THE NARRATIVE OF A PIONEER PREACHER

GEORGE M. SCOTT

OF ALL the figures who have left the imprint of their characters upon the temper and spirit of the American frontier, none has left as enduring a mark as the pioneer preacher. American culture, which is proving itself more and more deeply indebted to the frontier, and especially to the Ohio Valley of frontier days, owes much to these men who brought with them to the new land beyond the Alleghenies ideals of mental as well as of spiritual well-being. As ministers of the gospel they assumed at once, in the communities in which they labored, positions of social importance; in a region where toil and danger were seldom relieved by wholesome diversion, they offered their churches to fill the need. As educated men they brought to their communities a vision of a broader life, of a more abundant life, not only in terms of the spirit, but in terms of education, of expression, and of physical as well as of mental well-being. So long as the frontier endured, its primitive cultural life was dominated by these men, who left as their monuments, not only enviable reputations for service and sacrifice, but also books, magazines, churches, schools, and colleges. When the social history of the frontier is written, the ranks of these men will furnish the heroes.

The records of the activities of frontier leaders too often come to us indirectly. Through the courtesy of Miss Anna J. Jeffery of Waynesburg we are permitted to read a narrative account of the life and experiences of her grandfather, the Reverend George M. Scott, itinerant, missionary to the Ohio Indians, and minister, written by his own hand. The document is in the form of a small notebook of thirty-nine pages.

1 Contributed by Mr. James M. Miller, professor of English and American Literature at Waynesburg College, who has supplied the introduction and the footnotes. The editorial staff is responsible for the final collation of the transcript and for the omission of redundant or unimportant passages. Excerpts from the narrative were read by Mr. Miller at the meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania on January 9, 1934. Ed.
In transcribing the manuscript care has been taken to retain its original flavor. Spellings and punctuation, omissions and repetitions, are reproduced as they occur in the original. The reader will recognize in the temper of the writing the characteristics of an educated man, a good man, and a gentleman. He will regret that the writer is so seldom specific and that he was not a little more alive to what he saw, and he will look in vain for the figure or the phrase that does not echo from the pulpit. But if he cares to read, he cannot fail to find ample evidence of those qualities of frontier character that, may we hope, have still a more than traditional value—a sincere and noble faith, an exalting humility, and a steadfast and triumphant courage.

JAMES M. MILLER

A narrative of some particular incidents and experience in the life of G. M. Scott written for the use of his children at the request of a beloved friend; which is at their disposal, each to take a copy, or if they choose to put to print, as they they [sic] agree among themselves. Written Nov 28, 1846. . . .

I was born in Bucks county, Pensylvania, near the Crooked Billet Nov. 14, 1759. I was religiously brought up, and from an early stage of infancy, I had occasionally serious impressions on my mind, under instructions received from my parents, especially from my mother, who frequently embraced opportunities when alone with us children, of talking with us concerning the necessity of seeking the salvation of our souls. . . .

When taught to read, I became fond of the Bible though I often found passages in it that disturbed my peace; and often under the preaching of the word, my conscience was awakened; but the impressions were soon forgotten, and my convictions were like the morning cloud, and the early dew, that soon passed away and youthful folly returned. . . . At length being called into the service of my country, I was twice out in the military service. I served the last term [?] in the outmost post on the Delaware river three miles above the mouth of the Neversink creek. I found a Soldier's life was not favourable to religion; for although I supported an outward moral character; yet I grew more careless in the exercise of religion. . . .

