

THE
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
OF THE
ORGANIZATION
OF
Washington County,
Pennsylvania.



1781.

1881.

ADDRESS OF
REV. I. N. HAYS.
THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

This county was brought into existence in the midst of revivals. It is just one hundred years since God first poured out his spirit upon this western county and made sacred the spot where we stand. In the fall of 1781, the churches of Chartiers and Pigeon Creek, under the care of Dr. John McMillan, and Upper Buffalo and Cross Creek, under the care of Rev. Joseph Smith, were simultaneously made glad with the divine presence, and from that day to this the cloud of heavenly benediction has never been lifted from this garden spot of earth.

In this, beyond everything else, do we find, in my judgment, the most distinguishing feature of our history. I have seen other communities in which the people were just as intelligent and enterprising, as those with which I am surrounded and whose fertile hills and well-watered meadows were just as productive as those which send back the voice of this centennial jubilee, but where is there a spot rendered so sacred by the repeated manifestations of the divine presence? Not only do your watchmen see eye to eye, literally look into each other's faces, and the shadows of your church steeples touch each other, but for a man not to have at least an outward respect for religion, in this community, is to become a social and political outcast, a sort of religious Ishmaelite from whom all turn with instinctive horror. That you are a loyal citizen of Washington county carries with it the presumption that you are not only a respecter of religion but in some formal way are connected with some religious denomination. I therefore make no apology for magnifying my office and saying that your Scotch-Irish blood and your fertile soil and splendid educational institutions are all secondary matters. Washington county would not be Washington county without her grand and sublime religious history.

The most of our ancestors, as you all know, were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The name Scotch-Irish is an American phrase used to designate those who, fleeing religious persecution in Scotland

during the latter half of the seventeenth century under the reign of Charles II. and James II., passed over to the north of Ireland and after having remained there for a generation or two, came over to America. Most of these Scotch-Irish, in coming to this country, landed at either Philadelphia or New Castle, Delaware, and pushing westward located first in Chester, Lancaster and Dauphin counties, in conjunction with others who had come to this country from Germany. It was soon found that Germans and the Scotch-Irish did not take kindly to each other and in a short time an endless amount of feuds and contention sprang up amongst them. To get rid of these difficulties they appealed to William Penn, who with his accustomed wisdom and peace-loving disposition, advised them to follow the example of Abraham and Lot and separate their interests. As you can not root out a Dutchman when once he gets his pick and shovel in, nor keep a Scotchman from fighting except by removing the temptation, it was agreed that the lower counties should be given up to the Pennsylvania Dutch, and that the Scotch-Irish should seek permanent homes still farther west.

At once the tide of emigration set forth, and crossing the Susquehanna river at or near Harrisburg they passed up the great Cumberland Valley. Here the stream of emigration divided, one part, pushing on southward, populated the Valley of Virginia and North Carolina; some even pushing as far as Tennessee and Kentucky and thus was laid the foundation of our church in these several districts. The other part turned directly westward and crossing the mountains took possession of this whole region of country in the name of the Lord and that pure religion and the rights of conscience, for the attainment of which they had so earnestly labored. These facts will explain how it came to pass that this county was filled up so rapidly at the time referred to and almost exclusively by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

As the religious element was by far the most powerful leading to these results, it is not surprising to find that these good old fathers almost as soon as they had erected their own log cabins set about providing the preaching tent and log meeting-house, and then sent up their supplications as they were called to the eastern Presbyteries and Synods to send them men to break to them the bread of life.

These old log meeting-houses were, of course, exceedingly primitive in their character. The bodies of these buildings were constructed of unhewn logs, just as they were brought from the adjoining forest. For windows a portion of one of the logs was taken out and the space closed by greased paper through which the light was sup-

posed to enter. The roof was made of clapboards, held in place by heavy timbers laid upon them. The pulpit was usually placed in a recess in one side of the church. The seats were made of split slabs or puncheons, into which feet had been placed, the soft side of course being turned up. As to backs on the pews, floors or fire-places, they were not to be thought of. Indeed, in later times, when the procurement of stoves was a possibility, their introduction was stoutly resisted, on the ground that it was a useless extravagance and an unwarrantable innovation upon their time-honored customs.

The old fashioned preaching or meeting-house tent was not, as some have supposed, intended as a substitute for the old meeting-house, but almost invariably considered as an essential concomitant.

The primitive meeting-house was, of course, cold and cheerless, and, hence, whenever it was possible and the weather would permit, both preacher and congregation felt far more comfortable in the open air in the adjoining grove. The tent, therefore, was the preacher's open air pulpit. It was usually about 6 by 10 feet square, three sides of which were closed and the open side or front being turned toward the congregation. On the floor or platform, slightly elevated, the speaker stood when he poured forth his eloquence to his assembled congregation, seated on logs and pieces of timber arranged in somewhat semi-circle form before him. These open air services were generally well attended and often deeply solemn, especially on communion occasions when the whole community for miles would come together to observe their semi-annual religious festival. Indeed, I suppose the old preaching tent of Western Pennsylvania has been associated with some of the most thrillingly interesting scenes which will ever be witnessed until the angel of time shall have sounded his last trumpet.

