

Early Pittsburgh Presbyterianism

Tracing
THE DEVELOPMENT
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
in
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
FROM 1758-1839

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EARLY PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERIANISM

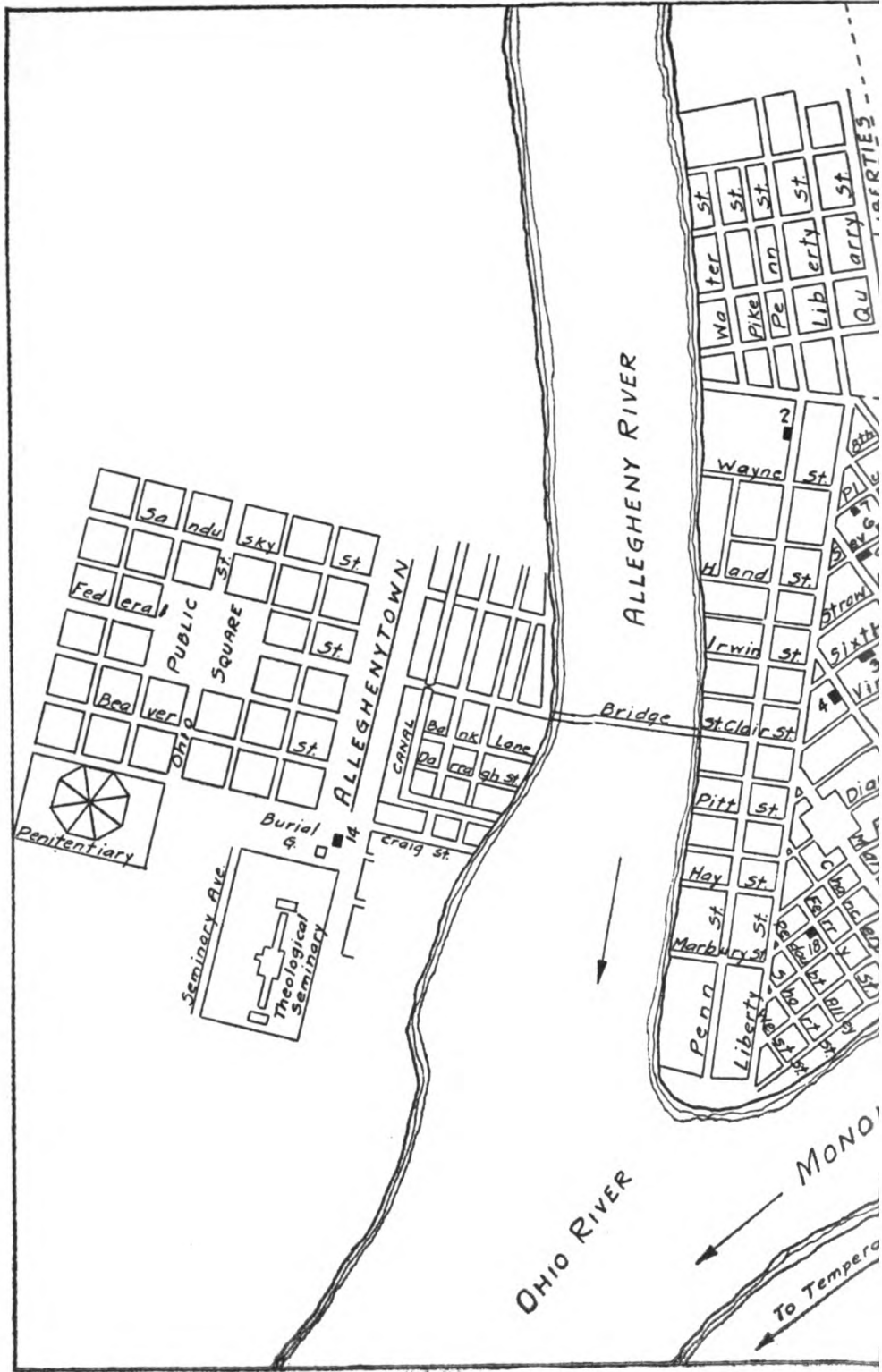
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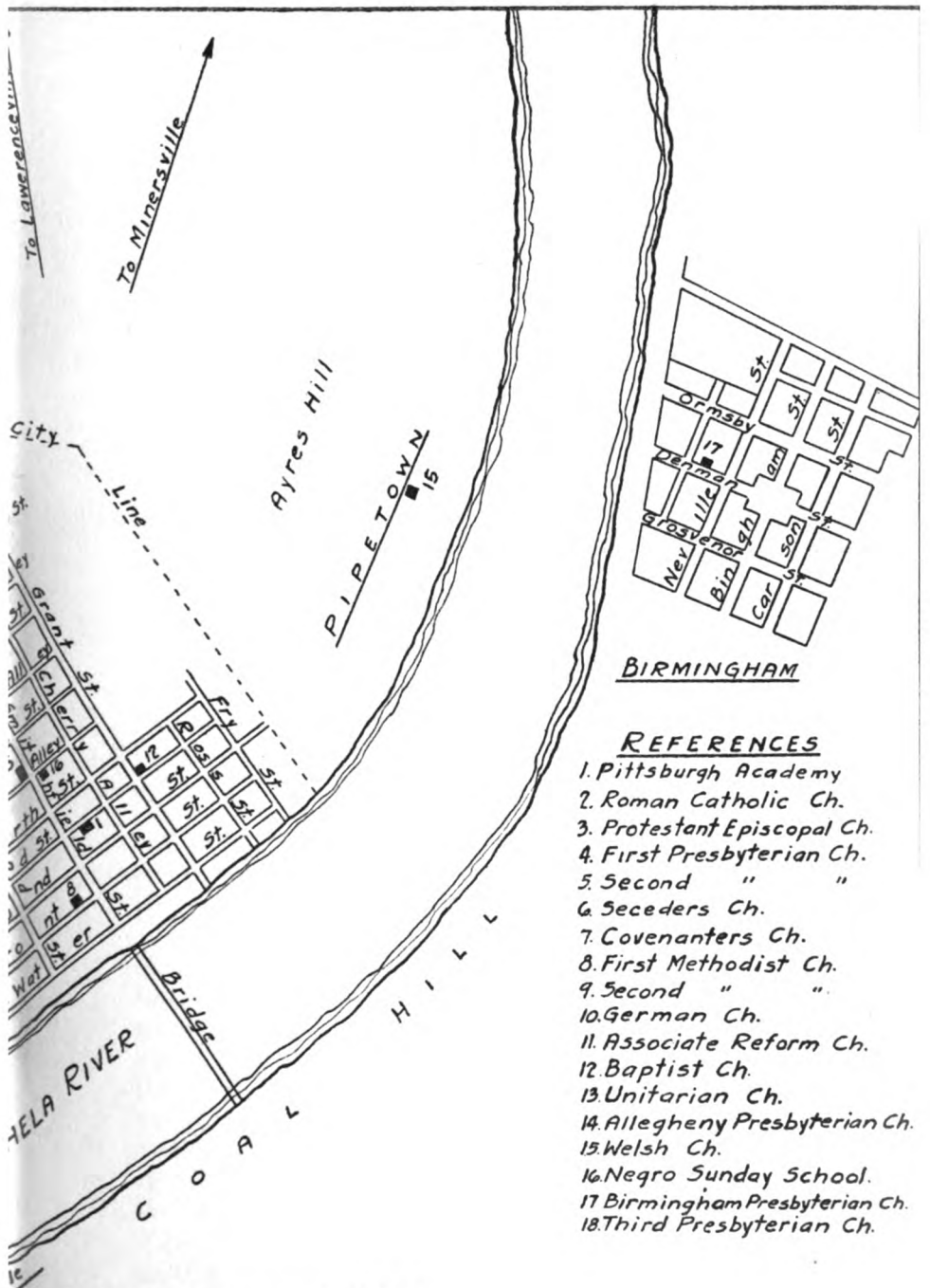
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REFERENCES

1. Pittsburgh Academy
2. Roman Catholic Ch.
3. Protestant Episcopal Ch.
4. First Presbyterian Ch.
5. Second " "
6. Seceders Ch.
7. Covenanters Ch.
8. First Methodist Ch.
9. Second " "
10. German Ch.
11. Associate Reform Ch.
12. Baptist Ch.
13. Unitarian Ch.
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15. Welsh Ch.
16. Negro Sunday School.
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PITTSBURGH about 1826
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PREFACE

The purpose of the present volume is to trace the early history and resulting growth in Pittsburgh of that branch of the Presbyterian Church which is designated officially as the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The study closes with the year 1839.

It is an outgrowth of the author's long cherished desire to become better acquainted with the personalities that contributed to the subsequent years of Presbyterian influence in the City of Pittsburgh. It is given to the public in the hope that a similar interest might be stirred in the heart of the thousands who share in the heritage of a glorious past. Pertinent information has been gathered from a wide range of primary and secondary source material to which detailed reference is made in the numerous footnotes listed as the narrative progresses. The expansion of the institutional agencies is described and special emphasis placed on the educational and reform work stimulated by religious zeal. Four appendices, extending over forty-five pages, present detailed numerical and financial information in statistical summaries and diagrams. A map and numerous illustrations make the story more vivid. A comprehensive bibliography concludes the study.

The author is especially indebted to Dr. Alfred P. James, of the Department of History of the University of Pittsburgh, for the experienced counsel and scholarly suggestions that served as a guide to available source material. He would also acknowledge his debt to Dr. Thomas C. Pears, who placed at the writer's disposal the splendid collection of manuscript materials that are the possession of the Presbyterian Historical Society at Philadelphia. Helpful cooperation was also given by the staff of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society and the librarian of the Western Theological Seminary.

In this connection also cordial thanks are extended to the pastors of the Presbyterian Churches throughout the Pitts-

burgh district for the use of cuts and historical materials. Their trust in a fellow minister at times extended beyond the limits of prudence, as they permitted him to carry to his home the original Minutes of Churches, which, if lost, could never be replaced.

A concluding mention should also be made of the Reverend Professor Frederick W. Loetscher, LL.D., of Princeton, New Jersey, who carefully corrected the manuscript before it appeared as a series of articles in the *Journal of The Department of History of the Presbyterian Church*.

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INTRODUCTION

With a justifiable measure of denominational pride and with a fair degree of statistical accuracy, Presbyterians refer to Pittsburgh as a "Presbyterian City." It is the recognized center of Presbyterian activity and includes more Presbyterian churches and communicants than any other metropolis in the United States. The Pittsburgh Presbytery, which covers approximately the geographical limit of Allegheny County, is the leading Presbytery in the entire denomination. It reports annually the largest church and Sunday school membership and the greatest total of contributions for all religious purposes. Included in that membership has been an unusually large number of capable leaders whose talents and energy have played a dominant part in developing the industrial and cultural life of an expanding city.¹ Though in recent decades the power and prestige of the denomination has been receding before the advance of newer racial groups, the imprint of the thought and ideals of the dominant Scotch and Irish Presbyterians is still reflected impressively in the achievements and traditions of the Pittsburgh district. To seek an explanation of that fact and thereby to bring into clear historical perspective the personalities and forces that contributed to the early establishment and development of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism is the author's purpose in the pages which follow.²

The narrative centers around the activities of the Presbyterian churches and institutions which lie within the territorial limits of the present City of Pittsburgh. Outside those limits

¹ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., 1937*, p. 845.

² The research out of which this volume has developed was undertaken originally as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh and was carried forward under the guidance of Dr. Alfred P. James, Professor of History in that institution. The bulk of the material was subsequently printed in a series of articles which appeared in three consecutive issues of the *Journal of the Department of History of The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1937-38.*

lay a number of strong rural churches which were thriving and impressive organizations throughout those long years of difficult beginnings while the congregations in Pittsburgh were weak and struggling against numerous discouraging elements. These rural churches for many years upheld successfully the banner of faith and morality and exerted a profound influence in developing the religious ideals of Western Pennsylvania. They lifted the moral tone of the surrounding communities and released from their membership a steady stream of church workers who moved to Pittsburgh and united with the less vigorous congregations within the city. A brief survey of the rise of these influential rural churches forms the necessary background for an intelligent understanding of the growth of Presbyterianism within the urban area.

The period under review opens with the first visit to Pittsburgh of a Presbyterian preacher on November 28, 1758, and closes with the hampering schism which on August 9, 1839, divided the denomination into the New School and Old School groups. On that latter date the influential and prosperous Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh withdrew from the denominational fold and united with the New School branch. Similar action had been taken by the small Minersville Church nearly a year previous. This schismatic action destroyed for three decades the unity of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism and so forms the logical terminus of a study designed to trace the growth of the united work of the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. However, this same Third Church thirty years later was to be the memorable scene of the merging into national unity of the Old School branch with its 252,555 communicants and the New School branch numbering 184,687. That welcomed reunion was consummated in Pittsburgh, November 12, 1869.³

The present work then seeks to make vivid the onward movement of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism during those eighty-one years of alternate failures and successes as a numerically small group of religiously minded people struggled to elevate

³ "The Presbyterian Union at Pittsburgh," *Harpers Weekly*, December 4, 1869. Framed copy at the Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

the cultural and religious outlook of a strategically located community. It aims to enter intimately into the program, policies and preaching only of that branch of the Presbyterian family which is known officially as "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." That complete denominational designation is intended to distinguish it from the allied religious groups which together form the Presbyterian family and which have always coöperated closely in enlarging the religious activities of a community destined to develop from a frontier trading-post into an expanding city.

Like other major Protestant Church organizations, the Presbyterian family includes a number of distinct ecclesiastical units which are incorporated separately, but which have a common heritage and a basic unity in historic creedal statements.⁴ Different racial backgrounds and schisms have led, however, to the separate organization of distinct denominations within the Presbyterian group. Of these, the largest branch is The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In its early American history it represents the merging of the French Huguenots and the Scotch and Scotch-Irish with their Presbyterian brethren from England and Wales. It was organized into a Presbytery in 1706; grew into a Synod in 1717, with four constituent Presbyteries; and subsequently developed into a General Assembly in 1789, composed of sixteen Presbyteries and four Synods.⁵

The years of growth brought further enlargement and changes in Presbyterial and Synodical boundaries, with the result that the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., now includes 44 Synods and 282 Presbyteries.⁶ Of these Presbyteries, the Pittsburgh Presbytery is the strongest both numerically and financially.

At different periods the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., has suffered from schisms which resulted in separate denominations. Some of these schisms have been healed. From 1741

⁴ William H. Roberts, *A Concise History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (1917), p. 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19 ff., 43 ff.

⁶ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., 1937*, p. 809.

to 1758 the Church was split into the New Side and Old Side groups, based on differing views of evangelism. Again in 1837 the Church divided into the New School and Old School, and remained apart until 1869.⁷

Other schisms were more lasting. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized from the mother Church in 1810, but was reunited with the parent body in 1906. Slavery, with its political complications, formed the basis of another schism in 1861, when "The Presbyterian Church in the United States" became a separate organization.⁸

The United Presbyterian Church, formed by a union in 1858 at Pittsburgh of the Associate and Associate Reformed Churches, has never been an organic part of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. Both of its constituent Churches trace their origin to the secession movements in the Church of Scotland.⁹ The Reformed Presbyterian Church is likewise an off-shoot of these secession movements in Scotland and has always maintained its ecclesiastical independence of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.¹⁰ Both the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the constituent bodies which formed the United Presbyterian Church had established preaching missions and churches in the early frontier period of Western Pennsylvania and were influential forces in shaping the religious life of Pittsburgh.¹¹ The details of their work in Pittsburgh do not lie within the scope of this investigation, which aims merely to tell the story of the developing life of only one branch of the Presbyterian family, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

The early history of Presbyterian progress in Pittsburgh divides itself logically into two contrasted periods or eras. The initial period, which is covered in the first six chapters,

⁷ Roberts, *A Concise History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, p. 63.

⁸ This is the official title of the denomination which is referred to frequently as The Southern Presbyterian Church. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹ Charles H. Small, *Corner-Stones of Faith, or The Origin and Characteristics of the Christian Denominations in the United States*, p. 153.

¹⁰ Marybelle Pierce, "The Establishment of the Associate, Reformed and Associate Reformed Churches in Western Pennsylvania" (1931), p. 16 ff. (An unpublished thesis, University of Pittsburgh.)

is the story of the years of discouragement and slow growth during which organized religion struggled to maintain itself in the face of persistent indifference. At times the lamp of faith seemed almost extinguished and only the most meager evidences of religious life are apparent. Even these feeble traces of religious activity sometimes disappear entirely, compelling the historian to leave two brief gaps in his chronological narrative as he seeks to piece together the records of those fruitless years of difficult beginnings.

This long initial period of fruitless effort closed with the year 1811, a year made memorable by the coming to Pittsburgh of the Reverend Francis Herron, whose notable pastorate of forty years in the First Church witnessed a transformation in the religious attitudes of the city. His coming, and the arrival a few years later of the Reverend Elisha Swift, ushered in a triumphant era in which faith and spiritual energy changed a worldly industrial center into a community where Christian ideals became dominant for nearly three generations. These two Presbyterian clergymen were among the most gifted and creative personalities ever to serve in any Presbyterian pulpit. They generated spiritual forces and furnished an aggressive and far-seeing leadership which resulted in a moulding program of education and moral reform.

The second half of the book, beginning with chapter seven, describes the expanding influence, along diverse but coördinating lines, of the renewed and rapidly developing Presbyterian churches and institutions in Pittsburgh. It reveals the broad and enduring foundation upon which the subsequent superstructure was built, a religious edifice justifying the frequent reference to Pittsburgh as a "Presbyterian City."

CHAPTER I

ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHAPLAINS AND PIONEER MISSIONARIES

The year 1758 is made memorable in the history of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism because of two important events of a contrasted nature. That year witnessed the healing of the first major schism within the ecclesiastical organization of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.¹ It also marked the shifting of political and religious responsibility in the strategically located Forks of the Ohio. Both events were destined to play a prominent part in shaping the subsequent religious history of Western Pennsylvania. For that reason the historian may be justified in regarding 1758 as the natal year of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism.

At a momentous meeting in Philadelphia, May 25, 1758, the two competing Presbyterian Synods, representing the New Side and Old Side groups, were merged into a unity and formed the "Synod of New York and Philadelphia." The united body was the supreme judicatory of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, until the organization of the General Assembly in 1788.² The significance of that merger for Western Pennsylvania lay in the renewed emphasis on missionary activity which the united resources and interest of the two Synods made possible.³ This rekindled missionary spirit was soon to manifest itself in sending forth itinerant preachers to visit the settlers who were gradually stealing into the fertile valleys of southwestern Pennsylvania. As rapidly as hostile Indians and the bloody struggles of the French and British would permit, these hardy settlers were ready to

¹ E. H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, Vol. I, p. 109.

² *Ibid.*, p. 269.

³ *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.*, p. 249.

stake claims and erect homes along the ever receding frontier. Equally resourceful preachers were ready to follow them and to share with them the hardships of life and the comforts of faith.

The burning of Fort Duquesne on November 28, 1758, was significant both from the political and from the religious viewpoints. It destroyed French claims to the resources of the upper Ohio valley and gave the British control of that vast territory.⁴ At the same time, it shifted from the Roman Catholics to the Protestants the major responsibility in Western Pennsylvania and altered for years the entire religious outlook of what was to become Pittsburgh. The French, commanded by Captain Pierre Claude de Contrecoeur, had captured the crude fort which Captain Nathan Trent had erected at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, and renamed it Fort Duquesne. The day after its capture, April 17, 1754, the Reverend Father Denys Baron celebrated what is perhaps the first mass within the corporate limits of present Pittsburgh.⁵

The first chapel soon followed and bore the impressive name, "the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin at the Beautiful River."⁶ During the subsequent months regular services were conducted by the Catholic chaplains. These Catholic clergymen kept accurate records of baptism and deaths. These records form the earliest source material for this section.⁷

To General Forbes was assigned the responsibility of at-

⁴ J. S. Bassett, *A Short History of the United States*, p. 125.

⁵ Gaius J. Slosser, "A Chapter from the Religious History of Western Pennsylvania," *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*, Sept., 1934, p. 98.

⁶ Andrew A. Lambing, *A History of the Catholic Church in the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Allegheny from Its Establishment to the Present Time* (New York, 1880), p. 32 ff.

⁷ Andrew A. Lambing, *Translation of the Baptismal Register of Fort Duquesne*, from June, 1754, to December, 1756, Pittsburgh, 1885. (The register is divided into three parts, each duly authenticated by Contrecoeur, and containing fifteen baptisms, of which two only are French, eight English, two Irish, and three Indians, one being that of Jean Baptiste Christiguay, "great chief of the Iroquois," who was then in his ninety-fifth year. The number of interments is forty-two, all of which are French except two English and four Indians. The first entry is dated July 11, 1753, and the last October 10, 1756.)

tempting the capture of Fort Duquesne.⁸ The Protestants supported his approaching campaign with something of the enthusiasm of a religious crusade. Nor was General Forbes loath to take advantage of this effective combination of religious zeal and patriotism. While he was levying forces for his contemplated expedition against Fort Duquesne, he encouraged the Reverend Dr. William Smith, provost of the College of Philadelphia, to publish broadcast his address in which this pugnacious clergyman declared: "Never was the Protestant cause in a more desperate situation. . . . Rise then my countrymen! As you value the blessings you enjoy and dread the evils that hang over you, rise and show yourselves worthy of the name Britons!"⁹

It was natural that a representative of these belligerent Presbyterians should be the chaplain of Colonel William Clapham's regiment of Pennsylvania troops in Forbes' expedition. To that clergyman, the Reverend Charles Beatty, tradition has assigned the honor of preaching the first Presbyterian sermon at the newly named post of Pittsburgh in 1758.

The slow-moving expedition under General Forbes was unexpectedly successful. The French had lost the loyal support of their Indian allies, who had forsaken the fort in large numbers. When at last Forbes did arrive, he found Fort Duquesne a mass of smoldering ruins and the French and Indians in rapid flight. This unanticipated deliverance called forth a special service of thanksgiving. It is the first recorded Protestant service upon the soil of Pittsburgh. Tradition states that on this happy occasion Reverend C. C. Beatty, the chaplain, preached a stirring sermon on thanksgiving, in which he expressed to God the gratitude of the entire army for the kind Providence that made possible the destruction of Fort Duquesne without bloodshed and loss of precious Protestant lives. But these oft-repeated affirmations rest upon a rather meager historical foundation. That Reverend Charles Beatty

⁸ Bassett, *A Short History of the United States*, p. 125.

⁹ William Smith, *Discourses on Public Occasions in America*, Appendix 21-31 (second edition, London, 1762); Charles W. Dahlinger, *Fort Pitt* (Pittsburgh, 1922), p. 5.

was the chaplain in the army is an established fact. He had asked permission of Synod to go in 1758 and permission was granted.¹⁰ His commission, which is in the hands of the Beatty family, is dated May 1, 1758.

There is, however, a strong possibility that there were two chaplains in General Forbes' army at this time. This second chaplain would be Reverend Mr. Barton. He may have preached in Pittsburgh at the happy celebration of the destruction of Fort Duquesne. Reverend Mr. Barton had written to General Forbes on the 8th of July, 1758: ¹¹

I am informed that a great number of the Forces under your command are of the Communion of the Church of England, as I hear of no Episcopal Clergyman appointed their Chaplain, I am prompted by duty, inclination and every good motive to attend them.

In reply General Forbes immediately accepted the proffered services of Mr. Barton and wrote: ¹²

I am favoured with yours of the 8th and am sorry to find that the Troops of the Communion of the Church of England are not properly provided with a Clergyman of their own profession. In consequence therefore of your laudable zeal for the service of your King and Country and of your truly commendable inclination of discharging your ministerial and Episcopal duty to the Troops of the Episcopal persuasion under my command You are hereby invited and authorized to discharge of all Ministerial functions belonging to a Clergyman of the Church of England amongst the Troops under my command.

The name Barton, however, has not been found in any of the official records describing the campaign.

In support of the claim that Reverend Mr. Beatty preached on the memorable day of triumph is the letter of Captain John

¹⁰ Minutes of the Synod of New York, May 26, 1758, printed in *Records of the Presbyterian Church*.

¹¹ *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church*, edited by William Stevens Perry, D.D., Vol. II, Pennsylvania. Printed for the subscriber 1871, 250 copies by the Church Press, Hartford, Conn. Many of the manuscripts are transcripts of the original in England made by Rev. Francis L. Hawks. This is the official collection of documents made for the Episcopal Church in America.

¹² *Ibid.*

Hazlett to Reverend Francis Alison, of Philadelphia. The letter is dated November 26, 1758, and contains the statement that Mr. Beatty is appointed "to preach the thanksgiving service."¹³ The authenticity of this statement was for a time doubted by Dr. C. C. Beatty, the grandson of Chaplain Beatty, since his grandfather made no mention of this unique honor in any of the family letters or in his personal diary. He felt it a little strange that his grandfather, in reporting his subsequent two months' tour of evangelism among the Indians around Pittsburgh and along the Muskingum River, should make no allusion to his having been in Pittsburgh previously. Later, however, after diligent historical study Dr. C. C. Beatty accepted the tradition but could find no additional supporting historical records.¹⁴ Reverend Joseph Smith, whose fame as a historian rests upon his popular volume "Old Redstone," carefully evaluated the available historical sources and confirmed the general belief that Reverend Mr. Beatty preached this first sermon.¹⁵ In the absence of contrary proof, Presbyterians feel justified in accepting the current tradition that the honor of preaching the first Protestant sermon in Pittsburgh rightfully belongs to Rev. Charles Beatty. Accepting this tradition with this brief historical criticism, there is at least a sentimental justification for dating the beginnings of Presbyterianism in Pittsburgh with this first sermon preached by a Protestant minister within the geographical limits of what was to become a mighty city.

During the next few years, the only clergymen of any faith to minister to the spiritual needs of Pittsburgh were army chaplains stationed at Fort Pitt. The reports of their activities are very meager and the evidences of their success almost negligible.

Reverend Dr. Alison, who accompanied Colonel Burd while a road was being cut to the mouth of Redstone Creek, preached

¹³ Israel Rupp, *Early History of Western Pennsylvania*, Appendix, p. 301 (Pittsburgh, 1846).

¹⁴ C. C. Beatty, *Record of the Family of Charles Beatty*, printed for the private use of the family. A copy is in the library of the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia.

¹⁵ Joseph Smith, article in *The Presbyterian Banner*, February 27, 1867.

in Fort Pitt on at least two different occasions. Colonel Burd's Journal, which is no longer available, but which formerly was included in the archives at Harrisburg, makes mention on several occasions of the Sunday sermons of his chaplain, Rev. Dr. Alison: "Sunday, Sept. 22nd. Had sermon today at 10 A.M. At noon moved camp 2½ miles to the river Monongahela." "October 28, Sunday: Had sermon in the fort [Fort Pitt]." The last entry is dated Sunday, November 4, and reads: "Sermon in the Fort. Doctor Alison set out for Philadelphia."¹⁶

The ecclesiastical status of Chaplain Alison is not definite. He is claimed by both Presbyterians and Episcopalians. The latter appear to have nothing more definite than pride and tradition to substantiate their claims. Research fails to reveal any Episcopalian clergyman named Alison of sufficient prominence to assume that he might have been with Colonel Burd. The only Reverend Mr. Alison mentioned in *Historical Collections for Pennsylvania* (an official Episcopalian Collection) is Reverend Francis Alison, of Philadelphia, the noted Presbyterian preacher and scholar.

Presbyterians, on the other hand, have supporting evidence to indicate that Colonel Burd was referring to Reverend Hector Alison, who had been appointed by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to serve as "chaplain to the Pennsylvania forces"¹⁷ in 1759. The Minutes of that body do not indicate to which division of Pennsylvania forces Reverend Mr. Alison was assigned, nor the exact location of the ensuing campaign. Reverend Hector Alison was a brother of Reverend Francis Alison, D.D., and served as moderator of the Synod of Philadelphia in 1753.¹⁸

The following year (1760), Reverend Hector Alison was again appointed to serve as chaplain in the renewed struggles

¹⁶ Sherman Day, *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania*, p. 336, published by G. W. Gorton, Philadelphia, Pa.

¹⁷ *Minutes of Synod of New York and Philadelphia, May 28, 1759*, printed in *Records of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*

¹⁸ James Wallace, *The Career of Reverend Hector Alison*; a brief unpublished manuscript in the possession of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

developing around Fort Pitt. Another Presbyterian minister, Alexander McDowell, received a similar appointment from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.¹⁹ How long they served and what spiritual results followed their labors cannot be determined from the available records. Imagination, however, pictures a very discouraging response and a natural yearning to return to the churches from which they had been temporarily released. Military outposts have rarely been noted for morality and self-control. Nor have hastily constructed trading centers been distinguished for ethical character and social service. Pittsburgh was no exception, if we accept the almost unanimous testimony of travelers of that period. Along the banks of the two rivers, cleared by the French during their occupancy of Fort Duquesne, a group of crudely constructed houses sheltered the traders who had been attracted by the protection of the garrison and by the ever alluring hope of commercial gain. June 21 of that same year, Colonel Burd took the first census of Fort Pitt. Apparently, he had the enthusiasm of a real estate promoter and counted every visible building large or small, since the number of homes exceeded the total population. His figures give some suggestion of Pittsburgh in that early period.²⁰

Number of houses	146	Number of men	88
Number of unfinished houses..	19	Number of women	29
Number of huts	36	Number of male children	14
—		Number of female children ...	18
			—
	201		149

A supplementary picture is furnished in a similar census taken April 14 of the ensuing year by William Clapham at the request of Col. Bouquet. His report included the number of houses with the names of the owners and the number of men, women and children residing in each home. He counted only 104 houses, but discovered that the community had grown to 233 people. These, with the ninety-nine officers, soldiers

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Minutes May 20, 1760.

²⁰ Journal of Col. James Burd, 1760, *Penna. Archives, Second Series*, vol. 7, p. 442, quoted by C. Hale Sipe, *The Indian Wars*, p. 418 (1929).

and their families, gave Pittsburgh a total population of 332. Most of the houses were erected on the low ground between the fort and the river. Other traders may have feared the possibilities of flood and so built their homes on higher ground along the Monongahela, extending the residential section of Pittsburgh as far as the present Market Street.²¹

Though no mention is made of army chaplains throughout the next few years, these 332 inhabitants were not spiritually destitute nor were they content to permit the lamp of religious faith to be extinguished by the crude immoralities of a vigorous trading center. Something resembling a church was set apart for worship and instruction, and an unnamed schoolmaster combined some of the duties of teacher and preacher. A suggestion of this self-generating religious impulse is contained in an incidental statement in the Journal of James Kenny. This Quaker merchant from Chester County moved to Pittsburgh in 1761 to manage a store for a Philadelphia company.²² Accompanied by a train of pack-horses, heavily loaded with blankets, guns, ammunition and other supplies for visiting Indians and needy frontier settlers, Kenny arrived May 16 and remained about three years.²³ He kept a journal throughout that period, in which he records interesting facts and observations on the economic, social and religious life of the village. The people, he tells us, gathered together more than sixty pounds to support a schoolmaster to teach about twenty pupils whose parents perceived the value of education. The name of this first Pittsburgh school teacher is not recorded. But he was a Presbyterian²⁴ sufficiently broad in his convictions to overlook denominational barriers and zealous enough to assist his fellow townsmen in worship. He used the Episcopalian "Littany and Common Prayer." "On the first

²¹ *Centennial History of Allegheny County*, p. 32 f., Warner & Co. (1880), chapter written by Rev. A. A. Lambing.

²² *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. III, pp. 350, 351, Philadelphia (1880).

²³ Glen B. Hawkins, *A Critical Study of Pittsburgh as Seen by Travelers Before 1808*, pp. 9, 10.

²⁴ "he being a Prisbiterant," James Kenny, "Journal . . . 1761-1763," in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. III, p. 395 ff.

day of the week" he gave expression to the religious aspirations of "the soberer sort of people who formed a congregation of different principles and behaved rather gravely." "On occasion ye childen also are brought to church as they call it." ²⁵ Apparently, Kenny was not a participant in this service. He used the detached "they" when referring to the worshipers, and added the parenthesis "as I heard." He stood aloof from this laymen's group, yet he did not fail to note they were men of different character from the non-attendants. Either religion makes men better or better men desire religion, even when forced to depend on their own resources.

The labors of this famed but unnamed Presbyterian schoolmaster were reinforced by the evangelistic zeal of Frederick Post. He was an ordained minister of the Moravian Church or *Unitas Fratrum*.²⁶ His special interest was the conversion of the Indians, but at times he sought other opportunities of evangelism. He may be regarded as the first Billy Sunday to visit Pittsburgh. Kenny in his journal describes the meetings, but cannot approve the spectacular methods employed. "Frederick Post has had a meeting today with ye military men and ye inhabitants, in ye forenoon preached in English, ye afternoon in Dutch but I went not to hear them."²⁷ The garrison band, Kenny hints, were drunk the night before but on Sunday they are found playing hymns and leading the music. "They had ye musitioners playing hymns and they were drunk yesterday."²⁸ This is the earliest record as yet revealed of a stirring service of worship. It is also the first mention of the use of hymns in any religious meeting in Pittsburgh and so is doubly significant. Poet's novel methods of arousing interest in a church service may have been needed, since Kenny a little earlier in his Journal bemoans the lack of Sabbath observance in these words: "This being ye first day of the week, I may say that ye people regard every day

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Joseph Smith, article, *Presbyterian Banner*, Feb. 27, 1867.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, March 20, 1763.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

so much alike that ye shop keepers sells more I think on that day to ye inhabitants than on week days." ²⁹

But a major catastrophe was soon to transform the growing town of Pittsburgh into a mass of leveled ruins. The entire frontier was to be bathed in blood as Pontiac, the greatest of Western Pennsylvania Indian chiefs, organized his widespread conspiracy aimed to obliterate all the settlers. May 30, 1763, Pittsburgh's village inhabitants moved into Fort Pitt. As a safety measure, to prevent the Indians finding protective shelter, all the houses were ordered torn down and burnt June 1st.³⁰ Fort Pitt was one of but three frontier forts able to withstand the determined onslaught of the murderous Indians. Only Fort Pitt was left standing in Western Pennsylvania. But in Colonel Bouquet, the harassed settlers found a military leader who knew how to cope with Indian marauders. To the rescue of the imperiled Fort Pitt he hastened. At the battle of Bushy Run, August 5, 1763, he struck the blow which drove fear into the hearts of the Indians and relieved the Fort.³¹ But the danger was not yet passed. The Indians still plundered the settlers. So in the fall of the following year, Colonel Bouquet with 1,500 men carefully moved to an attack upon the principal Indian villages along the Muskingum and compelled the warlike tribes to sue for peace.³² Soon a larger and better Pittsburgh was laid out by Colonel John Campbell, under the direction of the commanding officer at Fort Pitt.³³ The trading activities of the inhabitants moved forward. But war had left its wreckage. "The wonted vivacity and glamour of the community had vanished, not to return for another decade." ³⁴

But where is the Presbyterian schoolmaster who had sought to kindle the religious zeal of the inhabitants? Inquiry brings

²⁹ *Ibid.*, March 21, 1762.

³⁰ *William Trent's Journal of Fort Pitt, 1763*, edited by A. T. Voliviler, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. XI, pp. 393-413.

³¹ *Centennial History of Allegheny County*, p. 33 (1888).

³² Francis Parkman, *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, Chaps. XXII to XXVII.

³³ *Centenary Memorial of the Planting and Growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania and Parts Adjacent*, p. 267.

³⁴ Hawkins, *A Critical Study of Pittsburgh as Seen by Travelers Before 1808*, p. 14.

no response. He has faded from the gaze of the historian. But Presbyterian influence was again at work in the Fort and in the community. Three Presbyterian ministers made the year 1766 unique in the early history of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism. They were there on different missions but represented the same religious cause. One was the chaplain of Fort Pitt, a Scotchman named James Maclagan, who had been ordained only six years previously in his native Scotland. After serving for a time as missionary at Amulree, Scotland, he was appointed chaplain of the 42nd Footmen. As such he came to America where his services were welcomed by his fellow countrymen.⁸⁵ Since part of this 42nd Regiment formed the garrison at Fort Pitt, it was natural that he would serve as their chaplain.⁸⁶ On alternate Sundays he preached to the soldiers in English and in Erse, his native tongue.⁸⁷ Sunday, August 24, while preaching in the latter language, he was heard by Matthew Clarkson, a visiting merchant from Philadelphia. His sermon may not have been well adapted to the needs of a business man or the dialect might have been unfamiliar. The explanation is not recorded, only these words of disappointment: "Heard Mr. Maclagan preach . . . but little edified."⁸⁸ Mr. Clarkson may not have been a very appreciative judge of good preaching, but at least he was willing to listen. A few weeks later, when Reverend Charles Beatty and Reverend George Duffield visited Pittsburgh, this Philadelphia merchant attended church morning and evening. His diary has this entry dated September 7: "Mr. Beatty preached this morning in the fort and Mr. Duffield in the town. Dined with them at the mess. Afternoon went to hear Mr. Duffield in the town."⁸⁹ Two days later he again listened to

⁸⁵ Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesie Scoticanæ; the Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, Vol. IV, p. 270 (Edinburgh, 1923).