2 Crooked Billet, now the village of Hatboro, was the scene of a minor engagement of the Revolutionary War. It is described in W. W. H. Davis, "The Battle of the Crooked Billet," in the Bucks County Historical Society, Papers, 2: 173–186 (Riegelsville, Pa., 1909).
About A.D. 1785, I began to study the Latin language under the tuition of a Mr. Hindman, in Hanover township, Dauphin County and boarded the first year with my brother in law John McFerran, and afterwards with a widow Strain who had an excellent library of good books, formerly the property of her brother, the Rev. Mr. Strain deceased. I continued here till I finished my third year, in which I read through the course of Latin and Greek then taught in best institutions, then returned home to my father's house in Northampton County. But as the crops for a number of years had been much destroyed by an insect called the Hessian fly, my father could give me no assistance to pursue my studies, I was therefore obliged to go and teach to obtain money to finish my education. I taught school one year in Oxford, and two years in Greenwich, Sussex County New Jersey. Then entered in the University of Pennsylvania in the city of Philadelphia under the presidency of Dr. John Ewing, where I completed my collegiate education. I left this place about the beginning of June A.D. 1793, the same year in which the Yellow fever made its first appearance in that city. I then taught two years in Easton Pennsylvania, commencing the study of divinity alone (without a teacher) for which, at times for a great number of years, I had a strong desire; but now, the time drew near for me to choose my calling, the awful responsibility of the ministry of the gospel appeared so great, I felt myself so unfit for so important a work, and at the same time being under a cloud of great darkness with regard to my own state I was near the point of giving up my studies, and accepting of an offer made me by Mr. Palmer county surveyor. I determined however still to keep the study of divinity in view, and if it pleased the Lord to clear up my way, and give me light on the subject, I determined to devote myself to the ministry. In the providence of God about the close of my second year in this place, my father received a paralytic stroke, which called me home. While I remained with him, my uncle Dr. Moses Scott came to see him, and brought me a message from Dr. Samuel S. Smith, President of Princeton college, inviting me to come and teach the Grammer school in the College. This opened a way for the better prosecu-

3 Probably the Reverend John Strain, one of the most eloquent of the early ministers, who preached from 1761 until his death in 1774 at Chanceford and Slate Ridge, York County.

4 Dr. Ewing (1732-1802) became provost of the University of Pennsylvania under its new charter in 1779.

5 Dr. Smith (1750-1817) was the son of the Reverend Robert Smith, founder of an academy in Lancaster County. The son was educated there and at Princeton, where he was graduated in 1770. He received his divinity degree at Yale in 1783 and his law degree at Harvard in 1810. He became president of Princeton in 1794.
tion of my studies. And as soon as my father was so far recovered as would permit me to leave him, I went to Princeton and took charge of the Grammar school, and studied with a divinity class under Dr Smith. But in the beginning of my second year I was taken with a hemerage... I then gave up the school and went to New Brunswick to live with my uncle Dr. Scott, and to finish my studies under Dr. Joseph Clark. This was in the summer of 1796.

In August I took a voyage and journey to Balltown Springs in company with my two cousins Hanah Scott, and Mary Smith, wife of a Dr. Smith, and their brother Joseph Warren Scott went with us to Skenectady. We set sail in a sloop at N. Brunswick on the Rariton river, and sailed to New York city; thence up the North river to Albany—Thence by land to Skenectady, and thence to Balltown Saratoga county, N. York State. Here we remained, and partook of the waters for about two weeks. I found considerable benefit from this tour, and returned to Brunswick much improved in health. But the next Spring the spitting of blood returned, and I was very low.

Having gone through a regular course of trials I was licenced to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of New Brunswick May 1797, at which time I was in such a weak state of health that both the physicians and the Presbytery advised me to preach but one sermon in the day (at least) for some time, and that only on the Sabbath day. Indeed none that knew me at that time, expected that I would live to preach many sermons; but a kind Providence has preserved me to see a little more than 87 years and still able to preach occasionally.

Having obtained liberty to itinerate out of the bounds of the Presbytery, after supplying vacancies about three weeks near my father's, I set out for Bath in the Genesee country, in which tour the Rev Asa Dunham accompanied me as far as the Painted Post on the Tioga river. On our way I spent the first Sabbath preaching at Danville Northumberland county (now Columbia) and lodged with my brother in law John McFerran, who accompanied me the next day to my brother William Scott's. From this Mr. Dunham and myself encountered the wilderness and arrived at the painted Post on Thursday evening. There we parted and Mr. Dunham went toward the Seneca lake, and I to Bath, where I preached on Sabbath day and on Tuesday. Then travelled down the

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6 Ballston Spa, a post-town and resort near Saratoga Springs, Saratoga County, New York. Descriptions of the towns mentioned in the narrative as they were in the early nineteenth century may be found in The American Gazetter (third edition, London, 1810).

7 The various examinations, discourses, and trial sermons demanded of candidates by the presbytery.

8 Bath is a post-town on the north bank of Conhocton Creek in Steuben County, New York, eighteen miles northwest of Painted Post.

9 Danville is now in Montour County, formed from Columbia County in 1850.
Tioga river to the North branch of the Susquehanna. Thence up the said river to the Unadilla, preaching at every place where I could obtain even a small\[1\] collection of people. At the settlements near the mouth of the Unadilla considerable awakening took place, which induced me to stay with them near two weeks preaching by day and by night till a missionary came among them from the Eastern States.