As to the order of precedence of the several denominations I think it is conceded that Dr. McMillan, as the representative of the Presbyterian church, was the first to occupy this ground. Not only did he visit this county in 1775 and '76, but frequently after he had received a call from Chartiers and Pigeon Creek, prior to 1778, when he took permanent charge of these churches.

Dr. McMillan was soon followed by such men as the Rev'ds Joseph Smith, Thaddeus Dodd and others.

The Rev. Mathew Henderson, who may be regarded in a certain sense as the representative of both the Associate and Associate Reformed churches visited this country, it is thought, in 1775, almost if not quite as early as Dr. McMillan, and certainly did visit it in

1779, and took charge of the Chartiers Associate charge in 1782. Henderson was followed in due time by such men as Rev. James Ramsey, D. D., Rev. Abraham Anderson, D. D., and others.

The Rev. Graham of the Reformed or Covenanter church received a call to a church of that denomination, located in the upper end of Canonsburg, in 1810, but owing to certain feuds and contentions this church made but little progress until it was re-organized in later years at Miller's Run.

The Baptists were very early in the field in Western Pennsylvania and have not only a grand but in some respects a thrillingly interesting history; but they settled chiefly in Fayette and Greene counties and have never exerted much influence in Washington county. In reply to a query which I put to one of their good ministers the other day as to why the Baptists as a denomination had not taken firmer hold on Washington county, I was jocosely told that the Catfish was quite too insignificant a stream to invite the presence of a denomination which rejoices in much water.

The Methodists do not seem to have entered the field until some time after the commencement of the present century, and whilst in some parts of the county they are quite respectable in numbers, they not only entered the field late but have by no means made themselves felt as they have done in many other parts of the country.

Rev'ds Campbell, father and son, organized a church at Brush Run, in this county, as early as 1810, but the denomination as such did not assume a distinctive organization until some years after this. The Disciples, like the Cumberland Presbyterians, which organized a church in Upper Ten Mile in 1831, came into the field so lately and have had such a feeble following in this county, that we think it will be conceded on all hands that the moulding religious power within the century, whose history we celebrate, has been largely with the several branches of the Presbyterian family.

Having thus noticed some of the outward circumstances connected with the planting of the church in this part of the Master's vineyard, let us now turn for a little and notice some of the internal facts which have tended very powerfully to modify and shape the religious element of the century whose history we celebrate.

Of these I shall confine my remarks to four particulars. viz: The character of the men called to the undertaking; the character of their spiritual instruction; the type of purity developed, and the aggressive spirit and missionary zeal manifested.

Let us then first look at the character of the men called of God

to shape the history and give tone and character to the piety which has made the first one hundred years of the existence of this county what they have been.

It is a matter of no small moment to stand anywhere, in the line of God's prophets, and to do what we may to mould the character and shape the religious history of the congregation or community in which we live, but there are times of thrilling moment—crises in history—great formative periods, when every act becomes immortal and every influence set in motion, destined to run parallel with eternity.

There is a character stamped on every community, a tone and a life which it carries with it, in spite of all opposing forces. I need not tell you that there are communities within your own bounds almost as diverse from each other as if they had belonged to opposite sides of the globe, and they are to-day very much what the first settlers made them. Like the turbid waters of the Monongahela and the clear and sparkling Allegheny, although for more than one hundred years they have been flowing on in one great channel of God's providence, they have not mingled or lost their distinctive characteristics. Things are done and practices are allowed in one, which would not for a moment be tolerated in the other. It is said that if you strike the cords of a piano, that they will never cease to vibrate. Even so voices of McMillan and Henderson and Smith and McCurdy are yet traversing these hills and valleys. The unction and power with which they spoke, set in motion lines of influence which can be traced almost as distinctly to-day as when the great spirits walked this earth clad in human form.

When God proposes that such times of influence shall be set in motion he raises up and ordains his own chosen instrumentalities. When he would arouse all papal Europe from the slumbers of superstition he calls for a Martin Luther and fills his soul with sublime courage and burning enthusiasm. When the fate of Scotland was trembling in the balance, the cry of old John Knox, "Give me Scotland or I die," was heard reverberating from moor to hill-top; and when a cold-hearted formalism and a Christless faith seemed to be sweeping everything before them, God raised up George Whitefield and the Wesleys, that, by their holy zeal and trumpet-tongued eloquence, a spiritual resurrection might be accomplished. So it was, when the seed corn of a great harvest was to be planted on the hill-tops of this goodly land. It was no time for the employment of weak instrumentalities or untempered mortar.

