

OLD REDSTONE,

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THEOLOGICAL

OR,

Historical Sketches

OF

WESTERN PRESBYTERIANISM,

ITS

EARLY MINISTERS, ITS PERILOUS TIMES,

AND

ITS FIRST RECORDS.

BY

JOSEPH SMITH, D.D.

“Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee: thy elders, and they will tell thee.”—DEUT. xxxii. 7.



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# LIFE AND TIMES

OF THE

## REV. JOSEPH SMITH,

ONE OF THE FIRST MINISTERS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA.\*

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To be employed as instruments in laying the foundations of flourishing States and well-regulated kingdoms, has ever been regarded as securing a just passport to honor and renown. There is another achievement that claims a niche not much lower in the temple of fame, and, doubtless, in many instances, will reach a still higher place in the temple not made with hands. A right direction given to communities in the early stages of their formation, as to the standard of public and private morals, and the prevalent tone of religious sentiment, especially when those communities are destined to germinate into mighty and wide-spread republics, is a work not likely to be entrusted by Divine Providence to ordinary men, and seldom achieved by ordinary hands. It is not always easy to settle this question of precedence between those who have secured for their country Magna Charta and

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\* In the preparation of this paper, we have been essentially aided by the Rev. Dr. Elliott, who kindly furnished several facts and incidents in addition to those supplied by his biographical notice of the subject of this memoir, appended to his valuable "Life of Macurdy." We are also indebted to the Rev. Dr. William Wylie, for a number of anecdotes and dates; some things, also, we gathered from aged persons living in the bounds of Cross creek, and Buffalo, and from others in Ohio.

free constitutions, and those who have trained a people to become capable and worthy of enjoying such blessings. Who will say that the old English barons in Runnymede did more for British freedom than Cranmer, and Knox, and their compeers? or that *Lord Somers*, regarded as the main instrument in securing the present English constitutional government, was a greater benefactor to his race than Robinson, the humble minister of the exiles in Holland, who aided in training and sending forth the first race of noble pilgrims that landed on Plymouth Rock? However such respective claims to the grateful remembrance of posterity may be settled, surely we cannot regard without special interest the work of those who were first employed in sowing the seed of the kingdom in this mighty republic. And if, as is commonly believed, the vast Valley of the Mississippi,\* soon about to possess the majority of our population, will control the destinies of this land, and if we believe that the religion of the Bible alone can save our land from utter anarchy, and moral desolation and ruin, is there not an interest of a peculiar character attached to the self-denying toils, and struggles, and dangers of those who were first honored as instruments in diffusing that religion in the western world—an interest scarcely yielding to that with which we invest the character and work of M'Kemie, and Andrews, and their associates?

That portion of the Valley of the Mississippi which was first yielded up by the aboriginal tribes to the settlement and home of the Anglo-Saxon race, and which has been the most abundant hive for other sections of the West, is Western Pennsylvania. For, after the encroachments of the French and their Indian allies were successfully repelled, and the treaty of peace, signed at Fontainebleau, November 3d, 1762, secured to the British crown this long-disputed section of the West, emigrants from Eastern Pennsylvania, Virginia, Scot-

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\* This phrase is often, perhaps most frequently, used to denote that portion of North America whose waters are drained by the Mississippi, and not merely the region bordering that river.

land, and the North of Ireland, began to pour in, and, in the course of twelve or fifteen years, formed extensive settlements through what now constitutes the counties of Fayette, Westmoreland, Indiana, Allegheny, Greene, and Washington. For a considerable time, there was no settled ministry of the gospel, seldom even a missionary, among them. Yet a large proportion of these early pioneers were the children of the Church. They had been baptised, and brought up in its bosom; and some of them had, previous to their emigration, entered its communion. For a few years their situation was critical and perilous in the extreme. Had their religious interests fallen into unfaithful or incompetent hands, or had they been even a little longer neglected, to all human appearance the result must have been of fearful moment to themselves and their posterity. But God had purposes of mercy for these offspring of his people. He was *at this very time* preparing a class of *no ordinary men*\* to enter this field, and lay the foundation of our western Zion, that vast building that is still rising higher and higher, and that our children's chil-

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\* The following quotations from Doddridge's "Notes on the Life and Manners of the first Western Settlers," seem not out of place here. This Mr. Doddridge was an Episcopal clergyman, and a brother of the late distinguished Philip Doddridge, Esq., a member of Congress from Western Virginia. These "Notes" were published in a small volume, many years ago; but I quote from them as I find them in the Appendix to Kircheval's History of the Valley of Virginia, chapter 31, page 403. "The ministry of the gospel has contributed, no doubt immensely, to the happy change which has been effected in the state of our western society. At an early period of our settlements, three Presbyterian clergymen commenced their clerical labors in our infant settlements—the Rev. Joseph Smith, the Rev. John M'Millan, and the Rev. James Power. They were pious, patient, laborious men, who collected their people into regular congregations, and did for them all that their circumstances would allow. It was no disparagement to them that their first churches were the shady groves, and their first pulpits a kind of tent, constructed of a few rough slabs, and covered with clapboards. He who dwelleth not exclusively in temples made with hands, was propitious to their devotions."

dren will not see completed. Within the compass of three or four years, James Finley, James Power, John M'Millan, Joseph Smith, Thaddeus Dod, and J. Clarke, all were found at their stations in this singularly important field. Some of them had been out in the new settlements for a few months as missionaries, and then returned to their eastern homes or churches. Indeed, as to full pastoral and ministerial work, they almost entered abreast upon the mighty harvest. Every one of those named above, deserves an extended memoir. We select, for our first biographical notice, the fourth name in the list; not because it designates the first laborer in the vineyard, but because, with the exception of Mr. Finley and Mr. Clarke, he was the oldest, and, without exception, the earliest called to his rest, and perhaps the mightiest of them all in wielding the sword of the Spirit. But few fragments of reminiscences can now be gathered of this race of ministers. The motto of England's greatest Chancellor, "prodesse potius quam conspici," seems to have been theirs, and of none of them more than of the subject of this paper. In Dr. Hodge's Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church, vol. ii., p. 343, it is stated, "In 1769, John M'Creary and Joseph Smith were added to the roll (of the Presbytery of New Castle). Both of these were distinguished men. The latter, pre-eminent for piety and energy, was one of the fathers of our Church in Western Pennsylvania."

This devoted servant of God, Mr. Smith, was born in 1736, in Nottingham, Maryland, not far from the Susquehanna river. His father's farm was on the road leading from that river to Wilmington, Delaware, near what is called the *Rising Sun*. His parents were natives of England, professors of religion, and regarded as very pious and exemplary persons. Of his early education, and of his first religious exercise of mind, nothing is known. It would appear that he was out of his minority when he turned his thoughts towards the scholastic preparation which was required for entering the gospel ministry. For, as he graduated at Princeton in 1764,

he was then 28 years of age. Nassau Hall, our first collegiate Presbyterian school of the prophets, was then enjoying the presidency of *Dr. Samuel Finley*, to whose saintly piety, and triumphant death, the eloquent pen of *Dr. John M. Mason* has given a world-wide fame. His name is attached to Mr. Smith's diploma.\* At Drawyers, August 5th, 1767, Mr. Smith was licensed by the Presbytery of New Castle, to preach the gospel. No information has been obtained as to his theological training. He appears to have acquired considerable knowledge of the original languages of Scripture. The Hebrew Bible, the Greek Testament, Leigh's *Critica Sacra*, and Pool's *Synopsis*, were his companions during his subsequent life. On the 20th of October, 1768, he accepted a call from the congregation of Lower Brandywine, and was ordained and installed their pastor, April 19th, 1769. He had married Miss Esther Cummins, daughter of William Cummins, merchant, of Cecil County, Maryland, a short time before he was licensed. However questionable the wisdom of this order of events in a minister's history in most cases, we can hardly doubt that in the case of Mr. Smith, then

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\* We give the old ante-Revolutionary form, with all the signatures, as a literary curiosity, in the following exact copy of Mr. Smith's *Diploma*.

“Praeses et Curatores, — Collegii Neo-Caesariensis, — Omnibus et Singulis has literas lecturis: Salutem in Domino.

“Notum sit quod nobis placet, Auctoritate regio Diplomate commissa, *Josephum Smith*, Candidatum primum in Artibus Gradum competentem Examine Sufficiente primo approbatum, titulo, graduque artium liberalium *Baccalaurei* adornare. Cujus Sigillum commune Collegii *Neo-Caesariensis* huic membranae affixum, Nominaque nostra subscripta Testimonium sint.

Datum in Aula Nassovica  
Sexto Calendas Octobris  
Anno Ærae Christi  
Millesimo Septingentesimo  
Sexagesimo quarto.

SAMUEL FINLEY, D.D. Praeses.  
GULIELMUS TENNENT,  
RICHARDUS TREAT,  
GULIEL. P. SMITH,  
SAML. WOODRUFF,  
JOHANS. BRAINARD,  
ROBERTUS OGDEN,

} Curatores.”

nearly, if not quite, thirty years of age, it was not very unsafe or imprudent. His wife was a lady of remarkable piety, intelligence, and refinement of manners, and proved to be a help-meet, indeed, till the day of his death, surviving him more than twenty years.