I then set out again on my journey, but the first night after I left the Unadilla, I travelled till midnight before I found anyone that would afford me lodging, though there were some rich farms in the way. In the latter part of this night's travel I had 12 miles with but one house. Next day I arrived at Cooperstown at the head of the North branch of the Susquehanna river, where it comes out of lake Otsego. Here I preached an evening sermon to a respectable audience; and Judge Cooper,\[10\] the proprietor of the town, paid me a visit the next morning and gave me a strong invitation to come and settle there; but I wished to travel for my health. From this I passed through Cherry Valley, and to the Mohawk river near Canajoharie—thence down the foresaid river, till I found a road that led to Ballstown. At this place I remained between two and three weeks for the sake of receiving benefit from the springs. I preached to these people two Sabbath days and one week day. The people here proposed to give me a call, but I wished to travel more for my health. Set out on my return home, preached an evening sermon at Skenectady. And the next morning set out for Albany, where I met with my old friend Mr. Rowley from New Market, near Princeton, in whose company I travelled as far as Poukeepsey, where we parted, and I came across New Jersey to my father's house.

In the Spring of 1798, I had a return of spitting blood, and obtained liberty at the Spring meeting of Presbytery again to itinerate out of their bounds during the Summer months. May 17—I was married to Anna Rea, daughter of Sam' Rea Esq' of Mount Bethel. Some time in June set out accompanied with my father in law to see our friends in Washington County where I remained preaching in the vacancies in the bounds of the Presbytery of Ohio five weeks in which time I formed some acquaintance with the people of Mill Creek and the Flatts congregations.\[11\] After my return I spent the remainder of the Summer and Fall in the bounds of the Presbytery of New Brunswick untill the


\[11\] The Presbytery of Ohio was formed in 1793 from that portion of the Presbytery of Redstone west of the Monongahela River. Mill Creek is a small stream emptying into the Ohio River about forty-three miles below Pittsburgh. The Flats settlement, now Fairview, is a small village in Hancock County, West Virginia.
meeting of Synod in October, at Newark; when I was appointed to ride as a missionary for 5 months in a part of New York State lying between Owasco lake and the Genesee river. And the Presbytery of New Brunswick was authorized to ordain me as an Evangelist, if the way be clear. Accordingly I was ordained, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery at the city of New Brunswick Nov. 7, 1798.

Set out on my missionary tour Nov. 15. Hugh Foresman Esq' accompanied me to Sheshequin within a few miles of Tioga point. We were detained at Wilksbarry a day or two on account of a deep snow that fell before we could leave the town. As soon as we dared venture we set out up the North branch of the Susquehanna river to Sheshequin where I began my missionary labors. From this I crossed over the river preached in a small settlement then proceeded down the East side of the lake to its outlet visiting and preaching in every settlement as I went along. Thence down the Seneca river to the little saltworks where was a small town called Montazuma. From this I returned up the Owasco lake to its head, then back to Milton on the Cayuga lake. Here it pleased the Lord to bless my labor with more than common success. This induced me to continue preaching to this people and the neighbouring settlements for near one month, laboring both by night and by day (This people sent in a call for me to the Spring meeting of Presbytery, as will appear in its proper place) From this I visited all the settlements between the Seneca and Cayuga lakes passing on to Geneva, to Canandaug and other settlements to Williamsburgh on the Genesee river: and thence down to Bath and to Newton. And now the time of my mission drawing toward a close, and a great appearance of a thaw I found it would be necessary for me to return home as I had a number of large creeks to cross and neither bridges nor ferries over them. Accordingly I set out in company with a traveler, and although this was near the last of March, we rode a good part of the way on the ice of Tioga river and that night the river broke up.

Sheshequin and Tioga Point (now Athens) are in Bradford County. Athens is at the confluence of the Chemung (Tioga) River and the North Branch of the Susquehanna.

Montezuma is in Cayuga County, New York, ten miles from Auburn.

In 1810 Milton, near the southern extremity of Cayuga Lake, had a population of 3,553. The American Gazetteer (third edition).