I do not pretend to say that our spiritual forefathers, the ministers and elders, the men and women who were called of God to lay the foundations of our American Zion, in the then wilds of Western Pennsylvania, were especially renowned for their learning, although there were among them, not a few, of very much more than ordinary professional scholarship. Nor do we claim for them a classic eloquence such as would be demanded in some of our modern pulpits, but they were men of unusual strength of character—mighty in the Scriptures and in that supreme consecration of heart and purpose, which knows nothing but Christ and him crucified. It is true they were somewhat rude in manners, austere and perhaps even severe, especially in their pulpit reproofs, but this was very largely owing to the force of the circumstances with which they were surrounded. In dealing with the great rugged spirits of these backwoods men, it was no time for a weak Frenchified etiquette. Not to be forcible, was to be weak and tame and to lose that respect which under such circumstances flows from the exhibition of strength of character. There is both a masculine and a muscular christianity which have their appropriate times for manifestation, and it is no disparagement to our ministerial forefathers that in each they excelled when occasion required it.

It is related of Rev. Mathew Henderson, the first Associate minister who came to these parts, that on a certain occasion when on his way to Presbytery he was compelled to spend the night in a tavern. Not long after he had alighted two rude fellows, knowing who he was, undertook to treat him with great rudeness. For a while he bore it with becoming meekness. By and by they became more violent and insisted upon a fight, which he of course, at first evaded, but finding that nothing but a little muscular christianity would answer the purpose, he deliberately stripped off his black coat, and laying it down, said: "There, Rev. Mr. Henderson lie there, and now Mathew defend yourself;" and suiting the action to the word he sent one of the fellows head-foremost through an open window, and was about to seize the other when he remembering that "prudence was the best part of valor," took to his heels and gave Mathew a wide berth. I need scarcely add that the parson spent the remainder of the night in peace and quietness.

Nor is this the only illustration of rugged strength and force of character, which, to such an eminent degree, fitted these men for the peculiar work to which they were called. It is said that when Dr. McMillan or Mr. Henderson were called to preach in the open air, and became interested in their subjects, they could be heard

for miles, and when thus aroused, it was by no means incoherent ranting, but the most clear and powerful exhibition of truth, producing the most profound impression upon their hearts.

Then, alongside of this rugged strength of character, there was another trait, which, in an eminent degree, fitted these men for the work before them, viz: the supreme consecration which they had made of themselves to the Master's service. There was not a prominent man in any of our churches who took an important part in laying the foundation of our beloved Zion who might not have commanded almost any position he pleased in the more refined and thickly settled portions of the east. But what were all the wealth, ease and refinement, which the highest gifts could command when the Macedonian cry came up from the wilderness calling for help? And yet when we think of the privations which they endured, the rude log cabins where they lived, the cold and cheerless church edifices in which they preached; of the many nights they spent in the open air, sometimes preaching to their hearers, and at others, like Jacob, resting their heads on pillows of stone, we are simply amazed. They seem almost to have courted trials for the Master's sake. It is said that on a certain occasion, when two of his brethren called upon Dr. McMillan and were seated at dinner, the only articles on his table were a plate full of large shilalah potatoes and a cup of salt; and, after the blessing of God had been reverently invoked, the only remark which he made was: "Brethren, eat hearty, we have plenty of them;" and we know that there were weeks together in which there was not a mouthful of bread in his house, nothing but potatoes and pumpkins, and so it was to a very great extent with others. Truly God don't make such men but for great occasions. Like Esther they came to the kingdom for just such a time as this. They were called of God to the undertaking.

The character of their spiritual instruction.

It has often been supposed that there must have been something very peculiar and extraordinary in the preaching and other means employed, to have produced such marvelous results as those which took place before and about the commencement of the present century and which did so much to shape the whole character of our religious history. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There is not a single fact, either in regard to the instrumentalities employed or their manner of preaching, which to any considerable extent would account for the marvelous power displayed. There were no noted evangelists or revival preachers employed; no an-

xious seats provided—no unwarranted appeals made with a view of exciting the emotional nature. On the contrary, the most effective and powerful preaching was done by the regular pastors of the congregation or neighboring ministers. The preaching was eminently biblical and largely expository, in which the sovereignty of God, the extreme guilt and entire helplessness of the sinner, the freeness and fullness of the gospel offer and the fatal consequences of inaction or delay were clearly and powerfully set forth. The law work of the spirit, viz: the conviction of guilt and the condemnation and consequent misery of sin, and the absolute need of a personal interest in Christ, were strongly insisted upon by these old divines.

In the exhibition of these truths, usually the morning sermon was based upon a single text or paragraph, while the afternoon service was more of a running exposition or lecture upon a succession of verses, or larger portion of Scripture. In these expositions, ministers, before the same congregation, would often, not only cover the whole of one book in either the Old or New Testament, but a large portion of the entire Bible.