Difficulties having sprung up in the congregation relative to the site of a church, the pastoral relation between him and that people was dissolved on the 26th of August, 1772. At the same meeting of the Presbytery, he received a call from the congregations of Rocky Creek and Long Cane, South Carolina. It is not improbable that he had visited some of the southern churches, soon after he was licensed, by appointment of his presbytery, or of his synod, just as Dr. Power and Dr. M'Millan, afterwards his fellow-laborers and co-presbyters in the West, are reported to have done, when licentiates of the same Presbytery. This call from the South he declined, and accepted an appointment as a supply to his former congregation for one year. About this time he began to preach in Wilmington, Delaware. This proved the occasion of great dissension among the people, as the Rev. William M'Kennon was already preaching in that place. After a season of much excitement, during which various petitions and remonstrances were carried up to the Presbytery on the subject, that body, on the 12th of August, 1773, put into his hands a call from the *Second Church of Wilmington*. This action of the Presbytery seems clearly to exonerate the subject of this sketch from any blame or censure in his course at Wilmington. This very significant call he held in his hands till the fall of the next year. In the meantime, this congregation of Wilmington having united with that of Lower Brandywine, in seeking his pastoral labors, he accepted this united call, and became their pastor, October 27th, 1774. In these churches he labored until April 29th, 1778, when, at his request, the pastoral relation was dissolved. In the minutes of the Presbytery, it is added, "by reason of the difficult state of our public affairs." This expression alludes to the distracted



state of the country, and especially of that part of Delaware, being then involved in some of the most harassing and bloody scenes of the Revolutionary war. Some time in the preceding August, General Howe had landed a formidable British army, at the head of Elk river. On the 11th of September, General Washington, with the American forces then under his command, met his country's foes near the Brandywine, which stream has given its name to that memorable battle. The fearful cannonading on that field of slaughter was distinctly heard in the comparatively neighboring town of Wilmington, and perhaps shook many a window there on that day. Mrs. Smith who was in very feeble health at the time, soon after gave birth to their fourth child. The nervous excitement produced by the roar of the cannon, and its horrid associations, threatened to prove fatal to both mother and child; but they were mercifully preserved, the mother to sustain and increase the usefulness of her husband while he lived; the feeble infant, prematurely born, to become, in future years, the wife of one minister, and the mother of another.

Soon after these events, Mr. Smith, urged, no doubt, by an imperative sense of duty, as a husband, parent and minister, retired with his family into the Barrens of York, a district of country now, perhaps, partly included in Adams County. Here he resided for a little more than a year; but it was a memorable year in his history, as will presently appear. For some time he preached the gospel with great success, "in the region round about." Though he had no thought of remaining there, he labored as incessantly as though it were his chosen field for life, and his ministry was abundantly fruitful. One of his neighbors and spiritual children had recently married, and returned home late in the week with his young wife. Several of his neighbors, with their wives, much to the annoyance of the young man, paid them a complimentary call on the Sabbath day, just as they were preparing to set out for the church, which was quite near. These unseason-

able visitants were Quakers. The young man succeeded, however, in persuading them to go with him to hear their new minister, Mr. Smith, of whom he gave them such an account as to awaken their curiosity. The result was the hopeful conversion of several of the party.

Early in the following spring, Mr. Smith paid a short visit to Western Pennsylvania. The Rev. John M'Millan had removed, with his family, to that region a few months before. The Rev. James Power had already been residing there since the fall of 1776. How far his mind was influenced by his intercourse or correspondence with them, is not now known. Before this great event of his life, however, he was called to experience a severe preparatory trial. He was taken sick, and lay for some time under the pressure of a severe and dangerous fever, at the point of death. The people met, as they were wont, in a large barn, to hold their prayer meeting, on a Sabbath day. Tidings came that there was scarcely a hope of his recovery. It was requested that prayer should be offered in his behalf. The first man who led in their devotions, forgot his case, the second said but little, and so, the third. His friend, *James Edgar*, then a young man, afterwards distinguished for his piety, his usefulness, and his great influence, both in church and state, in Western Pennsylvania, was at that prayer meeting; he left it, with agonized feelings, to repair to the house of Mr. Smith, and to see him, as he feared on his deathbed. As he approached the house, he met an old lady, who was considered among them a mother in Israel. Mr. Edgar eagerly asked her about Mr. Smith. "He is worse," said she. Mr. Edgar's heart sunk within him. "But," added she, "he will not die, for the Lord hath told me to-day, that he will raise him up, and send him out to the West, to preach the gospel." This she uttered with great confidence and vivacity. Soon after this, and while Judge Edgar was still sitting by the bedside of Mr. Smith, a manifest change took place in the appearance and symptoms of his beloved minister, and he began to recover rapidly from

that hour. We mention this singular, but well-attested fact, and the remarkable language of the old lady, without comment, only observing, that however it may have an air of fanaticism, it seems to illustrate a feature of the religious character and sentiment of those days, not unlike those of the old Puritans and Scottish Reformers. In D'Aubigne's *Life of Cromwell*, the reader will find some very just and scriptural views on this subject. In the case above stated, we suppose this lady did not mean, nor did Mr. Edgar so understand her, that she had any express revelation from heaven, but only a strong and firm persuasion from the liberty and enlargement of soul she enjoyed, in pouring out her heart for her minister at the feet of her Saviour.

In this connexion, it may be proper to mention, that shortly before their removal from Wilmington, as Mr. Smith and his wife were returning from an evening walk, about sundown, in the outskirts of the town, and near an adjoining wood, they both distinctly heard strains of sweet and melodious music over the tops of the trees, that seemed to them to rise and float away into the distant skies. They listened to it for some minutes. They often spoke of it, especially Mrs. Smith, but rather confidentially: she was far from being a weak or superstitious woman. Whatever might have been the cause or source of this music, conveyed, possibly, by some peculiar law of acoustics, from a distant band in the British or American camp, similar to that which has been noticed at a point off the coast of Rio Janeiro, where the sound of bells and of music from the city, though out of sight, is distinctly heard—however we may account for it, why may we not regard it as under a special providential direction, and designed, as we have no doubt it served, to encourage and cheer them in the prospect of setting out, at no distant day, with their family of helpless children, to the wilds of Western Pennsylvania?\*

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\* We are surprised to find so excellent a writer as Dr. Mosheim speaking rather sneeringly of "*the pious sort of mistake*" that the

up from the very jaws of death, he doubtless received a fresh baptism of divine influence, designed to prepare him for his future work. His illness, from some of the circumstances mentioned, must have been in the summer or fall of 1778.

Early in the following spring, in April, 1779, we find him in Western Pennsylvania, on a short visit, where he labored for a few weeks in a part of what is now Washington County, then quite a frontier settlement. After remaining for some time breaking to these people in the wilderness the bread of life, he returned, and soon a call was sent after him to his Presbytery. This call is dated June 21st, 1779, and is a remarkable document. The following is an accurate copy:

A call from the United Congregations at Buffalo and Cross Creek, to the Rev. Joseph Smith, a member of the Presbytery of New Castle.

WORTHY AND DEAR SIR, — Having, under the direction of Divine Providence, been removed into this new country where the blessing of the gospel has never been enjoyed in the stated ordinances, or but seldom; but being of late favored with an opportunity of hearing you, reverend sir, to our satisfaction, and we trust the edification of our souls; we do unanimously agree to invite, beseech, and pray you to take the pastoral care, under God, of our souls. For encouragement we do promise, if you should accept of this our call, to yield all due subjection in the Lord, by regularly attending on the Word preached, and ordinances administered by you, and by endeavoring to improve them, through divine grace, for the edification of our souls; and by submission to the due exercise of discipline, if our faults should at any time deserve censure. And that you may be free from the incumbrances of the world, so as to attend upon your ministry, we do promise you a competency of the good things of this life,

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Christians made; he, considering the *shower*, as he calls it, which rescued the Roman army from destruction, a mere happy coincidence, and *not* any *special interposition* of Divine Providence, in answer to the prayers of Christian soldiers. See Mos. Ecl. Hist. 2d Cent. p. 1. ch. i.

with which God has blessed us; particularly we promise to pay yearly and every year, during your incumbency among us, the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, Pennsylvania currency (money equal in value to what it was in the year 1774), viz.: seventy-five pounds from each congregation—they employing your ministerial labors equally.

And now, reverend sir, when we consider the great loss youth sustain, by growing up without the stated means of grace; the formality likely to spread over the aged, and the great danger of ungodliness prevailing amongst both: there being divers denominations of people among us who hold dangerous principles, tending to mislead many weak and ignorant people: we cannot but renew our earnest entreaties that you would accept this our hearty call. That the Glorious Head of the Church may direct you to what may be most for his glory, and your future comfort and usefulness—is the earnest prayer of your humble suppliants.

We, the inhabitants of the upper and lower congregations of Cross Creek, do promise to pay or cause to be paid unto the Rev. Joseph Smith, annually, during his regular incumbency among us as a gospel minister, the several sums annexed to our names, respectively: and whereas money is become of less value, and every article has arisen to an extravagant price: therefore we do hereby agree that the said sums shall be annually regulated by five men, chosen in each congregation; and be made equal in value to what the said sums would have been in the year 1774.\*

Witness our hands, June 21, 1779.