Geneva, Canandaiga, and Williamsburgh are in Ontario County, New York. Geneva is at the north end of Seneca Lake and Canandaiga at the north end of Canandaigua Lake on the site of an old Indian town. Newtown is in Tioga County between the south end of Seneca Lake and the Tioga River.
After a long and tedious journey, having, through the good hand of Providence, escaped dangers at several times from high waters, I arrived at home April 5, 1799. In this tour the Lord was pleased to keep up my spirit during a very inclement season, and to preserve my health in a wonderful manner, although often exposed to bitter storms, and employed in incessant labor and fatigue. It was however a pleasant mission to me, especially where I could discover anything like feeling under the word. I trust my labor was not in vain, this however will be decided at another day.

I attended Presbytery April 17, 1799 at the city of New Brunswick, where two calls were put into my hands, one from the Congregation of Milton on the East side of Cayuga lake with a letter informing me that the Congregationalists and Presbyterians had united in that Congregation on the very same plan on which the two denominations formed the union of 1801. The other call was from the united Congregations of Mill Creek and the flats. I accepted the last of these two calls, and received my dismission from the Presbytery of New Brunswick, to join that of Ohio.

July 1, 1799 we set out with our moving to the West. At Shippensburg we spent the Sabbath, when I attended public worship at Middle Spring and heard Dr. Cooper and Mr. Laird preach. The next week we arrived at the East side of Laural Hill, where I preached on Sabbath day to a housefull of people although notice was not give till late a Saturday evening. On Saturday following we arrived in the bounds of Mill Creek Congregation, and I took the charge of both Congregations.

About the year 1800 the Reverend Thomas Edgar Hughes was sent on a mission to Detroit and visited on his way the Wiondot tribe of Indians at lower

16 The preaching of the Congregational ministers of New England and the Presbyterian ministers was very similar. Regulated cooperation was proposed by the Congregational Association of Connecticut in 1801 and a plan of union was adopted by the Presbyterian General Assembly. In 1802 this plan was unanimously adopted by the Connecticut association. George P. Hays, Presbyterians, 155-158 (New York, 1892).

17 Shippensburg, Cumberland County, laid out in 1749 by Edward Shippen, is one of the oldest towns west of the Susquehanna River. It was an important town on the early pioneer route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and Wheeling and until the opening of the nineteenth century was the terminal of the stage route from Lancaster westward. Middle Spring is a village a few miles north of Shippensburg.

18 Thomas E. Hughes (1769-1838) was a native of York County and a younger brother of the Reverend James Hughes, who was an organizer of the Ohio Presbytery and one of the early editors of the Western Missionary Magazine. Thomas Hughes was an important figure in the Erie Presbytery; he served the New Salem and Mount Pleasant churches in Beaver County and engaged in several missionary tours to the western country.
Sandusky,\(^{19}\) who gave some encouragement to send a missionary among them accordingly a Mr. Alex’ Cook was ordained an evangelist to go and preach the gospel to them but he could not remain there, as they would not receive him.\(^{20}\) But in the year 1802, if my memory serves me right Dr. McMillan and Brother Macurdy proposed making another trial, and requested me to undertake the tour, to which I readily consented.\(^{21}\) Accordingly I set out accompanied with a Mr Alex’ Mathews.\(^{22}\) A young man who had been taken prisoner with these Indians and brought up with them from his childhood, whose name was Hampton Northrop was our interpreter. When we arrived at Sandusky he had the Indians collected to hear me. To them I preached two or three times and proposed to take any of their children to receive an education without cost to them. On Friday our interpreter left us and went to Detroit but before he left us a half blood Indian named Barnet came to converse with me; the Lord had touched his heart, and he was under deep distress of mind. I tried to direct his attention to the cross of Christ, and open up to him the plan of salvation—and to guard him against resting on any false ground of hope and pointed out the evidences of a true conversion. On Saturday morning we considered it useless to stay here without an interpreter, and concluded that we could spend the Sabbath in the woods better than here. Accordingly we set out for home, accompanied with two young Indians of the Mohawk nation the one named Peter Johnson and the other Isaac —— with a design to go to school. They took us to the old Coscusky path\(^{23}\) along which we travelled till we came to a small stream

19 Lower Sandusky, at the head of navigation on the Sandusky River in northern Ohio, was on the main route of travel between the head of the Ohio River and Detroit. Until Wayne’s victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794 it was an important Wyandot village. In 1850 its name was changed to Fremont. The Wyandots were also known as Hurons.