⁸⁶ Charles Beatty, *The Journal of a Two Months' Tour*, p. 29.

⁸⁷ Matthew Clarkson, *Diary . . . in 1776*, published in Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Information Respecting the History, Conditions and Prospects of the Indian Tribes*, Part IV, p. 270.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

Mr. Duffield preach what he believed was "a very judicious and alarming discourse."

That Sunday, September 7, was a notable day in the religious life of Pittsburgh. It witnessed the presence of three Presbyterian preachers, more than on any previous Sabbath in the history of the struggling village. At least three sermons were preached that day. The audiences, in the judgment of Mr. Beatty, "were very attentive and much engaged."⁴⁰ But before another Sunday had come, Mr. Duffield and Mr. Beatty were on their journey toward the Indians on the Muskingum, some 130 miles distant.

Mr. Maclagan also was soon to leave the Fort. The next time his name appears in the annals of the Church he is back in his native country and receiving the honors of the city of Glasgow.⁴¹ Pittsburgh was again without clerical leadership, or to use Arthur Lee's famous witticism of a later date: "The people are likely to be damned without the benefit of clergy." Religious activity in that frontier village during the next six years fades beyond the vision of the church historian. It is an unwritten chapter with no available source materials.

But what were the circumstances that led Beatty and Duffield to visit Pittsburgh at a time when an army chaplain of the same denomination was stationed at the Fort? Reverend Mr. Beatty is a familiar figure. He it was who preached the thanksgiving sermon at the ruins of Fort Duquesne, nearly eight years previously. Reverend George Duffield was pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Carlisle, Pa. These two men were visiting the western Pennsylvania frontier at the request of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.⁴² They had been authorized to make a religious survey of the frontier in order to bring back to the Synod information which would form the basis of an intelligent program for the establishment of Presbyterian churches west of the mountains.

The historic significance of their tour lies not in the direct results of their evangelistic preaching. It perhaps stirred dor-

⁴⁰ Beatty, *Journal of a Two Months' Tour*, p. 30.

⁴¹ Hew Scott, *Festi Ecclesie Scoticanæ*.

⁴² *Minutes, May, 1766, Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 362.

mant religious impulses in many an Indian heart and strengthened the faith of little groups of settlers in village and country. But the permanent and momentous gain was the quickened sense of responsibility which Synod and its constituent Presbyteries felt for their fellow Presbyterians on the frontier. It resulted in a definite program of missionary effort and in the sending forth each year of ordained ministers. That historic tour contributed greatly to the subsequent growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania. The minutes of these church assemblies carry repeated evidence of that fact.⁴³ A quotation from this memorable report may be of interest:

Messrs. Beatty and Duffield's mission among the Indians and frontiers, came under consideration. And they report that they performed their mission to the frontiers and among the Indians. That they found on the frontiers numbers of people, earnestly desirous of forming themselves into congregations, and declaring their willingness to exert their utmost in order to have the gospel among them, but in circumstances exceedingly necessitous from the late calamities of the war in these parts. And also, that they visited the Indians at the chief town of the Delaware Nation, on the Muskingum, about one hundred and thirty miles beyond Fort Pitt, and were received much more cheerfully than they could have expected. Upon the whole, that there does appear a very agreeable prospect of a door opening for the gospel being spread among those poor benighted savage tribes.⁴⁴

Pittsburgh, however, did not share at once in this new missionary program of the Presbyterian Church. No definite report has been preserved of any minister of that denomination visiting this frontier village between 1760 and 1772. Possibly some of the men commissioned by the Church to travel throughout Western Pennsylvania during those years may have wandered into the Fort and the trading posts of the merchants, but no supporting evidence has found its way into the very meager source material covering those years.

But the year 1772 is rich in documentary evidence and is

⁴³ Manuscript Minutes of Donegal Presbytery, June, 1767, June, 1771, et al. *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 386, 389, 394, 405, et al.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

clarified by two Journals recording the labors and observations of a Baptist missionary and two Presbyterian ministers. Pittsburgh had now risen to the civil status of a Manor, covering fifty-seven acres,⁴⁵ and thus merited more attention from itinerant clergymen than it had as yet received. Reverend David Jones, a Baptist preacher, was the first to arrive. He was not favorably impressed with "the small town chiefly inhabited by Indian traders and some mechanicks." "Part of the inhabitants are agreeable and worthy of regard," he observed, "while others are lamentably dissolute in their morals." He found one man of piety and warm hospitality who appreciated the presence of a minister. Jones paid him this tribute: "Was kindly entertained by Mr. Aeneas Mackay who is deputy commissary here. Have reason to speak of him as the Apostle Paul did of Onesiphorus."⁴⁶ Mr. Jones found in the town no minister of any denomination, not even a chaplain at the Fort. He preached on several occasions but felt no call to remain. His major interest was the conversion of the Indians, and he soon left to continue that labor of sacrificial love.

Since the conversion of the Indians was one of the motives which brought the Rev. Messrs. Beatty and Duffield to Western Pennsylvania, and since it was the dominant impulse behind the visit of Mr. Jones, and a little later of Messrs. McClure and Frisbee, it might be of interest to listen to an abstract of one of Mr. Jones' sermons to the Indians. It perhaps is illustrative of the preaching of all these Indian missionaries and typical of the first sermons heard in the territory to the north and west of Pittsburgh. Thus the Rev. Mr. Jones reported his words and impressions:

On this occasion was very sensible of the great difficulties of speaking on such important subjects to these poor heathens, who were strangers even to the historical accounts thereof. After due deliberation spoke to this effect, viz. "You see, my brothers, that man is now very bad; he does many bad things;

⁴⁵ Dahlinger, *Fort Pitt*, p. 23.

⁴⁶ David Jones, *A Journal of Two Visits Made to Some Nations of Indians on the West Side of the River Ohio 1772 and 1773*, edited by Horatio Gates Jones, New York, 1865, pp. 31 ff.

he has a wicked and bad heart: but when *God* made him at first he was all good, all love. Then he loved GOD, and loved one another. GOD said to him, if you will obey me, you shall always live in a happy state; but if you disobey, you shall surely die, and be miserable. But afterwards man thought, may be, he might be happy and not die, even if he disobeyed GOD. Then he did that which GOD told him he should not do. But oh! immediately he lost all his good, and became very bad, having no love to GOD, nor to one another. In this state GOD looked on him and said, ah! you have disobeyed, and would not believe me: you must now die, and you deserve to suffer forever: yet I have compassion on you, though you do not deserve, and will send you a Redeemer. After a long time the Redeemer came, and so great was his love for us, that he himself in our stead endured all the punishment due to our transgressions, in order to make peace between GOD and us. Now GOD saith that all that believe on this Saviour shall be happy forever. And to prepare us for the happiness, GOD by his great power changes the temper of the hearts of all that believe: then they love GOD and one another. GOD takes delight in them, and when they die he takes them up into heaven to be forever with himself."—Some white people besides my own company were present: it was observable, that some of them were more affected than when they had been more immediately addressed. By what appeared expectations were raised; but these Indians had no further opportunities, being in time of the second visit down Ohio with my interpreter.⁴⁷

To carry a similar message of brotherhood and salvation to the mistreated and commercially exploited Indians came two Presbyterian preachers, who were destined to serve as Pittsburgh's first pastors. Their providential stay in Pittsburgh made possible a continuity of worship that resulted in the organization of the First Presbyterian Church, a church which perhaps has the best claim to the coveted distinction of being the oldest church in Pittsburgh. They came just a few months after the departure of Reverend David Jones, the Baptist missionary.

Reverend David McClure and Reverend Levi Frisbee were ordained at Dartmouth College, May 20, 1772, and later commissioned to go as missionaries to the Delaware Indians on

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

the Muskingum River in Ohio. They were ordained by what Mr. McClure calls an Ordaining Council.⁴⁸ The exact ecclesiastical status of that Ordaining Council is not known. Presbyterianism and Congregationalism in New England in those years are difficult to distinguish accurately, so that perhaps both Presbyterians and Congregationalists may have shared in the ordination of these two notable servants of the Church.⁴⁹

This uncertain status soon proved a hindrance to successful work among strict Presbyterians who wanted Presbyterianism pure and undefiled by any taint of Congregational independence. "Some rigid Presbyterians, in this settlement [Proctor's Tent—near Greensburg] objected to me," McClure explained in his *Diary*, "because I did not belong to a Presbytery but was a New England Congregational minister. To remove this objection in the minds of some worthy and zealous people of the Presbyterian persuasion I soon after stated the objection in a letter to the Presbytery of Donnegal and requested to be admitted, myself and Mr. Frisbee, which they accordingly did April 14, 1773."⁵⁰ These two brethren knew their Presbyterian theology and catechism and successfully passed a strict examination before that body of Presbyterian elders and divines. After declaring their approval of the "Westminster Confession of Faith, the Catechism and the Presbyterian Form of Church Government, they were received as members in good and regular standing."⁵¹

Moving westward, these Presbyterian missionaries were unable to find "a settled minister of any church in all the country westward of the Appalachian Mts." "The people," they discovered, "are generally Presbyterians. A few illiterate preachers of the Baptist persuasion have preached about, zealous to make proselytes."⁵²

August 17, 1772, McClure and Frisbee reached Pittsburgh.

⁴⁸ *Diary of David McClure*, with Notes by Franklin B. Dexter, 1899, p. 27.

⁴⁹ Thomas C. Pears, Jr., "The Foundations of Our Western Zion," *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*, Dec., 1934, p. 154.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁵¹ *Minutes of Donegal Presbytery*, April, 1773.

⁵² *Diary of McClure*, p. 47.

To their dismay they found the village merely "the headquarters of Indian traders and the resort of Indians of different tribes who come to exchange their peltry and furs for rum, blankets and ammunition."⁵³ "Drinking, debauchery and all kinds of vice reign in this frontier of depravity. A great part of the people here make the Sabbath a day of recreation, drinking and profanity. Providentially near Pittsburgh we found a Christian Indian who engaged to be our interpreter. His name was Joseph Pepee, of the Delaware nation. Pepee was an aged man, one of the Christians of the late pious and laborious David Brainerd. He proved to be a sincere and faithful and zealous interpreter."⁵⁴ Under his direction McClure left Pittsburgh September 15. Frisbee was stricken with sickness which for a time threatened his life and prevented him from accompanying McClure down the Ohio to the Indian villages.⁵⁵

The Indians were in a warlike frame of mind and in no mood to listen to a missionary from the hated whites who were squatting on their lands in violation of treaties. Somewhat discouraged, McClure returned to Pittsburgh on October 9 and decided to await a more favorable opportunity to carry forward the main object of this western journey. In the meantime Frisbee's health had returned. He had preached on various occasions to both the inhabitants of the town and the garrisons who still were without a chaplain.⁵⁶ Frisbee had also journeyed to Long Run, a rural church, eighteen miles from Pittsburgh near Irwin. There he had preached "in a small house which the people have erected for public worship."⁵⁷ This incidentally is the first mention of a building set apart for worship and might be called the first Presbyterian church edifice in Western Pennsylvania.

These two evangelists now decided to tarry several months and preach to the settlers scattered over the frontier.⁵⁸ Their

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

decision was strengthened "by a letter they received from Reverend Mr. Cooper, Scribe of the Presbytery of Donegal, that the Presbytery could send no supplies to the settlements west of the mountains and that they had authorized us [Frisbee and McClure] to preach there."⁵⁹ Frisbee remained in Pittsburgh to carry forward the work he had developed both there and in Long Run during McClure's absence among the Indians. He preached regularly each Sunday at these two communities, traveling the intervening eighteen miles on horseback. He was the first minister of any denomination to have a regular preaching appointment in Pittsburgh.⁶⁰

McClure, in the meantime, wandered to the east and south of Pittsburgh. He agreed to preach in rotation "at five settlements between Ligonier and the Yshiogeny River."⁶¹ The strain of this extensive traveling was too great for McClure's strength. So these two men agreed to exchange temporarily their self-assigned pastorates. McClure served the two congregations at Pittsburgh and Long Run, while Frisbee preached over the widely separated five-station circuit.⁶² This arrangement made McClure Pittsburgh's second regular preacher from February 4 to March 19, 1773, when Frisbee and McClure again exchanged pastorates.

But what were the material results of this regular preaching and worship under the leadership of these two Presbyterian pastors? Did their labors stir the congregation to organize a church? No positive reply can be given. The answer must lie in the realm of probabilities, not certainties. The *Diary* is silent. McClure did report to the Presbytery of Donegal that "at the settlement called Jacobs Creek near the Youghiogeni river I had formed the model of a church and a session."⁶³ In a meditative review of his work McClure wrote:

The settlements to which I have preached have invited me to tarry with them, which I have engaged to do until May or June

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

next. To encourage the business they have drawn up subscriptions, forming themselves into something like ecclesiastical order. I engaged to preach in five of the new settlements. It is about 6 yrs. since the people began them. They are from almost all parts and generally Presbyterians. It was pleasing to find in each of them some zealous and pious persons who came forward and willingly devoted their time and labors to form the people into a society for the purpose of the public worship of God. Perhaps in this situation I may have been honored as an humble instrument in collecting the materials and giving a form to social combinations among the disconnected settlers from which churches of Christ afterwards arose and ministers and ordinances settled and maintained.⁶⁴

Pittsburgh received a larger portion of the time of McClure and Frisbee than any other point at which they preached. Surely some form of organization would have been evolved during those consecutive months of pastoral labor. Some plan of support and financial remuneration was necessary. Moreover, "in each place some zealous and pious persons came forward and willingly devoted their time and labors to form the people into a society for the purpose of the public worship of God."⁶⁵ Pittsburgh was no exception. The names of some of these "fearers of God and friends of religion" are mentioned. They are the names of men who were later to play a prominent part in the history of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. The most distinguished of these was John Plumer, whose descendants still carry forward the family tradition of piety and religious activity. Of Plumer, McClure wrote:

We found, however, a happy few who live in the fear of God, & maintain their integrity, particularly a Mr. Jonathan Plumer & his family. . . . In his family, which is numerous & laborious, the life of religion is duly maintained. The dissipated respect him for his goodness & benevolence; but by way of reproach, give him the name of Solomon. He was the first man who found us on our arrival, & treated us with every possible mark of attention & kindness, in his power.⁶⁶

McClure also mentioned John Gibson, one of the ten trus-

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

tees whose names appear on the original charter of the First Presbyterian Church issued in 1787, who "endeared himself to the community by much kindness and helpful service." A third prominent figure was Aeneas Mackay, at whose home McClure lodged during his entire stay in Pittsburgh. McClure describes him as "a friendly social and high-spirited Scotchman . . . the friend of order and religion, or the form of it," and states that his was "one of the most orderly and respectable families in the place."⁶⁷ Mackay entered the service of his country during the Revolutionary struggle, but died in 1777 after a march with his regiment from Kittanning to Philadelphia."⁶⁸

McClure mentions only a few of the pulpit themes that he used during his stay in Pittsburgh. If the recorded sermon topics are typical of his preaching, the congregation heard persistent calls to repentance and changed living and were constantly urged to become aggressive in Christian service. February 21, 1773, he preached in Pittsburgh on "The Final State of the Righteous and the Wicked."⁶⁹ His theme on another occasion was "The Blindness of Man, by Nature, in Spiritual Things."⁷⁰

Another evidence that McClure and Frisbee organized a Presbyterian church during the months of their supplementary pastorates lies in the numerous requests for preaching which were presented to the Presbyteries of Donegal and New Castle during the years which follow the departure of these two Presbyterian preachers. They bade farewell to their Pittsburgh congregations in the summer of 1773 and returned to their homes in New England, never again to visit Pittsburgh. Before their visit no record of any request for preaching can be found in the minutes of the Presbyteries. But after McClure

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 102.

⁶⁸ Mackay was buried in Philadelphia, 1777, but later his body was moved to Pittsburgh and buried in the cemetery of the First Presbyterian Church. See Dahlinger, "First Church Burying Ground—A Place of Great Historic Interest," article, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Oct., 1919.

⁶⁹ McClure, *Diary*, p. 109.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

and Frisbee had stirred Pittsburgh and perhaps organized a church, the requests for Presbyterian preaching became numerous and so insistent that supply preachers again and again were sent in direct response to the supplications of a group of Presbyterians in Pittsburgh. For example, in April, 1773, Donegal Presbytery considered the request of Pittsburgh for a preacher⁷¹ and appointed Mr. McFerrin to preach the third Sunday in November.⁷² The following year Messrs. Vance and Black were sent in response to a similar plea to preach in Fort Pitt and other places at their discretion.⁷³ Again the ensuing year Messrs. McKnight, Slemons, Farquhar, King, and Linn were instructed to visit various specified places, including Pittsburgh.⁷⁴ On the second Sabbath of August of that same year Reverend John McMillan preached at Fort Pitt.⁷⁵

In the light of these and similar facts it seems reasonable to visualize a small Presbyterian church struggling for existence in the face of numerous discouragements, not the least of which was the misgovernment of Dr. John Connolly and his antagonism to Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Minutes of Donegal Presbytery, April, 1773 (ms. form).

⁷² *Ibid.*, Oct., 1773.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, April, 1774.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, April, 1775.

⁷⁵ Journal and Diary of John McMillan, 1774-1791 (typed copy).

⁷⁶ *Diary of McClure*, p. 123.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST RESIDENT PASTORS IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The tide of immigration, released by the Treaty of Fort Stanwick in 1768, had already spread over portions of the fertile valleys of the Youghiogheny and Monongahela and their numerous tributaries. Population had increased sufficiently to justify the formation of Westmoreland County in 1773 with Hannahstown, three miles northeast of Greensburg, as the county seat.¹ These sturdy pioneering settlers had followed two clearly marked but very meager trails. They traveled in the footsteps of George Washington "across the Laurel Ridge by the spot where Fort Necessity stood, through the Great Meadows to Blair's Camp, to Union (now Uniontown), to either Redstone, Old Fort or to Christopher Gists, to Stewart's Crossing (now Connellsville), thence on north to Fraziers (now Braddock) at the mouth of Turtle Creek, and from thence to the Forks of the Youghiogheny and then on to Pittsburgh."² Or they traversed the route laid out by Gen. Forbes when moving to the attack of Fort Duquesne in 1758. This road led from Bedford to Ligonier, thence to Hannahstown, past the scene of the Battle of Bushy Run, and on to Pittsburgh.³

They came to establish homes, to transform the virgin fields into producing farms and to develop the frontier into a profitable abode for their children. Over the rolling mills and along the well watered banks of creeks they scattered. They were

¹ C. W. Dahlinger, *Pittsburgh—A Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, p. 2 (1916).

² Slosser, "A Chapter from the Religious History of Western Pennsylvania," *Journal of Department of History, Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*, Sept., 1934, p. 102. For a fuller description, see A. B. Hurbert, *Pioneer Roads and Experiences of Travelers*, Vol. 2, pp. 64-93, which is No. 12 in series *Historic Highways of America*.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 103. For further details, see *The Old Glades (Forbes Road), Historic Highways of America*, Vol. 5.

predominantly of Scotch-Irish lineage, and Presbyterian heritage, with a courage and resourcefulness that made them ideal frontiersmen. Contrary to the custom of their Quaker brethren, these pugnacious pioneers relied upon the conquering power of the sword, rather than the mediating influence of treaties, for the settling of Indian disputes and property rights. Fighting became almost a tenet of their creed. Situated thus on the westward-moving frontier, their resolution, energy and industry enabled them to surmount discouraging difficulties.⁴ Being rough, independent and vigorous, they sometimes developed these qualities to exceed and caused considerable trouble for the government. They were the aggressive leaders throughout all Western Pennsylvania and exerted an influence far more dominant than their numbers would lead one to suppose.

But the hardships of pioneer life were not sufficient to cause these early Presbyterians to lose either their faith in God or their love for their ancestral religion. They were of stern religious zeal and carried their Bibles with them wherever they went. Before any Presbyterian minister labored in Western Pennsylvania and before any churches were established, many cabins were the scenes of devout family worship.⁵ When in 1773 the Reverend David McClure itinerated among them, he discovered they were well indoctrinated in the principles of the Christian religion. "The young people," he reported, "are taught by their parents and schoolmasters the Larger and Shorter Catechism. Almost every family has the Westminster Confession of Faith, which they carefully study."⁶ Their earnestness and deep longing for better opportunities of worship impressed McClure and caused him to write wistfully: "Truly the people here in this new country are as sheep scattered upon the mountains without a Shepherd. A great portion of the people manifest a desire for the Gospel and would gladly make provision for the support of ministers according

⁴ George Chambers, *A Tribute to the Principles, Virtues, Habits and Public Usefulness of the Irish and Scotch. Early Settlers in Pennsylvania*, p. 148 (1856).

⁵ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 6.

⁶ *Diary of McClure*, p. 112 (April 8, 1773).

to their ability. May the Lord raise up and send forth faithful laborers into this part of His vineyard." ⁷

McClure's prayer was soon to be answered in the coming of four ministers of marked ability to take up their permanent abode in the frontier country, Rev. John McMillan, D.D., James Power, D.D., Thaddeus Dodd, D.D., and Joseph Smith. These four pioneering Presbyterian preachers are often referred to as the "Four Presbyterian Horsemen of Western Pennsylvania." Coming separately, they united to form on September 19, 1781, the Presbytery of Redstone, with ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Presbyterians scattered throughout the entire western frontier. Their names and character are written indelibly upon the record of the early development of what was soon to become a thriving field of Presbyterian culture and influence. The story of their consecrated labors is most interesting and has long been familiar through the widespread reading of Smith's "Old Redstone." ⁸

Only a brief review is necessary to visualize the contrast between the dormant religious life of Pittsburgh and the expanding work in the rural sections throughout the broad expanse of Western Pennsylvania.

Of these four men, Dr. John McMillan was the most outstanding and exerted the most dominant influence. He spent his entire ministry in Western Pennsylvania and died at the ripe old age of eighty-one years, an honored veteran in many a battle for righteousness. He was born of Irish parents in 1752 at Faggs Manor and later was sent to a grammar school at Pequea in Lancaster County, where he received his first religious impressions and decided to devote himself to the work of the Gospel ministry. Following his graduation from Princeton College, he studied theology under Dr. Smith and was licensed to preach October 26, 1774, by the Presbytery of New Castle.⁹ In the summer of July, 1775, a youth of

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 124.

⁸ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone or Historical Sketches of Western Presbyterianism, Its Early Ministers, Its Perilous Times and Its Early Records*, 1854.

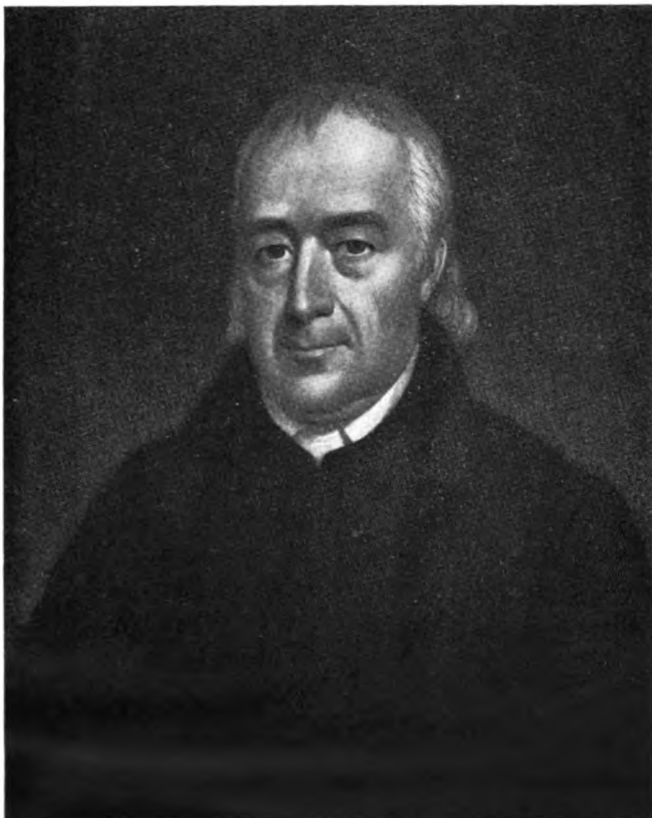
⁹ S. J. Eaton, "Ecclesiastical History with Biographical Sketches, Presbyterian Centennial Convention, p. 210.

but twenty-three years of age, he made his memorable tour throughout the frontier of Pennsylvania and Virginia. His detailed account of that tour, recorded in his *Journal*, indicated that there were many groups of Presbyterians who were in the habit of gathering together for organized worship.¹⁰ Again and again Dr. McMillan speaks of addressing congregations and of baptizing a number of people. Some of the earliest churches in Western Pennsylvania date their origin to these first recorded groups of worshippers who in different places gathered under the leadership of this missionary evangelist. On several occasions McMillan refers to congregations as though they had previously organized themselves into a church with an established meeting place.¹¹ On the second Sabbath of September of that year he preached at Fort Pitt,¹² the first Presbyterian minister to arrive at that trading-post following the departure of McClure and Frisbee.

¹⁰ D. M. Bennett, "Life and Work of the Rev. John McMillan," *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*, Three installments, Sept., 1932, Dec., 1932, Mar., 1933. Appended to this third installment is the "Journal of John McMillan from Oct. 26, 1774, to his marriage, Aug. 6, 1776." The original copy of the Journal and complete Diary, 1774-1791, is in the possession of Harper A. Allen, Washington, Pa. Mr. Allen is a great-great-grandson of McMillan. A typed transcript has been made by Charles W. Maus, Irwin, Pa. Dr. McMillan's Journal consists of sheets of foolscap paper folded in octavo form and is closely written, after McMillan's accustomed manner of writing. It commences with the date of his licensure and extends to the time of his marriage. It contains a record of the places where he preached on every Sabbath, with the exception of a single one, during this entire period, which was a little less than two years. The Sabbath on which he did not preach he was in attendance on the meetings of Synod. In addition he preached frequently during week days while on his two journeys across the mountains. The Journal bears the marks of age and was probably not all written at the same time. Whether it is the original document or one later transcribed by Dr. McMillan himself from documents of an earlier date, is not known.

¹¹ E. g., "I tarried here till Wednesday, when I rode about six miles and preached at the Forks meeting house." (Aug., 1775.) This is the early designation of the Round Hill Presbyterian Church. "Preached at a meeting house on the banks of the Monongahela." (1775.) "Preached in a meeting house at Long Run." "Preached at Conemaugh in the woods where they have agreed to build a meeting house." Journal, typed copy, p. 6.

¹² "Saturday preached at Josiah Richards and rode about 13 miles to Fort Pitt and lodged at Mr. Armobey's. The second Sabbath preached at Fort Pitt and rode seven miles to Thomas Ross." *Ibid.*, p. 7.



Courtesy Presbyterian Book Store

REVEREND JOHN McMILLAN, D.D.
Pioneer Preacher and Educator, 1752-1833



The following year he made another tour of Western Pennsylvania and preached in many of the places he had visited previously. On this tour he was impressed with the possibilities of service at Chartiers and Pigeon Creek and accepted a call to these two Presbyterian congregations. Both of these churches have continued their long unbroken service until the present time. The Chartiers Church is now the Hill Church near Canonsburg. Pigeon Creek is situated in Washington County near Eighty-Four. Owing to the uprising of the Indians, McMillan did not move his family west until November, 1778. He continued as pastor of both these churches until 1800, when he resigned to devote all his time to Chartiers.¹³

Dr. McMillan was a powerful man, six feet in height, brusque in manner and of coarse features and clumsy form.¹⁴ He had a very strong voice which he used with such force that it often offended delicate ears. In this powerful voice he took great pride. He remarked that he wished "he could leave his lungs as a legacy to the church for they would serve some poor weak-voiced fellow of another generation."¹⁵ In 1781 he began a revival which lasted for two years. Converts joined his congregation at every service throughout that period, while at one time forty-five professed conversion. At a subsequent revival as many as sixty were added. On another occasion fifty were converted.¹⁶ Quite frequently in these revivals, the meetings lasted all night.

While his efforts towards education were not the earliest in the West, they were more diligent and longer continued. His one room "Log Cabin College" is still a revered shrine, having been preserved and carefully removed to the campus of the now abandoned college at Canonsburg. He was largely instrumental in establishing a school at Canonsburg for the training of ministers, which later was merged with the Academy of that place. To the support of this Academy, Dr. McMillan gave

¹³ Chambers, as cited, p. 137.

¹⁴ W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 354.

¹⁵ Article in *Presbyterian Banner*, Aug. 7, 1867.

¹⁶ Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 352.

freely, setting aside ten pounds a year for its maintenance.¹⁷ The eminent preachers who received more or less of their early training from Dr. McMillan form a noble list of about one hundred. His teaching was in the form of lectures which the students were required to take down in writing and memorize.¹⁸

Dr. McMillan's zeal for law and order placed him firmly on the side of the government during the divisive days of the Whiskey Rebellion. He even went to the extreme of refusing to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the members of his congregation until they would submit to the law.¹⁹ He was uncompromising in his opposition to all forms of evil and vigorously upheld the moral code. He preached with a crusading fervor that struck terror into the hearts of the sinful and aroused the responsive to united effort. His favorite themes "stressed the dreadful evil of sin; the awful danger of the sinner, exposed to the wrath of God; the character of God as holy and just, as well as merciful; the utter helplessness of the sinner, and the necessity of a change of heart."²⁰

Yet he was thoroughly human and enjoyed a practical joke. While journeying to Synod with Reverend Joseph Patterson, they paused at a country inn for a little refreshment. A small portion of whiskey was poured into two glasses, but the saintly Patterson would not drink until he had besought the Divine blessing. His prayer of supplication was somewhat too protracted for the thirsty McMillan, who emptied the glass of his clerical brother while engaged in prayer. In reply to the astonished look of Mr. Patterson, McMillan replied slyly: "You must watch as well as pray."²¹

¹⁷ F. J. Collier, *Chartiers Church and Its Ministers*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 209. Mr. Harper Allen has a manuscript copy of these lectures transcribed by one of McMillan's students, Rev. Moses Allen, March, 1806. It is entitled, "Theology, Natural and Revealed."

¹⁹ Bennett, "Life and Work of John McMillan," *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*, Dec., 1932, pp. 208-216.

²⁰ Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 206, quoting the testimony of Dr. Brown, who heard McMillan preach frequently. Harper Allen, Washington, Pa., has at least 200 sermons in McMillan's own handwriting. McMillan wrote out and memorized his sermons.

²¹ Junkin, "Life and Labors of McMillan," *Presbyterian Centennial Convention*, p. 33.

Almost to the very end Dr. McMillan retained his physical and mental vigor. For nearly sixty years he was the acknowledged leader of Western Pennsylvania Presbyterianism and molded the conduct and thinking of a widely scattered community. His body lies buried in the cemetery adjoining the Chartiers Church, where he had preached so faithfully and acceptably for more than half a century. Upon his tombstone is carved this appreciative summary of his multiplied labors:

Erected in memory of the
 Rev. John McMillan, D.D.—
 An Able Divine,
 A Preacher of the first order;
 His distinguished talents,
 His active benevolence,
 His private virtues,
 His exalted piety,
 The skill and ability which he displayed
 In instructing and training young men
 For the gospel ministry;
 His indefatigable zeal
 In promoting his Master's cause
 And the best interests of his fellowmen;
 Have raised a monument to his fame
 Far more imperishable
 Than the stone
 Which bears this inscription.
 He was the leading founder
 Of Jefferson College;
 The Chartiers Presby'n Congregation,
 In which he laboured
 For more than half a century,
 Owes its origin
 To the blessing of God
 On his instrumentality.
 He died Nov. 16th A. D., 1833,
 Enjoying the unclouded hope
 Of a blissful eternity,
 In the 82nd year of his age
 And the 60th year of his ministry.²²

²² *Seasqui-Centennial of Lebanon Presbyterian Church*, p. 7.

One year earlier than Dr. McMillan made his famous tour of the frontier, another Presbyterian minister, Reverend James Power, had previously crossed the Alleghenies and spent about three months in missionary work, visiting what are now the counties of Westmoreland, Allegheny, Washington, and Fayette. So deeply did the needs of these destitute settlers affect this visiting preacher that two years later he returned to spend his entire life in the West.²³ To share with him the hardships of frontier life, he brought with him his wife and two young daughters. He was the first Presbyterian minister to settle with his family in Western Pennsylvania.²⁴ Near Brownsville, at Dunlap's Creek, he made his home.²⁵ From this center he traveled constantly among the settlers throughout that entire region, visiting Laurel Hill, Mt. Pleasant, Sewickley, Tyrone and Unity regularly. Lurking savages added greatly to the dangers of Dr. Power's missionary circuit. On several occasions he was reported killed by the savages.²⁶ Yet he persevered in his pioneering work among those churches until the year 1779, when he became pastor of the congregations at Sewickley and Mt. Pleasant. He served in this dual pastorate until August 22, 1787, when he devoted his full time to the expanding needs of the Mt. Pleasant congregation. Failing health necessitated his resignation April 15, 1817, but he continued to live among his beloved congregation until his notable career closed at the venerable age of eighty-five years.²⁷

Dr. Power was born at Nottingham, Chester County, 1746. After graduating from Princeton in 1766, he entered upon his

²³ Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 326.

²⁴ Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 226.

²⁵ The Minutes of the Dunlap's (Delap's) Creek Church are among the oldest of any Presbyterian church in Western Pennsylvania. "The Minutes from 1787-1804 are included in one book which is quite broken. Often the leaves are torn apart and apparently scraps of paper have been put together so that the dates in the Minutes are not consecutive." The entire Minutes have been transcribed by Jesse Coldren and are available at the Library of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society in Pittsburgh and cover four typewritten pages.

Unfortunately, practically all the other original Presbyterian churches have lost all minutes prior to 1800. Only a few have minutes of that early date.

²⁶ *Sesqui-Centennial of the Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church*, p. 10.

²⁷ Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 231.

theological studies, but feeble health delayed the completion of his course and postponed his licensure by the New Castle Presbytery until June 24, 1772. He was a man of medium height, slender and erect. Unlike his co-laborer, Dr. McMillan, he was extremely neat in his dress and had acquired an easy and gracious manner. Though his voice was not loud, he could be heard at a great distance because of his remarkably clear and distinct enunciation. His sermons were expressed in well chosen words. With a memory for faces and names that was remarkable, he called every person by name throughout his entire district. No stirring revivals marked his ministry, but each year saw steady growth and the results of thoughtful preaching and faithful pastoral visitation.²⁸ He was the great missionary pastor of a large section of the country. To him a number of the thriving rural churches in Redstone Presbytery look as their founder and leader.

The third of the four Presbyterian horsemen to enter Western Pennsylvania was Reverend Thaddeus Dodd. He was the most scholarly of the group and maintained a keen interest in education throughout his entire ministry. His early years were devoted to teaching and a specialized study of mathematics and Latin. But a sense of sin overwhelmed him and made him almost morbid in his search for salvation and inner serenity. After three years of struggle he found the peace for which he had been passionately yearning and entered into his theological studies with great zeal.²⁹ He graduated from Princeton College in 1773 and two years later was licensed to preach by the New York Presbytery.³⁰ In 1777 he visited Western Pennsylvania and settled at Ten Mile Creek. This settlement consisted of about ten families who four years previously had migrated from Dr. Dodd's native county in

²⁸ Letter of Dr. Carnahan, quoted in *Old Redstone*, pp. 233, 235.

²⁹ Autobiography and Memoir of Rev. Thaddeus Dodd, an unpublished manuscript in his own handwriting filed in the Library of the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. It is written in the form of a diary and relates the thoughts and moods throughout the years 1763-1765 which led to his conversion and dedication to the ministry. This personal portrait of his agonized soul explains the earnest emphasis Dr. Dodd laid on conversion throughout his ministry.

³⁰ Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 356.

New Jersey. They had come from homes of culture and were far superior in intelligence to the average pioneer. They eagerly welcomed this scholarly minister and called forth his best efforts as a preacher, teacher, poet and musician. Though few in number, they coöperated in his support, a Mr. Lindly furnishing the flour, Mr. Cook the meat, and so on.³¹ In that section he organized the Upper and Lower Ten Mile churches, which developed into thriving congregations. These churches are located in the southern part of Washington County, and are approximately ten miles from the county seat and an equal distance from each other. His preaching was earnest, persuasive, and attractive, especially to young people. He was one of the keenest minds in Western Pennsylvania and was especially proficient in Latin, Hebrew, mathematics, and the natural sciences.³²

With the hearty approval and aid of his people, he started to build the Log Academy near his home. In the following year he opened his school, which is usually regarded as the first classical and mathematical school in the West.³³ This school continued for three and a half years, when it was discontinued. At Washington, April 1, 1789, he, in coöperation with Dr. McMillan and the Rev. Joseph Smith, opened an academy upon an endowment of five thousand acres of land.³⁴ He served as the first principal of this Academy, which had been incorporated by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, Sept. 24, 1787. In that year between twenty and thirty students were enrolled. The destruction of the building by fire terminated temporarily the Academy and Dr. Dodd returned to the full work of the ministry at Ten Mile. He was erect and

³¹ Dodd, "Memoir of Dr. T. Dodd," written by his son, in the *Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. IV, 1854.