Another invaluable means of grace employed by our forefathers, was catechetical instruction by districts, and from house to house, and especially by making it a part of every-day instruction in the common schools. It is within the recollection of many now living, when, in the majority of schools, throughout this county, the afternoon of each alternate Saturday was devoted exclusively to recitations in the "Shorter Catechism," in which all were expected to participate. So earnestly was this matter of catechetical instruction insisted upon that it was no uncommon thing to find whole families in which every member could not only answer every question in the Shorter Catechism, but equally well those in either Fisher's or Brown's, with all the proof texts necessary to sustain each particular doctrine.

Another fact worthy of notice in this connection was the care,—I had almost said severity,—with which cases of awakening were treated, not only while under conviction, but when making application for admission to the sealing ordinances of the Church. In the early stages of spiritual awakening, it was very rarely that a word of comfort would be uttered, the object very generally being to deepen the conviction—to warn against self-deception and the necessity of making sure work with each advancing step; and even when application was made to be received into the Church, it was no uncommon thing for the candidate to be altogether rejected, or his case held under advisement for one, two, three or more communion

seasons.

And even in seasons of greatest religious interest, as for example, during what is known as the falling exercise, it is interesting to notice how earnestly efforts were put forth to suppress all mere emotional feeling and undue excitement. The fact being made manifest, that while the prostration and apparent insensibility were involuntary and wholly beyond the control of the individual, and the accompanying groans and ejaculations, although spontaneous, were not altogether beyond the power of the individual, there were congregations where not a sigh or a groan was heard; and even where these outward demonstrations were not altogether suppressed, the ministers, I think, without an exception, used the greatest diligence in guarding their hearers against any reliance whatever, upon these outward demonstrations. They taught that nothing but the effectual workings of God's spirit could be relied upon as the basis of a christian hope. This remarkable caution will account for the comparatively small number and very great reliability of those brought into the kingdom of Christ, in those times of unusual excitement.

That very many were converted during those extraordinary experiences, so characteristic of the early part of this century, is not to be doubted; and yet we almost wonder that there were no more, when we call to mind how this whole community was moved by the conscious presence of God. Certain it is, that great numbers of those who were outwardly affected, were not regarded as having experienced a change of heart, and were not, of course, received into the Church; and of those who were, comparatively few went back or gave trouble to the Church.

Another result flowing from this orthodox teaching, and general good management of our spiritual forefathers, is the stern and persistent orthodoxy of succeeding generations.

So far as I know, there has never been an important heresy originated, or even a serious doctrinal apostacy known within the territorial limits of our county. On the contrary, with remarkable consistency, the blue flame of orthodoxy has gone up from every church spire throughout the whole of these one hundred years.

For example; in the great struggle between uncertainty as to doctrine and a stern adherence to the old-fashioned Calvinistic belief which rent in twain the Presbyterian church during the years of '36 and '37, there was not a minister, I know not that there was a man, woman or child, who was willing to side with the doubtful party. The whole county was Old School to a man.

So it has been in regard to the Sabbath question, the Temperance

question and indeed, almost every controversy which has arisen.

On all such questions I think Washington county has always voted on the orthodox side.

And just so it has been with all extravagances on the subject of religion. Men do not go crazy on religious subjects here, as they often do elsewhere. Wild fanaticism springs out of other soil and is the product of vastly different training. When a man is known to have been trained up in this goodly county it is taken for granted that he soberly and intelligently believes what he professes, that he is always able to give a reason for the faith which is in him, and that he is not to be carried away by either damnable heresies or extravagant follies. Intelligent sobriety and logical consistency are characteristics, which, in an eminent degree, belong to all the different families of believers within our bounds.

We come now to speak of the type of piety, and the manner in which the power of God was here manifested. In these respects we think it altogether probable that nothing has surpassed it since the out-pouring of the Spirit in the day of Pentecost.

Without attempting a detailed history, allow me in the briefest manner possible, to speak of some of the times and circumstances connected with the display of God's mighty power; desiring more particularly to call your attention to some of the facts connected therewith, as indicating the character and magnitude of the work for the display of which these hills and valleys were God's chosen theatre.

As already intimated, the first revival of religion ever witnessed west of the Alleghany mountains took place in the fall of the year 1781, simultaneous with the organization of this county. What is remarkable about this, is that the interest manifested commenced almost exactly at the same time in four different congregations, somewhat remote from each other and without any preconcerted effort, viz: Cross Creek and Upper Buffalo, under the care of Rev. Joseph Smith, and Chartiers and Pigeon Creek, under the care of Rev. John McMillan. This work seems to have been preceded and ushered in, on the one hand, by deep groanings on the part of God's people over the very low state of religious feeling among themselves, and the condition of the unthinking crowds who were without any apparent concern for themselves, pressing on to the final judgment; and on the other by the frequent Sabbath and week-night meetings held for preaching, prayer and exhortation. Not unfrequently these services were continued throughout the entire night,

even before there were any wide-spread demonstrations of the Spirit's presence. There was nothing remarkable about the work itself, except the deep and genuine concern which seemed to take possession alike of old and young, friends and foes of the gospel.

