

Memorial to the Reverend Walter Clyde McClurkin, D.D.

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APPENDIX

WALTER C. McCLURKIN, D.D.

Through Hebrews 10:35 and 36, God continues to give to His servants this wise counsel:

" . . . Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised." (NASB) In the ministry of our brother Walter McClurkin these qualities of confidence and endurance were molded together to an unusual degree.

Walter Clyde McClurkin was born in Oakdale, Illinois, on February 14, 1882, and was over ninety-one years old when death came on June 20, 1973. He and his wife, the former Morna McWilliams, shared almost sixty-three years of married life together. They shared a great interest in gardening, and surrounded their homes with beautiful flowers and shrubs. Mrs. McClurkin preceded her husband in death by exactly three months. He was also preceded in death by his son, Robert. He is survived by his daughter, Eunice, who is a member of the Geneva College faculty.

In 1955 Dr. McClurkin was elected by the Synod to be its moderator, and he was granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Geneva College in 1956.

Dr. McClurkin was ordained to the Gospel Ministry on April 19, 1910, and served as pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Lisbon, New York, Coulterville, Illinois, Olathe, Kansas, and Coldenham, New York, and as Stated Supply at Glenwood, Minnesota. For three years he was superintendent of the Chinese Mission of the Central Pittsburgh congregation.

Walter McClurkin's quality of steadfast endurance was tested during the first twenty-two years of his public ministry by the frequency with which he moved. During those years he labored within the bounds of five different presbyteries, and in different kinds of ministry. His patience was tested and revealed through his physical handicaps of speaking and hearing.

In the depression year of 1932 an opportunity to return to the pastorate came in the form of a call from the congregation at Coldenham, New York. Before the call was made out, serious thought had been given to the possible closing of the church. Coldenham had seventeen resident members, and only one child on the baptized roll. However, a house-to-house survey of the surrounding community revealed that the people living there wanted the church to remain open. Under God's guidance, the decision was made to continue, and Dr. McClurkin received the call.

From the very beginning of a pastorate which was to last for a quarter of a century, Dr. McClurkin revealed his spiritual vision and strong confidence in his Lord. Under his leadership the church in Col-

denham became the center for a vigorous program of outreach. Dr. and Mrs. McClurkin made their home a center of social life for the young people of the community, and showed a deep interest in their activities. A very large and active Covenanter Young People's Union was organized. The young people were challenged to come to the public worship and pay close attention to the preaching of the Word, and prizes were awarded for the best sets of sermon notes. The church camp at White Lake — an hour's drive away — came to play an important part in the life of the congregation. A large mission Sabbath School was also developed, and the church began to grow. Throughout these years of ministry at Coldenham, Dr. McClurkin was deeply appreciated as a pastor who loved and cared for his flock. Upon his retirement from the active ministry in December of 1957, he was honored with the title of Pastor-Emeritus of that congregation.

May the unusual pattern of Walter McClurkin's ministry, and the fruitfulness of it, challenge us not to cast away either our confidence or our patience in our service to the Lord of the church.

"Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

(James 1:12)

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