the history of this church was she so well equipped for her work as at the present, and never did she receive so many evidences of the triumph of her cause. Her missions are planted among the Syrians, Cilicians, Cypriotes, Africans, Indians and Chinese; her theological seminary possesses devoted and learned professors, a goodly number of students, and its finances are in a better condition than formerly; her college engages a large corps of efficient instructors, possesses a large endowment fund, and an increasing number of pupils; her general condition is healthy, and her principles are receiving a hearing through doors that were never opened before. Brethren, we are exhorted to "hold fast the

profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised." "Be *thou* faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." And the time is soon coming when the angels shall declare that "the kingdoms of this world *are* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

PSALM 27: 8 AND 13, AND PSALM 49: 7-9 CRITICISED.

BY PROF. SPROULL.

To supply the proper words where the text is defective, is one of the most difficult duties of the translator. This is especially the case in the Psalms, where the mind of the Psalmist is under a high degree of excitement. The verses noted above of Psalm 27 present instances of this. In verse 8 the Psalmist records his exercise on receiving the answer to his earnest prayer in verse 7 for comfort in distress. Literally rendered, the reading is, "To thee my heart said, Seek ye my face; thy face Jehovah I will seek." In this most interesting occasion of the soul consciously dealing with God, how natural, when the Spirit responds to the earnest entreaty by bringing the call, "Seek ye my face," to the mind, that the heart, deeply moved, would seize the words, repeat them, and at once yield to the call! This is not a record of a past experience, as the supplied words imply, but the account of a present exercise; the soul, with feelings of joy, declaring its compliance with the invitation. The words "thou callest," or "thy call," appear to me to be the proper supplement, and the present tense of the verb should be used. The verse may be thus rendered in metre:

Thy call: Seek ye my face, I hear,  
And unto thee reply  
Thus doth my heart, thy gracious face,  
Jehovah, seek will I.

The same objection lies against the supplement in verse 13: "I had fainted." Fainting is not a necessary result of spiritual darkness shutting out from the soul a sense of divine goodness. Feelings of despair on the one hand, or stupid insensibility on the other, are more likely to follow. A general term that would cover all supposable cases is what is required. The state is one of deep distress, and the soul, alarmed for its condition, leaves the expression of its feelings to silence, "or to a sigh or groan." The exclamation, "woe is me," or "alas for me," is the proper supplement.

Alas for me! If I do not  
Believe that I shall see  
Jehovah's goodness in the land  
Of those that living be.

"If not" is the exact reading of the emphatic Hebrew word rendered in the authorized version "unless."

The passage, Ps. 49: 7-9, obscure in the prose, is unintelligible in all the metrical versions that I have examined. The difficulty is in the words in verse 8, "and it ceaseth for ever," an exact ren-