The most marked feature of those who were brought under concern, was the deep and overwhelming sense of the "absolute contrariety of their hearts and lives to the law of God, the awful wages of sin and the indisposition on their part, by reason of the hardness of their hearts, to turn to God, love his law or embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered in the gospel;" and when brought to peace, it seems to have sprung from a discovery of sovereignty as well as the freeness, fullness and all-sufficiency of the grace of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. In many instances the feeling was very deep, but only in a few were there those who seemed to be wholly overcome, and these did not manifest their feelings as was afterwards done in what was called the falling exercises.

This season of awakening continued in these, and to some extent, adjacent churches for some five or six years, (some say twelve years,) with almost unabated power, and when we call to mind that it commenced very soon after the people had left their fortifications, and got out on their farms, and in fact, before the country was free from incursions on the part of the hostile Indians, we can in some measure appreciate the relative importance and magnitude of the work itself.

Between this and 1800 there were several seasons of awakening of greater or less power; notably those of 1796, in Chartiers, in which the Canonsburg Academy largely shared; and that of 1798 and '99, in which nearly all the churches of the Presbytery, to a greater or less extent participated. But as these awakenings were not very extensive and did not differ materially from that already described, I pass on to speak of that season in which this whole community was shaken as if by a moral earthquake—a revival which in many of its aspects, we have no hesitation in saying, was more remarkable than that experienced on the day of Pentecost.

During the latter part of 1801 there seems to have been a wide-spread feeling of distress at the low state of religion amongst God's people and the alarming increase in the boldness and out-spoken opposition of the enemies of Christ. Gradually the interest deepened. Some special services, especially in connection with communion seasons, were held. Many were awakened, some brought to Christ, and with deeper earnestness and a more wrestling spirit did the people of God get down before him beseeching him to

come to their help. So intense was the feeling that, besides the general quarterly prayer-meeting which had been observed on the first Thursday of each quarter, by nearly all the churches, for the last five or six years, and the special services held on the Sabbath and in connection with their communion season, there had been an agreement on the part of the people of Three Springs, a part of Rev. Elisha McCurdy's charge, to spend a portion of time, about sun-setting on each Thursday, in secret prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit at their approaching communion season, to take place on the 4th Sabbath of September 1802.

The time came. The windows of heaven were opened. The Sabbath preceding the communion was a season of great interest and no small evidence of the presence and power of God; not a few tarried and spent most of the night in prayer. Thursday being observed as a day of fasting and prayer, gave increased evidence of the Spirit's presence. Before the sermon had been commenced, two young persons, who had retired to the woods to pray, fell prostrate on the ground, completely overcome. It was the commencement of the falling exercise. When these two young persons were met by others, they were crying most piteously, and when inquired of as to the cause of their distress, their only answer was: "We are exposed to the wrath of God." And when urged to look to Christ they said: "We have so long rejected the offer of mercy and our hearts have become so hard, that we fear God will not have mercy upon us." They were carried into the house and for five hours the services continued. The place was literally a Bochim. The cries of distress were heard in every part of the congregation. The services were kept up with very little intermission until the forenoon of the following Monday, when the congregation was dismissed, but not a movement was made by the people. Hundreds remained all day and the next night on the grounds. It was by far the most impressive scene ever witnessed west of the mountains. Great numbers were prostrate on the ground utterly helpless, and as the next day began to dawn, light began to break into many souls which up to this time had been left in total darkness. And now the audience began slowly, and apparently with great reluctance, to separate.

The following two months will be forever memorable as a season, the most extraordinary in the history of our American Zion. Almost simultaneously, the power of God began to manifest itself in the congregations at Cross Creek, under the care of Rev. Thomas Marquis; Raccoon, under the care of Joseph Patterson; Cross Roads, the other part of McCurdy's charge, and Upper Buffalo, un-

der the care of Rev. John Anderson and perhaps other places ; the only noticeable difference being that, as these churches held their communion seasons in the order in which they have been named, reaching from the first of October until the latter part of November, the interest became more wide-spread and the instances of the display of the extraordinary power of God more marvelous with each succeeding communion.

For example ; at Cross Roads, on the last Sabbath of October, the crowd was so great, that on Sabbath morning two action sermons were preached, one in the house and the other in the tent, and no less than 800 communicants were served ; and although the people were without any shelter, and all the preceding night and the whole of the Sabbath the rain and snow were falling, the people remained undisturbed, and so profoundly impressed that on the following Monday no less than three ministers officiated at the same time, one in the house and two in the encampment. At Upper Buffalo, two weeks later, the interest was still greater. People came from great distances on foot and horse back and in wagons, bringing their provisions with them. No less than fifteen ministers were present, 950 communed and it was supposed that not less than ten thousand persons were on the grounds, all deeply interested ; and from scores and hundreds the cry was going up, "What must I do to be saved ?"