³² James Allison, *Address at the Centennial Anniversary of Ten Mile*, p. 21.

³³ Joseph Smith, *History of Jefferson College, with an account of the early Log Schools and the Jefferson Academy*, p. 9. It describes the efforts of these pioneer ministers to establish schools.

³⁴ *Old Redstone*, p. 147, "Biographical Sketch of the Life of the Rev. Thaddeus Dodd." For fuller information regarding Dr. Dodd, see A. R. Sweet, *Life of Thaddeus Dodd and History of Washington College*. Both volumes are in the library of Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, Pa.

slender, sallow in complexion, but with keen and lively eyes. His health, which never was robust, failed gradually and he passed away on the 20th day of May, 1793. He was the second of the early preachers to die.

Reverend Joseph Smith, popularly referred to as Hell-Fire Smith, was the fourth member of the original quartet of Presbyterian preachers. He was born in 1736 at Nottingham, Maryland, not far from the Susquehanna River. After graduating from Princeton at the mature age of 28 he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New Castle, August 5, 1767.⁸⁵ After several brief pastorates in the East, he preached among the frontier settlements for a short time and received an earnest call from the congregations at Buffalo and Cross Creek in Washington County to serve as their joint pastor. The call was dated June 21, 1779, and signed by 204 people, thus indicating a large and well established group of worshippers.⁸⁶ Here he remained until his death twelve years later.

It was as a revival preacher that he did his most effective work. His services were in constant demand both to assist his fellow preachers and to improve opportunities in surrounding communities. He was a veritable son of thunder and dwelt in his preaching on the terrors of the divine law and the horrors of hell. His voice, remarkable both for its power and for its pathos, was an effective organ for the expression of his thought and his flaming personality. He held his audience in rapt attention even when his evangelistic sermons continued long after dark. He believed in the power of prayer and often retired to the woods for protracted seasons of communion with God.⁸⁷

He is credited with having conducted the first school for the training of young men for the ministry. In 1785, in the kitchen of his home at Upper Buffalo, he opened a Latin school, called "The Study," with three students.⁸⁸ Later he

⁸⁵ Smith, as cited, p. 274.

⁸⁶ Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 62. The author is the grandson of Rev. Joseph Smith. He includes in his book an extended biographical sketch.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76. His first pupils were Messrs. McGready, Porter and Patterson. A short time afterwards James Hughes and John Brice joined them.

moved his school to Chartiers, near Canonsburg. In 1791 it was united with the Canonsburg Academy, which had been erected shortly before and which later developed into Jefferson College. His busy program of education and evangelism exhausted his energy and hastened his death, which occurred on April 19, 1792. He was the first of the four ministers to be called from the scene of zealous earthly labor.

Shortly after coming to their widely separated fields of labor in Western Pennsylvania, these four settled pastors felt the need of some organized bond of union which could serve as a coördinating basis of their work. Accordingly, they petitioned the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to be constituted a separate presbytery. Their request was granted at a meeting of the Synod May 16, 1781, and the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Smith, John McMillan, James Power, and Thaddeus Dodd were authorized to form the Presbytery of Redstone. The first meeting of this "Mother Presbytery of the West" was held September 19, 1781, at Pigeon Creek, when the pastor of that church, Reverend John McMillan, was chosen as its first moderator.³⁹

Difficulties of travel and the incursions of the savages prevented further meetings until October 15 of the following year. At that time the name of another minister was added to the roll. The newcomer was Reverend James Dunlap,⁴⁰ who had accepted a call to Dunlap's Creek and Laurel Hill, two churches in Fayette County which Reverend Dr. Power had been attempting to serve along with his regular work. Mr. Dunlap was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, 1744. Like his four associates in the Redstone Presbytery, he was a Princeton graduate and had been ordained in 1781 by the Presbytery of New Castle.⁴¹

³⁹ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴¹ *Centenary Memorial of the Planting and Growth of Presbyterianism*, p. 212.

He continued as pastor of Dunlap's Creek and Laurel Hill until 1789, when he resigned the former charge to devote all his time to the Laurel Hill congregation. In 1803 he was chosen President of Jefferson College at Canonsburg and served in that capacity for eight years. While discharging the duties of this position, he found time to act as pastor at Miller's Run Church.⁴²

At the same meeting of Presbytery which received Mr. Dunlap as a member, a call was presented by the united congregations of the Forks of the Youghiogeny for the pastoral services of Rev. James Finley.⁴³ This newcomer was no stranger to Western Pennsylvania. He had made at least four previous trips among the frontier settlers.⁴⁴ In 1771 he had been commissioned by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to "supply over the Allegheny for two months at least, as soon as may be convenient for him."⁴⁵ At the subsequent meeting of the Synod the following year, he reported that he had fulfilled the assignment but gave no statement of the places visited nor the length of his western tour.⁴⁶ To Mr. Finley is given the honor of being the first Presbyterian min-

⁴² Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 302; *Sesqui-Centennial Celebration of Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church* (1926), p. 11.

⁴³ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 5.

⁴⁴ In a biographical description of Rev. James Finley, written by his son and now in the possession of Mr. Thomas E. Finley, of McKeesport, there is a statement that Rev. Mr. Finley made his first visit to Southwestern Pennsylvania in 1765. The accuracy of his statement is doubted and is regarded as an error of memory. In the *Presbyterian Banner*, Feb. 27, 1867, Rev. Mr. Smith, the author of *Old Redstone*, rejects the claim with the following argument: "Finley could have had no adequate object in exposing himself to the perils of this wide wilderness at that early day. Pontiac's Indian War had then just ended. There were then, perhaps, not twenty white families in all the Mesopotamia of Youghiogeny, Monongahela, and Cheat Rivers, and Laurel Hill Mountain. Three years later they were estimated by a Commission, composed of Rev. John Steele and others—presently to be referred to—at 'about an hundred and fifty.' If land was his object, no valid title, not even inceptive, could then be acquired. The running of the Mason and Dixon's Line, in 1767, put what is now Fayette County within Pennsylvania; and Mr. Finley may have come out, in that, or the next year, to select some lands. Title he could not acquire until 1769; and in 1771 or 1772 he bought an 'improvezer, on which his sons yet reside.'"

⁴⁵ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 417.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

ister other than an army chaplain to cross the Allegheny Mountains in the interest of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Previously he had accompanied Mr. Tanner, a farmer from Chester County, to view the western lands and perhaps stake out a future home for his sons. In 1772 he made another western trip in the interest of his financial welfare. On that occasion he brought with him his son Ebenezer and placed him on a farm he had purchased in Fayette County near Dunlap's Creek Church.⁴⁷

How widely he itinerated among the settlers in the years 1771 and 1772 cannot be determined. The tradition is that he gathered the settlers at the Forks of the Youghiogheny into a congregation of worshipers. Supporting evidence might be offered in the petition for a supply preacher which Synod in 1772 received "from some inhabitants near Monongahela and Youghiogheny."⁴⁸ That same year Synod received a similar request from Round Hill.⁴⁹ At the fall meeting Round Hill again pleaded for preaching.⁵⁰ During the period of McClure and Frisbee's visit this group of worshipers made no appeal to Presbytery or Synod for the services of a minister. Though McClure in his *Diary* does not mention Round Hill or the

⁴⁷ *Old Redstone*, p. 284.

⁴⁸ *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 432.

⁴⁹ Minutes of Donegal Presbytery, April, 1772.

⁵⁰ Round Hill is the incorporated name of the church which bore the local designation of "lower meeting place of the Forks of Youghiogheny." Rehoboth was referred to as the "upper meeting place of the Forks of Youghiogheny." These two churches were served for many years by one pastor and so formed one pastoral charge. But it is not certain just when the name Round Hill was chosen, nor do the Minutes of Donegal Presbytery indicate the location of the Round Hill Church when recording the requests for supplies. In addition to the Round Hill Church in Allegheny County there is another church east of the mountains which formerly carried that name and which at that time was part of Donegal Presbytery. It was a weak struggling church with no pastor from 1758 to 1778, when the members disbanded and united with the Great Conewago Church. In a list of churches included in *General American Register for 1774*,* the Round Hill Church is reported as having no pastor. Did this refer to the Round Hill Church organized near York in 1748 or to the Round Hill Church near Elizabeth in Allegheny County?

*Aitken's, *General American Register for 1774*. This is the earliest list of Presbyterian Churches and pastors. Copy is in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

Fork of the Youghiogheny, the presumption is logical that either McClure or Frisbee visited this congregation and met the immediate demands for worship. When McMillan traveled through that section of the county in 1774, he recorded in his Journal, "I preached at the Forks Meeting House" [Wednesday following the third Sabbath of August].⁵¹ Some one apparently had stirred these settlers at the Forks of the Youghiogheny to erect a place of worship and to organize themselves into a congregation. With the data available it seems reasonable to accept this partially substantiated tradition and credit that early organization to the missionary labors of Reverend Mr. Finley. At least three of the original elders of the Rehoboth Church had previously been members of Finley's former charge in East Nottingham, Delaware.⁵² Eagerly they now joined in the call presented to him by the "united congregations at the Forks of the Youghiogheny." Delays followed and it was not until 1785 that he could receive his formal transfer of membership to the Redstone Presbytery. He had already passed the meridian of life and died after a ten-year pastorate, at the age of seventy.

Another Princeton graduate joined the Redstone Presbytery, one year and a half after its first meeting.⁵³ There is more than ordinary historical significance in the fact that all these first Presbyterian pastors who settled in Western Pennsylvania were well trained men of broad education and culture. It explains why religion and education were so intimately associated on this western frontier and why the developing Presbyterian churches produced a steady stream of capable leaders in many spheres of life. These pioneer preachers revealed in their own conduct and thinking both the restraints and the challenges of education. They coveted for their members similar privileges and gave freely of their time and energy to promote the cause of education. Their sermons were the expression of reasoned convictions and analytic thought. They unfolded an elaborate system of theology that had as its bene-

⁵¹ *Journal of McMillan*, p. 6 (typed copy).

⁵² *Old Redstone*, p. 287.

⁵³ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 7.

ficial by-products the quickening of the sense of moral responsibility and the stimulation of the minds of the congregation. It is doubtful if Presbyterianism would have been so dominant in Western Pennsylvania had it not had as its original propagandists a group of well educated clergymen.

The newcomer among the settled pastors in the rural section adjacent to Pittsburgh was Reverend John Clark. His advanced age, sixty-four years, and his long white hair early won for him the affectionate title "Father Clark."⁵⁴ His field of labor included the "Western and Eastern Divisions of Peter's Creek," where Dr. McMillan had organized two congregations some time subsequent to 1776, which were the scenes of a notable revival during the winter of 1781.⁵⁵ Under the more descriptive names of Bethel and Lebanon, these thriving churches have continued an unbroken record of service and rejoice in the glory of an ancient heritage.⁵⁶ Here Reverend John Clark fulfilled in his old age a vigorous ministry that was to close at Lebanon in 1788⁵⁷ and at Bethel in 1794.⁵⁸ The last year of his ministry was made turbulent by the Whiskey Rebellion which agitated his parish. On June 17, 1794, five hundred men, under the command of Major McFarland, gathered at Couch's Fort, about a quarter of a mile west of Bethel Church. In an impassioned speech, the old man counseled against bloodshed and violence. Vividly McCook describes the scene:

Here stands a venerable figure upon whom all eyes are fixed. It is Father John Clark, the first pastor of Bethel. For thirteen years he has gone in and out before these people, revered and beloved by his parishioners, esteemed and venerated by all who know him. In appearance he is a spare man almost to leanness; is above the ordinary height, somewhat stooped by the weight of his seventy-six years; of grave and solemn demeanor. He wears the old-fashioned dress of the clergymen of his time, a black suit with breeches, and silver buckles clasping his black

⁵⁴ H. C. McCook, *The Latimers*, p. 196.

⁵⁵ *Sesqui-Centennial of Lebanon Presbyterian Church*, pp. 9, 10.

⁵⁶ W. C. Degelman, *Historical Narrative of Bethel Presbyterian Church*, p. 12.

⁵⁷ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 39.

⁵⁸ *Historical Narrative of Bethel, op. cit.*, p. 25.

stockings at the knees. His hat is held in one hand, thus uncovering long white hair, combed back from the forehead and worn in a queue, a bit of old-time dignity from which even the unconventional manners of the frontier could not dissuade him. The pallor of age is heightened upon his bloodless cheeks by the intense emotion which possesses him as he stretches out one hand, and lifts up his voice.⁵⁹

But the plea seemed in vain. The hot blood of passion was aroused and must express itself in some form of destruction before reason and better judgment could ponder a more effective solution of what appeared to be a real grievance.⁶⁰ Subsequent events vindicated Father Clark's judgment and added to the esteem in which his congregation held him. His body, worn with hardship and service, was laid to rest in the cemetery adjoining the church he loved. It is marked with these quaint words:

Here lies the body of the
Rev. John Clark,
who departed this life
July the 13th, A. D., 1797,
in the 79th year of his age.
In yonder church I spent my breath;
And now lie slumbering here in death;
These lips shall rise and then declare
Amen to truths they published there.⁶¹

These seven Presbyterian pioneers, laboring together in the spirit of love and unity, laid the foundations of Presbyterianism in the broad and fertile rural portions of Western Pennsylvania. Untiring in energy and zealous in service, they constantly welcomed opportunities to preach and teach and organize new churches that contributed greatly to moulding the religious life of the settlers. The field, large at it was at first, constantly expanded as new groups of worshipers were gathered to form struggling churches. Calls for preaching became more numerous and insistent. Throughout the first

⁵⁹ McCook, *The Latimers*, p. 196.

⁶⁰ R. T. Wiley, *The Whiskey Insurrection* (1912). It is a brief but informing summary from an unbiased view-point.

⁶¹ *Sesqui-Centennial of Lebanon Church*, p. 23.

seven years of the Presbytery of Redstone, nearly fifty different places sought to present claims upon the time and energy of these ministers. Yet during those seven years (1783-1790) no other Presbyterian preachers came to establish their homes in the rural territory surrounding Pittsburgh. Reverend Wait Cornell, a man of great ability, entered the work but remained only a short time. He assisted Reverend Joseph Smith in his revival services at Cross Creek in the spring of 1787 and spent a few months preaching to pastorless congregations and doing other missionary work, but then returned home.⁶² A few others came to help, but their work was transitory and of little value, perhaps even harmful.

In 1786 Mr. Morrison and his son preached in some of the vacant churches, but they caused a great deal of trouble and their early departure was a cause of thankfulness.⁶³ Another source of trouble was a Mr. Thomas Cooley who came asking the Presbytery for permission to preach. After allowing him to fill some vacancies, his credentials were examined, and thinking they were forged, the Redstone Presbytery refused to permit him to continue preaching.⁶⁴ The General Assembly later ratified their action, but it required considerable trouble to convince the people as to his character.⁶⁵

Real help, however, did come from co-workers whose religious zeal was aroused and guided by the original members of the Presbytery. The consecration of these faithful preachers brought forth abundant fruitage as Presbytery sent out into the expanding field a group of locally trained, but well equipped, evangelists. In 1788 the Presbytery licensed four men to travel in the field, preaching at various points.⁶⁶ John Brice was stationed at Three Ridges and the Forks of Wheeling, James Hughes at Short Creek and Lower Buffalo, and Joseph Patterson at Racoon, where he remained for twenty-seven years. In addition, Mr. James McGready was licensed

⁶² Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 131.

⁶³ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, pp. 23 ff., 27.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 91, 102.

⁶⁵ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 130.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

and, after laboring in the Presbytery, he moved into Kentucky where he was very successful in revival work.⁶⁷ All of these four men were educated and trained by one or more of the four founders of the Presbytery. The Prebytery was thus growing by its own strength. During the next few years, six other men were licensed to preach, which strengthened the Presbytery considerably. These also had been trained and educated at home, a testimonial to the faithful work of these earnest preachers. Mr. Samuel Porter was stationed at Poke Run and Congruity, where he remained until his death.⁶⁸ Mr. George Hill was at first given the congregations at Donegal, Fairfield and Wheatfield. After six years of successful work he accepted a call from Ligonier, at which place he remained until his death.⁶⁹ Thomas Marquis was installed as pastor of the congregations of Upper Buffalo and Cross Creek, retaining charge of the latter until a year before his death in 1827. Mr. John McPherrin accepted a call from the Unity and Salem Churches.⁷⁰ Mr. William Swan, soon after being licensed to preach in December, 1791, was besieged with numerous requests for his services, but he finally accepted the call from Long Run and Sewickley, and labored in these places for twenty-five years.⁷¹ Mr. Robert Marshall, after being licensed, spent two and a half years preaching among the vacant churches in the Presbytery and then joined the Presbytery of Transylvania.⁷² All of these six men received their education in the Redstone Presbytery.

Presbyterianism by this time had become an established institution in Western Pennsylvania. In numbers, in influence and in the development of a capable personnel of ministers, the church was moving forward rapidly. Soon it was to expand into a second Presbytery, called the Presbytery of Ohio,

⁶⁷ J. H. Patton, *Popular History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 224.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 138.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 125.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁷¹ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 421.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 439.

for more effective administration and more intensive cultivation of spiritual opportunities.

But Presbyterians were not left to work single-handed in the great task of moulding the religious and cultural outlook of Western Pennsylvania. At least contemporaneously, if not at all times coöperatively, representatives of other branches of the Christian Church were proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus and establishing preaching points and centers of worship. They also found the home-building settlers on the farms more responsive to religious motivation than were the traders and tradesmen clustering around Fort Pitt. As a result, the oldest churches of any denomination lie outside the present limits of the city of Pittsburgh.

Presbyterians, Baptists, and Lutherans share the pride of early religious zeal and present their rival claims of priority. As previously noted, Reverend David Jones, a Baptist minister, visited Pittsburgh on his missionary tour two months before McClure and Frisbee laid the foundations of what was to become the First Church of Pittsburgh. Mr. Jones' visit in 1772 was merely a brief interlude in a two-year evangelistic tour among the Indians and scattered settlers. Here and there in his journey he discovered groups of Baptists who had organized themselves into churches. On the level ground adjacent to Grave Creek, he reported a "Baptist meeting house."⁷³

In the vicinity of Redstone Creek, he found an aggressive center of Baptist influence. "In this new settlement," he wrote, "several houses for worship are already erected, and one Baptist Church is constituted, to which I administered the Lord's Supper." An ordained Baptist minister, "Reverend Isaac Sutton was residing among them." "Besides him, at some distance, there are three candidates for the ministry, John Corbly, John Swinglar and John Whitticur. Was favored with the opportunity of hearing each."⁷⁴

Perhaps it was this same group that Reverend Mr. McClure

⁷³ David Jones, *A Journal of Two Visits Made to Some Nations of Indians on the West Side of the River Ohio in the Years 1772 and 1773*, Dec., 1774 (Sabin's Reprints No. 2, New York).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11 (May 25, 1772).

visited. His record may have been tinged with denominational prejudice, for he wrote: "There was no settled minister or church in all the country westward of the Appalachian Mountains. These people are generally Presbyterians. A few illiterate preachers of the Baptist persuasion have preached about, zealously to make proselytes."⁷⁵ Source material is not available for an authoritative evaluation of these conflicting observations. McClure's travels may not have been wide enough to include the various localities where the Baptist itinerating evangelists had planted the seeds of Baptist churches. The Rev. Messrs. John Sutton and John Corbly, two pioneer Baptist preachers in Western Pennsylvania, are reported to have organized a church at Big Whitely, Greene County, in 1770.⁷⁶ Great Bethel, a Baptist Church near Uniontown, is able to trace its history of continuous service back to 1770. Peter's Creek Church at Library, some twelve miles south of Pittsburgh, was organized November 10, 1773, and merits the distinction of being the oldest Baptist Church in Allegheny County.⁷⁷ In 1776, Baptist churches were sufficiently numerous to permit the organization of the Redstone Baptist Association for fellowship and mutual welfare.⁷⁸ This was eight years previous to the organization of the Redstone Presbytery. But though these individual Baptist churches may have authentic claims to the dates assigned to them, the Baptist denomination never achieved the growth or the influence of the Presbyterian Church throughout the nineteenth century. The Records of the Redstone Baptist Association (Sept. 1, 1802) included a complete list of the churches which in that year comprised the Association. Only nine churches claimed to be organized previous to 1790. This list, with number of communicants and names of the ministers, is as follows:⁷⁹

⁷⁵ McClure, *Diary*, p. 47 (Aug. 20, 1772).

⁷⁶ *Churches of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, p. 66, A. Warner & Co.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 67.

⁷⁸ Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, Vol. II, p. 516.

⁷⁹ G. J. Slosser, "A Chapter from the Religious History of Western Pennsylvania," *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*, Sept., 1934, p. 108.

<i>Churches</i>	<i>Date Constituted</i>	<i>Ministers</i>	<i>Communi- cants</i>
Uniontown, Great Bethel.	1770	.....	24
Ten Mile	1773	Mathias Luce	112
Peter's Creek	1773	David Phillips .....	...
Turkey Foot	1775	Nathaniel Skinner	57
Pigeon Creek	1775	.....	22
Forks of Chest, Va.	1777	.....	14
Indian Creek	1783	John Patterson, William Stone	33
Sandy Creek	1785	.....	18
Forks of Yough	1789	.....	18

The German Lutherans were another religious group to make a helpful contribution to the religious life of the settlers. Their basic purpose was conservation, rather than conquest. They were not aggressive community leaders like the Presbyterians, but were content to minister to the spiritual and educational needs of the German-speaking groups. Between 1769 and 1776 fully two hundred German families had crossed the mountains to establish permanent homes. They settled chiefly in Westmoreland County, but a few of the more venturesome came to Fort Pitt.⁸⁰ Their numbers multiplied after the War, with the result that in 1795 the Germans in Western Pennsylvania are estimated to have been about 15% of the total population.⁸¹ A racial group of that size would naturally challenge the zeal of the Lutheran denomination and result in the establishment of many churches throughout Westmoreland, Bedford, and Fayette Counties. However, there is no record of the organization of any Lutheran Church in Allegheny County prior to 1790, except the church in Pittsburgh, formed in 1782.

Neither Roman Catholicism nor Episcopalianism entered very definitely into the task of moulding the religious outlook of Western Pennsylvania until the latter part of the eighteenth century. The Catholic Church was the first to conduct religious services at the Forks of the Ohio, but the missionaries

⁸⁰ Ellis Burgess, *Memorial History of the Pittsburgh Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1748-1845-1924*, p. 15.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

withdrew with the expulsion of the French. Following the close of the Revolution, the handful of Catholics increased rapidly, with the result that in 1784 a petition was drawn up and sent to Baltimore "asking for the ministration of a priest, at least at distant intervals, for some seventy-five families living about Pittsburgh and in the Monongahela Valley."⁸² Because of the scarcity of priests, the request could not be granted. These Catholic families had to await the occasional missionary who was traveling to Kentucky or to the French settlements in Illinois. These visitors included Father Paul in 1785 and Father Charles Whelan in 1787, Father Joseph Flaget in 1792, Father Badin and Father Barriere in 1793, and Father Michael Fournier in the winter of 1796-97. The last-named priest was detained fourteen weeks in Pittsburgh, "but though he held service every Sunday, the people were so indifferent that only six ever came to enjoy the privilege of assisting."⁸³

Nor did the Episcopalians meet with much greater success. The aggressive Scotch-Irish looked with disfavor upon the ritualism of the Episcopal Church and were intolerant of anything that resembled episcopal government. Such things were suggestive either of popery or English autocracy and were resisted from patriotic and religious motives.⁸⁴ As a result, the few adherents of the Episcopal Church were forced either to worship with other denominations or read their prayer books in solitude. Among the rural population in Chartiers Township, about six miles outside the city, St. Luke's Church was built in 1790 as the lone representative of the Episcopal Church. The tablet recording its organization reads: "The first Episcopal church west of the mountains was organized and the church built by several persons, viz.: General Johnson Neville, his son Pressly Neville, Major Isaac Craig and others." The Whiskey Rebellion destroyed even this solitary sanctuary of the Episcopalians. The following year it was

⁸² *Churches of Allegheny County*, p. 87.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁸⁴ Donehoo, *Pennsylvania—A History*, p. 1624, where are found quotations from *Annals of the American Revolution*, pp. 197-210, and *Colonial Records*, VI, p. 503.

rebuilt. Services were then conducted regularly by the Reverend Mr. Reno, and the feeble banner of Episcopalianism upheld until better days would, as they soon did, dawn.⁸⁵

More effective than any of these denominations were the allied efforts of two Scottish groups, who later merged to form in 1858 the United Presbyterian Church. They came early into the undeveloped rural fields of Western Pennsylvania and exerted a strong influence. Their racial heritage included aggressiveness and piety and an unwavering fidelity to their convictions. Though not as numerous as their brethren of the Presbyterian Church, they were equally creative and resourceful. They gave to Western Pennsylvania at Service Creek, a few miles back of the present city of Aliquippa, the second, if not the oldest, theological seminary in America.⁸⁶

Organized in 1794, this Seminary has continued its work through successive mergers and is now a part of Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary. The story of the growth and influence of the United Presbyterian Church in its two constituent branches has been well told by Marybelle Pierce in her detailed investigations of the Associate and Associate Reformed Churches in Western Pennsylvania.⁸⁷ These two Scottish denominations worked outside the bounds of Pittsburgh during the developing years of the eighteenth century. Thus they contributed to produce that striking contrast between urban depravity and rural redemption which led Dr. Smith to remark: "Had a traveler . . . confined his visits and observations to towns and villages he might have inferred that he had got into a heathenish land. Had some one on the other hand, carried him round the country churches—especially in 1787 when in several of them there was a revival of religion—he would have thought that he had got into an earthly Canaan!"⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *Churches of Allegheny County*, pp. 39-44.

⁸⁶ John McNaugher, *History of Theological Education in the United Presbyterian Church and Its Ancestors*.

⁸⁷ Marybelle Pierce, "The Establishment of the Associate, Reformed and Associate Reformed Churches in Western Pennsylvania," a thesis on file in the University of Pittsburgh, 1931.

⁸⁸ Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 219.

CHAPTER III
THE INCORPORATION OF THE FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Throughout the decade following the departure of McClure and Frisbee in 1773, Pittsburgh Presbyterianism lay buried in obscurity and perhaps inactivity. No Presbyterian minister felt either a call or a challenge to labor in that "frontier of depravity." More promising and more productive fields of labor attracted the services of the pioneer preachers who settled in Western Pennsylvania. McClure and Frisbee had discovered in Pittsburgh "a happy few who live in the fear of God and maintain their integrity."¹ The prospects of developing these few into a leavening force of righteousness encouraged these two missionaries to establish a center of worship in Pittsburgh, where one or the other preached regularly each Sunday during nine months of continuous effort. So stirred was this little group of Presbyterian worshipers that throughout the next two years they sent to Synod and Presbytery repeated requests for the services of available preachers.² Some of these requests were answered in the occasional preaching of itinerant missionaries.

But dark days were soon to follow. Dr. John Connolly's arrogance and inefficiency resulted in "a deplorable state of affairs."³ The dangers of Indian attacks destroyed the prosperity of the traders. The outbreak of the Revolutionary War called forth the enlistment of volunteers for military services. The British sought the assistance of the Indians and plotted raids throughout the frontier. Fort Pitt became a military outpost and the poorly manned headquarters for defense and offense against the Indians and their British instigators. Dur-

¹ McClure, *Diary*, p. 53.

² *Supra*, p. 236 f.

³ Sarah Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh, Its Rise and Progress*, p. 53 ff.

ing those critical years of the Revolutionary War, Pittsburgh carried a heavy responsibility along the entire western front. Her gallant stand held the Indians in check and permitted the Continental government to concentrate its military forces in the East.

With the triumphant close of the War, Pittsburgh's material and spiritual progress was stimulated. Population increased and settled pastors came to present the cause of religion and morality. A glimpse of Pittsburgh, just previous to this period of expansion, is given by Dr. Johann David Schopf. He had served as surgeon to the Germans employed in the British army and was enjoying the liberty of peace in a tour of the Western frontier. In the summer of 1783 he crossed the mountains in a carriage and was the object of much curiosity because of that novel feat. He reached Pittsburgh September 6 and lodged at the best inn, "a rickety little wooden cabin on the Monongahela." The village, he relates, "numbers perhaps sixty wooden houses and cabins in which live something more than a hundred families."⁴ In the social and moral attitude of these people, this German physician found but little that would merit favorable comment. They were poor, lazy, ravenously greedy and unwilling to work for reasonable wages. They preferred to live by extorting from travelers and strangers exorbitant prices. The merchants were bemoaning the loss of business caused by the departure of the soldiers who had garrisoned the fort and spent their wages freely. The young ladies were saddened by the thought that social life would be dull and monotonous without their gay escorts from the army. But Dr. Schopf was looking ahead and foresaw a great future for the village. One stone house was being erected that summer and more would soon follow.⁵ "Of public houses of worship . . . there are none as yet."

More important, though, was Dr. Schopf's observation that a German preacher was living in the village and officiating for

⁴ Johann David Schopf, *Travels in the Confederation (1783-1784)*, Vol. I, p. 244; Dahlinger, *Fort Pitt*, p. 49.

⁵ "Pittsburgh Long Ago," *Pittsburgh Evening Telegraph*, Dec. 11, 1875, which comments on this visit of Dr. Schopf and quotes from his journal.

all creeds. This venturesome clergyman was Reverend Johann Wilhelm Weber. His enthusiastic support of the colonists in their struggles against the British had aroused the resentment of a considerable portion of his congregation in Eastern Pennsylvania. Among the patriots on the western frontier, he now sought a more harmonious environment, and settled in Pittsburgh in September, 1782, one year before the visit of Dr. Schopf. His Pittsburgh preaching was done in a log building where the Germans gathered for worship.⁶ Three other congregations, on a circuit which carried him fifty miles east, claimed a considerable portion of Mr. Weber's time and energy and necessitated long absences from Pittsburgh. It may have been while Weber was away on one of these extended pastoral tours in 1784 that Arthur Lee visited Pittsburgh and "found not a priest of any persuasion nor church, nor chapel." Lee, however, may not have been looking for evidences of German culture, since he reported that "Pittsburgh is inhabited entirely by Scots and Irish who live in paltry log-houses and are as dirty as in the north of Ireland or even Scotland."⁷ Weber's congregation represented the Protestant Evangelical and Protestant Reformed Churches, the former of German origin, the latter of Swiss-German. The united congregation was known as the German Evangelical Church.

But in the very year that this unfavorable judgment was recorded, some of those "dirty Scots and Irish" were seeking the quickening influence of religion and petitioning the Redstone Presbytery to send into their midst a Presbyterian preacher. In answer to their request Reverend Joseph Smith, pastor of the Cross Creek and Buffalo Churches, was appointed to preach "at Pittsburgh the fourth Sabbath of August."⁸ This is the first recorded visit of a Presbyterian minister in Pittsburgh since Dr. McMillan preached the second Sabbath of August, 1775, a long period of almost nine years.

⁶ Dahlinger, *Pittsburgh—A Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, p. 10.

⁷ Richard Henry Lea, *Life of Arthur Lee*, Vol. II (1829), Appendix XI, p. 385, where are printed Extracts from Journal of Arthur Lee (Dec. 17).

⁸ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 11.

The direct cause of this renewed interest was doubtless the arrival in Pittsburgh of a group of capable leaders who were destined to play a vital part in the expanding life of that community. Some of these men had already achieved distinction as army officers. They had confidence in the future of the town and were ready to stake their own fortunes upon the possibilities of its growth and development. This group included the O'Haras, Dennys, Craigs, Bayards, Wilkins, and Brackenridges. Of these leaders, Mr. John Wilkins has taken to himself the major credit for stirring into action the dormant desire for a Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. In an autobiographical sketch written for his family in 1809, Mr. Wilkins recorded his reminiscences of those early days of discouraging beginnings:

In the middle of October, 1783, I left Carlisle and set out in a wagon with a light gun in my hand, and arrived in Pittsburgh November 10.

When I first came here I found the place filled with old officers and soldiers, followers of the army, mixed with a few families of credit. All sorts of wickedness were carried on to excess, and there was no appearance of morality or regular order. As I have already remarked, when I first came to this town there appeared to be no signs of religion among the people, and it seemed to me that the Presbyterian ministers were afraid to come to the place lest they should be mocked or mistreated. I often hinted to the creditable part of the people that something ought to be done toward establishing a Presbyterian church in this place and encouraging it.⁹

Neither hints nor appeals to Presbytery were needed much longer. Pittsburgh was soon to have its first regularly installed Presbyterian pastor. He was the Reverend Samuel Barr, who had recently been ordained by the Presbytery of New Castle. The members of that ecclesiastical court carefully examined this young Irishman who had been in America only a year, but who during that year had preached acceptably in several vacant churches.¹⁰ On June 15, 1785, "Mr. Barr

⁹ *Centennial Volume of the First Presbyterian Church*, p. 16 f.

¹⁰ Minutes of New Castle Presbytery, October 27, 1784.

having passed through the trials for ordination and adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Form of Government and promised subjection to his brethren in the Lord was after a sermon suitable to the occasion solemnly set apart to the work of the Gospel ministry by fasting, prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery."¹¹ Almost immediately Reverend Mr. Barr set out on a journey westward which was to bring him to his first pastorate and result in his call to serve as pastor of the embryonic Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh.

It was destined to be a pastorate marred with friction within both the church and Presbytery, yet blessed with much material progress. It was to close four years later amid the controversy of charge and counter-charge, but with the complete exoneration of the pastor by the Synod. The details are meager, but all evidence suggests that the group who comprised the Pittsburgh Presbyterian Church of that period was lacking in spirituality and perhaps in morality.

The Reverend Mr. Barr arrived in midsummer and entered enthusiastically upon the self-appointed task of developing a congregation both in Pittsburgh and Pitts-Township.¹² His introductory labors appeared successful. He received a call from these two congregations, which he presented to the Redstone Presbytery for approval December 21, 1785.¹³ The approval was granted but no formal installation services were planned, since Mr. Barr was not a member of the Redstone Presbytery. Almost sixteen months passed before his name

¹¹ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1785.

¹² Pitts-Township was organized at least a year earlier when, under the less euphonious name of Bullock Pens, an application for preaching was presented to Redstone Presbytery, Oct. 20, 1784. In 1804 the name was again changed to Beulah. "The name Beulah (married) suggested by the installation of Rev. Graham, the young pastor, and the church's first pastor, so they named it Beulah (married). For as a young man married a virgin."* The ecclesiastical marriage was successful, as Mr. Graham continued at Beulah throughout a life-long pastorate of forty-two years. The church is situated east of Wilkinsburg and has maintained an unbroken record of service.

* William S. Miller—History of the Beulah Presbyterian Church from Oct., 1784, to Sept., 1884 (ms.), Library of Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.

¹³ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 20.

was finally placed on the rolls of that Presbytery.¹⁴ The circumstances occasioning that long-delayed enrollment were the beginnings of a misunderstanding between him and his brethren in Presbytery that developed into coldness and subsequent condemnation.

This long delay was neither the fault nor the desire of Mr. Barr. Those who were instrumental in arranging for him to serve as pastor in Pittsburgh included a number who were not Presbyterians at heart and who had but little sympathy with the strict theology of the ministers in the Redstone Presbytery. Mr. Hugh Henry Brackenridge was the leader of this liberal group and argued that only a union church could thrive in so small a community as Pittsburgh was at that time. Mr. Brackenridge had graduated from Princeton College with the expectation of entering the ministry. He studied theology for a time and was licensed to preach. In 1777 he served as chaplain to a regiment in the Continental Army. But he never sought ordination, believing that the legal profession held for him greater opportunity of leadership.¹⁵ He established his practice in Pittsburgh in 1781 and soon rose to political and literary fame.

It was he who introduced Reverend Mr. Barr to the more prominent people of Pittsburgh and assured the young preacher that the prospects of an adequate salary were dependent on the establishment of a united congregation with no denominational affiliation. On that basis a "subscription paper was made out with a promissory obligation to pay him a promised sum as pastor of the Church of Pittsburgh."¹⁶ Mr. Brackenridge claimed that the Presbyterian term "call" was changed to the undenominational designation of "invitation" and the phrase "Presbyterian congregation" avoided. "It was stipulated expressly with the clergyman, that he should baptize and admit to privilege generally, at the recommendation of the committee, without inquiry as to what denomination they belong. It was stipulated expressly that any

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁵ *Centenary Memorial*, p. 272.

¹⁶ Reply of H. H. Brackenridge, *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 16, 1787.



Courtesy First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

REVEREND SAMUEL BARR
First Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of
Pittsburgh, 1784-1789



Courtesy First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH
Erected 1787. Remained in use until 1802



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other gentleman of an ecclesiastical character, occasionally present, should be admitted to preach in the church, at the approbation of the committee." ¹⁷

Mr. Barr, who was a trained and ordained Presbyterian clergyman, apparently did not share Brackenridge's understanding of these conditions or he did not feel they were mandatory, since he presented to the Redstone Presbytery a call supervised by a fellow Presbyterian minister, Rev. James Finley.¹⁸ But the antagonistic attitude toward Presbytery, manifested by the leaders in the Pittsburgh Presbyterian Church, influenced Mr. Barr's opinion of the members of that body and delayed his decision to unite with that Presbytery.