20 Alexander Cook (1760-1828), a Canonsburg silversmith, was licensed by the Presbytery of Ohio in 1802. He served as pastor of the churches of New Castle and Slippery Rock from 1803 to 1810. In addition to his missionary tours to the western Indians he served as missionary in South Carolina and Georgia.

21 The Reverend John McMillan (1752-1833) is famous in the annals of the Presbyterian church as one of the five founders of Redstone Presbytery in 1781 and as the principal founder of Jefferson College, Canonsburg. The Reverend Elisha Macurdy (1759-1845) was also prominent in the frontier church. He served for thirty-seven years at Cross Roads and Three Springs in the Presbytery of Ohio.

22 His name is also recorded as William Matthews. He was a brother of John Matthews, pupil and parishioner of Scott’s. History of the Presbytery of Washington, 430 (Philadelphia, 1889).

23 The Kuskuskie Path was a well-known path of communication between Pittsburgh and Sandusky. After leaving Kuskuskie, about forty miles north of Logstown, on the Beaver River, it sought the divide between the Lake Erie watershed and that of the Ohio River
about the middle of Sandusky plains, called Pipe creek, and here we encamped, spancelling our horses with elm bark. Next morning being Sabbath, having resolved to spend the day here in the best manner we could, we paid no attention to our horses till after worship and breakfast, when we could hear no sound of the bell. Mr. Mathews then got on their trail and pursued them; for then it was evident the bark of their spancels had slipped loose. Isaac had brought a horse with him which he had spancelled with an Indian hoppes [sic], he therefore caught his own horse, and follow[ed] Mathews. He returned about noon and gave us to understand that Mathews took his horse and was pursuing ours. This was a sore trial; yet I spent that day I think comfortably; I saw the providence of God in the dispensation, and was brought in some measure to submit. In the evening Mr. Mathews returned about sunset, but no horses, he had followed them to the out edge of the plains, and their trail could not easily be followed further. Next morning we packed our saddles and baggage on Isaac’s horse, and took it afoot ourselves. In the plain our bag of provision had fell off and was Lost, so that we were obliged to live that day that night and all next day without any thing to eat only one place we found some crab apples, and another a few half ripe winter grapes; but in the evening where we encamped, we shot a racoon which we roasted and eat without bread or salt. On Wednesday we came to Cleveland from which we received good treatment all the way home. Isaac went home again but Peter continued at school for some time.

The next summer I was sent out again accompanied with a Mr. John Bruce, a student of divinity. We were kindly received at Sandusky where I preached once or twice then set out for Browns town, Detroit river. I preached on Sabbath to the white people on the river Raison then proceeded to Brownstown on Monday where a Roman priest who was then with them, forbid them to hear me. I therefore wrote to Mr. Duet the Indian agent, who recommended them and followed it to the headwaters of the Sandusky River. Accounts of the Ohio trails are in Archer B. Hulbert, The Indian Thoroughfares of Ohio, 264-295 (Ohio Archeological and Historical Society, Publications, vol. 8—Columbus, 1900) and in Frank N. Wilcox, Ohio Indian Trails (Cleveland, 1933). See also Lewis Evans’ map of 1755 and Thomas Hutchins’ map of 1764.

24 After the loss of their horses the party seems to have diverged northward from the Kuskuskie Path to the Lake Shore Path.

25 About twenty miles south of Detroit.

26 Undoubtedly Mr. Charles Jouett, who was Indian agent at Detroit from 1802 to 1805. Milo M. Quaife, ed., The John Askin Papers, 2: 472 n. (Burton Historical Records —Detroit, 1928).
to hear me. The same evening two chiefs came down from Detroit who obtained a hearing for me the next day—after preaching here I returned to the river Raisin where I preached and formed a congregation. From this we returned to Lower Sandusky, and after spending a day or two here we went to upper Sandusky where I preached here I returned to the river Raisin where I preached and formed a congregation. From this we returned to Lower Sandusky, and after spending a day or two here we went to upper Sandusky where I preached on Friday and was asked to preach on Saturday. This was a trying case for me, as I had made an appointment at Mrs Whitakers 44 miles from this on Sabbath day; I agreed however if they would meet when the Sun is about an hour high. They met accordingly and I preached to them, after which Old Crain, the head chief paid a short address to me to the following effect. He thanked me for coming to declare the truth to them; for they had need of instruction. He thanked the great council (the Synod) for sending us; and he prayed that the great Spirit would conduct us safe home to our own fire's side. He then addressed his people to this effect. Brothers, our father has told us the truth, listen to him; and now to shew our approbation, let us all shake hands with him. Then the old chief came forward and shook hands with us and the next and next chief; Then the rest of the males from the old grey headed man to the little boy—and lastly from the oldest woman to the little girl. Then two of the chiefs went and brought our horses and held our stirrups for us to get on. Such a manifestation of respect, I have never met before nor since. That night we rode to Spicer's village about 28 miles. Next day I preached at the house of Mrs. Whitaker to quite a large society of Indians, and after sermon had considerable conversation with Barnet who seems to have obtained a comfortable hope.