I have not time to dwell upon particulars or to speak of similar displays of divine power at other places, but will ask you for a moment to call up the facts noted and try to measure, if you can, their significance. For example ; how extensive the interest must have been to have gathered together such immense crowds, especially as those witnessed at Cross Roads and Upper Buffalo ! Just think of ten thousand persons being gathered from a sparsely settled country, to a great extent without roads or public conveyances of any kind, so that it is manifest that many of them must have walked for even scores of miles ! At the lowest calculation, there are five times as many people within the same territorial limit now as then. What would you think of a religious interest which would bring together 50,000 people, to spend, not days and nights, but weeks together, without shelter or any accommodation of any kind except what they could bring with them ? Does not the very thought seem almost incredible ?

And then, think of the intensity of the interest manifested ! Idle curiosity often attracts great crowds, but it was no idle curiosity which gathered together these vast assemblies. Just think of the

same company of individuals remaining together as much as three or four days and nights, the whole time engaged in religious worship, almost without interruption,—of assemblies which had to be dismissed as much as three or four times before willing to separate,—of an elder going to the door of the church to speak to those who were crowding around it, striving in vain to obtain an entrance, and the moment the elder's voice is heard the whole assembly bursts into tears and asks that some one be sent to speak to them about their poor Christless souls,—of a congregation represented by 800 communicants sitting undisturbed amid the falling rain and snow throughout the whole of a Sabbath's exercises, and instead of being discouraged by the inclemency of the weather, the crowd had so increased on the following day that no less than three ministers were required to speak at the same time, so that all might be accommodated! Verily, Pentecost itself has nothing about it more extraordinary.

And, if we look at the results, we are scarcely less astonished.

The so-called falling exercises, then for the first time witnessed in this part of the country, have never been fully understood or explained, but certainly they were, in themselves, very remarkable. In a general way it is described by the committee appointed by the Presbytery of Ohio to prepare a history of this work, as follows:

“The body becomes affected with trembling, feebleness or failing strength, then sinks down, unless supported. The subject often weeps or cries aloud. In many instances, the body is considerably convulsed. Some become quite powerless and without motion for a considerable time, with little sign of life, the breathing very weak, scarcely discernible, and the pulse very faint.”

Dr. McMillan says that it was no unusual thing for persons to be so entirely deprived of strength that they would fall from their seats or their feet and be as unable to help themselves as a new-born infant, and remain in this condition for hours; and what is remarkable, their inward senses all the while remained as acute and even more alive to what was going on in relation to their spiritual interest than even before. But, whatever were the outward manifestations, they were invariably preceded, as well as accompanied with more or less intense religious impression, usually taking the form of a deep overwhelming conviction of personal guilt and estrangement from God, abuse of God's mercies and exposure to his wrath and displeasure. Many seemed to be groaning under a sense of present condemnation, and were not slow to declare that they felt already the thunderbolts of God's wrath in their bosoms. These impressions, as well as out-

ward manifestations were most frequently connected with the ministrations of God's word and ordinances, but by no means confined to them. Often the most serious impressions were felt after the services were over, on the way to or from the sanctuary; sometimes when alone in the closet, and others still when in the very act of opposing the work of God.

Of those belonging to this latter class two remarkable instances are on record. The one was a noted infidel or scoffer, who set out for the avowed purpose of turning the whole religious service into ridicule. Before, however, he got even in sight of the place where the services were being held, he himself was struck down, so that he could proceed no further, and in the agony of an awakened conscience he began to cry to God for mercy. The other was the case of a parent who was filled with indignation because some of his children had gone to one of these meetings without his consent and in the face of his known opposition. In a rage he set out determined to bring them back even by force, but scarcely had he reached the ground, and before he had got his eye on his children, he was so overcome that he fell prostrate on the ground and from his deep mental agony he got no relief until he found it at the feet of Jesus.

Now, while it is conceded that there was no necessary connection between these remarkable bodily exercises and the regeneration of the soul; that many felt them who were not savingly affected and that not a few who were savingly affected were not brought under the power of these outward demonstrations, they certainly do show the wonderful power of God connected therewith; especially when we remember that friends and foes were alike powerless to resist them. And then, when we come to reflect upon the great numbers who in the judgment of charity were brought to Christ, perhaps not less than five hundred during the months of October and November in the fall of 1802, in connection with the churches in Washington county alone, and the far-reaching consequences upon God's people here and elsewhere, the full measure of the results will only be known when the angel of time has sounded his trumpet and the books are opened. Sure I am, that there was a type of piety developed out of these revivals which has had a momentous influence in shaping the whole subsequent religious history of this county.

There is another point to which I must call your attention for a moment, viz: The wide-spread missionary zeal which characterized the planting and early history of this part of our church. It is a fact over which we greatly rejoice and in which we feel an honest pride,

that the great modern missionary movement, at least so far as the Presbyterian church is concerned, had its origin in Washington county. The men who planted the Church here were born missionaries. They came to this western wilderness in the interest of the same cause which brought the blessed Master himself from the throne to the manger, and the repeated revivals through which they passed, only intensified their zeal and filled their souls more full than ever, of love for their fellow men ; and hence we find that scarcely had they settled in their own fields, until they began to missionate beyond their bounds, organizing churches and caring for the destitute of their own race, and at the same time doing what they could to reach even the red men of the forest.