One of the Rev. Mr. Barr's first achievements was to secure the incorporation of his congregation as a Presbyterian church, despite the opposition of Mr. Brackenridge. In 1785, before he became a member of the Legislative Assembly at Philadelphia, Brackenridge had drawn up a petition which was presented to the legislature to incorporate a "Religious Society in Pittsburgh."¹⁹ No action was taken.

But in the following year, the petition was presented as a bill to incorporate "a Presbyterian Congregation in Pittsburgh, at this time under the care of the Rev. Samuel Barr."²⁰ Immediately Mr. Brackenridge, now a member of the Assembly, opposed it. He was anxious to incorporate a church in Pittsburgh in order that the church might hold legal title to ground donated by the Penns for religious purposes, but he believed that to specify "a Presbyterian Congregation" would divide the people and destroy the church.²¹ "There are a few Episcopalians among us and perhaps the name [Presbyterian] may be offensive to them and of a consequence prevent us from obtaining the laudable end we have in view."²² Brackenridge moved that the bill be amended by striking out the words "a Presbyterian Congregation" and inserting "A

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Centennial Volume of the First Church*, p. 20.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²² Letter of Brackenridge, *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 16, 1787.

Religious Society." He defended his amendment against the plea that it was too indefinite and would lead to future quarrels and bickering. "They have but one clergyman, a gentleman of reputation and a good preacher. There was no other in the place except a German but he did not preach in English."²³

In its amended form the bill was printed but never voted upon. It led to a warm argument between the Reverend Mr. Barr and Mr. Brackenridge, which soon took the form of a newspaper controversy.²⁴ These two men who formerly were intimate friends became quarreling antagonists. Insinuations of unworthy motives and downright dishonesty were hurled, especially by Brackenridge. In the end, Brackenridge was forced to yield. The bill was finally passed September 29, 1787, and bore the title: "An Act to Incorporate the Presbyterian Congregation of the Town of Pittsburgh and the vicinity thereof, in the County of Westmoreland."²⁵ The denominational status of the church was fixed and the future course of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism definitely charted.

The distorting effects of controversy are strikingly illustrated in Brackenridge's changed evaluation of church attendance. The summer following Reverend Mr. Barr's arrival in Pittsburgh, and while the two men were friends and co-laborers, Brackenridge had written his famed encomium of preachers and of church attendance:

The establishment of a clergyman in this town, to carry the idea no farther, is a high political good. The black cloth, the sedate and grave presence of a divine, the idea of dignity and reverence, from common opinion, annexed to his character, restrains the disorderly in the streets where he walks, or in the neighbourhood where he lives. His visits and private admonitions at the houses of such, give impressions favorable to good behavior. His sermons lay down rules of life and manners, which form the good citizen.

Even the convening to church, teaches the lower class of people to attend to dress and to cleanliness, and to set a value on their personal appearance. The sitting down amongst those of

²³ *Centenary Memorial*, p. 273.

²⁴ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 17, June 16, June 30, 1787.

²⁵ *Centenary Memorial*, p. 275.

more refinement of behavior kindles in their minds a love of what is elegant. They pay respect to their own manners, and are ambitious that their children should behave in such a manner as to deserve respect in life. Human nature is insensibly actuated by these secret springs and touches, and we see a people where a church is established, even where there is not great devotion evident, nevertheless more orderly, temperate and industrious than elsewhere.

The idea, moreover, of a future existence and retribution according to acts in life, cannot fail in some degree to govern the conscience, and enforce morality. I say nothing of those more energetic principles, which every preacher of Christianity will teach those under his care to desire and cultivate, and which constitute true religion: but in a moral and political point of view, I would consider the institution of such public orator to convene the people on that day, established as a day of rest, and to impress sentiments of virtue, as highly useful under whatever name and in whatever mode it may be thought expedient. Were I in faith a Mahometan, Pagan, or Jew, I would nevertheless, as a good citizen, contribute to the support of such, and carefully assemble with others to hear the discourses.²⁶

But a year later, after he had become embittered against his friend and pastor, the practical value of worship had faded from his mind: "I shall be under obligation to him to mention me now and then in his prayers, if he can think of it. If it does no good, it can do no harm, as I do not go to hear his sermons and still continue to pay him, I may as well take that as get nothing."²⁷

Included among the eleven trustees of this newly incorporated Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh were six men who had served in the American army during the Revolutionary War. They were men of action, not always pious, but capable of leadership in various phases of community service. To call the roll is to make mention of the beginnings of Pittsburgh's expanding greatness. Major Isaac Craig, after serving as captain in both the Marines and the Artillery, was transferred to Pittsburgh toward the close of the war. After

²⁶ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Aug. 26, 1786.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, June 30, 1787.

peace was made, he occupied many offices of public trust and creative activity.²⁸ Col. Stephen Bayard fought throughout the entire war and gained his interest in Pittsburgh while campaigning in Brodhead's expedition against the Indians. He and Craig were partners in the real estate business, buying a three-acre plot of ground and developing it into sites for homes and business. Their early ventures included a mercantile business, a distillery and a sawmill.²⁹ Col. John Gibson was the early pioneer who welcomed Reverend David McClure in 1772 and who carried to Lord Dunmore the oft-quoted speech of Logan, the Indian.³⁰ General Richard Butler achieved military fame in the battles of Saratoga and Stony Point, and became in his day "the most noted character in Pittsburgh." He was a member of the General Assembly and a justice of the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County. His career closed tragically November 4, 1791, while he was a member of St. Clair's ill-fated expedition against the Indians.³¹ General Alexander Fowler had served his country well during the war as auditor of the Western Department at Pittsburgh.³² Adamson Tannehill survived the toils and dangers of the Revolution and achieved an officer's commission.³³ Another of this original group of trustees of the Presbyterian Church who was to play a prominent part in the life of the community was George Wallace, president judge of Allegheny County in 1788.³⁴ The remaining trustees were John Withers, Robert Galbreath, David Duncan, and the pastor, Rev. Samuel Barr. To these eleven trustees, on behalf of the Presbyterian congregation, John Penn and John Penn, Jr., sold for the nominal sum of five shillings two and one-half lots on Sixth Street and Virginia Alley. The deed was dated September 24, 1787.³⁵ This deed was one of three similar donations made to

²⁸ Killikelly, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 518.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³⁰ "Original Trustees of the First Church," article in *The Presbyterian Advocate*, Feb. 19, 1851.

³¹ Dahlinger, *Pittsburgh—A Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, p. 122 f.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

³⁴ *Centennial Volume*, p. 141.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 253, where the deed is printed in full.

three churches "in consideration of the laudable inclination which they [the Penns] have for encouraging and promoting morality, piety and religion in general." The other beneficiaries of the Penns' generosity were the Episcopal Church and the United German congregation. These three churches were thus strategically located in the center of a growing community and given property that has been of great value in subsequent years.

Even before the Presbyterians had received formal title to this donated property they had begun the erection of the first church edifice in Pittsburgh. True it was only an unpretentious building of squared timber and moderate dimensions.³⁶ But it was the best that a small congregation could construct and represented the zealous labors of a few far-sighted leaders. It was a real achievement in church finance, made possible by the gifts of Presbyterians both in Pittsburgh and in Philadelphia.³⁷

Pittsburgh in those days was still a frontier trading post. In 1786, the year the church building was started, the community could boast of only thirty-six log houses, one stone and one frame house and six small stores.³⁸ Even two years later the population did not exceed five hundred people.³⁹ Barter, rather than sale, was the usual means of exchange. Money was scarce. Nor were the spiritual resources of the community higher than the material. The moral standards were those of the army and the frontier. Pleasure, pride, and profit were in the judgment of the people preferable to prayer and the progress of Presbyterianism. John Wilkins, one of the original elders, wrote in his diary the pathetic complaint that although there were a number of respectable families residing in Pittsburgh in 1786, "the majority were more in-

³⁶ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Aug. 26, 1786.

³⁷ *Records of the Synod of Virginia*, Vol. I, p. 39.

³⁸ *Niles Weekly Register*, XXX, p. 436, edited by H. Niles, Baltimore. H. H. Brackenridge, in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Aug. 26, 1786, claimed 100 houses and 1,500 people. His exaggerated estimate may have covered a much larger area and was written, not as a careful observation, but as a lure to prospective settlers from the East.

³⁹ Hildreth, May Flower, quoted by Killikelly, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 108.

clined to interest themselves in horse racing rather than to contribute to the building of the church."⁴⁰ Yet, despite these numerous obstacles, the enterprise of faith and sacrifice was attempted. A building and finance committee was appointed composed of General John Wilkins and John Wallace. Upon the shoulders of the former fell the major responsibility. He was a business man, not a mechanic, but emergency revealed his resourcefulness. "I worked at the building with my own hands," he wrote later, "and with assistants chunked and daubed it."⁴¹ By April of 1787 the building was complete save for the erection of the pulpit. This more skilled task was assigned to a carpenter, Jacob Mires.⁴² Within a few weeks everything was in readiness for the dedication ceremony. The exact date is not recorded. Perhaps that is important. More vital is the message of rebuke and encouragement preached by the pastor on that eventful day. A few abstracts from that address aid in visualizing the scene:

This day affords us a pleasing instance of the divine faithfulness. Look around you, my brethren; behold these walls, a standing monument of divine immortality. The church is the sacred place where the Lord delights to dwell! He hath promised to maintain her dignity against the efforts of the wicked and the malice of infernal spirits. She may be brought low, she may be dishonored and despised by Satan and his servants, ungrateful men, but the gates of hell shall not totally prevail against her. She is founded on a rock, and that rock is Christ.

In this place we have wandered long, alas! too, too long, in the wide field of folly and dissipation! It is now high time that we should return to our father's house! I blush to mention it, the time is long since this place was first inhabited by numbers who had been taught the glorious system of Christianity. On the 25th of November, 1758, Gen'l Forbes erected the British flag on Fort Duquesne. Astonishing to reflect! that 29 years

⁴⁰ Killikelly, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 108.

⁴¹ *Centenary Memorial*, p. 276.

⁴² *Records of Synod of Virginia*, Vol. I, p. 38. This quotation from the Records of Synod is the only available information regarding the date. It is the direct testimony of Mr. Mires presented to the Synod during the retrial of Rev. Mr. Barr. A typed transcript made from a photostatic copy of the original testimony is being placed by the writer in the Library of Western Theological Seminary.

should be squandered away in carelessness and ingratitude for the protection and favors of the great Jehovah!

But, my audience, however disagreeable a reflection on the past may be, blessed be God, the dark clouds of folly seem now to be passing by. The son of righteousness deigns to lift his healing wings and a day of gospel light has appeared unto us, by the blessing of heaven.⁴³

The ministry of Mr. Barr in Pittsburgh, however, was not to be crowned with the success he envisaged on this happy day of dedication. His real work was already done. His visible achievements lay in the realm of the material and included the incorporation of the church, and the erection of this wooden sanctuary upon ground donated by the Penns. He was a scholar and a business man whose sympathies were broad enough to include all that was worth while in the community. His service to education bore fruit in the incorporation of the Pittsburgh Academy, February 28, 1787. He and his friend H. H. Brackenridge were the moving spirits and tireless advocates of that Academy, which grew into a college and is now the University of Pittsburgh.⁴⁴ A few weeks later he was a conspicuous leader in the movement for the establishment of a market place. Together with "Hugh Ross and Stephen Bayard, he was appointed a committee to report a plan for building a market house and establishing market days."⁴⁵ This may seem a strange assignment for a clergyman, but it reveals the high esteem with which the inhabitants of Pittsburgh regarded his business judgment.

Why then did he fail in the difficult pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church? Why was his notable achievement marred by internal unrest and a persistent effort to becloud his reputation? The question is not easily answered nor can the blame be dogmatically allocated. Mr. Barr appears to have lacked those rugged qualities of will and personality needed to control army officers and unscrupulous traders. His

⁴³ *Centennial Volume*, p. 23.

⁴⁴ E. G. Baynham, "The Founding of the University of Pittsburgh," a thesis on file at the University of Pittsburgh (1935), pp. 16, 18 ff.

⁴⁵ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 10, 1787.

spirit was too sensitive to criticism. He could neither intimidate nor captivate the diverse elements in his congregation. He sought the path of compromise and conciliation rather than conquest and conversion and thereby forfeited prestige and confidence even among his ministerial brethren. His criticisms and rebukes were resented, not accepted. Perhaps no one could have succeeded in a community where even savages were contaminated by loitering with the inhabitants.⁴⁶ Perhaps Mr. Barr was not equipped for rough pioneer existence and should have accepted the call to the splendidly officered and cultured church of New London, Pa., which he had declined in order to come to spiritually destitute Pittsburgh.⁴⁷ Defensive explanations are always tinged with personal judgments. Authoritative answers are impossible with the meager source material that is available. Yet the fact remains clear that the closing scenes of his pastorate do not reflect credit on the men who served as leaders in those days of misunderstanding.

At the meeting of Redstone Presbytery, April 23, 1789, Mr. Barr asked to be released from his pastorate both in Pittsburgh and in Pitts-Township.⁴⁸ Action on the request was postponed until the May meeting when representatives from the churches could be heard. Because the difficulties seemed enveloped in controversy, the Presbytery agreed to gather for a special meeting in Pittsburgh, where all parties in the dispute could be heard conveniently and witnesses examined.⁴⁹ Mr. Barr based his desire to leave the Pittsburgh congregation on his very evident failure to achieve church discipline. He also accused two of his elders of "not having supported characters becoming their office." Moreover, he complained that the Trustees had taken no active means of raising the promised salary, but "on the contrary have appointed him to collect his own salary for the last year, which was as much as to say that he might hunt after his salary from door to door."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Jan. 17, 1789, reporting the dialogue of Brackenridge and David Sample in the Westmoreland County Court.

⁴⁷ *Centennial Volume*, p. 238.

⁴⁸ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 48.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

The church officers countered with the statement that Mr. Barr had no just complaint against the church, but that he had failed to do his duty, in not preaching regularly and in not visiting and catechising the congregation. They also presented the more serious charge that he "had raised money in New York and Philadelphia for the use of the Pittsburgh congregation and had never rendered any account of the same nor paid any part of it into the hands of the trustees or to any other person for the said use of said church."⁵¹ When supporting testimony was heard, it was further affirmed that Mr. Barr had cast sneering remarks about bigoted, narrow-headed McMillanites in the Presbytery and that he had tolerated card playing and drinking among the leading church members and even mingled in social gatherings where these indulgences were being enjoyed.

It is a long story with testimony covering six pages of the published *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*.⁵² Neither side could convincingly support its charges. The result was a decision by the Presbytery which placed upon Mr. Barr the responsibility for the difficulty and the evident lack of spirituality. They wisely concluded that his usefulness to the congregation was at an end and dissolved the pastoral relationship. Moreover, they felt his failure was a serious blow to the prestige of religion and forbade him "to exercise further any part of his ministerial office until the mind of our Synod is known thereon to whom we do refer the ultimate determination of this affair."⁵³

Thus Mr. Barr stood condemned by his brethren in Presbytery. His pastorate ended abruptly amid this cloud of censure and incrimination. His fine work was forgotten in the unhappy scenes which marred his ministry. If this were the end of the story, these Pittsburgh Presbyterians could be condoned for being more sinned against than sinning in their treatment of their first pastor. But the story was not concluded with the adjournment of Presbytery. Synod, a higher ecclesiastical

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51 f.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 52-57.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

court of the Presbyterian Church, reviewed the whole case and reached an entirely different verdict.⁵⁴ Barr was exonerated and his accusers ordered to be disciplined by the Presbytery.

This judgment of the Synod of Virginia favoring Mr. Barr has long been familiar information to readers of Pittsburgh church history. It is recorded in the *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery* and is referred to in Smith's *Old Redstone and Centennial Volume of the First Presbyterian Church*, and other popular historical résumés of that period. But the documentary evidence upon which that decision rested has not been printed. In the absence of definite information, the assumption has been current that perhaps Synod was inclined to be indulgent toward a brother minister who had already left a troublesome field of labor and that the just verdict was the rebuke administered by the Redstone Presbytery. Recently, however, the testimony before the Synod has been made available to the church and places the official members of the First Church in a very unfavorable light.⁵⁵

After reading the written reports presented by Redstone Presbytery and listening to some new evidence furnished by Mr. Barr, Synod felt that justice required a complete retrial. For that purpose a Commission of Synod was appointed for "the consideration of the whole affair *de novo*."⁵⁶ This commission was instructed to meet at Pittsburgh on the fourth Tuesday of November next (1789). Numerous witnesses were called and Mr. Barr given the privilege of cross-examining them directly. He proved to be a splendid lawyer. His questions were pointed and penetrating and revealed the misconduct of those who should have been his loyal co-workers in the church.

The most damaging part of the testimony was the forced

⁵⁴ *Records of the Synod of Virginia*, Vol. I, pp. 51, 52.

⁵⁵ At the request of Dr. Thomas C. Pears, of Philadelphia, and through the courtesy of the librarian of Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, a photostatic copy was made of the *Records of the Synod of Virginia*, covering the complete retrial of Mr. Barr. From this photostatic copy a typed transcript was made a few years ago. The page references in this volume are those of the original record, not the typed copy.

⁵⁶ *Records of the Synod of Virginia*, Vol. I, p. 13.

admission from the officers who had testified against him before the Redstone Presbytery (Messrs. John Wilkins, Robert Galbreath and George Wallace) "that they would never have exhibited any charge against Mr. Barr had they not been afraid that if Mr. Barr left them without blame that some arrearages due to Mr. Barr would still continue a burden upon the congregation, or in their own words be saddled upon the congregation."⁵⁷ Thus was uncovered the animus motivating the unkind charges. These three men, two trustees and one elder, thereby confessed they were willing to blacken the name of their pastor in order that he could not legally collect the salary they were too stingy to pay.

At this point in the trial, Mr. Barr's heart was gladdened by a convincing demonstration of the respect in which he was held by the members of the Pitts-Township congregation. This rural church, lying east of Wilkinsburg, had developed a real affection for their pastor and appreciated his services. The attitude of these farmers was a welcome contrast to their unspiritual brethren in Pittsburgh. They came before the Synod with this report: "A remonstrance from the Congregation of Pitts-Township was laid before the committee signed unanimously by the congregation consisting of 160 subscribers, members of said congregation." "Also testimonials from the Session of said congregation, verified by the Session clerk and supported before us—witnessing that Mr. Barr had in all respects acquitted himself to their satisfaction in the duties of preaching, catechising, visiting, etc., expressing their desire that he return as their pastor."⁵⁸

Nor was Mr. Barr without friends even in the Pittsburgh congregation.

A remonstrance from the Congregation of Pittsburgh was also laid before the Committee signed by upwards of 60 subscribers Members of said Congregation and by some who appeared as Witnesses against Mr. Barr at his former trial before the Presbytery of Redstone viz. Col. Tannehill, Gen. Gibson, & Mr. Kirkpatrick & was supported before us; witnessing that Mr.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Barr had behaved himself well and discharged the duties of his office to their satisfaction and expressing their desire that Mr. Barr should return to be their Minister.⁵⁹

The charges presented by John Gibson were withdrawn in the following written statement: "I do certify that in any disputes on matter which may have arisen between the Revd. Samuel Barr and me, that I am perfectly reconciled and satisfied as will further appear by the remonstrance I have signed to the Revd. Synod."⁶⁰

Likewise the efforts to picture Mr. Barr as tolerating card playing were proved groundless. He had withdrawn from the society of people who played cards after dinner even on occasions when he had come as an invited dinner guest. He sought "to persuade these gentlemen that they might spend their time better than in card-playing by forming themselves into companies for the purpose of improvement in political or religious knowledge."⁶¹ But the gentlemen in question were not inclined to intellectual entertainment. One retorted that he "would not give up a game of whist for the company of Sir Isaac Newton or the greatest man of the age." As a result, Mr. Barr no longer mingled in their social pursuits.

With equal success did Mr. Barr defend himself from the charge that he had "collected a considerable sum of money in Philadelphia and New York for the use of the congregation and had never rendered any account of the same nor paid any part of it into the hands of the Trustees or to any other person for the use of said congregation."⁶² In direct cross-examination of Col. Stephen Bayard, an elder and a trustee, it developed that Mr. Barr had commissioned Col. Bayard to "call on Mr. Gibbs in Philadelphia with an order to receive such part of the donation money as had been collected on the pledges Mr. Barr had secured in Philadelphia." Col. Bayard admitted that he had "received five pounds and ten shillings in state money and two cups which he delivered to Mr. Barr"

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

and a receipt turned over to Mr. Wilkins. Moreover, Mr. Wilkins testified that he told Mr. Mires, the carpenter who built the pulpit, to present his bill for payment to Mr. Barr, who would pay out of the donation money collected by him."⁶³

Thus at every vital point in the proceedings, Mr. Barr was able to call forth direct testimony which completely vindicated his character and placed his accusers in a most embarrassing position. He even forced his calumniators to admit that he never disappointed the congregation after they were assembled for public worship,⁶⁴ but that Messrs. Duncan, Wallace, Wilkins and Galbreath, all elders or trustees, deliberately locked the church on a Sabbath morning in order to cast discredit on the pastor and prevent him collecting for the day's services. This act of selfish discourtesy was planned without consulting the congregation and was heightened by the refusal to surrender the key, even when the pastor warmly protested their high-handed misconduct.⁶⁵

Such were some of the damaging bits of testimony presented before the Commission of Synod. No one dared attempt a denial or a defense. Mr. Barr was in a fighting mood. The committee reported to Synod that "the charges exhibited by the Session and Trustees of Pittsburgh congregation against Mr. Barr are wholly unsupported" and recommended that he be considered in full and regular standing in the church. Synod adopted the report and placed Mr. Barr in regular standing. His name was cleared and his honor vindicated.⁶⁶

Synod, however, was not satisfied merely with this exoneration of a villified pastor. Synod moved from defense to attack. The testimony taken before the Redstone Presbytery was compared with the testimony received at the trial before Synod's committee. The reports revealed that Mr. Barr's accusers had contradicted themselves at the two trials.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58 f.

These witnesses were then, by action of Synod, "denied the privileges of our church until they give evidence of their repentance and reformation."⁶⁸ Moreover, the men who instigated the charges against Mr. Barr were not allowed to escape unpunished. They had cast slander on the fair name of a minister. They were no longer worthy to sit in the council of the church until they experienced a real change of heart. In these words Synod phrased their condemnation:

Upon a review of the conduct of Mr. Barr's Accusers in Pittsburgh, The Synod were of Opinion that John Wilkins, Robert Galbreath and George Wallace Esqr. having acted in a manner unbecoming Men and Christians in the Prosecution of Mr. Barr as appears from their own confession of the motives which prevailed with them to prosecute Mr. Barr & also in the deception imposed by them upon the Presbytery of Redstone should not enjoy the Privileges of the Church in our Communion; until they testify [?] repentance for their unworthy conduct and receive a public rebuke for the same before the Church, by a regular Minister who shall be appointed by the Presbytery of Redstone for that Purpose.⁶⁹

Following this vindication by Synod, Mr. Barr continued his ministry, but not in Pittsburgh. He accepted a call to the well established church in New Castle, Delaware. With his departure, the First Church of Pittsburgh, which he had served so zealously, was again dependent on supply preaching. Another long period of weakness and obscurity followed. It was not until 1800, an interval of eleven years, that Pittsburgh received its second pastor.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

CHAPTER IV

THE DECADE OF DISCOURAGEMENT

The departure from Pittsburgh of Reverend Samuel Barr did not result in the progress that the discordant element in his church had anticipated. The turmoil had left the struggling congregation divided, discouraged, and discomfited. The breach between the church and the Presbytery had been widened by the humiliating failure to substantiate before Synod the charges made against their mistreated pastor. A petition seeking the return of Mr. Barr had been signed by sixty members and presented to Synod.¹ How large a portion of the congregation that petition represented cannot be determined, since no statistics of membership are available. It was large enough, however, to indicate a cleavage that was certain to prevent united action and result in division and discord. The discredited militant group had forfeited the confidence of Presbytery and perhaps of their brethren. Under these discouraging conditions the calling of a pastor would have been almost an impossibility. As a result the church was dependent upon the meager help available in Presbytery and the services of itinerant preachers.

Over a period of more than three years (from June, 1789, to November, 1792) the Presbytery of Redstone sent preachers to the congregation occasionally, but the records do not indicate that this strict Presbytery felt any great responsibility to keep the pulpit of the wayward Pittsburgh church supplied regularly. The domineering but undiplomatic Dr. McMillan preached on the third Sabbath of July, 1789,² and again on the fourth Sabbath of November of the following year.³ Reverend John McPherrin, who preached the first Sabbath of

¹ *Records of the Synod of Virginia*, p. 58.

² Journal of Dr. John McMillan, being a memorandum of the places where he preached from Aug., 1776, to July, 1791. (Typed copy.)

³ *Ibid.*

September, 1789,⁴ and Reverend Samuel Porter, who appeared in the pulpit on the third Sabbath of May, 1790,⁵ were the only other members of the Redstone Presbytery to visit Pittsburgh throughout the years 1789 and 1790. A total of four Sundays of preaching does not seem to indicate much interest on the part of the Redstone Presbytery nor would it be sufficient preaching to lead a turbulent congregation into the paths of peace and unity.

There is a possibility that other unnamed clergymen may also have preached in Pittsburgh, but no record of their services has been preserved. At the April meeting of the Redstone Presbytery, 1790, the Pittsburgh congregation was given permission to apply for occasional preaching to any other Presbytery within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church.⁶ Again at the October meeting of that same year Pittsburgh and Pitts-Township petitioned for the services of Reverend Robert Finley. Presbytery made no direct response but granted permission to Mr. Finley to preach at his discretion among the vacant congregations until April.⁷ A reasonable assumption might be that he spent a portion of those six months in Pittsburgh, but there are no supporting data.

Nor was the year 1791 distinguished by any renewed activity among Pittsburgh Presbyterians. Only twice throughout that entire year did Redstone Presbytery send a supply preacher. Reverend Joseph Patterson⁸ was authorized to preach one Sabbath in May or later, and Reverend Samuel Porter received a similar assignment for the third Sabbath of December.⁹ How well these two ministerial brethren were received or what response followed their efforts, the Minutes do not record. The absence of commendation and the persistent neglect of the Pittsburgh church might indicate a very discouraging response or a sadly divided congregation.

These preachers may have reported to their brethren the

⁴ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 60.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

same unfavorable impressions which John Pope had received a short time previously, while *en route* to Louisiana in 1790. Traveling across the Allegheny Mountains in early October, Pope beheld the autumnal glory of vast forests, ablaze in brilliant color. But in Pittsburgh the crude materialism of humanity was depressing in contrast. "The town," he wrote, "at present is inhabited, with only some few exceptions, by mortals who act as if possessed of a charter of exclusive privilege to filch from, annoy and harass their fellow creatures, particularly the incautious."¹⁰ He placed the blame upon the former officers of the Revolutionary army, who were Pittsburgh's business men, "a combination of pensioned scoundrels who infest the place."¹¹ These may have been the same army officers who formed the backbone of the Presbyterian church and rendered impotent Mr. Barr's ministry.

Nor did the situation in the Pittsburgh church during the year 1792 appear more inviting to the members of Redstone Presbytery. Only once did they send a supply preacher, and that was when Reverend John Clark was commissioned to preach on the third Sabbath of July.¹² The neglected church apparently was living at a poor dying rate and the members of Presbytery were not particularly concerned whether it lived or died. The more promising opportunities in the rural churches absorbed their energies and captured their fancy. Pittsburgh seemed a very unrewarding field of labor. Young preachers, ordained in the Redstone Presbytery, felt no call to seek to lift the morals of the village to those of the surrounding communities, where revivals of religion were bringing joy to ministers' hearts. Pittsburgh was left to its own resources and initiative.

But Pittsburgh Presbyterians were not content thus to be neglected and deprived of spiritual leadership. Through their own efforts they secured a young minister who filled the pulpit from November, 1792, to October of the following year. Had

¹⁰ John Pope, *A Tour Through the Southern and Western Territories of the United States of North America, etc.*, Richmond, 1792, p. 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 85.

the members of Redstone Presbytery been more in sympathy with the leaders of the First Church and more patient in guiding the newcomer, this young man might have continued in Pittsburgh and put an end to the chaotic condition of that church during the remaining years of the eighteenth century. But conscientious, though not consistent, presbyters insisted on a policy of rule or ruin. As a result, Presbyterians in Pittsburgh sank into discouragement and despair.

The young man in question was Mr. Samuel Mahon. He had graduated with honor at Dickinson College in 1789.¹³ Carlisle Presbytery licensed him to preach December 21, 1791. What induced him to visit Pittsburgh in the summer of the following year is not known. His preaching appealed greatly to the leading members of that church. A call for his services was quickly drawn up. Generously the people contributed to his financial support and promised him a yearly salary of \$875, if he would remain as pastor. This was an unusually large salary for that period and revealed both the enthusiasm of the congregation and the large number of people who were ready to help maintain the work of the new preacher. He presented his call to the Carlisle Presbytery October 2nd, and asked for a letter of transfer to Redstone Presbytery, within whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction Pittsburgh lay. His request was granted and the following action recorded:

A bond executed by the trustees of the Pittsburgh Congregation to Mr. Mahon for 175£ to be paid annually provided he shall become their pastor, was laid before Presbytery—put into Mr. Mahon's hands, the former bond of the trustees to him having been cancelled. . . . Upon inquiry by Presbytery, Mr. Mahon declared his acceptance of the Call from the Congregation of Pittsburgh, and he was dismissed from the Presbytery to put himself under the care of the Presbytery of Redstone. Ordered that there be given to Mr. Mahon a certificate of his licensure and dismission.¹⁴

Immediately the young licentiate returned to his newly chosen field of labor. He appeared before the Redstone Pres-

¹³ *Centennial Volume of the First Church*, p. 28.

¹⁴ Minutes of Carlisle Presbytery, October 2, 1792.

bytery with his credentials and asked to be ordained. Presbytery appeared willing and requested him to preach a trial sermon on an assigned text at the spring meeting. In the meantime he was authorized to serve as temporary pastor.¹⁵ At the April meeting peace and harmony seemed to reign and the long breach between the church and Presbytery appeared to be healing. Mr. John Wilkin and Mr. Robert Galbreath, the two leaders in the Pittsburgh congregation who had been suspended by Synod because of their fraudulent charges against Reverend Mr. Barr, asked to be reinstated.¹⁶ After mature deliberation, Presbytery lifted the censure and restored them to the full privileges of the church. Mr. Mahon, however, was not ordained. He was not certain that he desired to accept the pastorate at Pittsburgh. His ordination was postponed and his status of stated supply continued.¹⁷

By October of that same year he had definitely decided he would accept the pastorate at Pittsburgh and requested Presbytery to ordain and install him. What followed was most unfortunate. Presbytery was dissatisfied with the way the young man proposed to deal with the moral conditions in Pittsburgh. His plan of church discipline was not sufficiently rigid to meet the approval of his brethren. "Presbytery proposed to him several cases of conscience, but did not receive such satisfaction as would induce them to proceed to his ordination at present. But if at any time he should think himself able to give further light upon these matters Presbytery shall be ready to receive it."¹⁸ That disappointing decision destroyed Mr. Mahon's enthusiasm for religious work in Pittsburgh. He asked to be permitted to close his work there and return to Carlisle. This latter request was granted. What seemed like the beginning of a successful pastorate was terminated abruptly. Pittsburgh Presbyterians were again incensed by what appeared to them the narrow-mindedness of the Redstone Presbytery.

¹⁵ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 93.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95 f.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

Some intimation of the number of people who composed the Pittsburgh congregation at that time appears in the minute of Carlisle Presbytery recording the home-coming of Mr. Mahon. He brought with him a paper signed by 240 people testifying to the high regard they had for him.¹⁹ With the support of a congregation of 240 people, Mr. Mahon might have carried forward a most successful work in quickening the spiritual resources of an expanding town. The story of Presbyterianism in that community might have been altered greatly during the next few years if he had found a more sympathetic attitude in Presbytery.

This abrupt ending of what promised to be a successful pastorate was unfortunate in its ill effect both on the church and on the prospective pastor. Mr. Mahon's name remained on the roll of Carlisle Presbytery for two years, but he never again sought ordination. As others in Pittsburgh had done previously, he turned his thoughts from the ministry to the legal profession. In Natchez he practiced law and rose to the State Legislature and closed his career in his adopted state of Mississippi.²⁰ A promising preacher was thus lost to the Presbyterian Church.

Moreover, a resentful congregation was almost lost to the Presbyterian Church. For nearly two years the name of Pittsburgh did not appear in the records of Redstone Presbytery. No petition for supply preaching was presented to the Presbytery nor were visiting preachers sent by that body. The hostility culminated in a request to the General Assembly that

¹⁹ Minutes of Carlisle Presbytery, Dec. 4, 1793. The complete minute follows: "From said Dismission; from Mr. Mahon's account of ye matter, and from a petition and Representation of ye Congregation of Pittsburgh signed by 240 Names, which is now before us; it appears, that ye Presbytery of Redstone has actually dismissed Mr. Mahon from under their care, tho without an Expressed view of his Joining any other Presbytery; that no alteration [?], with respect to his good standing as a probationer for ye Gospel ministry, is intimated (except what may be implied in ye dissatisfaction mentioned in ye Dismission) and that His moral conduct, since He left us is not Blamed. The Presbytery upon serious Consideration of this Matter and judging it improper, that Mr. Mahon should remain unconnected with any Presbytery, agreed to Receive and consider Him under their Care as formerly."

²⁰ *Centennial Volume*, p. 28.

the Pittsburgh congregation be taken out of the jurisdiction of Redstone Presbytery and be permitted to unite with the more distant Carlisle Presbytery, located east of the mountains. The more tolerant attitude which that Presbytery had manifested toward Mr. Mahon caused the Pittsburgh Presbyterians to feel that their welfare would be stimulated more rapidly by that ecclesiastical court. A request so contradictory to the polity of the denomination could not be granted by the General Assembly. However, the justice of their complaint merited the attention of the Assembly, and a committee consisting of Mr. Smith and Mr. Hall was appointed to prepare a conciliatory and sympathetic reply.²¹

By this action of the General Assembly and by stress of unfortunate circumstances, the Pittsburgh church was left to drift for itself. The members were irritated at Redstone Presbytery and so would not seek any ministerial help from that body. Nor would they apply to the newly formed Presbytery of Ohio²² which bordered Pittsburgh to the west. Dr. McMillan was a member of that Presbytery. His strict views and undiplomatic approach had made him *persona non grata* to the liberal group in the Pittsburgh church. Not being permitted to affiliate with the Carlisle Presbytery, this church,

²¹ *Minutes of the General Assembly*, May 15, 1794, p. 98. The complete minute reads: "A representation and petition of the congregation of Pittsburgh to be separated from the Presbytery of Redstone and to be annexed to the Presbytery of Carlisle was taken under consideration and a motion having been made 'that the prayer of the petition be granted,' after a full discussion of the subject it was decided in the negative. On motion it was agreed that a letter be written to the congregation of Pittsburgh relative to the decision of the petition and Mr. Smith and Mr. Hall were appointed a committee to prepare a draught of said letter.

"The committee appointed to prepare a draught of a letter to the congregation of Pittsburgh reported one, which was agreed to and ordered to be transcribed, signed by the moderator and transmitted to them as soon as convenient."

²² *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 99. The eastern boundary of the Ohio Presbytery was the Monongahela River and a line extending northward from the junction of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers to Presque Island. Pittsburgh was thus left in the territory allotted to Redstone Presbytery. The first meeting of this new Presbytery was held at Upper Buffalo, Washington County, Oct. 22, 1793. Dr. McMillan was chosen the first moderator. See *Minutes of Ohio Presbytery*, Vol. I, p. 1 (manuscript).

with its spirit of independence, was forced to seek its own spiritual salvation. A congregation of 240 would not be content to drift into inactivity. What they did, however, is purely a matter of conjecture, as the name Pittsburgh fails to appear in the Minutes of any of the Presbyteries or Synods. Even the *Pittsburgh Gazette* made no mention of the church for several years. The excitement of the Whiskey Rebellion, culminating in 1794, and the recurrent attacks on the Indians, terminating in General Anthony Wayne's exterminating victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers August 20, 1794, were sufficient to absorb much of the thought and energy of the people. Religion always seemed a minor matter in the early life of Pittsburgh. But peace and the incorporation of Pittsburgh into a borough (April 22, 1794)²³ resulted in a rapid increase in population and greater concern for regular opportunities of worship.