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\* The depreciation of the paper currency, or continental money, had, in 1779, become a very serious burden to the people; and all over the country, great ingenuity was exercised to discover a remedy. Embargoes, commercial restrictions, tender laws, and limitations of prices were all tried—but in vain. Prices still sank. “I had money enough, some time ago,” said a merchant of those times, “to buy a hogshead of sugar: I sold it again, and got a great deal more money than it cost me; yet, when I went to market again, the money would not get me a tierce. I sold that too, at a great profit; yet the money received would only buy

Then follow six columns of names, amounting to 204: and the amount of their subscriptions is £197 5s. 6d.: thus abundantly exceeding the amount (£150) promised in the call. It is evident that they followed no special form in the construction of this paper; and the uniting of the call and the subscription paper into one document, gives it quite an original character. We need hardly say that there are some passages in this call of a most solemn and touching character. Altogether, it is a curious original paper, evincing great ability and fervent piety. Most probably, it was drawn up by Judge Edgar; though of that we have no direct evidence. It appears also that a call was sent to him from Peter's Creek; but on the 27th of October, 1779, he signified to the Presbytery his acceptance of the call to Cross Creek and Buffalo; and the next year, 1780, moved into the bounds of the latter, and became, in due time, their regular pastor. Here he spent the remainder of his life—twelve years.

Mr. Edgar, of whom we have already spoken, had removed also into Cross Creek congregation, a year or some months before, and became one of his most efficient elders. Perhaps no pastor was ever more blessed with a bench of devotedly pious elders, than was Mr. Smith. They were indeed men "mighty in prayer." Sustained by such men, and by a remarkably praying people,\* he was "instant in season and out

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a barrel. I have now more money than ever; yet I am not so rich as when I had less."—*Hist. Pitts.*, p. 145.

\* It is said that through the summer, during the interval of public worship, you could stray in no direction through the surrounding forest, without hearing the voice of secret prayer; and if you would return to the church, you could hear the low sound of a whisper from the pulpit, where the pastor, who seldom came out of it during such intervals, was likewise wrestling with the angel of the covenant. This fact has been attested by several unquestionable witnesses. The Rev. Dr. James Herve, some years ago, stated to the Synod of Wheeling, that when a very small boy, he one Sabbath, during "intermission," being near the door of Mr. Smith's church, went in. The house was vacated, but he heard Mr. S. engaged in prayer in the pulpit; and it gave him an awful and

of season." A revival of religion soon began, which never ceased till the day of his death, and for some years after—a revival of twelve or fifteen years! Incredible as this may now appear, there are still living credible and intelligent wit-

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indelible impression of the presence of God filling the house. This was the first deep and abiding awakening of his conscience. Mr. S. had indeed, from an early period of his labors, a race of "wrestling Jacobs," and "mothers in Israel," that we fear cannot be easily found now. The eminent piety of a large number of Western Presbyterians is affectionately remembered by thousands of their descendants to this day. When, more than thirty years ago, we read in Dr. Miller's sermon, preached at the ordination of the late lamented Dr. Nevins, of Baltimore, some remarks about cities tending to produce intensity of character, and therefore favorable to the production of the most eminent piety, we hesitated, and we hesitate still, to give an unqualified assent to his views. A distinguished minister of our Church (the late Dr. Mathews, of the New Albany Theological Seminary) remarked to us, after reading Dr. Miller's statements, that the pious John Newton seemed to differ from him; for he had said, somewhere in his works, that were Great Britain searched, by an angel, for the most pious person, he would possibly find that person an old woman, sitting at her spinning-wheel in some retired corner of the kingdom. It often occurred to us to ask when and where do we find the brightest monuments of holiness. Who and what was Enoch, "who walked with God?" Who were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? and where did they dwell? It will be remembered also that God chose for his covenanted people, a pastoral and agricultural life. The whole genius of the Mosaic institutions, as Michaelis has clearly shown, was designed to make and keep the Jews a rural people. [A pastoral and agricultural people; not strictly a rural people, in the modern sense of the term.] It is a natural inference that such a state is on the whole most favorable to piety. Who also were the Waldenses, and where did they live? The history of the Culdees of Scotland and Ireland may likewise be cited for illustration. And the more modern history of the Covenanters and of the Huguenots through the South of France, will, perhaps, occur to many as furnishing materials for a decision on this point. But our own country has had many illustrious proofs of a deep and fervent piety, that never drew any aid from the busy haunts of men. In Virginia are many rural spots, for ever sacred to the memory of those who lived near to God, and "quite on the verge of heaven." But without designing any invidious comparison, I would select the early race of Western Presbyterians, as presenting

nesses of that fact. It is true there were periods of comparative declension; but during all this time, scarcely one Sabbath occurred when some new cases of conviction or conversion did not become known. And this, too, in the midst of the trials and perils of frontier life, when they were often in imminent danger from savage foes—when, sometimes, they were compelled to retire to forts or block-houses to protect themselves from the merciless tomahawk. Sometimes a fresh outpouring of the Spirit would take place, while they were actually gathered in Fort Vance, to shelter themselves from some new invasion of the Indians. But these troubles were not very frequent, nor of long continuance.

It was a remarkable circumstance, that between Mr. Smith's congregations and the Ohio, and along up and down the river, for thirty or forty miles, there was early settled, or "squatted" rather, a peculiar population, many of them from Eastern Virginia—well suited, from their habits and training as hunters, and from their adoption of Indian modes of warfare, to fight with the savages, and to act as a life-guard, as a protecting *cordon*, to Mr. S.'s people and the interior settlements. Here were the Wetzells, the Bradys, and the

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complete proofs that cities are not necessary to produce intensity of Christian character. Martin Luther used to say that his three masters were Prayer, Meditation, and Temptation. All these were the masters, in an eminent degree, of our first ministers and their people in Western Pennsylvania. The piety in our city churches may be eminent: the advantages for cultivating it and for calling it into habitual and healthful action are certainly great. Christians in cities, by constant intercourse, too, may be much benefited. The habitual exercise of pious sentiments and affections, adorned by social refinement, and an easy, graceful familiarity with all the conventionalities of city life, may throw a peculiar sweetness and charm around the person and character; especially in the view of those who have themselves lived in cities, and whose refined taste would be often scandalized by the unpolished roughness of rural life. The apostolic piety of Mr. Smith, and many of his people, constitutes, at any rate, an eminent illustration of what the great Reformer's three masters would do, in training a people for heaven, amidst the toils and perils of frontier life.



Poes, and other names that figure in all the narratives of early western adventures. It is remarkable, by the way, that some of these famous frontier Nimrods signed the call to Mr. Smith—among others, the names of Andrew Poe and Adam Poe, each subscribing £1, are found. Thus God provided for his people a singular class of protectors, between them and the Indian settlements.

A glorious work of grace began and long continued in that vineyard, which God had so strangely fenced around. The following extract from a letter of Judge Edgar to Mr. Leiper, dated Oct. 22, 1802, will be read with interest by many, and may here be appropriately introduced :

“In April, in the year 1779, the Rev. Joseph Smith visited this country, and preached several times in the bounds of that which afterwards became formed into the congregations known by the names of Buffalo and Cross Creek. In June, a call was signed and sent down to the presbytery to him. That fall he accepted, and moved into them in December, 1780. In this winter, 1781-2, the Lord, by his Spirit, began to work. Attention and some serious thoughtfulness appeared among the people, in both congregations. The exercises of social prayer were attended to, in some parts. The summer of '82 was very remarkable. The gale increased. Many were under deep conviction of sin and danger until harvest, without much appearance of relief: few of the distressed had got relief; so that some of those that had religion formerly, were made to lament that the children were come to the birth, but few or none bringing forth. Indeed, at this time the number of God's people were very few [of that description] *that knew anything about the travail pains, or agonizing*, that Christ might be formed in the souls of the distressed the hope of glory. However, a gracious God was pleased to discover his glory shining in the gospel, to many of the convinced, before the sacrament was administered, that fall; which was the first time it was administered in these congregations. As well as I can recollect, about fifty in each congregation were added to the Church on that occasion, giving comfortable evidence of a work of grace on their hearts. The most of them to this day continue on, though some few instances there are of falling back. The work rather increased for three years. At the sacrament in Cross Creek in May and June, 1787, it was perhaps the most remarkable. On Monday evening, the power of God appeared bowing many. The people did not all get away from the meeting-house green until long after night, and came back on Tues-

day. This was the most solemn day I had ever seen at this time, in the house of God. Yet there were not more than two or three instances of crying out aloud. I cannot say there was much decline appeared for six or seven years after the work began. Our dear pastor died on the 19th of April, 1792. God continued his presence all that time, adding numbers to the Church every year."