It is also a fact which will not be called in question, that the Synod of Pittsburgh, organized in 1802, right in the midst of those great revivals which shook all this western country, was brought into existence in response to the earliest longings of these good brethren, for more efficient and systematic efforts looking to the welfare of those who were without the gospel. The Synod of Virginia, under whose care this part of the church had been placed, had done something in the way of evangelistic labors, but those east of the mountains had neither the spirit nor the opportunity to do all that was required, and hence the creation of a new body more closely related to and directly interested in the work was felt to be an imperative necessity.

That the Synod of Pittsburgh felt that it was especially called to this work, is manifest from the fact that at its very first meeting, held in the First Church, Pittsburgh, the following resolution was passed, viz : "That the Synod of Pittsburgh shall be called the Western Missionary Society, the object of which is to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel among the inhabitants of new settlements, the Indian tribes, and, if need be, among some of the interior inhabitants where they are not able to support the gospel."

The object of the first part of this resolution was to make each one feel that he was especially called and expected personally to devote himself to the furtherance of this work of giving the gospel to the destitute. In the prosecution of this work the Synod created a Board of Trust, whose business it was to manage and carry forward the work of missions during the intervals between the sittings of Synod, making each year a full report of the same.

The Board, as originally organized, consisted of Rev. Messrs. John McMillan, David Smith, Thomas Marquis and Thomas Hughes; together with James Edgar, William Plummer and James Caldwell,

elders. The majority of this committee were from Washington county, and Dr. Elliot affirms, also documentary evidence proves, that all the meetings of this committee until 1810 or during the first eight years of its existence were held within the bounds of Washington county; and even when its place of meeting was transferred to Pittsburgh, it still retained amongst its counsellors a goodly number of those wise and holy men who stood by the cradle of its existence, and Elisha McCurdy, the great apostle of Western Missions was still retained as its financial agent and treasurer.

Another evidence that the great modern missionary movement in the Presbyterian Church had its origin within the bounds of Washington county, is the fact that at this same meeting of the Synod of Pittsburgh, action was taken looking to the issuing of a suitable missionary publication, the special object of which was to be the stirring up of the Church to a higher sense of her responsibility in regard to those without the gospel. This journal was to be called, "The Western Missionary Magazine," and the following twelve persons were appointed as assisting or co-operating editors, with the first three as the business or responsible managers, viz: Rev'ds John McMillan, John Anderson, Samuel Ralston, Joseph Badger, John McPherin, William Wick, James Hughes, Samuel Porter, William Wylie, William Sloan, Thomas Moore and George Scott. You will notice that the leading men including all the business managers were from Washington county.

Those of you who are so fortunate as to possess this missionary publication, know that it is brim full of missionary and revival intelligence, and is by far the most invaluable source of information in relation to the early religious history of this part of our country.

This Board of Trust, of which I have spoken, continued to manage the business intrusted to it until 1829, when by mutual consent its work, and its funds were transferred to the Board of Missions of the General Assembly. It was thought best, now that the whole church had to some extent realized her responsibility in regard to the destitute, that there should be but one central organization to do the whole work, rather than, even seemingly, to provoke rivalry or conflict, and hence with undiminished zeal and interest our fathers committed the child whose cradle they had rocked to the care of our General Assembly.

This transfer, however, did not lead these noble men of God to feel that their responsibility was at an end. It is true that the home field was now to be cared for, but, looking beyond, they saw a world lying in wickedness, teeming millions of uncared for heathen:

and like Paul at Athens, their spirits were stirred within them, and in response to an overture sent up to the Synod of Pittsburgh, just two years after the home evangelistic work represented in the Board of Trust had been transferred to other hands, "The Western Foreign Missionary Society of the United States," was organized, with Rev. Elisha P. Swift as its corresponding secretary, and Rev. Elisha McCurdy as treasurer, both of whom had been intensely interested in the work which the General Assembly had just taken out of their hands.

The Western Foreign Missionary Society was organized in the same spirit, and in part, at least, by the same hands as the Board of Trust, and like it was transferred to New York and the care of the General Assembly; which transfer took place in the year 1837, six years after its organization in Pittsburgh, and now it is sending out its missionaries and organizing its mission schools in almost every part of the globe. No wonder that Dr. Green, in his "History of Domestic and Foreign Missions in the Presbyterian Church," says that "while the Synods of the Carolinas, Virginia and Kentucky, were distinguished for their zeal, the Synod of Pittsburgh was the longest and most extensively and efficiently engaged in this work."