Oral tradition makes mention of Mr. Cunningham Semple, who is supposed to have preached throughout the latter part of the eventful year 1794. The tradition rests upon the memory of a Mrs. William Eichbaum, a lifelong member of the Presbyterian church. She was born in 1792, and testified that she had been baptized by Mr. Semple two years later.²⁴ Mr. Semple had been ordained by the Presbytery of Baltimore, September 30, 1794, in order that he might "undertake a mission through the Western shore of Maryland."²⁵ Leaving Maryland he came to Pittsburgh either on a visit or for an extended period. He perhaps did not remain longer than the winter of 1794, since Pittsburgh in the spring of the following year appealed to Redstone Presbytery for a preacher.²⁶ The request was answered by the assignment of two men to preach one Sabbath each, Reverend Samuel Porter on the second Sabbath of July, and the Reverend David Smith on the second Sabbath of August.²⁷ This, incidentally, is the last time the

²³ Dahlinger, *Pittsburgh—A Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, p. 24.

²⁴ *Centennial Volume*, p. 28.

²⁵ Thomas C. Pears, "The First Presbyterian Church," an unpublished history in manuscript form (1934).

²⁶ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 113.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

name Pittsburgh is recorded in the *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery* until June 26, 1799, when, as we read, "an application for supplies was made from the Congregation of Pittsburgh. Mr. Porter was appointed to supply there the third Sabbath of August."²⁸ That is a long period of four years during which the Pittsburgh church neither sought nor received help from Presbytery.

Who preached during those years or what was the condition of the church is not known. Only occasional allusions to the church have been preserved. These do not indicate any great degree of activity or interest. In fact they suggest a discouraged, almost dormant congregation. During the autumn of 1796, John Wrenshall, an English merchant, moved to Pittsburgh and became one of the community's most honored citizens. He had been a local preacher in England for sixteen years. In Pittsburgh he found the people destitute of public worship and so began to hold meetings himself. In his journal he recorded an experience which does not indicate that the Presbyterians at that time were either a flourishing or a tolerant congregation:

Soon after his [Wrenshall's] arrival, as there was no minister or preaching of any kind in the place, he commenced holding meetings in an old, deserted log church belonging to the Presbyterians, which stood on Wood Street near Sixth Avenue, where Dr. Herron's church was afterward erected. His first sermon was from the text, "Worship God," and appeared to be greatly enjoyed by all in attendance, many of whom were officers and soldiers from the garrison. The congregations continued to increase, but after a few Sabbaths a padlock was placed on the door of the log meeting-house, and a notice served on Mr. Wrenshall that he could not have the use of the house any longer.²⁹

A more encouraging glimpse is recorded a little later when the *Pittsburgh Gazette* reported the splendid way in which the people of Pittsburgh responded to the call of the President of

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁹ *Church of Allegheny County, Penna.*, p. 54, where appears the above quotation from Dr. F. S. DeHass, who had in his possession the manuscript journal of Mr. Wrenshall.

the United States, John Adams, for a national day of humiliation, fasting and prayer. The services were held in the Presbyterian meeting house under the leadership of Reverend Mr. Semple.³⁰

Wednesday last having been appointed by our worthy President a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer, was regarded by the inhabitants of this place and its vicinity with all that respect due to the solemnity of the occasion. There was a total suspension of business of every description. An eloquent and patriotic sermon was delivered at the church by the Rev. Mr. Semple to a crowded audience. There were present the commander-in-chief of the army, the Judges of the Supreme court on the western circuit, the associate judges, magistrates and other Civil officers of the county with the most respectable and numerous collection of citizens ever assembled on a similar occasion.

Thanks were returned to Mr. Semple for his eloquent discourse.³¹

This is the second mention of Reverend Cunningham Semple in the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church. He preached during the winter of 1794 but did not remain during the subsequent years. This second appearance again raises the unanswered question as to the length of time he preached in Pittsburgh. The only other mention of Mr. Semple is a farewell reference to him in the Minutes of the Presbytery of Baltimore which records his withdrawal from the Presbyterian ministry:

Rev. Cunningham Semple has informed the Presbytery by letter that he has withdrawn from their Jurisdiction and engaged in a secular employment, thereby relinquishing the Pastoral office, he was and is declared to be no longer a gospel minister and his name was ordered to be left out of our minutes.³²

Still another glimpse of the Presbyterian church during that obscure period from 1795 to 1799 is preserved in the testimony of Reverend Francis Herron, who some years later began a

³⁰ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 5, 1798.

³¹ *Ibid.*, May 12, 1798. The sermon was requested for printing in full in the next issue (May 19).

³² Minutes of Presbytery of Baltimore, April 16, 1799.

long pastorate in that church.³³ During the summer of 1799 he journeyed on horseback from Carlisle to Chillicothe, Ohio. He was accompanied by his college classmate, Reverend Matthew Brown and Mr. Samuel Mahon.³⁴ On the return journey, Mr. Herron visited Pittsburgh and lodged for a few days with a former acquaintance who was an innkeeper. At the earnest invitation of his friend, he consented to preach. But though messengers were sent from house to house announcing the service, only fifteen or eighteen people assembled for worship. The log church, Mr. Herron reported, was used only at infrequent intervals and was the home of a large flock of swallows. They appeared annoyed by his presence and set up a disturbing noise throughout the service.

Religious interest and activity must have been at a low ebb during those closing years of the eighteenth century, if these three glimpses of the church are accurate indications of its spiritual condition. Apparently worship was not maintained regularly. The congregation was scattered and listless. No Presbyterian minister made his home in Pittsburgh. The church was dependent on the ministrations of whatever preachers were passing through the borough. Though the congregation had now been incorporated and a church building erected for thirteen years, the progress had been woefully slow. Interest had receded until the church could hardly be regarded as exerting any real influence in the community.

This discouraging state of affairs is all the more depressing when contrasted with Pittsburgh's growth in population and the spiritual advance in the adjoining rural churches. Pittsburgh at the close of the century was a growing community of 1,565 people. It boasted of its 400 homes.³⁵ It was the gateway to the West and an embryonic commercial and industrial center. Sufficient material progress had already been made to indicate a future city of importance. Yet Presbyterianism

³³ Thomas C. Pears, Jr., "History of the First Church" (ms.), containing a report of the incident as related by Dr. Herron to his friend Dr. Paxton.

³⁴ This is the same Mr. Mahon who preached in this church from Nov., 1792–Oct., 1793 (*supra*, p. 235).

³⁵ Killikelly, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 128.

appeared bogged in the mire of indifference and misunderstanding. Great revivals were sweeping over many of the country churches scattered throughout Western Pennsylvania. Membership lists were mounting. Morals were being elevated. But Pittsburgh remained spiritually isolated, morally degraded, and destitute of ministerial leadership.

What feeble efforts the other denominations were putting forth in Pittsburgh were equally fruitless and discouraging. The united German congregation was the only other organization of Christians that had succeeded even in erecting a place of worship. This was accomplished in 1793 with the generous assistance of the Presbyterians.³⁶ But it was only a crude log structure, sufficient, however, to meet the needs and resources of the congregation until the more prosperous days of 1833.³⁷ The Episcopalians who, like the German Evangelicals and the Presbyterians, were beneficiaries of the Penns' generosity in 1783, struggled to hold services at irregular intervals. The leading men worshiped with the Presbyterians when opportunity presented itself. The four trustees named in the Penn deed were all active in the Presbyterian church during the pastorate of Mr. Barr. In fact, Mr. John Gibson was one of the original trustees of that church and a prominent litigant in presenting charges against Mr. Barr before Redstone Presbytery.³⁸ So dormant was Episcopalian zeal that it was not until "1797 that a handful of churchmen resident in Pittsburgh invited the Rev. John Taylor to officiate as their pastor."³⁹ Some time later Mr. Taylor moved to Pittsburgh and conducted services in the Court House and other convenient places until 1808, when the Round Church was erected.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Centennial Volume*, p. 72, which quotes the grateful acknowledgment made at the centennial celebration of the German Church.

³⁷ Killikelly, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 377.

³⁸ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 53.

³⁹ John Scarborough, "Sermon preached at the Farewell Service in Old Trinity Church," Pittsburgh, Pa., Oct. 3, 1869.

⁴⁰ C. W. Dahlinger, *Rev. John Taylor. . . . And His Commonplace Book*, 1918. A reprint from the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, pp. 1, 2, and 12. Rev. John Taylor was born in Ireland, 1754. He was originally a Presbyterian but became an Episcopalian after coming to America. He kept a diary called "The Commonplace Book," which contains a skeleton account of his activities from 1788 until the latter

Even less successful were the labors of another ritualistic church, the Roman Catholic. Only itinerant priests stopped at Pittsburgh on their journey westward. One of these, Reverend Michael Fournier, was detained fourteen weeks during the winter of 1796-97. He attempted to hold service every Sunday, but his labors seemed wasted. "The people were so indifferent that only six ever came to enjoy the privilege of assisting."⁴¹ When Reverend D. A. Gallitzen visited Pittsburgh in 1804, he did not receive much greater encouragement, as "only fifteen souls came to assist at his mass."⁴²

The Methodists with more persistence, if not with greater encouragement, sought to stir into a flame the smoldering fires of religious zeal. As early as 1789 Bishop Asbury, the flaming evangelist of pioneer Methodism, had visited Pittsburgh. His fiery oratory was unavailing, as no visible results followed. In his diary he wrote:

Sunday, 19th.—Came to Rowlett's and dined; thence we set out and reached Pittsburgh, twenty-five miles; I preached in the evening to a serious audience. This is the day of small things. What can we hope? Yet what can we fear? I felt great love for the people, and hope God will arise and help and bless them. Monday, 20th. I preached on Isa. IV, 6, 7. Had great zeal, and the people were very attractive, but alas! they are far from God and too near the savages in situation and manners. We were not agreeably stationed at ——'s, who was continually drunk, and our only alternative was a tavern. Tuesday, 21st. I spoke on "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." We were crowded, and I felt more courage. The night before the rude soldiers were talking and dancing about the door, but now they were quiet and mute. This, I judged, might be owing to the interference of the officers or magistrates.⁴³

part of 1833. Entries in this diary previous to 1808 indicate that he was ministering to a very small group, amid the handicaps of poverty, and that his services at baptisms, marriages and funerals were rare.

⁴¹ A. A. Lambing, article on "The Catholic Church in Pittsburgh and Allegheny," *Churches of Allegheny County, Penna.*, p. 87.

⁴² A. A. Lambing, *A History of the Catholic Church in the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Allegheny*, p. 38.

⁴³ *Churches of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, p. 53, where the above quotation appears.

Not until 1803 did he again visit Pittsburgh. In the meantime circuit-riding Methodist ministers preached, but reported no converts.⁴⁴ The indefatigable advocate of Methodism, however, was the already mentioned Mr. John Wrenshall. His pious soul was distressed by the religious indifference of the community in 1796. With the assistance of occasional circuit-riding Methodist ministers, he conducted worship first in the Presbyterian church and then in the barracks of Fort Pitt. Only a small group were ready to cooperate. The zealous few included Mr. and Mrs. Wrenshall and their daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Shiras, Mr. and Mrs. Robert McElhenny, Mr. Ward, Mrs. Chess and James Kerr.⁴⁵ For six years they sought to develop the latent religious resources of the community. In 1802 Mr. Shiras sold the Fort and moved to New Jersey. Thus the Methodists lost both their place of worship and one of their few faithful families. Without the leadership of ordained ministers, religious development seemed woefully retarded.

These closing years of the eighteenth century were thus marked with discouragement and difficulty. Presbyterians, Methodists, German Evangelicals, Episcopalians, and Roman Catholics were all laboring feebly and independently. The warning prophecy of H. H. Brackenridge, uttered in 1786, appeared to have been fulfilled. Without a united effort the maintenance of religious work was a difficult if not a hopeless task.⁴⁶ But, as subsequent events revealed, it was not the lack of denominational unity, but the absence of aggressive clerical leadership, that proved to be the restraining handicap. That handicap was soon to be removed.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴⁶ Reply of H. H. Brackenridge, *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 16, 1787.

CHAPTER V
PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES CREATING A
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

With the turn of the century the outlook for Presbyterianism in Pittsburgh brightened considerably. A settled pastor was soon to arrive and a second Presbyterian church was soon to be organized. The new church, however, was not the joyous manifestation of rapid growth but the unhappy by-product of dissatisfaction with the new pastor at the First Church. In the overruling providence of God, the division became permanent but the irritation was but temporary. Two expanding and coöperating Presbyterian churches emerged to serve the community with an effectiveness that increased throughout the subsequent years.

At the June meeting of Redstone Presbytery in 1799, two events occurred of major significance for Pittsburgh. The first was the arrival in Presbytery of a young Irish minister, Reverend Robert Steele, who was seeking a field of service in Western Pennsylvania and was desirous of uniting with the Redstone Presbytery.¹ The second was the application for supplies from the congregation of Pittsburgh.² This was the first time in over four years that Pittsburgh presented a request of that nature to Presbytery. The coincidence of a pleading church and an unemployed pastor was to result eventually in the mutually answered prayer and the beginning of the longest pastorate that this Pittsburgh church had as yet enjoyed. But before the logical relationship could be consummated, a long period of delay and friction must elapse. Redstone Presbytery appeared to be unduly cautious and persistently suspicious of any minister the Pittsburgh church desired to call.

¹ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 148.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

The supplication of the Pittsburgh church was answered in the appointment of Reverend Samuel Porter to preach on the third Sabbath of August. The request of Reverend Robert Steele was debated carefully and then referred to the Synod of Virginia for advice.³

Mr. Steele, according to his own testimony, was an Irish patriot who had opposed the merging of his native country into the British Empire. Because of this divergent political activity, he had to flee from persecution. The hasty exit made it impossible for him to secure the usual testimonials and affidavits which an ecclesiastical court gives to a minister who desires to carry forward his ministry in another country. He, however, did bring with him certain letters of introduction from people who, in New York and Philadelphia, had observed his work and character. The members of the Presbytery were impressed with his statements, but felt they lacked the authority to lay aside the usual rules requiring testimonials from the ecclesiastical organization to which the preacher belonged. They agreed to permit him to preach within the bounds of the Presbytery until they could learn the will of Synod and could decide definitely at the next meeting.⁴

During the next few months, Mr. Steele probably preached in Pittsburgh with some degree of regularity, since his brother was a business man in that city and introduced him to the officers of the Presbyterian church. Further delay seemed necessary when, at the next meeting of Presbytery, the announcement was made that Synod had referred to the General Assembly a definite decision regarding Mr. Steele's ecclesiastical status.⁵ In the meantime the only provision that Presbytery made for the vacant Pittsburgh church was to appoint the Reverend Joseph Henderson as a supply preacher for the second Sabbath of November. On a number of the other Sabbaths, Mr. Steele doubtless preached at the request of the congregation, but without the expressed approval of Presbytery. The Pittsburgh congregation appeared satisfied with

³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

this arrangement, since no formal request for the services of a preacher was presented at either the December or the April meeting of Presbytery. Mr. William Moorehead, who had just been licensed, was given the task of preaching to the Pittsburgh Presbyterians on the first Sabbath of May.⁶

By this time General Assembly, at its annual meeting in May, 1800, had approved of the character of Mr. Steele and taken the following action which seemed clear and definite:

A reference from the Synod of Virginia respecting the credentials of a certain Mr. Steele, an ordained minister from the Presbytery of Londonderry, in Ireland, was brought in and read. The Synod having found some difficulties respecting the sufficiency of Mr. Steele's testimonials, referred the same to the Assembly for their direction in the premises. The testimonials and other documents respecting Mr. Steele's character and standing were read; whereupon it was RESOLVED, That the said testimonials are sufficient to authorize any Presbytery to receive Mr. Steele on probation, agreeably to the regulations which are or shall be adopted respecting the introduction of foreign ministers. Ordered, That Mr. Steele's testimonials and other papers, be returned to him, and that the Stated Clerk furnish him with an attested copy of the above minute.⁷

Encouraged by that action, Mr. Steele appeared before the Redstone Presbytery at the June meeting and expressed a desire to be taken on probation "agreeably to the regulations of the General Assembly respecting the introduction of foreign ministers."⁸ Presbytery again revealed that petty and censorious attitude which had previously characterized that body in its official decisions regarding the Pittsburgh church and its prospective pastors. After carefully examining Mr. Steele "as to his acquaintance with experimental religion, soundness in the faith and capacity for resolving cases of conscience," some one remembered that General Assembly had modified somewhat its rules regarding receiving ministers from other countries. On the flimsy excuse that no copy of this later action of the Assembly was available for reading, even though they

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁷ *Minutes of General Assembly, 1800* (May 26).

⁸ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 161.

had before them an attested copy of the decision of that same Assembly regarding Mr. Steele, a motion was passed postponing further deliberation until the next meeting.⁹ At this next meeting, Major Ebenezer Denny, a trustee, came, with the authorization of the Session, to plead the case of his pastor, Mr. Steele. After a detailed examination, Mr. Steele was received on probation and ordered to preach a trial sermon at the next meeting of Presbytery.¹⁰ He was also authorized to supply at Pittsburgh until the spring meeting, except on three Sabbaths, when he was asked to preach in neighboring vacant churches.¹¹

Sixteen months had now passed in this cautious and rather irritating process of testing the character and ability of a man whom the Pittsburgh congregation was anxious to call as pastor. Both minister and people had been patient. Their patience seemed to be bearing fruit. Presbytery appeared ready to receive Mr. Steele as a fully attested member. But further delays arose. At the December meeting of 1800 a hint of some trouble in the Pittsburgh church was heard. "A supplication was brought in from a number of persons belonging to the Presbyterian profession in Pittsburgh requesting supplies."¹² This is the first indication of that dissatisfaction with Mr. Steele on the part of a conscientious few which was to result a little later in the organization of the Second Presbyterian Church. Mr. Steele was not present to defend himself or explain the nature of the request. Presbytery, quick to respond to anything that resembled trouble in the church, took no action on the request but adjourned to meet in Pittsburgh next April, when the nature of the complaints could be examined directly.

No indication of any difficulty found its way into the minutes of that meeting. Mr. Steele's period of probation was extended and he was asked to preach a second trial sermon.¹³ Again his preaching was not deemed sufficiently satisfactory

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

and a third sermonic test was imposed for the spring meeting of the next year.¹⁴ Patience at last won its perfect reward and Presbytery, after almost two years of deliberation and delay, agreed to receive Mr. Steele as a member.¹⁵ The Pittsburgh church was now legally justified in preparing a formal call for the services of the man they had struggled for many months to receive as pastor. The formal call was put into the hands of Mr. Steele at the October meeting of Presbytery.¹⁶ It was promptly accepted and, without further action of Presbytery, Mr. Steele was recognized as the second pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

But what type of man had Pittsburgh Presbyterians called as their second pastor after a decade of discouragement and years of persistent patience? In disposition and attitudes did he resemble the Reverend Samuel Barr or the Reverend Dr. McMillan? He certainly was no Dr. McMillan either in appearance or moral austerity. He was tall, pleasant in speech and manner, and well equipped with social graces. He was careful of his appearance, wore satin breeches, silk stockings, knee-buckles and pumps.¹⁷ His own personal piety and fidelity to conviction were never questioned. Yet he enjoyed the social life of a gentleman, was somewhat tolerant of worldly fashions and indulgent toward erring church members.¹⁸ He sought by kindness to win the respect of all classes of society. His brethren in Presbytery felt that he was a bit remiss in not putting the fear of God into the hearts of his congregation. The thunders of revival preaching were rarely heard in his pulpit. Though he served during the Great Revival of 1800 and the years which followed, his church was untouched by this spiritual renewal which made that period memorable throughout the entire western frontier. The "falling work" and excessive emotionalism which accompanied and at times

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁷ *Centennial Volume*, p. 40, quoting the reminiscences of Mrs. Eichbaum expressed in 1877.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192, quoting the historical address of Rev. Richard Lea.

stigmatized that widespread revival were conspicuously lacking in Pittsburgh.

For this failure to share in the fruits of a widespread movement he has been criticized. But perhaps the fault, if such it was, should not be charged against him exclusively. The major portion of the blame might rest upon the easy-going, morally lax and spiritually careless group that comprised the long inactive Presbyterian congregation. A sterner disciplinarian might merely have irritated these free-living folks and thus failed to hold them together as a church. A wise leader always studies the capacities of his constituency and does not attempt to move forward too rapidly. The church under his leadership progressed steadily. He died in 1810, universally mourned by the members he had attempted to serve so diplomatically.¹⁹

It was, however, this lack of evangelistic fervor and this diplomatic toleration of evil that disappointed a conscientious group of his members and resulted in the organization of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. Mention has already been made of the request which this group presented to the Redstone Presbytery in December, 1800.²⁰ Nothing further developed for a time, since the hope was entertained that Mr. Steele would never be accepted by Presbytery as the church's pastor. But when the long delay resulted finally in a formal call being received and ratified in Presbytery, October, 1802,²¹ the blasted hope stirred further opposition.

Accordingly at the June meeting of the following year, "a petition from a number of the inhabitants of Pittsburgh praying that they might be erected into a different congregation and receive supplies" was laid before Presbytery. Both Mr. Steele and an elder from his church, Mr. James B. Clow, protested the appointment. Those presenting the request represented too numerous and too zealous a group to be dismissed lightly. Presbytery deliberated carefully. The fear was ex-

¹⁹ Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh and Its Vicinity, p. 27.

²⁰ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 166.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

pressed that Pittsburgh Presbyterians were too few to support two churches and that both would fail through divided efforts. Finally Presbytery decided to refer the matter to Synod for advice and counsel.²²

The Synod to which this appeal was now being made was no longer the Synod of Virginia which previously had reviewed the judgments of Redstone Presbytery and which had jurisdiction over Western Pennsylvania. The expansion of Presbyterian influence during the closing decade of the eighteenth century and the great revival of 1800 had so increased the number of Presbyterian churches and members that a new Synod had been formed to be called the Synod of Pittsburgh. It comprised three Presbyteries—Redstone, Ohio, and Erie—and was constituted a separate ecclesiastical court by order of the General Assembly of 1802.²³ Pittsburgh was chosen not because it was a strong Presbyterian center, but because it was an accessible point to which the widely separated ministers could travel conveniently. Subsequent meetings in the following years were also held here, thus enabling Pittsburgh to hear the leading Presbyterian preachers throughout Western Pennsylvania. It also gave the discontented element an opportunity to compare the preaching of Mr. Steele with the more denunciatory and fiery oratory of the men who were leading the revival movement of that period. This contrast was doubtless one of the factors which stirred the dissatisfied group to seek the privilege of forming a second church in Pittsburgh.

The first meeting of Synod convened September 30, 1802, twenty-one years after the organization of Redstone Presbytery. Those intervening years had witnessed great progress in the development of the Presbyterian Church in Western Pennsylvania. When the Redstone Presbytery gathered for its first meeting, it numbered only four ministers. The Pitts-

²² *Ibid.*, p. 187.

²³ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, p. 1, where the following action is recorded: "At the meeting of General Assembly in Philadelphia in 1800 it was resolved that the Presbyteries of Ohio, Redstone and Erie be constituted a Synod to be known as 'the Synod of Pittsburgh' and that they hold their first meeting in the Presbyterian Church on the last Wednesday in September of that year."

burgh Synod, at its first roll call, reported thirty-six ministers, all serving at least one, and the majority two or more congregations. In addition there were thirty-nine vacant churches that were seeking pastors.²⁴

Synod opened with a sermon by Dr. John McMillan. His text may have been chosen with special reference to the spiritual indifference of Pittsburgh: Romans 8:6, "For to be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace." One of the first decisions of the new Synod was to ratify the action of Redstone Presbytery in receiving Mr. Steele. He was welcomed officially as a member both of Presbytery and Synod.²⁵ The last possible obstacle to his serving as pastor of the church was thus removed.

The following year Synod, as it had done for six consecutive meetings, met in Pittsburgh. The proceedings were enlivened by a friendly but earnest debate on the question of permitting the organization of a second Presbyterian church. Those who were dissatisfied with Mr. Steele's preaching presented the following petition:

To the Rev. Synod, now sitting in the borough of Pittsburgh, most humbly sheweth. That we, the subscribers, being appointed by a number of our brethren, either already united to the Presbyterian churches, or desirous of being so united as becometh the general supporters of the Christian cause; do represent that we have not united in the call of the Rev. Robert Steel, as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, but that, nevertheless, being averse to a separation, if it could be avoided consistently, with our spiritual advantage did, for some time, attend the preaching of the said Rev. gentleman, and most of us did subscribe to his support, but finding no kind of spiritual advantage, have long since withdrawn, and are now as sheep without a shepherd. We bring forward no charges against Mr. Steel, or any members of said church, considering that if even sufficient ground should exist, this is not our present object; but assure the Rev. Synod that our present object is to receive the immediate benefits of what we deem a Gospel ministry.²⁶

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

The petition was signed on behalf of a larger group by four men, all of recognized standing in the community. William Semple was one of Pittsburgh's first Bible salesmen²⁷ and maintained a deep interest in religious things. William Barrett and William Gazzam were business men with adjoining stores on Market Street.²⁸ James Morrison was a capable mechanic and a consistent Christian.²⁹ Aggressively the representatives of the existing Presbyterian church opposed what they felt was a "crippling division." The resulting decision of Synod was a compromise. Thinking that time might heal the division, Synod refused to sanction a new organization but authorized Presbytery to send supply preachers to the schismatic group.³⁰

The compromise decision did not meet with the approval of the officers of the church. A protest, phrased by Judge Alexander Addison, the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, was sent to the General Assembly. There it called forth considerable discussion. The preaching of the Reverend Robert Steele had not won the approval of his brethren in Synod. Such prominent preachers as the Reverend Messrs. Jacob Jennings, James Hughes, Cephas Dodd and Thomas Hughes were sympathetic toward the group who had withdrawn from the First Church. As a result a motion was passed that "the decision of the Synod be confirmed."³¹ The protesting group of Pittsburgh Presbyterians were permitted to gather together to hear preaching but could not organize themselves into a church. The restriction proved but a temporary delay and the second church gradually took form.

Leading the opposition to this new church was Judge Alexander Addison, another gift of Redstone Presbytery to the legal profession, and probably the most brilliant and consecrated lawyer of his day. He had hoped to be a minister, but the members of that stern body cast sufficient obstacles

²⁷ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Nov. 2, 1793.

²⁸ Dahlinger, *Pittsburgh—A Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, p. 121.

²⁹ "Origin of the Second Presbyterian Church," *Presbyterian Banner*, Oct. 9, 1867.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³¹ *Minutes of General Assembly*, May 24, 1804.

in his path to turn him aside into the field of law. He appeared before Presbytery at the same meeting at which Reverend Samuel Barr first sought admission. He had been licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Aberlour in Scotland. From that court he received the usual credentials and certificate of good deportment. His testimonials were approved by the Redstone Presbytery, but his theology was not shatter-proof. After conversing with him at some length, seven ministers who composed the Presbytery at that time "did not obtain the satisfaction they desired, yet as some things appear very agreeable in Mr. Addison they are not without hopes of obtaining such satisfaction and therefore permit him to preach in our bounds until the next meeting."³² He was assigned to Washington as a stated supply. At the earnest request of that church he was continued in that capacity until a subsequent meeting. That subsequent meeting never arrived. He withdrew from the ministry and rose to fame as the president judge of four counties. He maintained a very active membership in the Presbyterian church at Pittsburgh, where he served for many years as an effective trustee and faithful worker.³³ The ministry lost a gifted thinker, but the Pittsburgh church gained a capable worker at a time when it most needed leadership. He strove to prevent the formation of a second Presbyterian church in Pittsburgh, but lived to see the error of his judgment, as the two Presbyterian groups became allied in community service.

So eager were this new group of worshipers to obtain regular preaching that they sought and obtained permission to apply to the adjoining Presbyteries of Erie and Ohio for the services of ministers.³⁴ The following year, when a request for a renewal of this privilege was presented, they had grown bold enough to style themselves "The Second Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh."³⁵ Their first meetings were in

³² *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 20.

³³ The earliest records of the church, dating April 27, 1801, are in the handwriting of Judge Addison. The records are the "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Trustees."

³⁴ *Minutes of Redstone*, p. 189.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

the Borough Court House, but this was soon locked against them. Mr. James Morrison then opened the doors of his home to his fellow worshipers. He was living on Wood Street between Third and Fourth.³⁶

A more commodious place of worship soon became available through the kindness of the German congregation. They had remembered the generosity of the Presbyterians in helping them build their church ten years previously. They now rejoiced to share their church with their Presbyterian friends a portion of the time each Sabbath.³⁷ This splendid illustration of denominational coöperation continued until 1806. In that year a separate church home was found in a former carpenter shop on Diamond Alley. Reverend William Wylie, a member of the Erie Presbytery, was the supply preacher on numerous occasions until he accepted a call to the Round Hill Church on the fifth of February, 1805.³⁸ Throughout the next few months, the Rev. Messrs. James Power, John Henderson, James Graham, William Swan, and John Wright were appointed by Presbytery to supply at infrequent intervals.³⁹

Soon the need for supply preaching ended. Reverend Nathaniel R. Snowden, formerly a member of the Presbytery of Carlisle, was received into the Redstone Presbytery and presented with a call from the Second Presbyterian congregation of Pittsburgh. He accepted October 16, 1805,⁴⁰ and began the constructive task of assisting in quickening the spiritual life of the city. Very little is known of the Rev. Mr. Snowden's work during his brief Pittsburgh pastorate. All the early records of the church were lost in the disastrous fire of 1845. His efforts perhaps did not meet with much success, since he resigned within less than two months. At the special meeting of Presbytery, the congregation offered no objection to his request for a dissolution of the pastoral relationship.⁴¹ He at

³⁶ "The Second Presbyterian Church," an article in *The Presbyterian Banner and Advocate*, May 22, 1858.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 201.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 203 f.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

once withdrew from the Presbytery to unite with the Presbytery of New Castle.⁴²

Again the little group comprising the Second Church were dependent upon supply preaching. Redstone Presbytery commissioned the Reverend Messrs. James Power, Francis Laird, and William Wylie to preach on specified Sabbaths.⁴³ The attention of the congregation was directed to Mr. John Boggs, a young licentiate from Winchester, who had affiliated himself with the Redstone Presbytery at the October meeting of 1806. His work proved acceptable. He was reappointed at intervals to serve as stated supply for a year. After the necessary delays involved in testing the knowledge and convictions of a candidate for the ministry, he was ordained and installed as pastor of the Second Church, October 20, 1807.⁴⁴

It was during his ministry that the congregation rented the former carpenter store to be used as a place of worship. But the difficulties of the Pittsburgh pastorate and the small group of supporters were greater handicaps than the health of the inexperienced minister could stand. On April 20th of the following year he resigned to seek a more fertile field within his native Presbytery of Winchester.⁴⁵

The now familiar experience was repeated. The church was again seeking whatever preaching the members of three Presbyteries could offer. The list of supply preachers included Reverend Messrs. William Swan, Thomas Moore, Samuel Por-

⁴² Perhaps this infant congregation was fortunate that Mr. Snowden terminated his pastorate with them so quickly. His subsequent record cast reproach upon the ministry. After several brief pastorates, he returned to Redstone Presbytery as pastor at Kittanning. Several very serious charges were presented against him by that church (Oct. 3, 1827). He soon resigned and joined the Presbytery of Huntingdon. He returned and caused more trouble. Dec. 1, 1829, he was suspended from the ministry, after trial, on charges of intoxication (*Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 398).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 227. "The Presbytery having received satisfaction from Mr. Boggs on the usual parts of trial, proceeded to his ordination; and did by prayer and with the imposition of hands set him apart to the holy office of the gospel ministry, and install him pastor of the Second Presbyterian congregation of Pittsburgh. The Reverend William Speer preached on the occasion and the Reverend Samuel Porter presided and gave the charge."

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

ter, *et al.* The discouragements of an unattractive place of worship, of two brief pastorates and long intervals without regular ministerial leadership were not sufficient to break the spirit of the pious men, who for conscientious reasons had sought to establish a second Presbyterian church. During all this time, Reverend Robert Steele was serving the First Church and leading a growing congregation into peace and harmony. The contrast must have been disheartening. Yet the little group persisted.

Among the occasional supplies from the Ohio Presbytery they found a young man who was willing to share with them the hardships of poverty and disappointment. They secured him first as a stated supply, to serve during the interval of examination and probation.⁴⁶ He joined the Redstone Presbytery in June, 1809. He received ordination and was installed as the Second Church's third pastor, December 27, 1809.⁴⁷ That young man, the Reverend Thomas Hunt, was the real founder of the church. He remained throughout nine years of appreciated service. Under his leadership the church erected a pretentious brick edifice in 1814. It remained in use until consumed in the great fire of 1845.

With the beginning of his ministry the Second Presbyterian Church can rightly be regarded as an established institution. Out of controversy and through repeated discouragement the protesting members grew in numbers and effectiveness. They had rejected Dr. Steele's preaching. As a result they were compelled to struggle against innumerable obstacles to achieve something which they regarded as more elevating. Whether the goal was worth what it cost in faith and fidelity cannot be determined convincingly. At least Presbyterians could boast of two churches in Pittsburgh.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

CHAPTER VI

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF DR. STEELE'S PASTORATE

If the effectiveness of Dr. Steele's eleven-year pastorate in Pittsburgh were judged by the standard of increased membership and religious revival, his work would not seem very successful. His labors resulted in but a small addition to the church's roll of members. The revivals of the early nineteenth century did not reach Pittsburgh. Statistics for the first few years of his ministry are not available. Nor is it known how large a group comprised the membership of the church when he was called. In the year 1808 the communicants numbered only forty-five. This was increased to fifty-eight in 1809, and to sixty-five in 1810, leading to the assumption that the last years of his pastorate were the most fruitful.¹

This slow growth in the church is all the more remarkable when contrasted with the rapid increase in population throughout that same period. "In 1800 the population of Pittsburgh was 1,565, and in 1810 it had risen to 4,768, an increase of 204 per centum, which was the greatest percentage of increase that has ever taken place in its history."² Trade had also expanded tremendously. As early as 1803 Pittsburgh could boast of forty-nine stores and shops. Innumerable wagons traveled across the mountains, loaded with goods to be placed on the boats bound for Kentucky and Louisiana. The number of homes jumped from 400 in 1807, to 767 in 1810.³ Industry similarly expanded, giving employment to many immigrants from the eastern part of the state.

But church membership was not stimulated greatly by this expanding population and industry. Pittsburgh retained its reputation for moral delinquency. Whiskey flowed freely at

¹ *Centennial Volume*, p. 41.

² *Dahlinger, Pittsburgh—A Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, p. 90.

³ *Boucher, A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People*, p. 350.

numerous taverns and stores. Shopkeepers worshiped at the shrine of wealth and fostered the gambling and brawling instincts of the teamsters and river men, who squandered their earnings during loafing periods between trips on land or water.⁴ The fashionable sought the social prestige of worship at Mr. Steele's services and listened to the reading of his sermons, but experienced none of the emotional regeneration that resulted in building up the membership rolls in the famous rural churches like Cross Creek and Cross Roads and Bethel.⁵ Neither in the number of communicant members nor in religious quickening can Mr. Steele's pastorate be deemed memorable.

But it was as an educator, rather than as an evangelistic preacher, that the Reverend Robert Steele made his greatest contribution to the development of the church and community. He sought to lay a careful educational foundation upon which an enduring superstructure could be erected slowly but certainly. His interest lay in the realm both of religion and of academic education. He was the father of the Sunday School movement in Pittsburgh. He was principal of the Academy from which grew the University of Pittsburgh. Later he conducted his own Academy and developed a well rounded curriculum. For that dual service he merits at least a brief appreciative review of his constructive work as a pioneer in the field of education.

His interest in religious education was manifested almost immediately after entering upon the difficult task of reorganizing the church in Pittsburgh. Religious work in that congregation had lain dormant for so many years that he was confronted with the necessity of building his own program and marshaling what feeble resources were available. He believed that any lasting and effective work must begin with the children. In the East, and perhaps in England, he may have heard something of the Sunday School, which was then only

⁴ Observations of F. Cumming in 1807, quoted by Boucher, *Pittsburgh and Her People*, p. 349.

⁵ Whereas the Pittsburgh Church reported only 65 in the year 1810, Cross Creek Church numbered 255 and Cross Roads 237.

in its infancy. Robert Raikes, at Gloucester, England, in 1780, had gathered together the ragged street urchins for instruction on Sundays. His program was humanitarian but not religious. Reading, writing, and morals, with the Bible as the textbook, were the basis of his curriculum. Teachers were paid a shilling a day for their work which extended from nine o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon.⁶ This was the germ out of which has grown the modern Sunday School program of religious training. Raikes' revolutionary idea reached America about 1788 and took root in Philadelphia.⁷ The first schools were modeled on the experience and program of Raikes. They were planned primarily to give to illiterate children needed training in reading and morality.⁸

When Mr. Steele came to Pittsburgh in 1799, he may have brought with him impressions of these pauper and widely ridiculed Sunday Schools. If he did, he proved himself not an imitator, but a creative experimenter. In the latter part of the year 1800, he opened in the log church, of which he was only the stated supply, what seems to be the first Sunday School in the Pittsburgh district.⁹ Unlike Raikes, he did not purpose to teach reading and writing to pauper children. Unlike Raikes, he did not pay his teachers. His aim was to impart religious truth to the boys and girls of his congregation and their friends throughout the community. His school was planned to supplement the work of the preaching service and to provide a type of religious training that was suited to the religious needs and interests of children. In making his school an adjunct of the church, and in conducting the work on a volunteer basis with a direct religious aim, he was the initiator of the modern Sunday School.