Besides Mr. Smith's abundant labors on the Sabbath, and his frequent preaching through the week, during particular seasons of spiritual harvest, he instituted, at his own house, a Wednesday evening prayer-meeting, to which persons would come from a distance of from three to fifteen miles. These meetings would sometimes extend to a late hour in the night. But no weariness nor drowsiness seemed to attend them. Many, now in heaven, will, perhaps, never forget those prayer-meetings. He was not a man of robust health. In person he was tall and slender, of fair complexion, of a slight look askance, of one eye. It will be remembered that this was a peculiarity of Whitefield, and that gave him increased power over his audience, as many thought he was looking directly at them. Whether this was the case with Mr. S., we have not understood. It is abundantly testified, however, that there was a piercing brilliancy about his eyes, when he became animated, that was peculiarly impressive. His dress was always neat and becoming. His voice was remarkable alike for the *terrific* and the *pathetic*, and, as Dr. Kirkland said of the celebrated Fisher Ames, "now like the thunder, and now like the music of heaven." When his theme was the terrors of the law, or the horrors of hell, or the glories of heaven, he appeared to many of his people as though he had just come from the spirit-land. "I never heard a man," said the Rev. Samuel Porter, "who could so completely unbar the gates of hell, and make me look so far down into the dark bottomless abyss, or, like him, could so throw open the gates of heaven, and let me glance at the insufferable brightness of the great White Throne." His favorite subjects were the importance and necessity of regeneration, and the immediate

necessity of faith in Jesus Christ. His ordinary manner of speaking had nothing of rhapsody in it. It was rather that of animated conversation. Indeed, his sermons were generally written out with some degree of fulness. Many of the skeletons, which he used on ordinary occasions, are so well drawn out, that, with but little addition, they would be fit for the press. He would often rise to an almost supernatural and unearthly grandeur, completely extinguishing in his hearers all consciousness of time and place, and verifying Cicero's strange description of the highest kind of eloquence—"ali- quid immensum, infinitumque." John Foster's account of the peculiar power of fascination which the celebrated Robert Hall could sometimes exert over his audience, has often reminded us of what our aged fathers have told us of Mr. Smith.

When the above was written, six months ago, for the Presbyterian Magazine, we felt apprehensive that it would be deemed an exaggerated and extravagant account of Mr. S. as a preacher. Two persons of highly cultivated minds, who had often heard him, have recently testified to us, after reading the foregoing remarks, that they altogether fall short of giving any conception of the peculiar power of Mr. Smith's eloquence. "It was altogether different," said one of them, "from Dr. M'Millan's manner. *He* was sometimes awfully solemn and impressive. But Mr. Smith's manner had a strange kind of power about it, totally indescribable." "Neither you nor any man on earth that never heard him," said the Rev. C. Dodd to us, "can form any idea of his wonderful power." "Permit me to say," says another aged servant of God, "I have formed an estimate of him higher than posterity, even his descendants, can form of him. Even if his sermons had been correctly written as they fell from his lips, they could not now be appreciated. And why? Because neither the stenographer nor the printer has any types by which to express his tones, his emphasis, his holy unction, the holy vitality of his soul. Who can now rightly appreciate the characters of Whitefield and the Tenants, by

their simple sermons, which have been printed? Printers have no types for souls. When Mr. Smith commenced his pulpit exercises, if his flight was upwards, he was immediately out of the sight of the growling critic, who became like the huntsman's dog, when he has lost the track! Or when, arrayed with divine and awful majesty, he uncovered the bottomless and wide-extending pit of wo, whose billows of fire are ever lashed into fury by the almighty breath of an incensed, slighted Saviour, the sinner lost his coat of mail, retreated in terror, or fell prostrate, imploring for mercy. Mr. Smith's mind was early disciplined by classical studies and collegiate drillings, so that, when his ardent soul became fledged with heaven's plumage, he was prepared to soar, without a seeming effort or premeditated measurements, above the flight of common minds. He never elaborated his sermons by logical, syllogistic formulas, or mere theological didactics. Every truth he presented had the perspicuity and force of an intuitive axiom, and conclusions were drawn by every listener; so that the speaker would have lost time, and chilled the kindling flame, by the introduction of a "therefore," or a "quod erat demonstrandum." The traveller, in a tornado, is not occupied with the philosophy of pneumatics, nor the floundering mariner with the philosophy of the tides. Such was the condition of Christless sinners under the preaching of Mr. Smith. No doubt he was a classical scholar; but the cold ratiocinations of logic—the crucibles of the chemist—the black-board and the chalk, were left far behind. His baptised soul had been led to that fountain whence all science flows. Nothing short of imperious necessity, and that for Christ's sake, could ever have nailed him to a common-school bench, or chained him to the presidential chair of a college." "When he was taken up from us, much of his spirit fell upon a Hughes, a Marquis, a Patterson, a M'Gready, a Brice, &c. But Smith was the giant; and no one was found capable of putting on and wielding his whole armor."\*

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\* Rev. Dr. Lindley.

Old Col. R. of Virginia, used to say that he liked that preacher best, who could make him wish that he could creep into an augur hole before the preacher was done.

The celebrated Robert Morris, the great American financier, who saved the credit of his country, and ruined his own, once told Dr. Rush that "he liked that kind of preaching that drives a man into a corner of his pew, and makes him think the devil is after him." He would have been delighted with Mr. Smith. See Hazard's Register, vol. xii., p. 249.

If it might be said that preaching was Mr. Smith's great forte, it is questionable whether his usefulness out of the pulpit was not even greater. He was a man of prayer, and often spent special seasons in that exercise. It was not uncommon for him to rise in the night and engage in intercessory prayer for his people, and especially the youth of his congregation, and his own children. For this purpose, he kept a cloak at the foot of his bed, during cold weather, in readiness to throw around him when he wished to get on his knees. His wife and himself would often observe special fast days, for the conversion of their children. And they were almost all the subjects of Divine grace, while quite young. One of them, and it was the one born the day after the battle of Brandywine, was received into the fellowship of the Church at ten years of age. A large session, of unusual Christian experience and discrimination, were unanimous in their vote, to receive her. He was faithful in catechising and conversing with his children. Sabbath evenings were generally spent in this way. Gathering them round the fireside after the usual recitation of the Shorter Catechism, he would talk most earnestly and affectionately to them about the interests of their souls, and would sometimes close with solemn warnings, telling them that "he would take the stones of the chimney to witness against them," &c. Yet there was nothing severe or morose in his character. On the contrary, it was one of his peculiar excellencies, that he could win the friendship and

affection not only of his own children, but of all the children and youth of his church. Some of them have testified that they were unconscious of the flight of time when Mr. Smith was among them. There was a peculiar charm about his cheerfulness and his talent for social intercourse with the young. He was seldom depressed or in low spirits. But this steady cheerfulness seemed to be fed by communion with God, and the hope of heaven. Praise generally employed his lips, when he first opened his eyes in the morning. He was fond of singing, and he loved to sing a verse or two before he rose. One of these verses was,

“Ye little birds of heaven,  
On every bough that sing,  
Ye shame me with your early notes,  
While on your morning wing.”

Another was

“Not many suns shall set,  
Not many mornings rise,  
Till heaven unfold its glories all,  
To my admiring eyes.”

Yet though a cheerful, happy man, he had often his trials and sorrows. Besides those common to the lot of humanity, he and his family, in the earlier years of their western history, were sorely tried by frequent alarms about the Indians. At certain periods, he, in common with his people, when committing themselves and their little ones at night, to the care of the Shepherd of Israel, knew not but that before the morning's dawn, their cabin-houses might be wrapped in flames, and themselves massacred, or led off into captivity. On one occasion he had to bring a communion service, at King's Creek, to an abrupt close on the announcement of the approach of a body of Indians from the mouth of Mill Creek, to mount his horse, and with many of his people, both men and women, to ride in haste, near twenty miles. Pecuniary embarrassments, which, no doubt, in a great measure proceeded from the perilous condition, or entire suspension of trade and

commerce, produced by these "forays" of the savages, pressed sorely upon Mr. Smith and his people. Here we cannot forbear to introduce a very singular account of a providential interposition for the relief of Mr. Smith, at a very alarming crisis in his affairs, when his faith must have been greatly tried. In justice to the Rev. James W. Miller, to whom the public was indebted many years ago, for this statement, we will give the narrative in his own language.

"Our story will carry the reader back 'to the period' when all north of the Ohio River was an almost unbroken wilderness—the mysterious red man's home. On the other side, a bold and hardy band from beyond the mountains had built their log cabins, and were trying to subdue the wilderness. To them every hour was full of peril. The Indians would often cross the river, steal their children and horses, and kill and scalp any victim who came in their way. They worked in the field with weapons at their side, and on a Sabbath met in a grove or rude log church, to hear the word of God, with their rifles in their hands. To preach to these settlers, Mr. Joseph Smith, a Presbyterian minister, had left his parental home east of the mountains. He, it was said, was the second minister who had crossed the Monongahela River. He settled in Washington County, Pennsylvania, and became the pastor of the Cross Creek and Upper Buffalo congregations, dividing his time between them. He found them a willing and united people, but still unable to pay him a salary which would support his family. He, in common with all the early ministers, must cultivate a farm. He purchased one on credit, promising to pay for it with the salary pledged to him by his people. Years passed away. The pastor was unpaid. Little or no money was in circulation. Wheat was abundant, but there was no market. It could not be sold for more than twelve and a half cents in cash. Even their salt had to be brought across the mountains on pack-horses, was worth eight dollars per bushel, and twenty-one bushels of wheat had often to be given for one of salt. The time came when the last payment must be made, and Mr. Smith was told he must pay or leave his farm. Three years' salary was now due from his people. For the want of this, his land, his improvements upon it, and his hopes of remaining among a beloved people, must be abandoned. The people were called together, and the case laid before them; they were greatly moved; counsel from on high was sought; plan after plan was proposed and abandoned; the congregations were unable to pay a tithe of their debts, and no money could be borrowed. In despair, they adjourned