I have thus spoken of the missionary work of the Church to show that the spirit of revivals and the spirit of missions do not simply run in parallel lines, but go forth hand in hand to the music of the final coronation of King Jesus; that out of that baptism of fire which fell upon our fathers, as upon the disciples at the first, came that spirit of high consecration and even martyrdom which is to-day zoneing and belting the earth with light and love; that just as we and the church at large are filled with the spirit of the Holy One, will we care for those who are sitting in the region and shadow of death.

Brethren, I have not attempted to write history. My aim has been to bring before you some of the leading facts in the religious life of this grand old county, which are amazingly significant and should stir our hearts to their profoundest depths. You wisely boast of your beautiful hills and fertile valleys,—of your agricultural and commercial advantages,—of your great men and great women, who have adorned their professions and performed well their appointed missions; but blot this part of your history out of existence and in the grand aggregate it would scarcely be missed; but blot out your religious history, and you pluck a star out of God's firmament and quench a light the absence of which would be felt to the re-

motest corners of the earth.

There is not a square foot within your territorial limits which would be what it is to-day, had it not been for those mighty men of God, who took possession of this land in the name of their ascended Redeemer. There is not a man, woman or child, within your territory who is not in some respects the better for having breathed the atmosphere yet redolent with the fragrance of those revivals which, like the waves of the sea swept across these hills and these valleys. I asked one of the brightest of college graduates when uniting with my church, why he was giving up the law and entering the Seminary. Said he, "I went to Washington and Jefferson College and breathing the atmosphere, I caught the infection and now I feel, 'Wo is me if I preach not the gospel.' "

And where are not the lines of this religious influence felt? Your sons and your daughters are filling some of the best pulpits and gracing some of the best society in the east. There is scarcely a spot in the great Mississippi Valley which does not boast of the descendants of our Washington county Scotch-Irish forefathers, and wherever they have gone they have kindled the fire of a sterling orthodoxy and many of them are in the fore-ground, leading against the legions of Satan the enlisted host of the God Emmanuel. And if you look to lands beyond the seas, you have Rev. John Cloud, whose bones are bleaching on the shores of southern Africa, having fallen just as the battle was beginning to rage; and Mrs. Anna Bradford Ewing, who is still waving the banner of King Emmanuel over Egypt, the land of the Pharaohs. You have Rev. Dr. Hopper, the old missionary war horse, with Mrs. Mary Snyder Henry, kindling the gospel fires in the midst of the teeming millions of China, with Mrs. Martha Emery Brown, who long since fell in the heat of the conflict. You have Rev. A. O. Johnston, who was killed in the Sepoy Rebellion, and Rev. Dr. Wm. Johnston, who catching the banner as it fell from the hand of his stricken brother, still waves it over the rampart of India, nobly seconded in his efforts by Mrs. Anna McGinnes Hull, Mrs. Amanda McGinnes Goheim, Mrs. Jennie Sherrard Ewing, with Rev. I. S. Barr and his wife, Mary E. Black Barr, and Miss Lizzie McCahen of the U. P. Church, and Rev. G. W. Pollock and his wife, Mrs. Minnie Ewing Pollock, from your own town, about to enter the field. You have Rev. Dr. Samuel G. McFarland and his wife, Mrs. Jane E. Hays McFarland, presiding over the King's College and at the very head of the educational interests of Siam, with right noble lieutenants in the person of Miss Sarah M. Coffman and Miss Mary Court, who are kindling the gos-

pel fire in the very heart of that nation. Last, but not least, you have Miss Lizzie Smith doing service for Christ in New Mexico, among a people almost as much degraded as those found in Southern Africa. And how many more who have gone forth from your midst of whom I have no knowledge, or have caught the fire of a missionary consecration while attending upon some of your colleges or female seminaries, I dare not even conjecture.

And now, when that day shall come that the mountains of the Lord's house shall be established upon the tops of the mountains and exalted above the hills, and all the nations shall come flowing into it, and these returning missionaries shall present themselves with their arms full of sheaves to lay at the foot of God's throne, can even imagination reckon up the results? Just as a little child may strike the flint which may kindle a fire on yonder mountain top, from which shall go forth rays of light piercing the utmost ether; so there are lines of influence which shall go on widening and extending, until, touching the shores of time, the receding wave shall give to the recording angel, what only in eternity we will be able fully to know or comprehend.

Brethren my task is done. I have led you over this field with an enthusiasm which no other spot on earth could kindle, but I would have you know that great privileges involve great responsibilities. We walk in the shadow of great men; are we equal to the shadows in which we stand? Are our foot prints making such impressions as will gladden the generations yet unborn, as theirs have gladdened us? If not, let us awake to a fuller realization of life and the mission God has put in our hands. Yonder is the Judgment. Will it be for weal or for woe? Will you and I stand with heads lifted above the clouds, in company with McMillan, and Smith, and McCurdy, and Henderson, and Ramsey; or shall it be said of us that we knew not the time of God's visitation, and be driven away to the blackness of darkness forever, with the thought forever reverberating in our souls, "Ye knew your Master's will and did it not."