* W. F. Lloyd, *The Life of Robert Raikes and History of Sunday Schools*.

⁶ *Sunday School Times*, 1860, contains an account of a school established by Ludwig Hacker, in Ephrata (Lancaster County), Pa., some time before 1747. This school continued in existence several years but exerted no visible effect on the subsequent Sunday School movement as indicated above.

⁷ John C. Power, *The Rise and Progress of Sunday Schools*, p. 201 ff.

⁸ D. A. McKnight, *Historical Sketch of the Sabbath Schools of the First Presbyterian Church from 1800-1867* (Pittsburgh, 1867), p. 10.

Every afternoon for an hour and a half he met with the children. At times his school preceded the afternoon preaching service. On other occasions he scheduled his instruction for children immediately after the morning service. He was accustomed to announce from the pulpit the hour of meeting and to urge all parents to permit their children to attend regularly. The program included Bible reading, memorizing the Larger and Shorter Catechism, prayer, exposition of Scripture, and systematic instruction in problems of faith and conduct. There was no music to add charm to the meetings, since Mr. Steele scarcely knew one note from another. Church music was still in its infancy and limited to a few familiar tunes giving melody to Rouse's or Watts's translation of the Psalms.¹⁰

Among the thirty-five or forty boys and girls in this first Sunday School are several who developed into capable workers in the subsequent life of the church. Time has destroyed the complete roll, but the following twenty-two names are recorded:

They are, Nancy Morrow (Mrs. James Crossan), Charity McKinney, Jerusha McKinney (Mrs. ——— Butler), Mary Reid, Matilda Craig (Mrs. Reese E. Fleeson), Harriet Craig (Mrs. John H. Chaplin), Polly Boggs (Mrs. Thomas Wallace), Miss Semple, Mary Sturgeon, Mary McNickle (Mrs. James Biddle), Miss Wills, Mary Stevenson (Mrs. Alex. Johnston), Margaret Irwin (Mrs. Matthew George), Eliza Irwin (Mrs. Alex. Semple), Rebecca J. Johnston (Mrs. William Eichbaum), Eliza Riddle (Mrs. Dr. Jos. Gassam), Catharine Willock, Mary Evans (Mrs. John Bayard), Letitia Anderson (Mrs. John Cald-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11. Detailed information concerning this interesting experiment in religious education is based largely on the memory of Mrs. William Eichbaum. She was one of the first pupils and was then a girl of about eight years of age. She maintained an unflinching interest in the work of the First Presbyterian Church in which she served to a venerable age. On numerous occasions she rejoiced to speak of her early experiences in this first school and refreshed her memory by conversing with friends who also attended the school. Mr. McKnight, who for a time was superintendent of the Sunday School of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh and who wrote his history of the School in 1867, was a personal friend of Mrs. Eichbaum and received his information from her directly.

well), Mary Ann Anderson (Mrs. John Way), Henry Steele and Robert Steele.¹¹

At the time of their enrollment they were all young, with ages ranging from seven to fourteen years. As the months passed, the older pupils gained sufficient training to help as teachers of the younger children. No one received any financial remuneration in this pioneer school of religious education.

But Mr. Steele's novel experiment was too progressive for conservative Pittsburgh. Public opinion was arrayed against his unprecedented effort to reach the boys and girls of the church and community. The church officers felt the pastor was devoting too much of his thought and energy on Sunday to this "unessential" task.¹² In spite of prejudice, Mr. Steele continued his school for at least two years. But other tasks were demanding his attention. The old log building was no longer adequate to meet the desires of his growing congregation. A fine brick edifice must be built. Into that more imposing task the energy of the pastor must be poured. Thus ended for a time the first Sunday School in Pittsburgh and the first of its kind, as far as present research reveals, in the United States.

A little later during Mr. Steele's pastorate the Sunday School was revived, but in a changed form that did not prove very successful. It was not a direct product of his leadership, but it doubtless had his hearty support. It was a layman's movement and brought into active coöperation leaders of various faiths. The new effort toward improved morality took form in the year 1809 and bore the title "The Pittsburgh Moral Society." Mr. Ebenezer Denny, a trustee in the First Church, was the President, and Mr. M. B. Lowrie, an elder in the Second Church, served as Secretary. The new society announced its aim in a long statement in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. The following quotations indicate its scope and basis of appeal:

To The Inhabitants of Pittsburgh and Its Vicinity
A number of persons in and near Pittsburgh have, within the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

present year, formed themselves into a society under the name of the Pittsburgh Moral Society. As members of the same we take the liberty of addressing you, fellow citizens, that you may know on what principles and for what purposes our society has been formed. The objects for which we associate are the suppression of vice—reformation from evil manners—and the increase of useful knowledge. To gain these ends, such means shall be used as are dictated by prudence and a sense of duty. . . . We disclaim all preference for one denomination, sect, or party above another. We take the morality of the Bible for our guide; while the laws of the land prescribe the extent of our measures. Our Society consists of, and we wish it to be increased only by, such as profess themselves friends of religion and morality. . . .

But to the tender feelings of parents and guardians we would particularly appeal. Is it not your ardent wish that your children may become a comfort to you, an honor to themselves, and a blessing to the community? Yet such effects cannot be produced without the use of adequate means. Children are naturally without knowledge; they are ignorant of the real difference between virtuous principles and vicious propensities, and prone to go astray. They are therefore to be corrected and improved only by education, example, and prudent restraint; without which we cannot expect from them anything but a savage, ignorant and vicious life. With your aid the Society hopes to restrain and correct many of the irregularities which are too common, particularly on the Sabbath; and we flatter ourselves with the idea of rendering such services to the community, as will at least entitle us to your countenance and support.¹³

The announcement was greeted with enthusiasm by the better element in the community. The low moral condition of Pittsburgh was admitted, and any effort to improve things was appreciated. Thus encouraged, the Society decided to open a Sunday School. The first session was in the jury room of the old courthouse where a number of children and adults gathered.¹⁴ That week the *Pittsburgh Gazette* contained this commendatory report:

It is with pleasure that we mention, that a school was opened in this town on Sunday last, for the first time, when a consider-

¹³ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Aug. 16, 1800.

¹⁴ McKnight, *Sabbath School History*, p. 20.

able number of scholars attended. The school is under the direction of Messrs. M. B. Lowrie, Alexander Downing, and Phillip Gilland, men of known capacity as teachers, and will be opened every Sunday morning at eight o'clock and continue until eleven, and from two to five in the afternoon. This institution will afford an opportunity to parents who cannot pay for the education of their children, to have them instructed without expense. In order, however, to render the Sunday School extensively useful, it must be countenanced by every well disposed citizen; on this the projectors of it calculate, and we flatter ourselves they will not be disappointed.¹⁵

The new school was modeled on the popular plan of Robert Raikes, rather than on the experiment of Reverend Mr. Steele. Like Raikes' first school, the aim was intellectual and moral rather than religious. The pupils were instructed in spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic. No mention was made in the newspaper announcements of the use of the Bible, although it probably formed the text-book for practice in reading. Interested citizens contributed to the support of the school. Text-books were made available free of charge. Each teacher received one dollar a day for his services.¹⁶

But this Sunday School, launched with such laudable motives and enlisting the support of religious leaders, was soon to be wrecked on the rock of social ostracism. Pittsburgh, already at that early date, had developed a proud aristocracy based on comparative wealth. The old settlers, who had purchased property and had seen it increase in value rapidly, "assumed airs of superiority even over the well-born and well-bred part of the community who had been reduced from a more affluent situation by misfortune, or who had not been so fortunate as themselves in acquiring what stands the possessors in lieu of a descent and all the virtues and accomplishments."¹⁷

The children of these haughty rich would not attend a free Sunday School for the instruction of the poorer classes. They could pay for their own education and so shunned the pauper

¹⁵ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Sept. 6, 1809.

¹⁶ McKnight, *Sabbath School History*, p. 21.

¹⁷ An observation of Mr. F. Cumming written in 1807 and quoted by Boucher, *A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People*, p. 349.

school. What was not good enough for the wealthy, soon became despised by the poor. Attendance fell off. Discipline failed as the boys carried off the stationery. In less than a year the laudable enterprise was abandoned. No further effort was made to reorganize on the plan of Robert Raikes. When in 1815 Sunday Schools reappeared in the city of Pittsburgh, it was on the basis of Mr. Steele's experiment of 1800.

Throughout the earlier years of his Pittsburgh pastorate, Mr. Steele found time to strengthen the meager educational resources of the community. The trustees of the Pittsburgh Academy in 1801 asked him to serve as principal and teacher, which position he held for two years. The good news was the occasion of a special announcement in the newspaper: "The Trustees, anxiously disposed to promote the growth, prosperity and usefulness of the Academy, have engaged two masters (one of them a respectable clergyman) of education, character, skill and experience, who teach the Greek and Latin languages, mathematics, reading and writing. . . . The amount of the tuition money is incompetent to pay the salaries of the Masters and for this purpose, besides the aid of the interest on money lent on security, occasional advances are necessary. Those who send scholars to the Academy are especially admonished of the necessity of regular quarterly payments. Bills of the tuition money will be sent out to each by the Principal."¹⁸ The duties of principal, teacher and money raiser may have proved a burdensome responsibility even for a gifted preacher. To conserve his time and perhaps his finance, since his salary from the Presbyterian Church was only \$450 a year, he lived in the Academy building.¹⁹ After two years of service he felt compelled to resign. His resignation did not lessen his interest in education, nor did he withdraw from active teaching. On the fifth of January, 1803, he opened a private school for the education and moral training of promising youths. His advertisement clearly defined his dual purpose:

¹⁸ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Jan. 6, 1801.

¹⁹ *Centennial Volume*, p. 152.

The Subscriber, being about to leave the Pittsburgh Academy intends to open a school in his house in Second Street, on the 5th of January next, for the reception of a limited number of pupils, to be instructed in the Latin and Greek languages, writing, arithmetic, elements of geometry, geography, etc. He will have frequent examinations, considering them best calculated to bring into operation two powerful incentives to application, the love of praise, and the dread of disgrace. On such occasions the attendance of parents, guardians and men of education will be requested. He looks for no patronage but that to which his attention to the improvement of his pupils in literature and morals will entitle him.

Tuition in Latin and Greek \$4.00 a quarter.

Robert Steele.²⁰

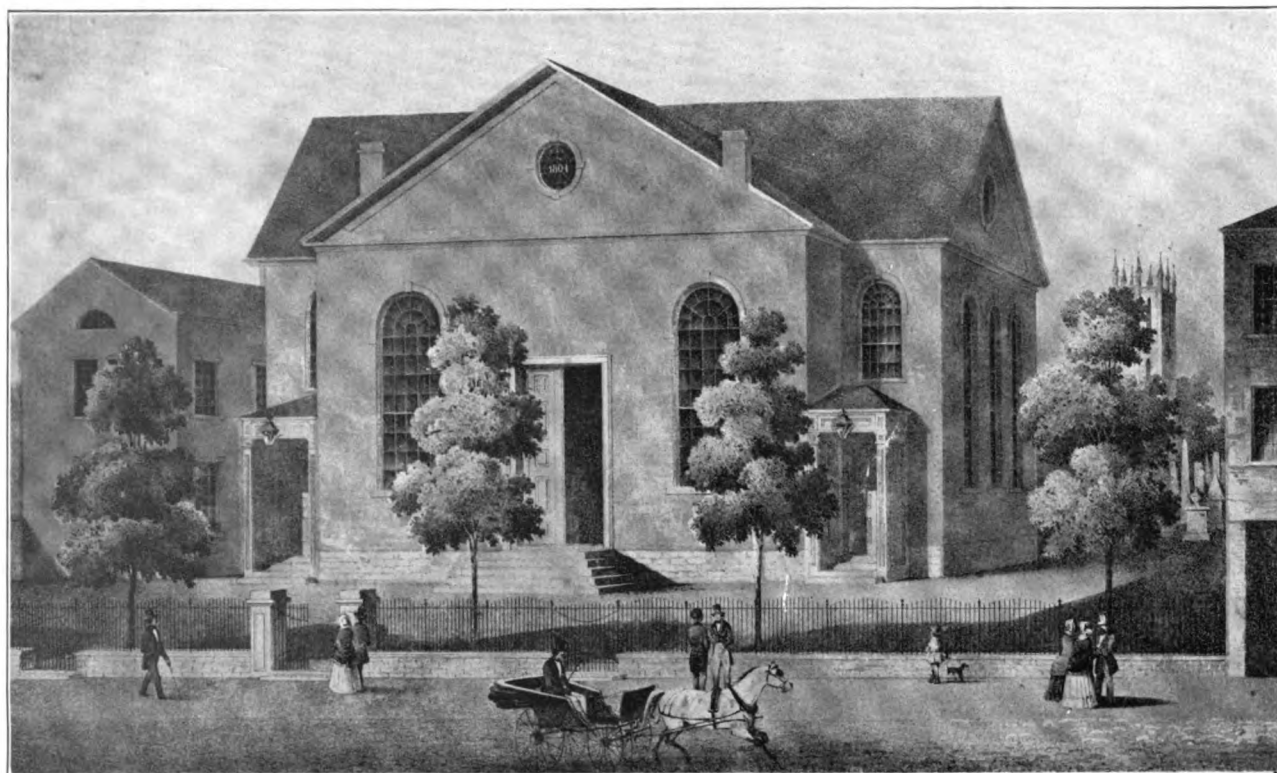
Though the small red brick house into which he had moved had but two rooms and a kitchen downstairs, he devoted one room to his school. How long he continued this personal venture in the field of education, or what success accompanied his efforts, is not recorded. Mrs. Way's reminiscences would indicate that only a few pupils took advantage of the opportunity and that the school, after a time, numbered only seven or eight scholars, all girls.²¹

Another notable achievement of Mr. Steele's pastorate was the building of an attractive brick church. The old log structure, completed in 1787, was no longer adequate for the congregation that on important occasions gathered for worship. The pastor's vision, however, exceeded the generosity of his members and resulted in a more elaborate building than could be financed conveniently. In the emergency, he stooped to an unscriptural method of raising money that proved unsuccessful and embarrassing to oncoming generations of Presbyterians.

Plans for the new church were discussed at the meeting of the trustees on May 4, 1801. In order to provide additional space, the lot adjoining the church was purchased at a cost of \$280.67. The campaign for funds was enthusiastically ordered

²⁰ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, Dec. 23, 1802.

²¹ Quoted in *Centennial Volume*, p. 157. Mrs. Way was a daughter of William Anderson, a trustee during Mr. Steele's pastorate. She was born 1794.



Courtesy First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

SECOND BUILDING OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH
Erected 1802



and a subscription paper drawn up. The largest contributors were promised the first choice of pews in the new building.²² By the 19th of February of the following year, \$2,400 had been secured in pledges. Contracts were authorized for a building "in width 44 ft. and in length 50 ft. exclusive of a steeple to be annexed to it."²³ Worship was continued in the log building until the new structure completely encased the old. Work progressed rapidly and on April 14, 1802, the historic building was demolished.

The new church was a handsome addition to Pittsburgh's attractive buildings. It represented a splendid effort to express in brick the congregation's conception of the glory of spiritual things. It occasioned justifiable pride in the hearts of Presbyterians. It called forth an improved ritual and greater emphasis on congregational singing. Twenty-five dollars were set aside by the trustees for the services of a capable precentor. For this important phase of worship, Mr. Reed, who kept a tavern on Diamond Alley, was selected. In approved orthodox style he would "line out" the words of the Psalms. Generously he donated to the pastor's wife the money he received for thus assisting in the musical accompaniment of worship.²⁴

Everything seemed to be progressing nicely, except in one respect. The pledges toward the new church were not being paid as rapidly as anticipated. Creditors and artisans demanded payment. Money to complete the building was not available. Alexander Addison, Isaac Craig, and Ebenezer Denny, the three trustees appointed as a building committee, reported that on the 20th of February (1805) the congregation was \$1,500 in debt for the work already done on the new church.²⁵ Further efforts to secure funds were unsuccessful. As a last resort, the trustees resolved "that, as the subscription for building the Meeting house is inadequate to the expense, an application be made to the Legislature for a lottery to pay

²² Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh, p. 5, May 4, 1801.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁴ *Centennial Volume*, p. 154.

²⁵ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, p. 11.

the debts incurred and that Isaac Craig, Ebenezer Denny, George Stevenson and Alexander Addison be a committee to carry this resolution into effect."²⁶

It is easy either to condemn or condone this unethical attempt to solve a baffling financial problem. It is a humiliating evidence of the unspiritual attitude even of the honored leaders of that worldly-minded congregation. These four trustees, who were authorized to make the application for a lottery, were among the most capable and enterprising men of the entire community. They doubtless did not feel there was anything wrong in their plan. It certainly was not novel either for Pittsburgh or for a church. As early as June, 1798, a legalized lottery was utilized as a convenient means of "raising \$12,000 to be applied in erecting piers to defend the banks of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers within the borough of Pittsburgh, authorized by an act of the Legislature of Pennsylvania."²⁷ The Episcopalians adopted a similar device to raise funds for Trinity Church. They sold tickets for \$1.50 each and offered as the highest prize the magnificent sum of \$10,000.²⁸

Yet when all reasonable allowance is made for conformity to custom, the use by Presbyterians of the gambling instinct cannot be condoned and must be recognized as exceptional. Gambling to the glory of God has never been a popular procedure among Presbyterians, who emphasize a strict reliance upon Scriptural methods of church finance. Commercializing the weaknesses of humanity, even for lofty purposes, has no justification in ethics. None of the other Presbyterian congregations in Western Pennsylvania imitated the example of their Pittsburgh brethren.

Permission to hold the lottery was granted by the State Legislature. Tickets were printed and duly advertised.

Scheme of a lottery for raising the sum of three thousand dollars, for defraying the expense of furnishing the Presbyterian church, in the borough of Pittsburgh: \$1,500 in prizes; 1,213

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁷ Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh*, p. 125.

²⁸ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 10, 1808, quoted *Ibid.*, p. 357.

prizes; 1,787 blanks, less than a blank to a prize; \$5 a ticket. Prizes thirty days after drawing; if not demanded within twelve months, considered relinquished to the church. One prize of \$800, the highest, and one thousand prizes of \$6, the lowest.²⁹

Leading members of the church sold tickets. The drawing was started. The pastor's two sons turned the lottery wheel.³⁰ Everything possible was done to give the lottery the prestige of respectability. Yet it failed to raise the anticipated revenue. Again the outstanding bills were pressing. The trustees made a desperate effort to raise funds. They threatened suit to collect from the individual members the amounts pledged.³¹

Still the necessary funds were not forthcoming. A second lottery was planned and advertised:

Second Class Scheme of a Lottery in raising part of the sume of \$3,000, for defraying the expenses of furnishing the Presbyterian Church in the borough of Pittsburgh: 1 prize of \$1,000, 1 of \$500, 3 of \$250, 2 of \$200, 10 of \$100, 11 of \$50, 3 of \$20. The prizes to be paid within the time limited by law; those not demanded within twelve months considered relinquished to the church.³²

It was the hope of the Trustees that this second lottery would bring in sufficient funds to complete the building. Six years had passed and yet the brick meetinghouse was not finished. Contracts were authorized for the erection of steps on the outside of the building and also for "completely finishing the front door and for painting and plastering said church."³³ The workmen were to be paid, not in cash, but in tickets for the second lottery. By this arrangement the church was completed. Pews were rented at prices ranging from \$5 to \$11. Even these methods of finance proved ineffectual. So com-

²⁹ *Centenary Memorial*, p. 277.

³⁰ *Centennial Volume*, p. 150.

³¹ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, p. 14. The complete minute follows: "Mar. 14, 1807. The demands on the trustees of the 1st Presbyterian Church of the Borough of Pittsburgh are so pressing that they are obliged to call on all the subscribers in arrears for the Sums due; and do hereby give them notice that if not paid into the hands of Boyle Irwin, Treasurer, before the 15th of April next, they will be put into the hands of a justice for collection. Signed—John Wilkins, President."

³² *Centenary Memorial*, p. 277.

³³ Minutes of Board of Trustees, p. 18, March 3, 1808.

pletely had the lottery failed that the whole enterprise ended in confusion. It added to the financial difficulties of the harassed congregation. The church's credit had been so impaired by this financial fiasco that all efforts to secure a favorable loan failed.

Nor did the subsequent plan of forced collection from the church members bring any great success. A report presented to the Trustees on June 25, 1810, revealed that the congregation "was indebted for the sum of \$2,772, exclusive of the lottery ticket accounts of which they had no statement."³⁴ Years passed, but no correct account of the amounts of the tickets sold was possible. Thus terminated in confusion and embarrassment the first and only effort of the church to use a method of finance that has no support either in Scripture or in ethics. "No better result ought to have been expected from so improper a measure," observed the clerk of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church some seventeen years later.³⁵

Amid these cumulative financial difficulties the church suffered another crushing misfortune. It lost its beloved pastor, Reverend Robert Steele. He died on the 22nd of March, 1810, a martyr to his sympathetic eagerness to help people in trouble. One bitterly cold winter morning at four o'clock he rose from his bed, dressed hastily and hurried to assist in extinguishing a fire that threatened to destroy a row of frame houses on Wood Street. The sub-zero weather added to the hardship. Water was carried in buckets from a hole cut through the ice in the river. Mr. Steele worked hard. His exposure in wet clothing resulted in a cold and pneumonia, from which he never rallied. His fight for life ended nine days later.³⁶

So deeply had Mr. Steele won the love and loyalty of his congregation that, in spite of their financial embarrassment, the Trustees voted to give to Mrs. Steele the rents from the pews until another pastor might be called. Even then they

³⁴ John H. Snowden, "Early History of the Church," a brief account incorporated as part of the minutes of the Session, Vol. II, p. 19, March 11, 1839.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁶ *Centennial Volume*, p. 153, quoting reminiscences of Mrs. Way.

did not wish to forget her, but promised her an annual gift of \$200 as long as she might remain a widow.³⁷ The pulpit and surrounding railing were draped in black at the order of the Trustees, to symbolize "our great respect and esteem for our late pastor, Rev. Robert Steele."³⁸ Appropriate services of farewell were conducted by Reverend James Graham, pastor of the Beulah Presbyterian Church. His body was laid to rest in the graveyard adjoining the church. He had given of his best in the face of obstacles that would have crushed a less valiant soul. He achieved a measure of success that made his ministry a constructive service to both church and community.

Mr. Steele's service to the community found a pleasing response in the generous provision the Masonic Fraternity made for his family. An enthusiastic canvass resulted in securing \$800 which was presented to Mrs. Steele, who now had the responsibility of providing for her five fatherless children, three boys and two girls.³⁹ This gift of the Masons was an expression both of sympathy for Mrs. Steele and appreciation of Mr. Steele's active work inside and outside the lodge. He had served for several years as chaplain of "Lodge No. 45 of Ancient York Masons."⁴⁰ This was the oldest and most influential fraternal organization in Pittsburgh and included in its membership the leading men of the community. In its ranks originated what Dahlinger describes as the "first temperance movement in Pittsburgh."⁴¹ The influence of Mr. Steele was probably one of the moving forces in seeking greater sobriety among its members. In this fellowship of men, Mr. Steele found opportunity of shaping opinions and

³⁷ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, p. 28: "April 9, 1810.—It was unanimously resolved that the Pew rents should hereafter be appropriated for use of the Widow, and Orphans of our late pastor, Mr. Steele, as heretofore until the Said Congregation shall employ another Pastor, after which it was farther agreed that after the pew rent shall cease from the aforesaid; that they should receive from the Congregation the sum of two hundred dollars annually during the widowhood of the said widow of the said Robt. Steele."

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³⁹ *Centennial Volume*, p. 153.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁴¹ *Dahlinger, Pittsburgh—A Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, p. 96.

expressing ideals that resulted in a practical application of religious truth.

One of the impressive ceremonies of the lodge was the annual observance of St. John the Baptist's day. A parade through the main streets led to the Presbyterian Church, where Mr. Steele preached to a great crowd of his Masonic brethren and their friends.⁴² People who attended public worship only on special occasions found their way to the church on these festive gatherings and heard at least one sermon a year from the Presbyterian minister, who attempted to be "all things to all men if by any means he might save some."⁴³

In this quiet fraternal ministry, Mr. Steele was very effective. His popularity was revealed in the office he held in the lodge and in the outpouring of affection that brought cheer and assistance to his widowed companion. As a preacher, an educator, a fraternity brother and a helpful citizen, he sought to build himself and his Christian ideals into the hearts of his fellowmen. It is difficult to determine in which of those four allied phases of service Mr. Steele's constructive achievements were most lasting.

His death, in the prime of life and usefulness, was a personal sorrow to many who had known and loved him in one or more of these helpful phases of his diverse ministry. It was also a severe blow to the church he had served so faithfully in the face of initial hostility and repeated financial handicaps. The immediate future held but little encouragement to the bereaved Presbyterians who in 1810 began the prolonged task of securing a successor to the lamented Reverend Robert Steele. A pastorless interval of more than a year followed. At last, in April, 1811, Reverend Francis Herron accepted the call of the First Presbyterian Church and continued to serve throughout a constructive ministry of almost half a century which was to mark a new era in the spiritual and religious life both of the church and of the community.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴³ I Corinthians 9:22.

CHAPTER VII

THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA

The second decade of the nineteenth century was the transitional period in the fortunes of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism and in the religious life of the entire city. The decade opened while the darkening clouds of persistent discouragement still hung over the two small groups of Presbyterians who were struggling to surmount financial adversity and religious lethargy. It closed with strengthened resources of men and money and with the creative leadership of two dominant clergymen who were preëminently fitted to mould the thinking and aspirations of energetic citizens. Through their joint coöperative labors the dormant Presbyterian energy was quickened into activity and became a controlling force both for personal morality and for civic righteousness. In Dr. Herron and Dr. Swift Pittsburgh experienced the leadership which was to alter its entire religious outlook for nearly a century.

Though the seeds of Presbyterianism had been planted in Pittsburgh by McClure and Frisbee as early as 1772, and though faithful pastors had at varied intervals diligently tilled the soil, the resulting growth had been discouragingly slow. Two small churches had been organized; but in 1810 they could report a membership of only sixty-five in the First Church and thirty in the Second Church.¹ That seemed a pitiably meager harvest of thirty-eight years of repeated struggle. It stands in rebuking contrast to the commercial and industrial expansion of the frontier trading post into a thriving borough, boasting a population of 4,786 in the year 1810 and manufactured products that reached a yearly total of \$625,773.² Nor had the other denominations in Pittsburgh achieved anything more encouraging during that same period. Either the inhabitants were so absorbed in material things as

¹ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 247.

² *A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People*, p. 322.

to be deaf to the call of higher interests, or the proper leadership had not yet arrived.

The two German congregations, the Lutherans and the Reformed, were worshipping, sometimes together and sometimes alternately, in a small building erected on property donated by the Penns in 1787. They had pooled their feeble financial resources to make possible the part-time support of a minister whom they selected jointly from one or other of the two co-operating denominations.³ The Episcopalians, who likewise had received a land grant from the Penn heirs, had succeeded but little in the development of their initial heritage. On a triangular lot, at the intersection of Sixth, Wood and Liberty Streets, they had erected in 1808 a distinctive octagonal edifice, known for many years as the Old Round Church.⁴ But their numbers were few and their influence less. With commendable persistence the Reverend John Taylor had sought to quicken their zeal and fidelity. Arriving in Pittsburgh in 1797, he served as rector when occasions required his presence. But if the entries in his diary are an accurate gauge of his ministerial services, he was not needed frequently for baptisms, marriages or funerals.⁵ His major employment was teaching either at the Pittsburgh Academy or at his own night school,⁶ prompting the remark of one of his pupils that, "he was as good a man as there is any use for in this wicked world."⁷ His efforts resulted in the formal organization of his congregation into the Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church in September, 1805,⁸ and the erection of a house of worship three years later. He resigned in 1817, "a most amiable man who on account of the hollowness of religion as practiced, had left off preaching in disgust, because of which he was then struggling with poverty."⁹

³ Warner, *Churches of Allegheny County*, p. 72.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41.

⁵ C. W. Dahlinger, *Reverend John Taylor and His Commonplace Book*, p. 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷ H. M. Brackenridge, *Recollections of Persons and Places in the West*, p. 59, Philadelphia.

⁸ Warner, *Churches of Allegheny County*, p. 41.

⁹ Comment of Mrs. Anore Royall, quoted by Dahlinger, *Reverend John Taylor and His Commonplace Book*, p. 12.

Even less successful were the Roman Catholics throughout that period. Itinerant priests were unable to gather together a sufficiently large group of worshipers to justify the establishment of a resident priest until the autumn of 1808. In that year Reverend William F. X. O'Brien was appointed to serve Pittsburgh and the surrounding territory. His entire congregation did not number more than twenty persons.¹⁰ Ample accommodations for worship were found in one room of the priest's home.¹¹ Through the generosity of a prominent Presbyterian layman, Col. James O'Hara, the feeble congregation was given title to a conveniently located lot on the corner of Liberty and Washington Streets.¹² The task of building was slow and sacrificial for the small, poverty-stricken group. But at last, late in the year 1811, "Old Saint Patrick's" was completed with only a minimum of necessary equipment.

The Methodists up to this time had fared but little better. Starting under lay leadership in 1796, a group of zealous believers struggled to stimulate the religious resources of the community. Their efforts found official encouragement in the inclusion of Pittsburgh as a preaching station on a rather expansive circuit. This arrangement made possible regular Sabbath preaching, but there was an almost total absence of pastoral direction. Such meager results followed that in 1806 Pittsburgh was dropped from the circuit and McKeesport substituted as a more promising opportunity.¹³

Two years later, in the home of Mr. Thomas Cooper on Smithfield and Water Streets, regular preaching was resumed with the appearance of a minister every other Sunday and lay preachers testifying on the intervening Sundays. These combined labors made possible the accumulation of sufficient funds to purchase, at a cost of \$300, a lot on First Street, nearly opposite the present Monongahela House.¹⁴ There the strug-

¹⁰ A. A. Lambing, *A History of the Catholic Church in the Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Allegheny*, p. 39.

¹¹ Warner, *Churches of Allegheny County*, p. 87.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹³ Grafton E. Reynolds, "The Smithfield Methodist Episcopal Church," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. VI, October, 1923, p. 253.

gling congregation built a plain brick meeting-house. Bishop Asbury graced the ground-breaking ceremony and preached two stirring sermons which were heard by large congregations.¹⁵ The ensuing eight years of peace and progress necessitated the erection of a more commodious sanctuary with a broad gallery extending around the rear and the two sides of the building. This new brick structure stood on the corner of Smithfield and Seventh, a spot subsequently honored as Brimstone Corner. By 1820 this famous Smithfield Methodist Church had grown too large to be included in a circuit with other churches and received the full-time services of its own pastor.¹⁶

The only other religious denominations which had succeeded in establishing even a feeble foothold in Pittsburgh previous to the second decade of the nineteenth century were two members of the Presbyterian family, the Reformed Presbyterian and the Associate Church. The former was blessed with the ministerial leadership of the Reverend John Black, a brilliant teacher and a consecrated pastor. Throughout a lifelong pastorate, which began with his ordination on the 18th of December, 1800, and closed with his death October 25, 1849, he was a zealous advocate of reform and identified with almost all the literary and charitable institutions of his adopted city.¹⁷ His little flock worshiped for a time in the old Court House and later shared the hospitality of the German Reformed con-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 253. The deed is dated June 21, 1810, and conveys the property to John Wrenchell, Robert McElhenney, Edward Hazelton, John Phillips, R. McElhenney, Jr., Nathaniel Holmes and Thomas Cooper, Jr., who were serving as trustees of the "Methodist Episcopal Church of Pittsburgh."

¹⁶ *Journal of Reverend Francis Asbury*, Vol. III, covering the period January 1, 1801, to December 7, 1815. "Preached on the foundations of the new chapel to about 500 souls. I spoke again at five o'clock to about twice as many. The society here is lively and increasing in numbers" (p. 345). The size of these congregations may have been somewhat exaggerated, as frequently throughout his entire *Journal* this itinerating Bishop gives very generous estimates of the numbers who heard him. He was too busy to count and too enthusiastic to be conservative.

¹⁷ *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. VI, October, 1923, p. 254.

¹⁸ William M. Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, 1888, p. 440.

gregation. They attained sufficient members and strength to erect a "very good brick meeting-house" on Oak Alley, not far from the present site of the Pennsylvania Railroad depot.¹⁸ Membership statistics are not available for these early years. But in 1807 F. Cuming, a traveler who had spent considerable time in Pittsburgh, referred to them as "a large society of a sect of Presbyterians called Covenanters."¹⁹

The other allied group of Presbyterians was the Associate Church, one of the two ecclesiastical bodies which merged in 1858 to form the United Presbyterian Church of North America. On November 24, 1801, a small group of the faithful had organized themselves into the Associate Congregation of Pittsburgh. They shared with Turtle Creek and Bethel the ministerial services of the Reverend Ebenezer Henderson. But "the great discouragements of his present charge"²⁰ motivated his resignation after two years of unproductive labor.

After a long pastorless interval, during which various supply preachers brought their sporadic stimulation, he was succeeded by the Reverend Robert Bruce. Dr. Bruce was another of the distinguished clergymen who accepted the challenge of Pittsburgh's religious lethargy, and achieved a growing success throughout an extended pastorate of forty years. His name and character are closely entwined in the spiritual development that was to be increasingly evident in the more encouraging decades that followed the year 1810. He was installed December 14, 1808, with the understanding that he would devote two-thirds of his time to the task of developing a church in Pittsburgh and the remaining one-third to his other pastoral charge at Peter's Creek.²¹

No building had as yet been erected. Like several others of the struggling denominations, his members profited by the friendliness of the German congregations who permitted him

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁹ Fortescue Cuming, *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country Through the States of Ohio and Kentucky*, p. 84. Pittsburgh, 1810. Thwaites, *Early Travels*, Vol. IV.

²⁰ William J. Reid, *History of the First United Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pa.*, p. 5 (Pittsburgh, 1901).

²¹ *History of Allegheny County*. Article by Rev. Aaron Williams, "The United Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh," p. 84.

to use their building for a number of years. Progress was difficult. The little group grew slowly in numbers and resources. At last, in 1813, they were able to erect their own house of worship upon a lot purchased three years earlier at a sheriff's sale for \$550. But it was only a rude brick building without paint, plastering or vestibule. Its high pulpit was supported by unadorned posts.²²

Dr. Bruce was now permitted to devote his full time to his Pittsburgh congregation. But internal friction hampered his efforts. The difficulties centered in the music and in the pastor's unwillingness to heed the wishes of his more conservative supporters.²³ At a meeting of Presbytery July 7, 1818, he was charged "with tyrannical acts as moderator of the Session in refusing to grant a hearing to a petition from certain members of the congregation."²⁴ Presbytery regarded the matter lightly and dismissed the charge. An appeal was taken to Synod. After long deliberation that higher judicatory voted that "it is most expedient to dismiss the affair without passing judgment on the merits of the case."²⁵ The protesting minority refused to be appeased. Three elders and a number of members withdrew.

But Dr. Bruce continued undaunted in his pastorate during

²² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²³ Reid, *History of the First United Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh*, p. 12. See also p. 63 ff., wherein appears an anniversary address of Dr. Bruce's son, David D. Bruce. In that address Mr. Bruce states that the trouble in his father's congregation was caused originally by the innovation of the precentor who, in lining out the psalms for the morning worship, "gave out two lines instead of the customary one line."

This testimony of Mr. Bruce is of particular interest to Presbyterians since a similar precedent-shattering precentor is the reason often given for the schism in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh and the resulting organization of the Second Presbyterian Church. It would be a strange coincidence that in the same small community two weak churches of different denominations split over the same trivial cause. After carefully pondering this apparent coincidence and examining the available original sources bearing upon the early establishment of the Second Church, the writer of these pages is inclined to doubt the historicity of the disturbing incident attributed to the Presbyterians and to believe the accuracy of Mr. Bruce's explanation of the trouble in his father's church. Oral tradition may have confused the two closely allied denominational groups.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

many years of distinguished service. In 1823 he succeeded in renovating and enlarging his unattractive church building. He was one of the original professors and the first principal of the Western University of Pennsylvania, which he helped to organize in 1822 and in which he labored until 1843.²⁶ Effective as he was as a minister and pastor, it was in this educational ministry that his personality was most creative. Ministers, judges, lawyers and merchants "have pronounced Robert Bruce as the most learned, the most sincere and the most kindly man they have ever met."²⁷ He, with Dr. Black in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Dr. Herron in the First Presbyterian, and Dr. Swift in the Second Presbyterian formed the notable quartette of crusading pastors whose influence was soon to be reflected in the altered ideals of the incorporated city of Pittsburgh.