to meet again the following week. In the mean time, it was ascertained that a Mr. Moore, who owned the only mill in the county, would grind for them wheat on reasonable terms. At the next meeting it was resolved to carry their wheat to Mr. Moore's mill: some gave fifty bushels, some more. This was carried from fifteen to twenty-six miles, on horses, to mill. In a month word came that the flour was ready to go to market. Again the people were called together. After an earnest prayer, the question was asked, 'Who will run the flour to New Orleans?' This was a startling question. The work was perilous in the extreme; months must pass before the adventurer could hope to return, even though his journey should be fortunate; nearly all the way was a wilderness, and gloomy tales had been told of the treacherous Indian. More than one boat's crew had gone on that journey and came back no more. 'Who, then, would endure the toil and brave the danger?' None volunteered: the young shrunk back, and the middle-aged had their excuse. The scheme at last seemed likely to fail. At length a hoary-headed man, an elder in the church, sixty-four years of age, arose, and, to the astonishment of the assembly, said, 'Here am I—send me.' The deepest feeling at once pervaded the whole assembly. To see their venerated old elder thus devote himself for their good melted them all to tears. They gathered around *Father Smiley* to learn that his resolution was indeed taken; that, rather than lose their pastor, he would brave danger, toil, and even death. After some delay and trouble, two young men were induced, by hope of a large reward, to go as his assistants. A day was appointed for starting. The young and old, from far and near, from love to *Father Smiley*, and their deep interest in the object of his mission, gathered together, and, with their *pastor at their head*, came down from the church, fifteen miles away, to the bank of the river, to bid the old man farewell. Then a prayer was offered up by their pastor, a parting hymn was sung. 'There,' said the old Scotchman, 'untie the cable, and let us see what the Lord will do for us.' This was done, and the boat floated slowly away. More than nine months passed, and no word came back from *Father Smiley*. Many a prayer had been breathed for him, but what was his fate was unknown. Another Sabbath came; the people came together for worship, and there, on his rude bench before the preacher, composed and devout, sat *Father Smiley*. After the services, the people were requested to meet early in the week to hear the report. All came again. After thanks had been returned to God for his safe return, *Father Smiley* rose and told his story; that the Lord had prospered his mission, that he had sold his flour for twenty-seven dollars a barrel, and then got safely back. He then drew a large purse, and poured upon the table a larger pile of gold than most of the spectators had ever seen before. The young men



were paid, each a hundred dollars. Father Smiley was asked his charges. He meekly replied that he thought he ought to have the same as one of the young men, though he had not done quite as much work. It was immediately proposed to pay him three hundred dollars. This he refused to receive till the pastor was paid. Upon counting the money, it was found there was enough to pay what was due Mr. Smith, to advance his salary for the year to come, to reward Father Smiley with three hundred dollars, and then have a large dividend for each contributor. Thus their debts were paid, their pastor relieved; and, while life lasted, he broke for them the bread of life. The bones of both pastor and elder, I believe, have long reposed in the same churchyard; but a grateful posterity still tells this pleasing story of the past.\*

\* Mr. William Smiley was an elder in Upper Buffalo Church — was a Scotchman, of a strong mind, very shrewd, and eminently pious. His manners were somewhat blunt; and he had an integrity and honesty about him which would not allow him to connive at anything which he thought to be wrong. He disliked everything which in any way set aside the claims of religion, and did not give it its proper place in the business of life or the enjoyment of the social circle. While attending the General Assembly at Carlisle, he was invited to spend a social evening at the house of General ———, who was also an elder and a pious man. The next day he was asked by an acquaintance, who met him, how he enjoyed himself. “Not very well,” he replied, that “they gave him cursed tea.” — “Cursed tea!” said his friend; “how was that?” — “Why,” said he, “it was not blessed — of course it must have been cursed, that is all.” He referred to the fact that the tea had been handed round without a blessing having been asked. Such was his judgment of the fashionable mode of tea-drinking. During the same Assembly, the Rev. Mr. ———, a vain man, of very moderate abilities, preached from I. Tim., i. 15, “This is a faithful saying, &c.” Several other ministers had preached on the preceding days. The next day after he had preached he was walking with Father Smiley, and took occasion to ask him how he liked the sermon of Mr. ———, and the sermon of Mr. ———, who had preached on the previous days. Mr. Smiley put him off with a general answer. “Well, then, how did you like my sermon?” asked his interrogator. — “Why,” said he, “I did not like it at all.” — “Why not?” said the preacher. — “Because,” rejoined Smiley, “you said nothing about closing with Christ.” — “That,” said the preacher, “was not in the text.” — “It was as much in the text as what you did say,” replied Smiley. This put an end to the colloquy, and it is not likely that the reverend gentleman would soon again seek to elicit a compliment from the honest Scotchman. Father Patterson

Mr. Miller states in his outset, that he received this account from Mr. Grimes, an elder of Buffalo; and we will add, that we have taken considerable pains to ascertain, from various other sources, that it is all substantially correct. Such were the dealings of God with His servant, and well might he, ever after this, feel assured that "the Lord will provide."

Mr. Smith was a laborious and faithful pastor. In visiting and catechising his people, and in his efforts to seek out those who were neglecting the ordinances of religion, he was most diligent. The tide of emigration, especially from Virginia, poured around him considerable numbers of a profane, Sabbath-breaking class. He was skilful in devising successful methods of access to every sort of persons, even to some that but few would have thought it worth while to approach. In this respect, he knew no man after the flesh, and would at once "beard the lion in his den." He may have sometimes failed, but no such instance of failure is now remembered. When once at the house of one of his elders over night, and rising early in the morning, he observed a house some half mile distant, and persons walking back and forth, near it. He inquired of his elder who lived there? He was told that it was a man who had come there some months before. Mr. Smith asked if he came to church. The elder said that he did not, but that his wife and daughters came sometimes. Mr. Smith said he would go and see them, and telling the elder not to wait breakfast for him, he set off immediately. On arriving at the house, he found the man and his family at home. He introduced himself as the minister who preached at Buffalo, and as such he called to see him. The man said he knew him, although he had not been to church; but his wife and children sometimes went. Mr. Smith called the family together, and talked with them on the subject of religion. After some time he asked the man if he had family

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was walking near to them at the time, and overheard this conversation, very much to his gratification.

worship that morning. He replied he had not. "I suppose," said Mr. Smith, "you pray in your family, of course." He admitted that he did not. "Then," said Mr. Smith, "you ought to do it, and the sooner you begin, the better. You must begin immediately." He then asked for a Bible, and read and remarked upon a suitable passage, and then asked the man to pray; and without giving him time to express his assent or dissent, kneeled down forthwith. A long silence ensued; Mr. Smith then turned to the man, and urged him to pray. He still remained silent. Again urged by his importunate visitor, to pray, under this process, his mind deeply agitated, he at length cried out in agony, "O Lord, teach me to pray, for I know not how to pray." "That will do," said Mr. Smith, as he rose from his knees, "you have made a good beginning, and I trust you will soon be able to extend your petitions." The result was such as Mr. Smith predicted, for the tradition is, that from this time forth he became a man of prayer, and he and his family became consistent and active members of the Church.\*

He was anxious from the first, after he settled in the West, to look out for, and aid in preparing some young men to preach the gospel.† He is believed to have been the first

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\* Dr. Lindley says, in one of his letters, "The ruling passion of his warfare was innocent contrivances to catch flanking parties and strolling individuals in the gospel-net. He was an eagle-eyed spy and scouter upon the trails of the enemy, and was very successful in the capture of individuals, as well as taking them in squadrons. Though he made no pretensions to brute force, he feared none of the Devil's emissaries, on this side of Hell."

† We give another passage from Doddridge's "Notes." "From the outset, they prudently resolved to create a ministry in the country, and accordingly established little grammar schools at their own houses, or in their immediate neighborhoods. The course of education which they gave their pupils was indeed not extensive; but the piety of those who entered into the ministry more than made up the deficiency. They formed societies, most of which are now large and respectable, and in point of education, their ministry has much improved. About the year 1792, an academy was established at Canonsburgh, in Washington

who moved in this matter. The Rev. Thaddeus Dodd had, as early as 1783 or '4, moved into the village of Washington, and taught the town school or academy, in the old Court-House, for about a year, and returned to Ten Mile, where he had previously resided. During that time, two or three young men, having the ministry in view, received instruction from Mr. Dodd, among whom were James Hughes and John Hanna. But the first school that was opened with a special view to the training of young men for the sacred office, is believed to have been begun by Mr. Smith, at Upper Buffalo, as early, at least, as 1785. The subject had pressed heavily on his mind for some time before. There was one difficulty in his way. He had no suitable house. But he had recently erected a house adjoining his dwelling-house, to serve as a kitchen and out-house. If his wife would be willing to surrender that for a while, and fall back on their former hampered domestic system, it could be done. He stated the case to her. She cordially acquiesced in the plan, and warmly seconded his views. Almost immediately the first Latin school was begun. Messrs. M'Gready, Porter, and Patterson, began their course. Soon after, James Hughes, and Brice, who had already been with Mr.

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County, in the western part of Pennsylvania, which was afterwards incorporated under the name of Jefferson College. The means possessed by the Society, [the Presbyterian Church, doubtless, he means,] for the undertaking, were indeed but small; but they not only erected a tolerable edifice for the academy, but collected a fund for the education of such pious young men as were desirous of entering into the ministry, but were unable to defray the expenses of their education. This institution has been remarkably successful in its operations. It has produced a large number of good scholars, in all the literary professions, and added immensely to the science of the country. Next to this, Washington College, situated in the county town of the county of that name, has been the means of diffusing much of the light of science through the Western country. Too much pains cannot be bestowed on those good men who opened these fruitful sources of instruction for our infant country, at so early a period of its settlement. They have immensely improved the departments of theology, law, medicine, and legislation in the western regions."