On Monday morning Mr. Spicer came with little son James about 5, or 6 years old for me to take him with me. We therefore set out for home with James Whitaker and James Spicer to receive and [sic] education, and old Mr Spicer conveyed us two days in the Wilderness. This man was taken prisoner when a child was married to a Squaw of the Seneca nation. On my return I was taken with the billious remitting fever near Jeromestown and rode home with it on my back. I was confined with this complaint till late in the fall when

27 A Wyandot village forty miles south of Lower Sandusky. It is famous as the scene of the burning of Colonel William Crawford.

28 Chief Crane (Tarhe) was a famous Wyandot chief. There is a sketch of him in Edward L. Taylor, Monuments to Historical Indian Chiefs, 3-9 (Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society, Publications, vol. 9—Columbus, 1901).

29 Jeromestown, in Ashland County, Ohio, on a branch of the Mohican River. It was an Indian trading post established by a Frenchman named Jerome. Scott is now on the Great or Big Trail from Detroit to Pittsburgh.
it fell into my legs, and in the Spring it turned to the shaking ague, which continued with me till August.

About A.D. 1825 or 1826 I gave up my charge of the Flatts congregation on account of ill health, and their having an opportunity of uniting with another congregation which had lately become vacant; and the congregation of Mill Creek took the whole of my time where I continued to labor till the winter of the year 1838, when being afflicted with a calculous complaint became unable to ride, I considered it to be my duty to resign my charge and Presbytery at my request dissolved the union, and the congregation was declared vacant. I continued, however, as a stated supply for one year.

Thus have I labored forty years in this place, I trust not in vain. I have reason, indeed, to be astonished at, and to adore the goodness, and long suffering patience of God, in bearing with my faults and failings, which have been great and exceeding many...

My labors here I trust have not been in vain. The Lord has been pleased to bless them I trust to the salvation of a goodly number of souls; and with heart felt gratitude I would record it to the honour of his name.

When I first arrived in the bounds of Mill Creek congregation in the Summer of 1799, I found that a considerable awakening had taken place under the preaching of Mr. Thomas Edgar Hughes, then a licenciate under the care of the Presbytery of Ohio, and that fall 33 were admitted to the privileges of the church on examination. In the year 1802 the Lord was pleased to give us a refreshing shower in which 25 were added to the church. One evening during this refreshing season, after social worship at the house of David Kerr—(one of our elders) a number tarried awhile for religious conversation, when seven children of, perhaps, from six to twelve years of age were brought under serious impressions, which continued for some length of time. All but one of these have since become hopeful members of the church.

In the year 1803 the work known by the appellation of the bodily or falling exercise began in the Presbyterian churches, and spread throughout the

30 A manifestation of the Great Revival, symptoms of which were in evidence in western Pennsylvania as early as 1797. The spirit of the revival burst forth in the Red River and Muddy River sections of Kentucky, swept in a wave of enthusiasm through the settlements of the upper Ohio Valley, and came to the pious Scotch-Irish of western Pennsylvania as an answer to their oft-repeated prayers for the regeneration of the world.