Nine churches, representing the efforts of ten denominations, had thus been planted in the barren soil of Pittsburgh previous to 1810. They were small but aggressive and undaunted by the meager harvest that had followed their labors. Though but little visible result had been produced, in the realm either of religion or of morality, their members had successfully withstood the repeated tests of disappointment and isolation. They kept burning the lamp of faith and continued to cherish the vision of a spiritually quickened community.

In some of these churches, notably the First Presbyterian, the membership included men of ability who were contributing effectively to the progress and prosperity of Pittsburgh and who were bearing the burden of responsibility in the work of the church. General James O'Hara, the leading industrialist of that period, was serving as president of the Board of Trustees. Associated with him on the board were other prominent business men such as Isaac Craig and John Wilkins.²⁸ Judge Alexander Addison, John Scull, Ebenezer Denny, and James Ross were some of the outstanding community leaders whose

²⁶ "Western University of Pennsylvania Organized," article in *Pittsburgh Recorder*, May 2, 1832.

²⁷ A. L. Starrett, *Through One Hundred and Fifty Years*, p. 75 (Pittsburgh, 1937).

²⁸ Original Minutes of the Trustees, p. 35.

talents added greatly to the resources and prestige of the congregation. When quickened into coöperative activity by a capable consecrated pastor, their united energy was an important factor in the subsequent success of the First Presbyterian Church.

Where to secure that capable and consecrated minister was now the immediate problem of the bereaved congregation, left pastorless by the death of Reverend Robert Steele. The solution was not easy and involved delays that necessitated an interval of more than a year. Three months of sorrow passed before the trustees called the congregation together "to take into consideration the propriety of an application to the Presbytery for a pastor to supply the vacancy of the said church."²⁹ During these months Presbytery had asked the Messrs. Reverend Thomas More, James Graham, and Samuel Porter, Jr., to fill the pulpit on certain designated Sabbaths and also at their discretion.³⁰

But the uncertainties of occasional supply preaching were not conducive to the welfare of the enfeebled congregation. The officers took the initiative in inviting the Reverend Joseph Stockton, principal of the Pittsburgh Academy, to preach as occasion demanded. His work proved so acceptable that at a regularly called congregational meeting in October, 1810, Redstone Presbytery was requested to appoint him as the regular preacher for a six months period.³¹ To this request Presbytery agreed after receiving Mr. Stockton as a member.³²

As a well merited compensation the congregation voted to allow him "six dollars per day as well for the past services as the future."³³ Money in that debt-burdened congregation was not at hand. The pew rents had already been reserved as a gift to the widow of the deceased pastor. The trustees, however, voted that "a percentage should be laid on the present pew rent, as will pay such supply, to be assessed by the trus-

²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 18, 1810, p. 29.

³⁰ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, April 18, 1810, p. 242.

³¹ Original Minutes of the Trustees, p. 31.

³² *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 244.

³³ Original Minutes of the Trustees, p. 31.

tees."³⁴ This action may have appeared to the sympathetic supply pastor as equivalent to asking the widow to pay his salary. There is no record of his accepting any money for his services even though at a later meeting the trustees decided to pay him \$300 for the period during which he had filled the pulpit.³⁵ Family tradition stated that this sum also "he refused out of consideration to Mr. Steele's family and out of sympathy with the struggling church."³⁶

Mr. Stockton was a versatile genius of broad human sympathies and wide range of knowledge. He was a professor, preacher, and physician, equally at home in classroom, pulpit and sickroom. When a youth of nineteen years of age he had won honors in the graduating class at Jefferson College. Two years of theological study, under the tutelage of the celebrated Dr. John McMillan, prepared him for licensure on June 26, 1799.³⁷ His early ministerial and academic experience was gained at Meadville, where he served nine years as pastor and also had charge of the Meadville Academy. From that dual responsibility he was called in 1809 to the principalship of the Pittsburgh Academy.³⁸ His induction into office ushered in the golden age in the early history of that Academy and culminated ten years later in its expansion into the Western University of Pennsylvania.

His coming to Pittsburgh, less than a year before the death of Reverend Mr. Steele, seemed a providential blessing to the First Presbyterian Church. He succeeded not only in holding together a disheartened congregation, but in attracting the interest of ten additional recruits.³⁹ Finances, however, remained a baffling problem even for an educator and a capable group of trustees.⁴⁰ His sermons were scholarly and appealed to the more intellectual portion of his audience, while his genial personality and tender sympathy endeared him to all.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁶ *Centennial Volume*, p. 46.

³⁷ *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, Philadelphia, 1899, p. 382 and p. 410.

³⁸ McCormick, *History of Western University of Pennsylvania*, p. 3.

³⁹ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 247.

⁴⁰ Original Minutes of the Trustees, p. 32.

As a result, his brief leadership quickened the zeal of the entire congregation and developed an attitude of expectancy when visiting ministers were heard as prospective pastors.

One of those visiting preachers was the Reverend Francis Herron. He had come to Pittsburgh to see his sister, Mrs. Peebles, and to enjoy a brief vacation with his brother-in-law, Dr. Brown, who at that time was president of Washington College. With perhaps a touch of humor he used as a most appropriate text the words: "The voice of my beloved, behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills."⁴¹ An invitation to return a few weeks later was accepted. So anxious were the people to hear him that "some of the ladies went to the church on horseback, the mud being too deep for them to walk, and others were carried there."⁴² The enthusiasm resulted in an early meeting of the congregation and a formal call to serve as pastor. The call was accepted and on April 3, 1811, he resigned his ten-year pastorate at the Rocky Spring Church, near Chambersburg, Pa., to begin a month later the journey across the mountains and a memorable ministry in the First Church.⁴³

Dr. Herron was not a total stranger to Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania. As early as 1798, while a young clergyman of twenty-four years of age, he was sent by the Presbytery of Carlisle on a western missionary tour which brought him to Pittsburgh and on to Chillicothe, Ohio. In Pittsburgh he preached to a small congregation of some eighteen people in the old log church which then housed more swallows than worshipers. He assisted Dr. McMillan who at that time was enjoying a notable season of revival at Char-tiers, Pa. His evangelistic passion stirred the souls of his hearers in the church at Buffalo, Pa., and resulted in a call to serve that thriving rural congregation. Earlier on this same tour he had been urged by the congregation at Pitt Township

⁴¹ Text is the Song of Solomon, chapter 2, verse 8.

⁴² Paxton, W. M., *Two Discourses Upon the Life and Character of Reverend Francis Herron, D.D.*, p. 34 (Pittsburgh, 1861).

⁴³ Alfred Nevin, *Men of Mark of Cumberland Valley, Pa.*, p. 114 (Philadelphia, 1876).



Courtesy First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

REVEREND FRANCIS HERRON, D.D.

**Third Pastor of First Presbyterian Church,
Pittsburgh, 1810-1850**



(now Beulah Church) to accept a call for his ministerial services.⁴⁴

But the young missionary was not seeking a permanent field in Western Pennsylvania and returned to his own Presbytery, where he was installed pastor of the Rocky Spring Church on April 9, 1800.⁴⁵ Eleven years of mental and spiritual development followed, during which the energetic pastor inaugurated prayer meetings and established Bible classes and catechetical instruction for old and young, and stimulated the piety of the people. And now he was back in Pittsburgh, a vigorous man of thirty-seven years, with wisdom ripened by study and experience, yet with the same evangelistic passion that had sent him on his missionary tour twelve years earlier.

Pittsburgh was soon to discover that a mighty personality had arrived who knew both how to persuade and how to command. Unusually gifted by nature, he seemed predestined by God to be the human agency for the spiritual quickening of an expanding community. An associate who was privileged to know him intimately has written this description of his physical presence:

Few men have ever been favored with a physical organism so dignified and imposing. His noble, manly frame was tall, muscular, strongly developed, yet compactly knit, and well adjusted in its proportions. His voice was clear and strong, yet mingling a tone of kindness with authority, so as both to win and to command. His face was well moulded with every manly lineament; health glowing upon his rounded cheek; decision expressed in the wrinkles of his compressed lips; sagacity glancing from his eye; command enthroned upon his brow, and an expression of benevolence overspreading his whole countenance.⁴⁶

His physical strength and courage equipped him for rugged pioneering and venturesome rebuking and gave him a calm self-mastery that reinforced his convictions and commands. A classmate remarked, "He is the only preacher I would fear in a personal encounter. He is all bone, all muscle; has no

⁴⁴ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery* (October 16, 1798), p. 142.

⁴⁵ Nevin, *Men of Mark*, p. 115.

⁴⁶ Paxton, as cited, p. 87.

fear and would die before he would yield.”⁴⁷ Shortly after reaching Pittsburgh he was disturbed by a small riot which had broken out among some teamsters in front of his home. Hurrying out into the street, he discovered that two of the angry men were about to exchange blows. Perfectly fearless, he rushed up to the combatants and seized them one in each hand and held them apart in his vise-like grip. Struggling to break loose, one of the men exclaimed: “Let me go, parson, or I will strike you.” “Strike me!” replied the preacher as he tightened his hold. “It will take six of you. I will have no fighting in my presence.” The man was powerless to object and reluctantly agreed to a forced armistice and a hasty withdrawal from the presence of a clergyman who could successfully discharge the duties of a policeman.⁴⁸

Combined with this physical courage was a tenderness that inspired him to seek the spiritual development of all men, even of those who were mistreating him. A well authenticated incident forms a striking illustration.

One night the Reverend Mr. Herron was aroused from sleep by a noise in his bedroom. “Who is there?” he inquired sharply. A voice, imitating the tone of a female, replied, “It’s me, sir.” Detecting the imposture, he immediately sprang from his bed, and as the robber was retreating down the stairs, he seized him by the hair and held him in his iron grasp. The robber, feeling that he had found his master, surrendered, and the minister led him down the stairs into the kitchen, struck a light, stirred the fire, and seated the culprit by his side to talk with him about his soul. After a long conversation, in which the robber expressed great penitence, and promised to lead a new life, the minister kneeled by his side, and prayed most earnestly to God in his behalf. When they arose from prayer, Mr. Herron was about to dismiss him, with a supply of bread and meat for his family, when it occurred to inquire what time it was. Mrs. Herron went to look at the watch; but behold, it was gone! The villain had stolen it, and, notwithstanding all his professions of penitence, was about to depart with the watch in his pocket. The minister seized him again and made him surrender the watch. The fellow’s penitence now became

⁴⁷ *Centennial Volume*, p. 193.

⁴⁸ Incident related by Reverend Richard Lea in *The Presbyterian Banner*, July 31, 1867.

deeper than ever, and Mr. Herron, in the kindness of his heart, forgave him all, and sent him away with such an abundant supply of provisions as to leave rather a scarcity for the next morning's breakfast.⁴⁹

Such were the physical resources of the man who on June 18, 1811, was received into the Redstone Presbytery and authorized to be the new pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.⁵⁰ Problems of finance and spiritual lethargy immediately confronted him. The little congregation of seventy-four members had agreed to contribute to Mrs. Robert Steele, the widow of the former pastor, an annuity of \$200.⁵¹ The present pastor was promised an annual salary of \$600.⁵²

But the crushing burden was the indebtedness on the church building. Though the new edifice had been completed in 1808, and persistent efforts had been made to raise funds through subscriptions and an unfortunate lottery, the sum still due on July 8, 1811, was \$4,300.⁵³ An assessment, equal to one hundred percent of the total pew rents, was levied against the pewholders who were allowed four years to make the mandatory payments.⁵⁴ But still funds in sufficient amounts were not forthcoming. Repeated efforts to secure the necessary collections were unavailing.⁵⁵ Promises and postponed payments at last exhausted the patience of the creditors. Suits were entered against the congregation during the fall of 1813. The church building and the two adjoining lots were attached legally and the entire property offered for sale by the sheriff of Allegheny County.

Desperate measures were necessary to meet the emergency. The trustees were called into a hurried conference. They authorized and requested their pastor, the Reverend Francis Herron, to attend the sheriff's sale of the church's property

* Paxton, as cited, p. 102 f.

⁵⁰ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 248.

⁵¹ Original Minutes of the Trustees, April 9, 1810, p. 28.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

and "if the same is sold to become the purchaser in his individual capacity."⁵⁶ He followed instructions. He was both able and willing to bid higher at a cash price than his competitors. The entire property was sold under the sheriff's hammer to the highest bidder and the title transferred to the pastor. Later he resold to the directors of the Pittsburgh Bank the corner lot, 60 feet square, bordering on Sixth and Wood Streets, for \$3,000. He used this \$3,000 to pay in full the balance due the creditors and then redeeded to the Trustees the remaining property, including a cash balance of \$181.13.⁵⁷ The property was saved, the obligations were met and a heavy burden lifted from the congregation.

This successful financing fired the officers of the church with new zeal. The building was repaired according to the suggestion of the pastor.⁵⁸ Financial prosperity, stimulated in Pittsburgh by the demand for manufactured products occasioned by the war of 1812, was shared by the members of the church. Money for all purposes flowed more freely. The pastor's salary was increased from \$600 to \$1,000, as a token of esteem and success.⁵⁹ Four years later it was raised to \$1,500, a remarkably generous figure for that period.⁶⁰ Thus within a comparatively few years after his installation the first of the two difficult problems which confronted the aggressive pastor appeared to have been banished triumphantly.

With equal evidences of success Mr. Herron struggled to overcome the more persistent problem of spiritual lethargy. When he entered upon his work in Pittsburgh the religious resources of the congregation were at a low ebb. Only the barest

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42. The complete minute reads as follows: "That the Revd. Francis Herron be authorized and requested to attend on the behalf of the Trustees the Sheriffs Sale of the beforementioned property, and if the same is sold to become the purchaser in his individual capacity, with an understanding, that after receiving so much of the Lot of Ground (part of said property) as will sell for and produce about Three thousand Dollars, he will convey and transfer the residue of said property to the Congregation as well as all monies arising from such sale or sales, after paying and satisfying the present liens thereon."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

essentials of worship were maintained, and these were observed with but little zeal. "The number of persons who then attended upon the preaching of the Word was comparatively small and the laxity of discipline was equally lamentable."⁶¹ During his latter ministry Dr. Herron referred frequently to the "prevalence of fashionable follies, the strength of pernicious social habits, the influence of worldliness over the church and the mournful absence of the spirit and power of vital godliness" that characterized his congregation throughout the early period of his pastorate.⁶²

Only two men were then serving on the Session, to which, under Presbyterian polity, is entrusted the spiritual program of the church.⁶³ Of these, Mr. James Beech Clow was the more gifted and more responsive to opportunities of spiritual service. He had been elected an elder in 1803 and was the only one who appeared at the communion seasons to assist in distributing the elements.⁶⁴ He was the precentor whose beautiful voice regularly led the congregation in praise and frequently in prayer. He was Dr. Herron's "praying elder."⁶⁵ Mr. James Cooper, the other elder, needed the stimulating influence of a consecrated pastor before his spiritual vision was clarified sufficiently to perceive religious opportunities.

At the request of the new pastor the session was enlarged by the election to the eldership of James Brown and John M. Snowden.⁶⁶ The latter was a most helpful addition. He had removed his newspaper interests from Greensburg to Pittsburgh in 1811 and purchased the *Commonwealth*, which he renamed the *Mercury*, and continued to edit it with marked vigor and wide influence until 1831. His broad knowledge, deep piety and high standing in the community were of great value to the church. Zealously he coöperated with his pastor, whom he loved and admired, and proved himself a most useful

⁶¹ Original Session Minutes, Vol. II, p. 19, wherein is included a history of the church written in 1839 by John M. Snowden, at that time clerk of the Session.

⁶² Paxton, as cited, p. 38.

⁶³ Minutes of Session, Vol. II, p. 24.

⁶⁴ Centennial Volume, p. 213.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁶⁶ Minutes of Session, Vol. II, p. 24.

leader throughout a long service which closed with his death in 1845.⁶⁷

In his persistent efforts to vitalize the spiritual life of his congregation the Rev. Mr. Herron depended upon the cumulative power of four supplementary agencies; his own courageous and consistent example, dynamic uncompromising preaching, fervent unceasing prayer, and faithful catechetical instruction of youth. Unlike his two predecessors in the pastorate of this church, Mr. Herron made no attempt to be "all things to all men." He refused to mingle in social life where his presence might seem to condone indulgences that were contrary to his understanding of strict morality. He was quick to manifest his disapproval and frank in his rebukes.

One evening some of the young people in the community planned an elaborate ball and in a spirit of youthful bravado they sent him an invitation to attend. The invitation carried the announcement that one of the members of his church would act as manager for the evening, and was accompanied by the statement that many of his church members would vindicate their freedom by taking part. Mr. Herron sent no written reply, but on the next Sabbath morning he announced from the pulpit that on a certain night "there would be a ball held by those who served the devil and he feared by some who professed to serve God. On that night he also would have a party. He invited all to attend, particularly the ladies. Jesus, he knew, would be there. He begged those who attended the devil's party to remember that after nine o'clock he would retire alone and pray for God to have mercy upon the triflers. He would intercede for them until morning, and further he would discipline before the Session all of his members who would be at the ball, if any should attend after their pastor's warning." His party was crowded. The ball was a failure. It was the last invitation he received to attend a dance.⁶⁸

This announced intention to discipline any recalcitrant

⁶⁷ *Centennial Volume*, p. 203.

⁶⁸ *Presbyterian Banner*, July 31, 1867. Article by Reverend Richard Lea relating anecdotes of Dr. Herron. Mr. Lea was a member of the First Presbyterian Church and entered the ministry during the early years of Dr. Herron's pastorate.

members was no idle threat. He utilized diligently the power of the Session to rebuke, denounce, try and suspend from the privileges of the church those who deviated from the path of recognized rectitude. Especially during the early years of his pastorate, he found frequent occasions to summon his communicants to face, in the presence of the Session, detailed charges of misconduct. The earliest recorded minute of the Session is the case of an army officer who was forced to acknowledge publicly "the sinfulness and impropriety of his conduct in drinking too freely of spirituous liquors and having made use of improper language in his livery stable during a dispute."⁶⁹ The Minutes record numerous trials and stern disciplinary action taken against members convicted of such offenses as adultery, drunkenness, quarreling, assault, betting on election, profanity, and Sabbath breaking.⁷⁰

This same uncompromising attitude toward the popular indulgences of an unredeemed community characterized his preaching. He sought to convict and convert, never to please or pamper. He exposed sin with the loving fidelity of one "who came to seek and to save that which was lost." His words at times aroused violent resentment, but he never wavered nor retracted, and when the storm of opposition had spent itself he was still proclaiming his convictions with all the power and pathos he could command. One of his hearers thus described his pulpit pleas: "The earnestness with which he appealed to sinners brought the conviction that he believed all he uttered. His denunciations of the wrath of God against the wicked were most powerful and alarming, whilst, on the other hand, he often dwelt on the fulness of the Saviour and besought men to be reconciled to God."⁷¹

But though Dr. Herron was a stern moralist and a pleading revivalist, he was convinced that something more than preaching or living was essential to spiritual regeneration. He was above all else a man of public and private prayer and believed fervently in the power of intercessory supplication to God.

⁶⁹ Original Session Minutes, Vol. I, p. 1.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, typical cases on pp. 8, 12, 15, 25, 30, 36, and 39.

⁷¹ Quoted by Paxton, as cited, p. 40.

His emphasis on prayer was regarded by his cynical congregation as a mark of eccentricity or as an unwelcome evidence of Methodism. Mr. Cooper, one of the elders, bitterly opposed his announced intention to conduct a prayer meeting each week and denounced him severely for his non-Presbyterian policy.⁷² But Mr. Herron would not yield.

He found a ready partner in the Reverend Thomas Hunt, the minister of Pittsburgh's Second Presbyterian Church. Mr. Hunt at that time was attempting to supplement his meager income by conducting a private school. The needs of his large family of ten children⁷³ were greater than could be met on the small salary promised, but not always paid, by a feeble congregation none too well supplied with financial resources.⁷⁴ His members were no more responsive to the novelty of a weekly prayer meeting than were the leaders in the First Presbyterian Church. So the two consecrated pastors concluded it would be more diplomatic to hold their cherished prayer meeting in the small room which Mr. Hunt was using as his private school.⁷⁵

Here the two preachers, and as many of their congregations as would join them, met in earnest prayer week after week, pleading for a spiritual revival. But only one man and six women accepted their invitation. For eighteen months that little handful of praying Christians continued their weekly prayer service.⁷⁶ Ridicule and opposition greeted their persistent prayers, but still they persevered. So meager seemed the response in numbers, and so futile appeared the efforts of the two ministers, that finally the patience of the elders of the First Church was exhausted and Mr. Herron was told bluntly by his Session that this extravagant waste of time must cease.

⁷² *Centennial Volume*, p. 213, which quotes the statement of Dr. Herron's daughter (Mrs. Mary Smith).

⁷³ *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, which includes a biographical sketch of Mr. Hunt, p. 428. Philadelphia, 1889.

⁷⁴ Mr. Hunt reported to Redstone Presbytery that for the year 1811 the congregation owed him \$104.44. (*Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 246.) For the year 1812 he failed to receive \$54.88 of promised salary. (*Ibid.*, p. 253.)

⁷⁵ Nevin, *Men of Mark of Cumberland Valley*. Includes biographical sketch of Mr. Hunt, p. 428, Philadelphia, 1889.

⁷⁶ *Centennial Volume*, p. 80.

With a dignity and sternness which always characterized him, he replied: "Gentlemen, these meetings will not stop. You are at liberty to do as you please. But I also have the liberty to worship God according to the dictates of my conscience, none daring to molest or make me afraid."⁷⁷

Persistence and patience at last won their merited reward. The prayers of the little group were answered. Opposition abated. Attendance increased and the weekly prayer meeting became an established custom in Pittsburgh Presbyterian churches and a new spirit of piety was soon manifested. The Session was enlarged, as previously noted, and the religious life of the church stirred by a man who could not be swerved from his noble purposes. This, declared Dr. Howard, was "the turning point of the spiritual history of our churches in this city."⁷⁸

Visible evidence of progress appeared in the increase of membership and in a subsequent enlargement of both the Presbyterian churches. The members of the Second Church had been worshipping since 1807 in a remodeled carpenter shop which, though unadorned, was adequate accommodation for the thirty enrolled communicants. But the new spiritual energy which had been released by the growing prayer group stimulated a revival of interest and sacrificial zeal. Funds for a new building were solicited. Optimism exceeded resources. A burdensome debt was incurred as the old carpenter shop was replaced with an impressive brick edifice on Diamond Street.⁷⁹

The new church was a splendid addition to Pittsburgh's developing architecture. It surpassed in size and appearance the building which the First Presbyterian congregation had erected and was more pretentious than the rural houses of

⁷⁷ Paxton, as cited, p. 44.

⁷⁸ Quoted by Dr. S. F. Scovel in his historical sermon in *Centennial Volume*, p. 80.

⁷⁹ The early Minutes of this congregation were destroyed in the fire which swept over Pittsburgh in 1845 so that the exact amount of the indebtedness cannot be stated accurately. But Dr. Swift reported that when he accepted the pastorate of this church in 1819 the debt was \$10,000. (Dr. Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 22, in *Discourses*, Pittsburgh, 1859.)

worship. Its one hundred pews had a seating capacity of between 500 and 600 and revealed faith in the expanding future of the Christian religion in Pittsburgh.⁸⁰ Proudly the church entertained Presbytery in the recently completed house of worship on June 28, 1814.⁸¹ In the spring of the following year the membership had grown to 63. The next year thirty-nine new names were added to the roll, lifting the enrollment to eighty-seven as the direct fruitage of the revival.⁸²

In the First Church the results of this revival were a little slower in manifesting themselves but developed more impressively, due perhaps to the greater strength and resourcefulness of the pastor. The membership of this church at the close of the year 1814 was only sixty communicants.⁸³ Within two years that number was doubled.⁸⁴ Increased seating capacity was necessary. The trustees, at a meeting on June 1, 1816, voted to enlarge the church to make possible the erection of sixty-one additional pews on the main floor and nine in the gallery.⁸⁵ Subscriptions were taken to defray the expenses of this expansion in the facilities of worship. The new pews were sold to the subscribers, on the basis of competitive bidding, at prices ranging from \$45 to \$495 and totaling \$7,179.⁸⁶ So successful was this plan of financing that the trustees were able to report that the work of remodeling was completed, all bills were paid and a balance of \$1,905.68 was placed in the treasury.⁸⁷ It was a convincing evidence that the consecrated efforts of Dr. Herron were winning the loyalty and hearty support of the congregation.

Two preaching services each Sabbath were now deemed necessary to meet the quickened interest and the needs of this growing congregation of worshipers. The request for addi-

⁸⁰ Letter of Reverend E. P. Swift, written from Pittsburgh to his wife, dated July 6, 1819. This unpublished letter is in the possession of his great-granddaughter, Miss Naomi Wright.

⁸¹ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 267.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁸⁵ *Original Minutes of Trustees*, p. 55.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, February 20, 1817, p. 63.

tional opportunities of worship came not from the pastor, although his heart was doubtless warmed by this manifestation of enlarged zeal for his faithful preaching. No, the action was taken by the trustees themselves as the announced policy of the church. "Unless some unavoidable circumstances prevent," the resolution reads, "divine services shall be performed in the church every Sunday throughout the entire year at 11 A.M. and 3 P.M." ⁸⁸

The gathering shadows of the late winter afternoons and the morning gloom, spread by the fog and smoke of a developing manufacturing community, suggested the necessity of more adequate lighting facilities for these Sabbath preaching services. General James O'Hara, "Pittsburgh's First Industrialist," responded to the suggestion with his accustomed initiative and generosity. He presented to the church a beautiful chandelier of skilled German workmanship, "in token of the glowing desire to promote the lustre of this enlightened society." ⁸⁹ It was hung from the center of the ceiling where it continued to adorn and illuminate the sanctuary for many years. It was the object of much admiration and of some criticism because, as it was said, "its magnificence glares in unbecoming contrast to the Quaker-like plainness of the house." ⁹⁰

The chandelier was constructed of numerous pieces of glass so arranged as to reflect the light of the 100 sperm candles that were artfully placed in ascending circles. To light those 100 candles was no small task, challenging the skill of the janitor who took great pride in gracefully swinging his long taper from candle to candle. The curious lads of the congregation would come to church early just to experience the thrill of watching the janitor light the candles in rapid succession.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1818, p. 82. In a subsequent issue the following editorial comment appeared: "A chandelier of elegant workmanship has lately been presented to the First Presbyterian Church of this place by General James O'Hara. This beautiful ornament, which was imported at great expense and trouble, reflects as much credit on the taste as on the munificence of the generous donor, and adds one more instance to the long list of liberal acts performed during a most useful life, by this worthy citizen."

⁹⁰ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 2, 1819.

Part of his technique was to tip each candle previously with turpentine so that the torch brought the candle instantly into a bright flame.⁹¹

The gift of his famous chandelier was the last outstanding contribution of the man who had served the church as President of the Board of Trustees and who had been actively identified with the church and community for many decades. Within a little over a year his earthly career closed amidst numerous tributes of esteem. He had left behind many monuments of his diversified interests which caused him to be widely cherished as a most constructive citizen. Typical of these tributes to his usefulness is the following abstract of a newspaper comment:

General James O'Hara died on the 17th of December in the 66th year of his age. The history of General O'Hara is identified with that of Pittsburgh, and in his death our city has to mourn the loss of one of her founders. He was born in Ireland in the year 1754, and emigrated to the United States in 1772; immediately after landing he proceeded to Fort Pitt, then a wretched frontier post only inhabited by a small party of military, and a few intrepid Indian traders. He arrived amongst them at the age of nineteen, unfriended, unpatronized and without capital; his capacity, however, could not long remain concealed, and before six weeks had elapsed, he was engaged in the Indian trade as an agent for Simon and Campbell, and in the next year he was taken into the concern as a partner.

General O'Hara, at an early period, was the only man who properly appreciated the advantages of the locality of Pittsburgh. When others less provident viewed the acquisition of real estate as of no account, his keen penetration looked into futurity and anticipated the period with sanguine enthusiasm when it would assume the character of a wealthy city. He lived to see his anticipations realized. When he retired from public life, he devoted his whole mind, and the means which his princely fortune afforded him, to the aggrandisement and advancement of his adopted town. He was the first to think of manufactures, and at a period when the idea was looked upon as chimerical, he struggled through almost incalculable difficulties and succeeded at length in establishing his glass works. These were soon after followed by his brewery. In the

⁹¹ *Centennial Volume*, p. 232.

prosecution of these objects, and in the many buildings which he erected (for he may be said to have almost created a city himself) he was always viewed as a public blessing.⁹²

The permanent establishment of the Sunday School movement in Pittsburgh was another notable evidence of the spiritual transformation which Dr. Herron was achieving in the First Presbyterian Church. The pioneering efforts in the autumn of 1800 of his predecessor, the Reverend Robert Steele, had collapsed after two years of struggle against prejudice and misunderstanding. Nor had the more ambitious layman's Sunday School movement in the year 1809 achieved any greater success. It was disbanded after less than a year's discouraging trial.⁹³ But Dr. Herron was convinced that only through the proper instruction of youth could the enduring foundations of character be laid. Shortly after his coming to Pittsburgh he carried forward the systematic program of catechetical instruction which he had used successfully in his former charge at Rocky Spring, Pa.⁹⁴

But opinion differs as to the exact date when he encouraged the formation of a Sunday School. Dr. Paxton, who followed Dr. Herron in the pastorate of the First Church, gives 1812 as the probable date. He based his statement on the memory of one of the men who, as a lad, was a member of that school. As accurately as he could recall it was "in the year 1812 that a school for Sabbath instruction was held in an old stable, near the old Cotton Mill, in the upper part of the town. It was taught by a gentleman, whose name I have not been able to learn, who conducted a log school in the vicinity. As public sentiment was then so strongly opposed to such measures, he was not permitted to hold it in his own schoolhouse and therefore resorted with six scholars to a stable. Frequently Dr. Herron visited the school and took great interest in the instruction."⁹⁵ No documentary evidence has been discovered

⁹² *Pittsburgh Gazette*, December 21, 1819. For a more detailed summary of his life see E. C. Schramm: "General James O'Hara, Pittsburgh's First Captain of Industry," Pittsburgh, 1931, a master's thesis on file at the University of Pittsburgh.

⁹³ See pages 322 f. for details.

⁹⁴ Nevin, *Men of Mark of Cumberland Valley*, p. 115.

⁹⁵ Paxton, as cited, p. 52.

to support this youthful memoir. The statement is definitely rejected by McKnight in his careful researches tracing the history of the Sabbath Schools of the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. "The evidence to the contrary," he affirms, "is cumulative and conclusive."⁹⁶

Rejecting, then, the statement of Dr. Paxton, the Sabbath School movement in Pittsburgh cannot be dated earlier than 1815.⁹⁷ In that year reports reached Pittsburgh of the successful schools established in Philadelphia by the Rev. Mr. May, a returned missionary. Dr. Herron, in consultation with several of the leaders of his church, concluded that the newer plan was better than his own method of catechetical instruction. "He transferred the younger portion of his class into the hands of members of his congregation who had volunteered to adventure in the matter."⁹⁸ The new movement, thus launched with pastoral blessing, developed rapidly into a missionary enterprise. It organized schools outside the church building in convenient and strategic places. The revival of 1816 quickened its zeal and widened the scope of its activity. It aimed, not to reach the children of parents already Christian, but to enlist the interest of boys and girls whose religious training had been totally neglected.

The following year the two Presbyterian and the two Methodist churches officially recognized the value of this new agency for religious education and united their efforts in the formation of the Pittsburgh Sunday School Association.⁹⁹ Financial resources were meager. Equipment was most inadequate. Yet the zeal of the workers was undaunted. Obstacles could not check their spirit or counteract their efforts. Through-

⁹⁶ D. A. McKnight, *Historical Sketch of the Sabbath Schools of the First Presbyterian Church from 1800-1867*. Pittsburgh, 1867, p. 23.

⁹⁷ The evidence for this date rests upon the following historical statement appearing in the *Pittsburgh Recorder*, May 9, 1822: "A Sabbath School was first commenced by a number of pious and benevolent individuals in this city about the year 1815. Shortly after several others were organized—but it was not until the 23rd of December, 1817, when by a union of four or five different churches, forming your present Association, that they began to assume an important attitude and commenced to be extensively useful to our youth."

⁹⁸ McKnight, *Historical Sketch*, p. 27.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

out the next year evidences of success began to appear. The attention of the editor of the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. The next day he wrote the following commendatory editorial:

On the morning of Christmas day a sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Herron, to the Sunday School Association. On this occasion some surprise might have been excited in the minds of those who were ignorant of the extent to which this excellent institution had been carried, in our city. We were indeed agreeably surprised ourselves to find that the number of the pupils so far exceeded our expectations. Several hundred children of both sexes, who had been rescued from idleness and vice, appeared with their teachers on this occasion, and evinced in their orderly deportment, the salutary effects of the benevolence which had been exerted towards them. There is no place, perhaps, where institutions of this kind are more necessary than in this city. The great mass of our population consists of people who are apt to be careless of the minds and morals of their children, and the constant influx of strangers, to which we are subjected, must always have a tendency to unsettle the habits of those who are not early and carefully instructed.¹⁰⁰

The following years witnessed a steady expansion in the number both of schools and of teachers. The initial report of the Sunday School Association, covering the year 1821, showed the organization of 19 schools with an enrollment of 1,513 pupils and 175 teachers.¹⁰¹ The teachers donated their service and manifested remarkable zeal. Two sessions were held each Sabbath day. The morning session extended from 8 to 10:45, when the schools adjourned to permit the teachers and pupils to attend the church of their choice. Shortly after 1:00 P.M. they reconvened and dismissed a few minutes before three, so as not to interfere with the teachers' attendance at the afternoon preaching service. Every other Sunday at sunrise the teachers met for prayer and for the exchange of suggestions for improving their work.¹⁰² Great stress was laid on the

¹⁰⁰ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, December 29, 1818.

¹⁰¹ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, May 9, 1822.

¹⁰² *Pittsburgh Gazette*, December 29, 1818. "As the sun was emerging over the eastern hills, I proceeded from my couch, to contemplate the wonders of creation, and enjoy the sweet zephyrs of the morning. Progressing, my attention was suddenly arrested by a group of interesting

memorization of Scripture, and remarkable results were achieved. The annual report affirmed:

These scholars have committed to memory during the past year, and recited in Sabbath schools, more than 180,000 verses of the Scriptures, divine songs, questions out of the catechisms, &c. Some of them have, since they commenced in our schools, memorized all the four Gospels, and nearly all the New Testament; and have likewise patiently gone through the Bible, committing and answering with much judgment and exactness all the important questions in M'Dowel's Bible Questions, and after diligent researches, have answered some of the most difficult Geographical, Historical and Doctrinal questions in the Old and New Testament.¹⁰³

A surprising feature of this new movement was the organization of a school for colored people in the year 1817. Racial prejudices at that time were strong and white people regarded their dark-skinned brethren with haughty disdain and with but little sympathy for their poverty and hardships. But a devout member of the First Presbyterian Church felt moved of God to attempt to do something for their spiritual uplift. In company with a young friend of like interest he called upon his pastor to seek his advice and possible encouragement. Dr. Herron entered heartily into the suggestion that a Sunday School be organized for colored children.

In a carpenter shop, on the corner of Smithfield Street and Diamond Alley, these two courageous Christians, Mr. James Wilson and Nathaniel Smith, launched their missionary enterprise.¹⁰⁴ Soon the attendance totaled 100 pupils of both sexes and all ages. The only textbook was the Bible, which was used for instruction in reading, spelling and religious faith. The one purpose of the school was character building.

and respectable looking young persons of both sexes who were fast approaching one of our churches. At half past six this interesting Christian company separated, to go to their respective homes, and further prepare for their several duties at 8 o'clock. Now, reader, citizen of Pittsburgh, parent, Christian, who think you, were these people, so early in the house of God, fervent in prayer, zealous in the cause of Christ, and affectionate towards each other? Will you be surprised when I inform you that they were a band of the Sabbath School Teachers, who came to seek preparation for the hallowed labours of the Sabbath?"

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, quoting the annual report for the year 1822.

¹⁰⁴ McKnight, *Historical Sketch*, p. 28.

Needed assistance came from the Second Presbyterian Church in the person of Mr. M. B. Lowrie, a man of rare devotion and consecration, who was to become one of Pittsburgh's outstanding laymen. He soon transferred this school for negroes to more ample quarters in his own school on Hay-Scale Alley. A little later it was taken under the care of the Second Presbyterian Church and permitted to occupy that church's former house of worship on Diamond Alley.¹⁰⁶

The school proved to be a most rewarding piece of missionary work from both a religious and an educational view-point. The annual report of 1822 thrilled with optimism and rejoicing over a very laudable achievement.