Dodd, joined them. This school for the languages and sciences was continued some time, and then, by some mutual arrangement, was transferred and re-organized, near Canonsburgh, under the care of Dr. M'Millan. It was therefore the real nucleus, the larva out of which grew eventually, first, the Canonsburgh Academy, and then Jefferson College. This view of the case will, perhaps, be called in question. It has been commonly supposed that such a school was long before in operation, under the direction of Dr. M'Millan, and that the school at Chartiers, for preparing young men for the ministry, did not succeed that of Mr. Smith, or in any sense was the same school, transferred from Buffalo to Chartiers. We will endeavor to state fairly a few things that may serve to guide us to a right decision on this point.

In the first place, the records of the Presbytery of Redstone show that there were no licentiates under their care, who had received their previous scholastic or theological training from Dr. M'Millan, till long after the above period, and that all the first ministers had received their instruction, either from Mr. Dodd or Mr. Smith. The Redstone Presbytery was the only Presbytery then west of the mountains. Now it is strange, if, indeed, there was such a school at Dr. M'Millan's, where young men were instructed in the languages and sciences, before or for some years immediately after, or during 1785, that not one of them can now be found, and that there is no mention of such in the minutes of the Presbytery. The same thing will appear upon examining the Appendix (containing brief biographical notices of all the first ministers in Western Pennsylvania) affixed to Dr. Elliott's life of Macurdy.

In the second place, we would mention the express testimony of Mrs. Irwin, an aged, but very intelligent lady, now residing near Marysville, Ohio, who stated to us, in substance, as follows (and her pastor, the Rev. Mr. Smith, testifies that it has been her unvaried statement for many years, and has no doubt of her memory being perfectly good in this case,) "that she was between twelve and fifteen years of age, living

near Mr. Smith's, one of his spiritual children, took a great interest, then, in what Mr. Smith did in this matter, and all her life after, familiarly remembered the following facts: that in 1785, Mr. Smith, of Buffalo and Cross Creek congregations, opened a school for assisting and training young men for the gospel ministry; that Mr. M'Gready, Mr. Brice, Mr. Porter, and Mr. Patterson, began their course then with him, Mr. James Hughes soon after joining them; that Mr. M'Gready came from Dr. M'Millan's, with whom he had been living, not as a student, but as a laborer on his farm; that five congregations, through the ladies, united in furnishing these students (with the exception of Mr. M'Gready) with clothing, viz., Buffalo, Cross Creek, Chartiers, Bethel, and Ten-Mile; that they made up summer and winter clothing for several of these young men (coloring linen for summer wear in a dye made of new-mown hay!) that this was the first movement made for preparing young men for the ministry; that there was no such school, at this time, at Chartiers, nor until after the one at Buffalo was discontinued; that Mrs. M'Millan and the Chartiers ladies took their share in this effort to sustain this school at Buffalo, Mr. M'Gready coming from Dr. M'Millan's to the school." This is very explicit testimony; and to every word of it Mrs. Irwin testified, in substance, to the writer.

In the third place, we give the following statement, furnished to us by Dr. Cephas Dodd, the venerable pastor of Amity, Washington county, and son of Rev. Thaddeus Dodd. He was sufficiently old, at the time, to remember distinctly the facts which he states. "There was an agreement made between Mr. Smith and Mr. Dodd, by which they engaged, alternately, to superintend the education of certain young men, who had the ministry in view. Mr. Dodd had a large cabin erected near his dwelling, which was occupied as a school-room, and they boarded in his family. Of these, were Messrs. James Hughes, John Brice, Robert Marshall, and John Hanna, and afterwards David Smith, son of Mr. Smith,

all of whom afterwards entered the ministry. They were with Mr. Dodd from about 1783 to 1786, and pursued their studies for the remainder of the time with Mr. Smith. It is thought that Dr. M'Millan was also a party to the above arrangement, but for some cause the aforesaid young men were never under his tuition. There were others, as Messrs. Patterson, M'Gready, and Porter, who were instructed solely by Mr. Smith." There may seem some slight discrepancy between the view presented by Dr. Dodd, and some of the foregoing testimony; but the most essential difficulty is easily removed by remembering that Mr. Dodd's school was, all along, an *English school*, and instruction in the languages merely an appendage to it, for the accommodation of two or three young men; whereas Mr. Smith's school was a real Latin school, got up especially for training young men for the ministry, and concentrating the aid and patronage of all the churches, Dr. M'Millan's church included.\*

We may, in the *last* place, refer to an extract from a letter of Dr. M'Millan to Dr. Carnahan, dated March 26th, 1832. Towards the close of that interesting letter he says, "I am now in my eightieth year; I have outlived all the *first set* of ministers who settled on this side of the mountains, viz., Rev. Messrs. James Finley, James Power, Jas. Dunlap, J. Clarke, Joseph Smith, and Thaddeus Dodd; and all of the *second set* who were raised up in this country, viz., Joseph Patterson, James Hughes, John Brice, James M'Gready, Wm. Swan, Samuel Porter, Thomas Marquis, and J. M'Pherrin." There is Dr. M'Millan's list of the *second set*; and *none* of these

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\* The statement above given respecting the character of Mr. Dodd's school, the writer is assured by the Rev. C. Dodd and the Rev. Jacob Lindley, is not altogether correct. This school of Mr. Dodd, though with an English department, was prominently a classical, mathematical and scientific school. The silence of Mr. Doddridge, and a statement of the Rev. William Wylie, D. D., together with an expression of the Rev. Joseph Patterson, (see his *Life*,) had misled us.

did he train or instruct, till after the school at Buffalo ceased, or was transferred to Chartiers.

An earlier passage in this letter has given rise to what we believe an error respecting the date of Dr. M'Millan's *Latin school*. It is as follows: "When I determined to come to this country, Dr. Smith enjoined it upon me\* to look out for some pious young men, and educate them for the ministry; for, said he, though some men of piety and talents may go to a new country first, yet, if they are not careful to train up others, the country will not be well supplied. Accordingly, I collected a few who gave evidence of piety, and taught them the Latin and Greek languages. Some of them became useful, and others eminent ministers of the gospel. I had still a few with me when the academy was opened in Canonsburg, and, finding that I could not teach and do justice to my congregation, I immediately gave it up and sent them there."

Now, this passage furnishes nothing in conflict with all that we have said, and, we think, *proved*. If the Doctor refers to a period *prior* to the school at Buffalo, as some seem to have understood him, but of which he says nothing, then *who were those* he thus trained, and who afterwards became ministers? It is manifest their names are not found on the records of the Presbytery of Redstone, nor in that list which he himself calls the *second set* of ministers. It is evident that either this passage in the Doctor's letter has been misunderstood, when it has been brought to prove that his Latin school was the first, or is only another illustration of "lapsus memoriæ" in an octogenarian! [This letter, by the way, gives no evidence that Dr. M'Millan had any direct agency, or at least took any active part, in getting up the academy at Canonsburg. On this we have other evidence that he opposed that location, but it is aside from our purpose to introduce it now.] It seems in itself not unlikely that this enterprise should begin

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\* He no doubt gave the same injunction to Mr. Smith and others, if he had the opportunity.



with Mr. Smith, as he was a thorough classical scholar, and fifteen years older than Dr. M'Millan, and the pastor of two very large churches, where a great number of youth had been hopefully converted to God under his ministry.\* That he

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\* We would also invite attention to the following statements from the Rev. Joseph Patterson, and from his son, the Rev. Robert Patterson, as in harmony with the entire view we have given above, though by no means written for that purpose. The first is an extract from a prefatory note to a volume of letters written by the Rev. Joseph Patterson: "In the fall of 1785, being thirty-three years old, it was thought best, with the advice of the Presbytery of Redstone, that I should endeavor to prepare for the gospel ministry. There being no places of public education in this country, I, with a few others, studied with the Rev. Joseph Smith, of Buffalo congregation, Washington county, Pa. Being partially absent from my family," &c.

The other statement will be found in the following extract from a letter of the Rev. Robert Patterson to the Rev. M. Brown, D. D., dated Oct. 1st, 1846: "Between 1780 and 1790, and chiefly in the latter part of these ten years, some of the few Presbyterian clergymen living west of the mountains in Pennsylvania, were in the habit of giving instruction in the languages and sciences to young men, whose object in their studies was the gospel ministry. The Rev. Messrs. Joseph Smith and John M'Millan were distinguished in their devotion to this cause. They both settled in congregations in Washington county, Pa. Mr. Smith had a small building erected in a corner of the garden, called "the students' room," too small to be dignified with the name of a *hall*. And Mr. M'Millan had a small log cabin built near his log dwelling-house, known to this day by the appellation of the "log cabin." In these primitive seminaries were educated some men who became eminently useful and successful in the Church. Among them may be named the Rev. Messrs. William Swan, Samuel Porter, James Hughes, John Brice, David Smith, Joseph Patterson, and others whose names do not occur to my memory. It should be here stated, that, for want of suitable places elsewhere, the students generally lodged in the minister's family, without profit, and sometimes at considerable expense to the household. In this service and toil, the wives of these two godly ministers heartily concurred. I knew them well, and they were both eminently mothers in Israel.