31 The "falling exercises," the "jerks," the "barkings," the "shoutings," were evidences of emotional excesses accompanying the revival to which many conservative Presbyterians objected. Few accounts of early revivals fail to note remarkable exercises among children.
whole bounds of our Presbyteries West of the mountains. The work indeed appeared strange. The bodies of the subjects were so effected that they became entirely powerless, and some would lie from two to twenty four hours speechless and helpless. Yea, I attended one young woman who remained thirty six hours in that state. The pulse was regular the whole time, only sometimes a little higher and quicker than in common health. This work has been condemned by many pious ministers and people, who were not conversant in it. Indeed I felt opposed to it before it came among us. I considered it to be an enthusiastic rant, till it brake out in my own charge, when in examining the subjects I found the exercise of the mind of every one with whom the work began was entirely rational, and those who were admitted to the privileges of the church have generally given good evidence of their piety. The cause of the bodily agitation appeared to be the sudden deep impression on the mind, as there is such a near connection between the body and mind, that whatever effects the one will affect the other more or less. The agitation of the body therefore appeared to be a mere effect produced by these sudden impressions. This, however, may be mechanically produced by the art of imposture, and therefore no evidence of a saving work of grace; it is the exercise of the mind that proves the work. Our Presbyterian ministers and Church sessions therefore were cautious on this point. The number admitted during this excitement, in my charge was 58. From this time till the year 1816 the annual admissions varied from 1 to 15. In the Fall of 1816, I preached at the house of a Mr Corey in an out quarter of the Flatts congregation, in the neighbourhood of Muchmore's bottom, on the Ohio river, where there was but little regard paid to religion or the Sabbath day. The house (which was not large) was much crowded, and a solemn attention was paid. After the people were dismissed and gone out, an old gentleman, who had lately moved into the neighbourhood, and who was a member of the Secession church, called the people together, and observed, that as there were none of the denomination to which he belonged near, he wished to have preaching to which he might occasionally attend, he therefore proposed to have a subscription draw[n] up, for me to preach to them one weekday every month, provided I would consent. This was immediately agreed to among themselves, and they came and proposed the same to me; to which I made answer, that as they lived contiguous to, and, for the most part, within reach of the Flatts meeting house, whatever they chose to subscribe, they might subscribe to that little congregation which (through removals) had become exceeding weak, and I would preach to them on the last

32 The author probably means the Cumberland church.
Wednesday of every month, as long as God in his providence should enable me. To this they readily agreed; and Mr. John McMillan, an elder of the Flatts congregation being present, providentially had a subscription paper in his pocket, which he presented, and the head of every family there, beside several young men subscribed to it. (I have been more particular in this relation on account of the remarkable Providence that appeared through the whole) From this time a season of grace began to be manifested in this moral desert, which spread into the congregation, the fruits of which were 17 admitted on examination.

A communion was appointed in Mill Creek in September 1817, and on the preparation Sabbath, I proposed, according to our custom, to appoint a day to converse with applicants; but everything appeared to indicate a deadness in the congregation (not having partaken of the Shower on the Flatts and Muchmore's bottom) and having no applicants on the last occasion, Session thought it best to publish that no appointments would be made; but if any wished to make application, they might come to my house and bring the elder of the quarter with them. But I thought that from the dark appearance we had the more need to meet, and pray for better times. I therefore proposed to meet, and if no applicants came forward we would spend the day in social prayer. To this the Session cordially agreed. A day was therefore appointed, and publication of the agreement made. On the day appointed we were all astonished to find the congregation generally met for social worship, and there were so many applicants, that like Jacob, we were constrained to acknowledge, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and we knew it not.' We therefore concluded that I and a part of the Session would take a seat out of doors to converse with applicants, while the other part went in and attended the prayer meeting. On that occasion we admitted 29 on examination, and 6 in December following. During that year I baptized 6 Adults. In 1818 we received on examination 32, so the fruits of that awaking from 1816 was 76 of whom I baptized adults 13.

In 1821 a remarkable reviving season was graciously afforded, which lasted with little or no abatement about five years, the fruits of which at Mill Creek were 111, and at the Flatts about as many 96 of whom were admitted before I was dismissed from that congregation. Adults baptized during that time 47.

During this last excitement the Lord was pleased to favour me with an uncommon degree of health and strength so that I was enabled to preach and labor day and night especially in the Winter during the whole five years, and twice I rode round the outskirts of both congregations and preached eleven sermons, and attended five praying societies in one week on each of these tours.
Our meeting for prayer was at early dawn, at which we spent from half an hour to an hour in prayer. O how precious was that season! To God be the glory.

In the fall of 1826 (if I remember right) the pastoral relation between me and the Flatts congregation was dissolved, and the congregation of Mill Creek took the whole of my labors till the Winter of 1838 when, through age and bodily infirmity, I thought it my duty to give up the charge, that the people might have the opportunity of obtaining one that was able to undergo the labors of a pastor. Nevertheless I continued to preach to them as a stated supply till Jan' 1839. Thus I have preached to this people 40 years, through the kind providence of God, and still feel attached to them with a paternal affection.