"For some time in the latter part of 1790, instruction in these small seminaries had been suspended," &c.

Both these statements substantially confirm the account given by

cheerfully handed over the subsequent management of this important interest to Dr. M'Millan, and co-operated with him, after the transfer, in building up the school, we have not a doubt. Indeed, as chairman of the committee appointed by the Synod of Virginia, (and truly this place was rightly assigned to him who had done so much in starting the enterprise,) he brought in a report which was adopted by the Synod at their session in Winchester, Oct. 1st, 1791. That report contains these two interesting items:

“The committee appointed to form a plan for promoting the education of persons for the ministry of the gospel, report: The Synod having considered the same, and made such amendments and additions as were judged necessary, agreed to it as follows: ‘Taking this measure, therefore, under serious consideration, the Synod recommend that there be two general institutions for learning, conducted under the patronage of this body—the one to be established in Rockbridge county, in this State, under the care of the Rev. Wm. Graham; the other in Washington county, Pa., under the care of the Rev. John M'Millan. The principles upon which these institutions are to be conducted, are to be as follows,’” &c. Thus the prominent part which the subject of this memoir took, from first to last, may be clearly seen. While Mr. Smith lived, the institution at Canonsburg was under the care of his presbytery, and remotely of his synod (of Virginia). And so it continued for many years after his death.\* It is no part of our design to trace the subsequent history of this

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Mrs. Irwin and Dr. C. Dodd; whilst the latter statement of the Rev. R. Patterson shows how erroneous has been the prevailing theory about the earlier and prior origin of the “log cabin” school, and about the Canonsburg academy growing out of it. It indeed rather grew out of Mr. Johnson’s school, or Mr. Miller’s school; and Dr. M'Millan gave up his school in consequence, in part, of this academy being thus begun. (See further on this subject in the Life of Dr. M'Millan.)

\* We have since ascertained that this statement, as will hereafter appear, is not quite correct.

earliest western Presbyterian school of the prophets. For reasons no doubt deemed satisfactory, it has long since passed out of the control of the Church. It is no longer under ecclesiastical supervision, and, indeed, never was, we believe, as a college. Its earlier history, from the peculiar relations to it of the subject of this memoir, we have thought proper to notice. Mr. Smith never met the Synod of Virginia again. Before that time he was called to his rest.

Still abounding in labors, at home and abroad, and wearing out in his master's service, the spring of 1792 found Mr. Smith at his post. His health, though never vigorous, gave no token of his approaching end. He was in his pulpit on the first Sabbath of April, and was at Cross Creek, according to his alternate course, on that day. His text was Gal. i. 8, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." He took occasion, from this text, to give them a summary sketch of his twelve years' preaching. It seemed like the winding up of the whole of his ministry. It was universally remarked that he spoke as though he had a presentiment that it was to be his last sermon. He seemed to them as though he was just going to the judgment-seat of Christ. The whole place was like a Bochim. How much more were his people affected, when it was found that he required assistance to get from the pulpit to his horse! He was obliged to remain for a day or two in the neighborhood, and then was conveyed home on a sled. Carriages with wheels were almost unknown then.

His disease was inflammation of the brain. His sufferings, though short, were severe. In the earlier stages of his disease, he was in deep waters. At one time a cloud of great darkness came over him. His affectionate people poured in to see him. He asked them to pray for him. To a number of young people, whom the Lord had given him as his spiritual children, and who were permitted to approach his bedside, he said, "My dear children, often have I prayed for you

when you were asleep in your beds; now is your time to pay me back. Oh, pray for me, that the Lord would shield me from the fiery darts of Satan. Deep calleth unto deep, and all his billows he maketh to pass over me." In such language, we have been told by one of that group that then stood by his bedside, did he express the anguish of his spirit; but the conflict was soon over, and all was peace. His last day was spent in the land of Beulah. As long as he could speak, it was in the accents of triumph and holy joy. On the 19th of April, 1792, Mr. Smith finished his course on earth, and died in the faith. The tidings of his death spread a gloom over a widely extended community. Such were the feelings of his own people, that, as many of them testified, it was a common remark among them, that the sun did not seem to shine with his natural brightness for many days afterwards. Truly a great man had fallen in Israel. The following lines, composed by the Rev. Thaddeus Dodd, are to be found on the stone that covers his mortal remains in the graveyard at Upper Buffalo:

“What joys malignant flushed the powers of Hell!  
 But Zion trembled when this Pillar fell,  
 Lest God, who his ambassador withdrew,  
 Should take away his Holy Spirit too;  
 Then some vain hireling, void of special grace,  
 Be brought to fill this faithful pastor's place.”\*

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\* The following lines were found among Mr. Dodd's papers, composed by him as an affectionate tribute to the memory of his departed friend and brother:

“Hark! hark! methinks I hear the solemn toll,  
 Which might reverberate from pole to pole;  
 That dear beloved man, whom oft we heard,  
 And every truly gracious soul revered,  
 That man of God—the man we often saw,  
 In his great Master's name proclaim his law,  
 In terms which might have moved a heart of steel,  
 And almost made an adamant to feel  
 The terrors of God's wrath—and when he show'd  
 The way of peace, pointing to Jesus' blood,

The congregation where he lived and died still survive in the successive generations that have arisen. Their candlestick is not yet removed. It is true, that by emigration, they have furnished an immense number as materials for new churches all over the West: could their statistics in this matter be gathered, it would, it is believed, awaken in every pious mind astonishment and gratitude. In this respect, the influence of his ministry has been extended down till the present time; and over the Western States, and with multitudes, wherever the traveller wanders through Ohio and other States, he will find the name of Joseph Smith pronounced with reverence and affection. It will be seen also by the statistics of the General Assembly, appended to their Minutes, that his old churches are still amongst the most flourishing of Western Pennsylvania. If Kidderminster, the place where Richard Baxter laboured so ardently and so successfully, has still a chosen people, after the lapse of two centuries, need we wonder that the Lord is still very gracious to the descendants of that pious race, that, more than seventy years ago, were gathered in our western wilderness, under the ministry of such a man as Joseph Smith, who "lured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Mr. Smith was a faithful preacher of the terrors of the law; and, on this account profane people gave him the soubriquet of *Hell-fire* Smith. In this connexion we may mention a well-accredited fact, though all the details are not now preserved. Mr. Smith was on his way to the General

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Hard was the wretch, a senseless rock the heart,  
 That in the Saviour would not have a part;  
 Sweet invitation dwelt upon his tongue,  
 Enough t' have drawn an infidel along.  
 In him seraphic zeal and manly sense,  
 A mind informed, and sacred eloquence,  
 Warm (not enthusiastic) heavenly love,  
 To souls below and his great Lord above,  
 Joined in sweet concert: Unto him was given  
 The art of converse, tasting strong of heaven."

Assembly, and tarried during the Sabbath in a congregation where vital religion was at a very low ebb. The minister, having heard of Mr. Smith's style of preaching intimated to him that he would be glad if he would give his people one of his more moderate sermons, as it would better suit their taste. Mr. Smith, after giving out an impressive hymn and offering an unusually fervent prayer, arose to preach, and as he rose uttered with a strong voice the words, "Fire! fire! fire!" The congregation, as we may well suppose, were alarmed and agitated, and eagerly glanced their eyes towards every part of the building, above and around. "If the very mention of the word," continued the preacher, "so startles you, if the mere apprehension of it, excited by the voice of a stranger, so disturbs you, what will it be to encounter the reality? 'Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' This is my text." He delivered one of his most alarming and awakening discourses. It was the means of an entire change in the spiritual views and ministerial labors of the pastor, and the commencement of a revival of religion in the congregation. The minister often mentioned the circumstance freely, and with flowing tears and expressions of gratitude to God for having sent his servant among them.

At one of the first communion seasons in the western wilderness, Mr. Smith was present. An immense concourse of people were drawn together from a widely extended settlement. The services were conducted in a grove, adjoining the meeting-house; which house, by the way, would hardly have contained a tithe of the people that usually assembled, on such occasions. This recourse to a grove was quite a common arrangement for many years afterwards. There are thousands yet living who well remember the solemn, delightful scenes witnessed and enjoyed beneath the canopies of western forests; and we doubt not, the reminiscences of Heaven sometimes wander back to such rural spots, where "Heaven was begun below!" But to return: the sacramental service which, at that time, was generally more protracted than in our day, was

at length closed, late in the afternoon of a long summer day. Mr. Smith rose to deliver a closing address; but the attention of the audience was disturbed: considerable numbers having many miles to go in order to reach their homes, were rising and dispersing; some setting out on foot, some going to their horses, some disengaging their bridles from the branches of the trees, some preparing to mount, some already mounted, and riding in different directions — presenting altogether a picturesque and striking scene. Mr. Smith, surveying the whole aspect before him, and raising his clear and remarkably piercing voice to a loud and thrilling pitch, commenced, after this manner: “One word to those who are now retiring, and who cannot remain longer with us. We are told that when this supper was celebrated for the first time, none retired from the place until all was over, but Judas. If there be any Judases here, let them go! but let them remember, that what they have heard and seen here to-day, will follow them to their homes and to hell, if they go there!” The effect, it is said, was like an electric shock; they all, with scarcely an exception, returned to their seats and hung upon his lips with fixed attention, until the benediction was pronounced.