Since giving up my charge I have labored under serious difficulties of mind to know whether my resignation was agreeable to the mind and will of God. . . . Soon after my dismission a great division and contention arose about giving a call to a certain young minister, which contention threatened to rend the congregation. . . . I have often feared, that it was a chastisement both upon myself and the congregation. If so, I pray that it may be sanctified to us both.

In the Fall of 1840 the congregation presented a call to the Rev'd John B. McCoy;\(^3\) but they enjoyed his labors but a short time for in the fall of 1841, having attended Presbytery at West Liberty, he went from them accompanied with his wife and child to the town of Wheeling to see his brother in law, and on the next morning, set out for West Alexandria when descending a hill a short distance from Wheeling town, the horse took fright, ran away overset and broke the carriage kicked and broke the thigh of Mr McCoy, with which together with other injuries received from the fall, he survived but a day or two. This strange Providence was a sore stroke on the congregation.

In Oct' 1842 a call was forwarded from the congregation for the ministerial labors of Mr David Robinson which he accepted, was ordained and enthralled in April 1843 and has since continued the regular pastor of this church—\(^4\) Since my dismission I have occasionally preached here and the neighbouring congregations when they send for me. Through the kind hand of Providence I have been enabled to preach as usual when called upon, and have frequently been sent for by the congregation of Fair View (formerly the Flatts)

\(^3\) John B. McCoy was received as a candidate by the Washington Presbytery in 1837; he was dismissed to the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1837 and from it in 1839; and he was installed in the Mill Creek church in November, 1840.

\(^4\) David Robinson (1809–1861) was born at Cross Creek, was graduated from Washington College in 1837, was licensed in 1841, and was ordained at Mill Creek in April, 1842, where he remained twelve years.
I have had several tours to Cross Road (Florence) Frankfort, and Bethlehem (near Safe harbour) twice to Wellsville and Sharron (formerly Flaugherty) one to Mohawk tour, to the Scotch Settlement, and Longs Run; besides several tours to Wellsburgh, Va. and three times on a visit to my friends at Cross, where I preached each time and once at Mount Prospect, Upper Buffalo and Middle-town. It still rejoices my heart to have an opportunity to proclaim the glad news of salvation to my fellow men. O that God would give grace to improve the few days of sojourning here in such a manner that his glory may be advanced, and my own soul may be edified.

Thus, my dear children, I have given you a condensed and hasty narrative of some of the most important events of my life, together with some of the wonders of grace which the Lord has permitted me to witness in the congregations over which his Providence had placed me, and in which I labored 40 years. . . .

And now, my dear children, I shall conclude this epistle with my last and dying advice.

I. Let me earnestly beseech you to 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Thousands deceive themselves on this point, and Satan is always ready to confirm the deception, so that you cannot be too much on your guard against his wily insinuations. . . . There are great mistakes with regard to the doctrine of assurance. Some make it the very essence of faith, and this opinion has a tendency to cast the young soldier of the cross into despondency instead of encouraging him. . . .

II. Remember you are not called into the fold of Christ merely to seek your own benefit, or your own salvation; but the salvation of others also. . . .

1. Such of you as have children, they need your special care and attention, and you are bound by the strongest ties, not only to provide for their temporal wants, and to have them well educated at school, but also to use every means to bring them up in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord. What an awful account will many parents have to render, of the manner in which they have brought up their children! What care and pains do many take to have their children well clothed, and well instructed in literature, and polite behaviour (which is right in its place) while the immortal soul is neglected. . . . Multitudes of parents seldom (if ever) pray with or for their children, and by this neglect children are taught never to pray for themselves. Many men, not only restrain prayer, but lead their children by example to abominable vices. Hence you will generally see a drunken, Swearing, Sabbath breaking parent have drunken, swearing, Sabbath breaking children. Example has a powerful
influence on the young and tender mind. How important, then, is it to maintain a walk and conversation according to Godliness before your children or domesticks.

2. The cause of God, in general throughout the world has a demand upon you. You are hired in the vineyard of Christ, not to stand idle there, but to work as you are enabled in supporting the gospel, and the cause of religion, and in spreading the gospel to the utmost heathen lands. . . .

And now, that the God of peace may bless you with all the blessings of his grace—strengthen you in the inward man, establish you in the faith and prepare you for the enjoyment of himself in that happy region, wherein your worst enemy can never enter, is the sincere prayer of Your affectionate father.

Finished Dec' 15, 1846