The following is an extract from *his will*:—“I give and bequeath to each of my beloved children, a *Bible*, to be paid for out of my personal estate, and in so doing, mean to intimate to them, as I am a dying man and in the sight of God, that it is ten thousand times more my will and desire that they should find and possess the pearl of great price hid in the field of the Scriptures, than enjoy anything else which I can bequeath to them, or even ten thousand worlds, were they all composed of the purest gold and all brim-full of the richest jewels, and yet be ignorant of the precious treasures in God’s word, that are entirely hid from the most eagle-eyed and quick-sighted men that are properly of this world.” We cannot forbear to add that there is good reason to hope that all his children are now with him in heaven.\*

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\* Indeed it is worthy of admiration and praise, that the Lord was truly a covenant God to him and to his seed after him. He trained in

After all that has been said, we know of nothing better suited to give us a full view of the depth and fervency of his piety than the following letter, written more than two years before his death, and addressed to a young minister, though not a very young man, whom he had trained for the sacred office, and who was now just settled as a pastor in an adjoining field.\*

“*Rev. and Dear Sir,*—Grace, mercy, and peace be with you and yours. It might, perhaps, look too much like flattery, to tell you how much I long to see you, and the desire I have for your success in the great work which your divine Master has lately intrusted you with. Dear sir, let me remind you, and myself with you, that such is the greatness, the extreme difficulty of a minister’s work, and the awfully-important consequences of every sermon, of every sentence he delivers in the name of the Eternal God, that every man of the sacred character, who knows what he is about, must often tremble at the thought, and cry out with the Apostle, ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ Who is fit to stand so near to, and personate so glorious and dreadful a God? Who is fit to manage this office, so as to give a good account of it upon the strictest inquiry? Who can discharge it, answerable to that boundless eternal felicity, or extremest everlasting misery, which will enure upon the manner of his executing it? O, what acquaintance with God,

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the nurture and admonition of the Lord *five daughters*, one, who died a peaceful and happy death, in the very bloom of womanhood; the four others became the wives of ministers. These ministers were the Rev. Dr. Welch, of Dayton, the Rev. James Hughes, first President of Miami University, the Rev. Joseph Anderson, lately deceased in Missouri, and the Rev. Dr. William Wylie, of Newark, Ohio. One of his sons died whilst preparing for the ministry. Another, the Rev. David Smith, lived to the age of thirty-two; after preaching with great success, for about nine years, he literally fell in his Master’s work, with his armor on, and “*vici*” on his shield, in the midst of an extensive revival of religion in his congregation. Several of Mr. Smith’s grandchildren became ministers of the Gospel, some of whom are now in the field.

\* Mr. Smith had been appointed to deliver the charge to Mr. Patterson at his ordination; but was prevented from attending on that occasion. And though another had performed that service in his stead, he, in this letter, perhaps at Patterson’s request, sent him the substance of what he had intended and prepared to say in the charge. See Records of 26th Meeting of Presbytery.



what application of mind, what skill, what prudence, what tenderness, what care, what fortitude and courage, does such an one need! In short, if we consider and well survey the important ends of our office, how extremely difficult it is; what discouragements and oppositions we have to encounter, from ourselves, from those we preach to, from the missionaries of hell, who, with a zeal that may reproach our lukewarmness, exert themselves to propagate the contagion of vice, and occasion those to relapse who seemed upon the recovery by our instrumentality, — I say, can we consider this, the important and tremendous ends of our office, and yet yawn and indulge a slothful inactivity in the pursuit of them? Surely, no: but we must be crying out, O, that we could get free from the stupifying influence of sin and sloth! and keep our spirits deeply impressed with the dread importance of eternal things! O, that we were always duly sensible of the worth of the immortal soul! then would we be as watchful over our flocks as their guardian angels.

“But, alas! from hell, too, do our ministrations meet with the most powerful opposition. The very office itself, and ministers for the sake of it, are the butts against which Satan, by his instruments, levels his sharpest darts, well knowing that here are laid the strongest batteries against his kingdom. And, therefore, without doubt, the most faithful ministers are the most assaulted.

“Oh, it is well that the mighty conqueror hath said, ‘Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ In this one blessed promise we find all necessary provision. The officers he employs, in every age, are still entitled to the benefit of this provision, as well as those of the first age. Here, then, my dear son, brother, and friend, while you take heed to fulfil your ministry, you have the greatest encouragement. Though you may be often ready to faint, and so left to feel your weakness and dependence, yet, on the whole, you shall find strength proportioned to the difficulties of your work. For you are a fellow-worker with Him whose designs shall not be frustrated by all the powers of hell. When our dear Lord put you into the ministry, I doubt not at all but he counted it the greatest honor he could put upon you in this mortal life; and he justly expects that you should form the same estimate of it. See that you endeavor always to realize this, and it will much sweeten your work, and raise your grateful wonder. See also that you keep your mind believingly attentive to this promise, ‘Lo! I am with you,’—to qualify and succeed you in whatever work I call you to, ‘Lo! I am with you,’—to comfort you by my grace and Spirit, when your heart is grieved, ‘Lo, I am with you,’—to defend and strengthen you in every trial, though all men should forsake you; and while He stands with you, there can be no just cause of fear or fainting. When you

are exposed to danger, it will comfort your heart that Christ holdeth the stars (his ministers) in his right hand, and none can pluck them thence. If any hurt them, they must strike them *there*. And, therefore, you can suffer nothing but what He permits for gracious ends; and from destructive evils you are altogether safe.

“And now, my dear sir, as you are appointed an instrument to plant the Heavenly world, may you be honored in begetting many souls to Christ, and saving those who shall be your crown of rejoicing in the day of our dear Lord Jesus. Nor will you fail of endless glory, though your hearers should perish by their own fault. From, dear sir,

“Your obedient, affectionate friend,

“JOSEPH SMITH.

“Cross Creek, Jan. 16, 1790.

“REV. MR. PATTERSON.”

Such were the views and sentiments of this western pioneer of the gospel ministry, and “though dead, he yet speaketh.” If the foregoing account of this eminent servant of God be rendered in any measure instrumental in promoting amongst the rising ministry an increased degree of devotion to their sacred work and of love to the souls of men, it will be an abundant compensation for the time and trouble expended in the preparation of this article. To the divine blessing, for this purpose, we commend our humble offering. If this paper shall meet the eye of any of the descendants of the venerated subject of this Memoir, may it contribute to quicken their steps heavenward.

J. S.

*Note.*—The partner of Mr. Smith’s joys and sorrows, who was truly a crown to her husband, Mrs. Esther Smith, survived him for twenty-eight years, and did not reach the goal of her life till she had almost touched the boundaries of fourscore. She was a remarkable woman. Often it might be said “she was an Israelite indeed, and a mother in Israel.” She was the daughter of Mr. William Cummin, merchant, of Cecil County, Maryland. Early in life she knew the Lord, and devoted herself to him. In the twenty-second year of her age she was united in marriage to the subject of the foregoing memoir. They had eight children—three sons and five daughters; all hopefully the children of God. Six of them gave comfortable ground of hope that they entered the heavenly rest of God’s people before their mother. Mary, the wife of the Rev. James Hughes, and Esther, the wife of the Rev. William

Wylie, D. D., survived her. But both have long since joined their pious parents in the heavenly Inheritance, as we confidently and joyfully hope. Mrs. Smith lived with, and sustained, and blessed her husband, more than twenty years, saw him triumphantly depart, and pursued her widowed pilgrimage for a still longer period, before she in turn reached the margin of Jordan, on whose banks she had seen her husband enjoying the visions of the Celestial City. The latter part of her life, particularly after her removal to the State of Ohio — for, having selected the family of the Rev. James Hughes as her earthly home, she went with them to Ohio — was peculiarly useful. Being without any particular charge or incumbrance, she spent a great part of her time among the poor, afflicted, and those who were under exercise about the state of their souls. She did much to relieve and procure relief for their distress. A steady member of female praying societies, she did much to unite Christian females of different denominations in these societies; one of which she attended weekly until a few days before her decease, when she became too weak to walk. She gradually declined, without much pain or sickness. Near the close of life, she sometimes wondered why *the Lord continued her so long in the world*: she feared that she had in some way offended him; and this was a reason why *he did not take her home to himself*. She said, a short time before her death, that she had no hope but through the perfect righteousness of Christ. She had so often (she thought sincerely) given herself to the Lord, she believed he would not cast her off. She slept sweetly in Jesus on the morning of the 7th of October, 1820, in the 78th year of her age, while the family were engaged in their morning devotions, in which the following hymn was sung, though her death was not at that time immediately expected:

“Ye fleeting charms of earth, farewell:  
 Your springs of joy are dry:  
 My soul now seeks another home;  
 A brighter world on high.

“Farewell, ye friends, whose tender care  
 Has long engaged my love;  
 Your fond embrace I now exchange  
 For better friends above.

“Cheerful I leave this vale of tears,  
 Where pains and sorrows grow:  
 Welcome the day that ends my toil,  
 And every scene of woe.

“No more shall sin disturb my breast;  
My God shall frown no more;  
The streams of love divine shall yield  
Transport unknown before.

“Fly, then, ye interposing days;  
Lord, send the summons down:  
The hand that strikes me to the dust  
Shall raise me to a crown.”