When the Directors, the report reads, call to mind the condition of the colored people of this city a few years ago, and compare their then situation with the present, they have cause of thankfulness for the success which has attended their instruction in the Sabbath-school. Then very few were able to read. Now nearly every person of color from three years and upward can read, or is in a state of progression towards that desirable attainment. Then the Holy Sabbath was spent in idleness, dissipation and wickedness; now, in seeking God, in prayer, singing his praise, and learning to read his Word. Many old men and women—some forty, fifty, sixty and seventy years of age,—some on crutches and some wearing spectacles,—who at the commencement could not distinguish one letter from another, in eight, ten, or twelve months, have learned to read quite intelligibly in the Bible.¹⁰⁶

Throughout this period of the early development of the Sabbath School movement the Presbyterian personnel was augmented by the coming to Pittsburgh of a veteran minister who was eager to be of service in every noble cause. The newcomer was Rev. Joseph Patterson. He was a welcome addition to the quartet of Pittsburgh Presbyterian ministers which included Dr. Herron, the pastor of the First Church, Reverend Mr. Hunt in the Second Church, Rev. Joseph Stockton, the principal of the Pittsburgh Academy, and Rev. Robert Patterson, who was devoting his time chiefly to the printing and

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

distribution of religious literature. The elder Patterson was the father of Robert Patterson. He had served a notable pastorate of twenty-seven years in the Montour and Raccoon Churches and in the fall of 1816 had moved to Pittsburgh to spend his remaining years in less strenuous activity.¹⁰⁷

Rev. Joseph Patterson was preëminently a man of prayer and was distinguished for the unaffected simplicity of his Christian character, his ardent piety and his active zeal in the cause of Christ. He and the Rev. Thomas Marquis had been the first missionaries sent by the Synod of Pittsburgh to carry the gospel to the Indians beyond Pittsburgh. Upon their return Dr. McMillan inquired: "How did you get on, Patterson?"

"Well, we started with no provision but corn meal and bear's grease. My stomach soon revolted at this fare; I must either return or get sick. So, as I believe in special prayer, we knelt down. I told the Lord I was willing to serve Him, but He must give me something which I could eat, or I would die." "Did He answer your prayer?" "Yes!" "What did He give you?" "Nothing better to eat." "Then how?" "Why, you see, I laid down in His forest, slept safely under His care, and when I awoke He had given me an appetite so voracious that corn meal and bear's grease tasted *good*, which was as much an answer to prayer as though He had sent me beef and pudding."¹⁰⁸

Coming to Pittsburgh in 1816 he affiliated himself with the First Presbyterian Church, where his Christian testimony and experience were of invaluable assistance to the pastor in developing the spiritual life of the congregation. His especial interest was the Sabbath School Association, which he helped to organize and to which he gave much time and labor in the capacity of president. It was his influence more than any other single factor which directed the Sabbath School Association into home missionary projects and developed the teachers into consecrated workers.¹⁰⁹ He acted as agent for the newly organized Bible Societies of Pittsburgh. During his

¹⁰⁷ Elliott, *The Life of McCurdy*, which includes biographical sketches of other ministers, p. 309.

¹⁰⁸ *Centennial Volume*, p. 193.

¹⁰⁹ "Obituary of Rev. Joseph Patterson," *Christian Herald*, March 17, 1832.

fourteen years' residence in the city he received and distributed 3,920 Bibles and 2,943 New Testaments.

At some seasons of the year, almost every day of the week would find him passing along the shores of our rivers, entering hundreds of boats containing families of emigrants from various parts of the world, kindly inquiring after the temporal and spiritual welfare of these often destitute and afflicted strangers, giving them such advice as to their secular concerns as they needed, and making sure that they were supplied with a copy of the Bible.¹¹⁰

But the shifting loyalties of the Second Presbyterian Church soon compelled a break in the quintet of coöperating Pittsburgh Presbyterian preachers. On July 1, 1818, Mr. Hunt presented his resignation as pastor.¹¹¹ Things had not been progressing well in the Second Church. The indebtedness on the new building proved a source of serious embarrassment, especially during the financial depression which embraced Pittsburgh in 1818—1819 and which forced the suspension of the banks.¹¹² Salary payments to the pastor could not be met.¹¹³ This was a hampering worry to a father of ten children. Dissatisfaction was evident. Mr. Hunt suffered by comparison with Dr. Herron, the mighty pastor of the First Church.

Yet Mr. Hunt had not failed. During the eight and a half years he was in Pittsburgh he had succeeded in building a substantial and commodious house of worship. He had raised the church membership from 30 to 104. He had developed prayer meetings and Sabbath Schools in his church. He had won the confidence of his brethren in Presbytery, who entrusted him with the responsibility of Stated Clerk.¹¹⁴ He left friends in the Second Church who cherished his memory and resented his resignation.¹¹⁵ But a new leader was desired and perhaps

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 294.

¹¹² Wilson, *Standard History of Pittsburgh*, p. 324 ff.

¹¹³ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, pp. 280, 291, which indicate that for the year 1817 the congregation owed Mr. Hunt \$177 and \$286 for the year 1818.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

¹¹⁵ Evidence of this regret appears in an advertisement in the *Pitts-*

necessary to save and develop a debt-burdened congregation. Mr. Hunt left Pittsburgh to join the Ohio Presbytery. Some months later he was called to serve the churches of Two Ridges and Richmond in eastern Ohio. In the former of these two churches he closed his earthly ministry January 14, 1850, in the eighty-first year of his age.¹¹⁶

The congregation of the Second Presbyterian Church welcomed the resignation of Mr. Hunt as an opportunity to secure the services of Dr. Herron. The trustees officially addressed the First Church with the suggestion that the two congregations worship jointly under the leadership of Dr. Herron but maintain separate identity as distinct organizations.¹¹⁷ At a specially called meeting the trustees of the First Church considered the suggestion carefully. The disadvantages were felt to be greater than the possible gains. Separate pastors were regarded as essential to the interests of both congregations, and so the trustees deemed it inexpedient to pursue the proposal further.¹¹⁸ The suggestion was a flattering tribute to

burgh Gazette on three successive issues of October 9, 13 and 23, 1818. The advertisement reads: "For sale or Barter, In the Second Presbyterian Meeting House. The good old leader, who has laboured with and for us many years, and who was popular enough to preach in an old carpenter shop, until he had strengthened the congregation sufficient to enable it to build a regular meeting house, which is now finished—who has borne the heat and burthen of the day, has not been considered worthy to reap the benefit of his labours, and for want of popularity has been discharged, and a man more in favor has appeared in his stead. It is now thought a good time to transfer the right of said property to one of the supporters of this favorite, as the owner never went to preaching to hear popularity explained, but rather the truths of the Gospel. Any person wishing to purchase will apply at the Gazette office."

¹¹⁶ *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, p. 428.

¹¹⁷ Original Minutes of the Trustees, p. 79. The complete communication reads: "The Trustees of the Second Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh, do respectfully represent to the Board of Trustees of the First Congregation, that they think it would contribute to the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, the honour of religion, and the advantage of the Presbyterian interest, to unite both Congregations as a collegiate charge; and while they wish to maintain separate funds and a separate session, do submit this question, 'Shall we unite the pastorate charge of both Congregations?' We are ready to appoint a committee to correspond with the Trustees of the First Congregation on this subject, if they shall think proper to take it up. By order of the Trustees of the Second Presbyterian Congregation. Signed, Isaac Harris, Secy.—Tuesday Evening, 4th Aug. 1818."

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81. The decision reads: "1818, August 20—Resolved, that

the popularity of Dr. Herron as a preacher. It revealed the high esteem in which he was held even by those who were not privileged to share in his pulpit ministrations.

Defeated in this desire to have Dr. Herron as a joint pastor, the members of the church began the diligent search which was to be rewarded finally in the coming to Pittsburgh of another brilliant leader, whose talents rivaled those of the pastor of the First Church. That new leader was the Reverend Elisha P. Swift, then a young man with but two years of ministerial experience. He, however, was not the initial choice of the congregation. On October 9, of the year Mr. Hunt resigned, the church presented to Presbytery a call for the pastoral service of Reverend Thomas Hoge, then a member of the Ohio Presbytery.¹¹⁹ After some deliberation he declined this invitation to the pastorate of the Second Church. Various supplies and prospective candidates were then heard as the pastorless interval lengthened month by month and the resources of the organization dwindled and the congregation scattered due to the lack of pastoral oversight.

But a feeble ray of hope shone through the clouds of discouragement when on the first Sabbath of July, 1819, Reverend E. P. Swift preached both morning and evening.¹²⁰ He came at the invitation of the officers of the church who had retained favorable impressions of his former visit to Pittsburgh two years previously, when he had spoken as the financial agent of the American Board of Missions. His sermons stirred the congregation with enthusiasm and resulted in a request that he remain throughout the entire month of July and serve as a supply pastor.¹²¹ All uncertainty vanished. A

although this board entertain the most lively solicitude for the welfare and prosperity of the Second Presbyterian Congregation, and the most cordial respect for its board of trustees; yet considering the many, and, in the opinion of this board, the insurmountable objections which would arise against an union of the two congregations under one pastoral charge, they deem it inexpedient to enter into an investigation of the question submitted to them by the Board of Trustees of the Second Presbyterian congregation."

¹¹⁹ *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 295.

¹²⁰ Letter of Reverend E. P. Swift written to his wife and dated July 6, 1819.

¹²¹ E. P. Swift, "The Record of a Zealous Life," *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 214. Pittsburgh, 1931. Manu-

unanimous call for his services was presented to Presbytery and the notable ministry of Dr. Swift in Pittsburgh began officially with his formal installation on the first Wednesday of November of that year.¹²²

script of this biography was written in 1872 by E. P. Swift's son, but had not been printed previously.

¹²² *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 303.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONSTRUCTIVE LABORS OF DR. SWIFT

Dr. Swift was the second of the two coöperating ecclesiastical giants who made Presbyterianism a creative force in the religious and cultural life of Pittsburgh. He was an able co-laborer with Dr. Herron and possessed unique gifts which supplemented rather than duplicated the distinctive abilities of the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. These two dominant clergymen worked together in perfect harmony and gave Pittsburgh a spiritual leadership that was felt not only throughout the developing city but in the entire work of the denomination at home and abroad. The establishment of the Western Theological Seminary and the creation of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions were largely the results of their outstanding services. To that latter cause at least Dr. Swift made the greatest contribution of initiative and energy. He is the recognized founder of the Board which is now in its second century of missionary progress.¹

When Elisha Pope Swift accepted the call of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, he was comparatively inexperienced in the pastorate. Though he was twenty-seven years of age his only previous charge had been at Dover, Delaware, where he had served less than a year. Born in Williamstown, Massachusetts, August 12, 1792, his early education was hampered by the death of his father, the Reverend Seth Swift.² The diversified occupations of clerk, printer, and teacher brought him to self-support and maturity while he

¹ James Allison, "Obituary of Dr. Swift," *The Presbyterian Banner*, April 12, 1865. Dr. Allison, the editor of the *Banner*, wrote: "While the Presbyterian Church lasts, as long as a history of Foreign Missions remains, the name of Elisha P. Swift will be remembered. He was at all times ready to advocate with wonderful power every good cause, but the very mention of Foreign Missions fired his soul with quenchless ardor and made his voice the sound of a trumpet calling to conflict and victory."

² Ed. P. Swift, "The Record of a Zealous Life," *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 214.

pondered the problem of his life work and prepared for college. His student days in Williams College were made memorable by his public confession of faith and his decision to enter the Christian ministry. Though the influence of French infidelity was sadly prevalent in the avowed unbelief and skepticism of the majority of his fellow students, the serious-minded Swift responded to the earnest preaching of the Reverend Mr. Nott, who at that time was leading a religious revival in the community and college.³ Ridicule merely strengthened his determination and spurred him to more careful study of the underlying convictions of the Christian faith. Eagerly he welcomed an opportunity to enter the newly founded theological seminary at Princeton, from which he graduated in 1816.

While a student in that institution he acquired that deep interest in missions which was to remain the ruling passion of his life. He joined a missionary society, "The Society of Inquiry," and served as secretary. Diligently he corresponded with Judson, Morrison, and other missionaries, seeking from them accurate information of missionary progress.⁴ His discussions with his fellow students centered around such practical problems as these: "In the present destitute situation of some parts of our own country would it be expedient to send missionaries to foreign lands?" "Is it not a duty of graduates of the Seminary to spend one or two years in missionary labor?" "Is it the duty of a missionary to go into a country to preach the gospel where from the existing laws and regulations or from any other cause he will be in imminent danger of losing his life?" "Ought ordained missionaries to do anything but preach?"⁵

This earnest study and deep interest manifested a natural fruitage in Mr. Swift's prayerful determination to give his life to missionary service either at home or abroad. During

³ Biographical letter of E. P. Swift addressed to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and dated 1817, and printed in *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 166 f.

⁴ Robert E. Speer, "Elisha P. Swift," an address delivered in Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh at the unveiling of a tablet in memory of Dr. Swift, *Centennial of the Western Missionary Society*, p. 165.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165. Dr. Speer quotes from the Minutes of that society.

his senior year in Princeton he offered himself to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and sought appointment to some distant needy field. The earnestness and humility of that sacrificial decision is reflected in the following abstract from the letter of application which he addressed to that body:

I trust I have been aware of the danger of being actuated by motives, unsanctified in their nature, and inadequate to support me under those disappointments and trials incident to a Missionary life. To avoid these I have endeavored to examine the true state of my heart, the qualifications I possess, and the true reasons of my wishing to engage in so awfully responsible an undertaking. I have sought to be sensible of the sacrifices and exigencies incident to the office I seek; the deep interest of the Church in regard to the disposal of her funds, and the unhappy effect which the failures or improper conduct of Missionaries must have upon the great and glorious cause in which you are engaged; and above all, I have sought to commit my way unto the Lord, and entreated him to direct my path. I know that if I run where I am not sent, or, go uncalled, I can be of little use, and perhaps of much injury to the interests of religion among the unhappy and dying heathen. And although I think it is my ardent desire to participate in the sacrifices and sufferings as well as the pleasures of those who, under your direction, are sent to "proclaim liberty to the captives," and point those who are sitting "in the valley and shadow of death" to the Star of Bethlehem, the promised ransom, yet I wish not to occupy the place of one who might be judged better qualified than myself.⁶

Swift's application was gratefully accepted, but owing to the meager financial resources of that Board of Commissioners a temporary delay was necessary. Throughout the summer following his graduation from Princeton he served as traveling agent of the Board, traversing New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, both preaching to the frontier settlements and raising funds for the missionary cause. In one week he collected more than \$400.⁷ His success as a financial agent may

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 166-170, where Dr. Speer quotes the letter in full. The original is in the possession of Dr. Swift's granddaughter, Mrs. C. W. Graves, of Logansport, Indiana.

⁷ Letter of E. P. Swift to his future wife, dated September 10, 1816.

have tempted the officers of the Board to delay his mission to the foreign field.⁸ He grew impatient and hastened to Boston to plead his speedy embarkation as a missionary.⁹

The expectation that he would soon sail occasioned much misgiving in the heart of his widowed mother, causing him to write to his betrothed: "The cheerful smile which so often attended the first hours of my arrival at the mansion of my affectionate mama begins gradually to decline and give place to the gloomy shadows of approaching sorrow. These circumstances often affect though they do not discourage me."¹⁰ He was determined to go. He urged the talented girl to whom he had pledged his heart to promise to accompany him to the foreign field. She was hesitant to commit herself, pleading she was not certain that it was God's will. "No, beloved Eliza," he argued, "we must dare to go when we are not certain if we design to trust in the Lord and exercise that lecturing and confident faith in Christ which trusts in his promises nor looks for a special revelation respecting duty."¹¹

This hesitancy was not due to any unwillingness on her part to face the rigors of life among the heathen, but was the natural solicitude of a devoted daughter for an afflicted mother. Finally both mother and daughter acquiesced in the proposal of the enthusiastic missionary, causing Swift to look forward with joyous anticipations to that happy day when he and his bride would soon sail as ambassadors of Christ. But a severe relapse almost resulted in the death of Swift's future mother-in-law, necessitating further postponement of the missionary venture.

As the months passed and the prospect of early improvement in her health grew fainter, Mr. Swift himself was less inclined to urge his beloved to shirk her family responsibility and ac-

Typed copy is in possession of the writer. The original is in possession of Dr. Swift's great-granddaughter, Miss Naomi Wright, of Lock Haven, Pa.

⁸ Swift, "The Record of a Zealous Life," *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 218.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹⁰ Letter of Swift to Miss E. D. Beach (his future wife), dated September 10, 1816. Typed copy in possession of the writer.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

company him to the mission field. He felt uncertain what should be his own course of action. In a long letter to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions he confessed this uncertainty occasioned by Mrs. Beach's illness, and suggested several possible courses of duty and asked for guidance, all the while pledging his willingness to follow the wisdom of the Board.¹² "I can hardly consent," he wrote, "to take from the house of sorrow and the bedside of long protracted sickness when I know not what will be the consequence to her and know indeed what will be said by others if I take, in such circumstances against the opinion of friends, the only comfort and solace of a distressed and widowed mother until I see some prospect of her being better and able to sustain the stroke."¹³

He suggested that he be ordained and go alone as a missionary among the American Indians or, as he wrote, "continue as a stated agent for the society in this country or in any other service with the expectation that, if circumstances should hereafter permit, I should go forth to a foreign clime."¹⁴ "But if the commissioners deemed it wise and necessary I would be ready to be ordained and go out with the missionaries who are soon to sail for India."¹⁵

The Commissioners, after giving anxious consideration for the health of the mother of Mr. Swift's betrothed, and perhaps with pleasing remembrance of his success as a financial agent, accepted the suggestion that Mr. Swift be ordained and continue to serve in the capacity of financial agent. Accordingly, on September 3, 1817, he was ordained in the old Park Street Church of Boston with Dr. Lyman Beecher preaching the sermon.¹⁶ Soon after he married his betrothed, Miss Eliza D.

¹² Letter of E. P. Swift addressed to American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Original is in possession of Miss Naomi Wright. The writer has a personally typed copy.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Allison, "Obituary of Dr. Swift," *Presbyterian Banner*, April 12, 1865.

Beach, and set forth on another year of itinerating service in the interest of the American Board.¹⁷

A number of the letters which he wrote to his wife during the months of long absence on extended tours have been preserved.¹⁸ These letters record many interesting comments on the crude immorality and the neglected religious conditions throughout the western frontier, as he traveled through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia. "There is indeed in this western country," he wrote, "a vast population and a large portion of its consists of those who have little of the form of Christian piety or morality. It would shock the feelings of many in our eastern states to hear and to see the extent of impiety. . . . The number of the pious is generally small and there is no adequate means of supporting the number of missionaries who would be requisite to instruct the people."¹⁹

This westward tour brought him to Pittsburgh the latter part of December, 1817, where he presented the missionary cause in both Presbyterian Churches and left the deep impression which resulted, nineteen months later, in an invitation to be heard by the Second Church as a possible pastor. On this same tour he received several opportunities to settle in pastorates in Kentucky and Virginia, but the continued sickness of his wife's mother prompted him to decline the proffered calls.²⁰ The strain of travel was greater than his own health could withstand and he deemed it expedient to terminate his itinerating labors in the interest of the Board. He returned east to serve for a time as financial agent for Princeton Theological Seminary and then to settle for a year as pastor of the church in Dover, Delaware.²¹

But the missionary enthusiasm which stirred him to volunteer for foreign service never faded from his heart and flamed

¹⁷ Swift, "Record of a Zealous Life," *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 217 f.

¹⁸ The writer has typed copies of three of these letters which bear the dates: Jan. 13, 1818; Jan. 24; Feb. 2nd.

¹⁹ Letter of Swift to his wife, January 13, 1818.

²⁰ Letters of Swift to his wife, January 24 and February 2.

²¹ Swift, "Record of a Zealous Life," *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 218.

forth as a burning passion during his subsequent pastorate in Pittsburgh. His own hopes and plans checked by what seemed the regrettable ill-health of his wife's mother, he was destined to be used by God in the more strategic task of arousing his entire denomination to a consciousness of responsibility for the world-wide proclamation of the gospel. As he confided to his wife in a letter written toward the close of his western missionary tour: "It is true indeed that the dispensations of Providence have often seemed to thwart my plans and at times to shed no little gloom upon my path. But I am learning to acquiesce in those dispensations whose mystery I cannot unravel. I see in the movements of the generations of men a depth inscrutable to mortals. I see a system of government that far transcends my vision and at the feet of the King of Kings I am taught that it is not given to man to scan the ways of his Creator. It is not our duty to borrow sorrow from the future or hang around the sepulchres of departed hopes."²² How gloriously that trust in God's overruling providence was to be vindicated in the subsequent career of the missionary apostle who, though he could not go himself, was used of God to send hundreds of others!

Upon his arrival in Pittsburgh to begin his pastorate in the Second Presbyterian Church, Swift found abundant opportunity to manifest the facility in finance which he had so successfully demonstrated throughout his previous service as financial agent for the American Board of Foreign Missions. Pittsburgh at that time was in the midst of monetary difficulties that bordered on a panic. The boom years, stimulated by the war of 1812-1814, had resulted in a rapid expansion of Pittsburgh's population and industries. The thriving borough had grown into the size and dignity of the City of Pittsburgh amid the enthusiasm and prosperity of 1816. Manufactured products reached the surprising total of \$2,617,833 during the year 1815 and gave employment to 1,960 people.

But lean years soon followed. By 1819 only 672 workers could find employment and the total volume of manufactured

²² Letter of Swift to his wife, January 13, 1818.

products did not exceed \$832,000, a decrease of more than two-thirds within four years.²³ The decline continued until in "1821 Pittsburgh witnessed the greatest business depression this community was ever called upon to endure."²⁴ Business was almost at a standstill. What little money was available was demanded by Eastern creditors or hoarded in terror. Debts and bankruptcy were everywhere.

It was inevitable that the finances of the churches would be affected similarly. The members of the Second Presbyterian Church had built a pretentious house of worship in the midst of the optimism and prosperity of 1814. It was beyond the resources of a small membership but erected in the confidence that an expanding city and congregation would justify it. The subsequent decades vindicated that faith, although the years that immediately followed tested it severely and subjected it to near-sighted censure.

When Mr. Swift arrived in 1819 the debt-harassed membership of eighty-eight people could promise him a salary of not more than \$600 a year. Accumulated obligations and unpaid building costs reached an indebtedness of \$10,000.²⁵ Yet the new pastor was not discouraged. In a letter to his wife he painted a cheerful picture, designed perhaps to enthuse her with the prospects of an optimistic future. "The two Presbyterian Churches in Pittsburgh are larger than can be found in any country congregations and nearly as large as the Brick Church in New York. They are both of brick, well finished and painted in a neat and pleasing style. The Second Church is a better building than the First, containing 100 pews on the main floor and several in the galleries and is a neat spacious church. The congregation, while vacant, lost several of its members but it still contains about 50 or 60 families. The people in general are not perhaps as fashionable as in Philadelphia. . . . The most wealthy part of the Presbyterians and

²³ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 11, 1820, which gives these comparative figures.

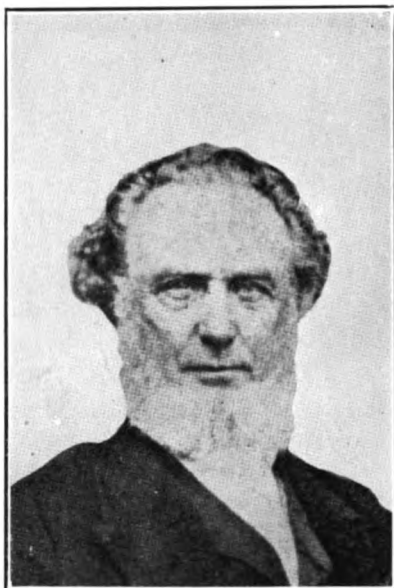
²⁴ Erasmus Wilson, *Standard History of Pittsburgh*, p. 221.

²⁵ E. P. Swift, "A Discourse on the Fortieth Anniversary," p. 22, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

DISTINGUISHED PASTORS OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

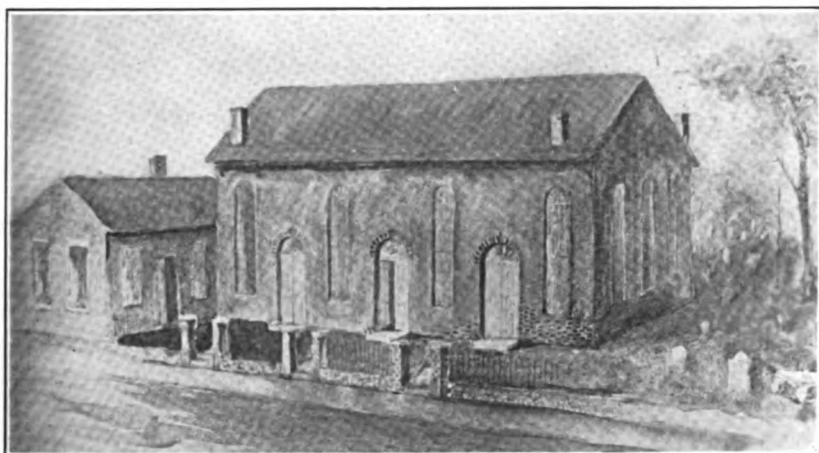


REV. ELISHA P. SWIFT, D.D.
Third Pastor, 1819-1833



REV. J. W. BLYTHE
Fourth Pastor, 1833-1836

Courtesy Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh



Courtesy Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

FIRST BUILDING OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, DIAMOND CHURCH
In use from 1814-1844



the most fashionable are now in the First Church, but there are several in the Second who are very rich and respectable."²⁶

Those whom he refers to as "very rich" may have had considerable property and they may have held title to the inactive manufacturing plants, but their current cash was being taken by creditors, leaving but very little to meet their church pledges. Loyal to the congregation rallied around their new leader, but the financial condition of the city and church sank steadily throughout the years of depression. Finally only seven members of the congregation remained solvent.²⁷ The situation became desperate. Those to whom the church owed money attempted to force payment. They levied their claims against the property. The sheriff advertised the sale of the building and the date was fixed for public auction.²⁸

In that emergency the pastor called together the few solvent members of the church. They in turn invited the church's creditors to meet with them for a frank discussion of the wisdom of canceling a reasonable portion of their claims against the church property. In consideration of the depressed condition of the church and the fact that the panic had given money a purchasing power far greater than when the debt was contracted, the creditors unanimously agreed to accept fifty cents on the dollar. To raise the remaining money the members were challenged to make gifts of real sacrifice in a consecrated effort to save the church edifice. To the amazement of the community the money was raised and paid.

Gladly the creditors took fifty cents on the dollar as full payment and gave receipts covering the complete amount. The suit entered before the sheriff was withdrawn, the building was saved and the reputation of the members enhanced by their heroic sacrifice.²⁹ Other obligations at the bank remained. Current expenses could not always be met, but the

²⁶ Letter of Reverend E. P. Swift written from Pittsburgh to his wife and dated July 6, 1819.

²⁷ "Early History of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh," *The Presbyterian Advocate*, April 3, 1844, p. 3.

²⁸ W. D. Howard, "A Discourse Commemorative of the Life and Labors of Reverend E. P. Swift," p. 38, printed in *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

²⁹ *The Presbyterian Advocate*, April 3, 1844, p. 3.

financial condition of the members improved with the return of prosperity in 1825 so that, when Dr. Swift closed his pastorate in 1833, only a comparatively small portion of the crushing debt of \$10,000 remained.³⁰

This severe financial depression had a similarly adverse effect upon the First Presbyterian Church, although that organization was more fortunate in having no hampering indebtedness. The prosperity of 1815 had been wisely capitalized by a shrewd board of trustees led by the practically minded pastor, Dr. Herron. Contributions were received in advance for enlarging the building. This remodeling was completed in 1816, leaving in the treasury an unexpended balance of \$1,905.³¹ This surplus was then used to modernize the pulpit and build a conference room for the Session.³²

The first few years of the depression passed without embarrassment to the First Church. But in 1820 the reduced income of the membership was reflected in the action of the trustees lowering the rental cost of the pews in the gallery.³³ The following year Dr. Herron's annual salary was reduced from \$1,500 to \$1,200, and the pastor refunded \$100 to help meet accumulating bills.³⁴ The passing months witnessed a formerly prosperous congregation unable to meet current obligations which by April 1, 1823, had reached a total of \$1,752. Of that amount \$1,579 was due the pastor, although his promised salary was only \$1,500 a year.³⁵ The following year the financial clouds were lifted and the debt reduced to \$1,523. This comparatively small debt gradually disappeared in the tide of prosperity which had returned throughout the city.³⁶

The financial embarrassment which confronted Dr. Swift during the opening years of his Pittsburgh pastorate, and which tested so severely his resourcefulness as a leader, may have been a blessing in disguise. It may have been a helpful exter-

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Original Minutes of the Trustees, p. 63. February 20, 1817.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 73. March 31, 1818.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

nal stimulus in developing the unity of purpose and effort which marked the religious life of that expanding congregation. Source material for those years is extremely limited since the disastrous fire of 1845 destroyed all the previous trustee and sessional records. There may have been disturbing difficulties which have not been uncovered by the historian. Yet the recorded conversations with intimate ministerial friends and the published anniversary addresses and reminiscences all reveal enviable ecclesiastical peace and harmony.

In this respect Swift was more fortunate than his co-laborer in the First Church. In coming to his Pittsburgh pastorate he was entering into a heritage that appeared more spiritual than that which had been Dr. Herron's experience some eight years earlier. The congregation in the Second Church originally was composed of a crusading few who demanded a sterner standard of morality than that which had been tolerated by the Reverend Robert Steele in the First Church. The struggles and slow growth during the subsequent decade were effective barriers to any who might desire to join a church crowned with social prestige. The ideals of the older members were adopted by those who accepted invitations to join during the ministry of Mr. Hunt. Moreover, the spiritual change in the First Church, produced by the preaching of Dr. Herron, exerted a beneficial effect upon Presbyterians in the adjoining congregation.

As a result, when Dr. Swift arrived he inherited a small but self-disciplined congregation who welcomed a man of his outstanding piety and uncompromising devotion to truth and duty. "The membership," he wrote in 1819, "contains many pious and friendly people who received me with greatest affection. In this and the other Presbyterian Church almost all kinds of benevolent societies may be found, and praying societies. Our young men go out and hold meetings for prayer and reading in the alleys and suburbs of the city. The females of the two churches have also a general praying society and indeed meetings of some kind are held almost every evening in the week."³⁷

³⁷ Letter of E. P. Swift to his wife, dated July 6, 1819.

To this rather diverse work of a small church Dr. Swift devoted himself diligently. He held meetings for special groups in his church almost nightly.³⁸ The Sabbath School with its various mission schools found in him a zealous leader and a capable educator. For the increased efficiency of these schools he prepared and published, in 1821, "The Sacred Manual," which contained a series of questions and answers to many historical and doctrinal problems arising out of a study of the Bible. It remained in wide circulation throughout Western Pennsylvania for many years and formed a popular and informing summary of Scriptural truth.³⁹

He was tireless in zeal and indefatigable in his ministerial labors. He allowed himself only five hours of sleep, spending from twelve to fourteen hours daily in study and devotion, interspersed with several hours in family visitation.⁴⁰ He "preached more sermons and delivered more addresses for the Bible, Missionary, and Tract Societies than any other minister who ever lived in Pittsburgh."⁴¹ Long and often he withdrew to private prayer and devotion. Four times a day he sought the solitude of his little attic room where he would pour out his soul in intercessory prayer. For this purpose he kept a book open before him so that he might record the names of people and the causes which he was carrying upon his heart and for which he sought Divine blessing.⁴²

His public prayers formed a most effective part of his pulpit ministry, superior perhaps even to his well prepared sermons. "Such fluency of utterance, comprehensiveness of petition, expressiveness of words, and fervor of feeling, the transient worshiper could never expect to hear again."⁴³ The Synod of Pittsburgh "never had his equal in prayer—so solemn, so suit-

³⁸ W. D. Howard, "Discourses Commemorative of the Life and Labors of Reverend Swift," 1865, p. 37, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39. The complete title is "The Sacred Manual, Containing a Series of Questions, Historical, Doctrinal and Perceptive on the Sacred Scriptures."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴¹ Allison, "Obituary of Dr. Swift," *Presbyterian Banner*, April 12, 1865.

⁴² R. E. Speer, "Elisha P. Swift," p. 179, *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*.

⁴³ E. E. Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 24.

able, such absence of repetition, his expressions so grand, so simple, so perfectly unique." "If," said a visiting Episcopal Bishop, "ministers all prayed like that, our liturgy would be laid aside."⁴⁴

But Dr. Swift was no mystic depending for his power upon only prayer and meditation. He was a diligent, consistent student who read widely and held himself to strict hours of study. In that respect he was the antithesis of Dr. Herron, who was often too busy to study and admittedly a dull preacher and guilty of formalism and repetition.⁴⁵ Though Dr. Swift was gifted in extemporaneous speaking and delivered many of his most effective addresses without any opportunity for formal preparation, he never permitted himself to rely upon that welcome ability. His sermons, especially for the morning service, were wrought out upon the anvil of painstaking labor. "From the commencement of his ministry," to quote the testimony of his son, "it was the habit of Elisha P. Swift to preach without reading. He did not suffer himself to use even the smallest scrap of paper in the pulpit. He commenced his preparation on Thursday and continued to write with more or less of intermission until three or four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, when the labor of fixing the subject in his mind was begun and continued until the hour of Sabbath morning service."⁴⁶

So absorbed did he become in his study that he often forgot the hour of morning worship until his waiting congregation would send for him. This absorption in study and meditation was the occasion of several amusing anecdotes which cluster around his memory. One day he was journeying on horseback to attend a meeting of Presbytery at one of the rural churches. To his surprise an elder, riding in the opposite direction, stopped, turned around his horse, and informed the distinguished preacher that he had already ridden two miles past the church. Upon arriving at the church his fellow presbyters greeted him with laughter. "Ah," he replied innocently,

⁴⁴ Allison, *Presbyterian Banner*, April 12, 1868.

⁴⁵ *Centennial Volume*, pp. 184, 186. C. E. Macartney, *Right Here in Pittsburgh*, p. 67 (Pittsburgh, 1937).

⁴⁶ E. E. Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 25.

"really the horse might have stopped when he came to his companions." "So the horse tried to do," exclaimed one of the ministers, "but you spurred him on." "Indeed," said Dr. Swift, "what could I have been thinking about!"⁴⁷

His power as a preacher lay primarily in the vigor of his thought, the fervency of his earnestness, the broad range of his illustrations and the choice elegance of his expressions. "He was Websterian in the massiveness of his thoughts, in the sublimity of his conceptions and in the strength and grandeur of his diction. Careless of all the graces of style and elocution, he, nevertheless, wielded the English language as only a master can."⁴⁸ He was blessed with a grandeur of presence that added effectiveness to his utterance and captured the attention of the hearer. "He was tall, straight and slender and majestic in appearance. His head was of unusual size and his forehead broad, but his eye was the portion of his countenance which would most impress the stranger. It was of a peculiar size and penetration and when fixed upon the hearer, would give to some of his searching addresses, an almost irresistible power."⁴⁹

Even the irreligious listener felt this potency of his person. One Sabbath morning a group of actors visited Pittsburgh. They had heard that the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church was reputed to be the outstanding preacher in the city. Out of curiosity they determined to hear him. Returning to the hotel after the service they discussed him in the presence of a few other guests. "I would give a thousand dollars," said one of the company, "if I could move upon the stage as he walks up that aisle." "That voice," said another actor, "would persuade me to be a Christian if I heard it long." "His large full eyes," said a third member of the party, "frightened but fascinated me. I saw nothing but his eyes; he is all eye."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Lea, "Reminiscences of Dr. E. P. Swift," *Presbyterian Banner*, April 15, 1868.

⁴⁸ S. J. Wilson, Funeral Address for Dr. Swift, p. 10. Printed in *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

⁴⁹ E. E. Swift, *History of First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 25.

⁵⁰ Lea, "Reminiscences of Dr. Swift," *Presbyterian Banner*, April 1, 1868.

Dr. Swift's diligent scholarship and interest in education were of distinctive service both to the newly organized Western University of Pennsylvania and later to the Western Theological Seminary. When in 1822 the limited curriculum of the Pittsburgh Academy proved inadequate to meet the needs of a developing city of more than 7,248, the Western University of Pennsylvania was launched through the coöperative zeal of a far-sighted group of community leaders. The new institution had been chartered by the State Legislature in 1819, but three years of effort were necessary to finance the experimental undertaking and arrange the curriculum and select the faculty.⁵¹

The intellectual strength of the Pittsburgh ministers of that period found complimentary recognition in the first faculty selected for the nascent University. Five men were chosen to serve as professors. All were pastors, in active service, of prominent Pittsburgh churches.

The principal, Reverend Robert Bruce, D.D., taught Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and Mathematics. He was for many years pastor of the Associate Presbyterian Church (now the First United Presbyterian). Reverend Elisha P. Swift, D.D., pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, was professor of Moral Science and the Evidences of Christianity. Reverend John Black, D.D., pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, occupied the chair of Ancient Languages and Classical Literature. Reverend Joseph McElroy, pastor of the Associate Reformed Church, a man of remarkable eloquence and power, taught Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. Thus these four clerical professors were all pastors of churches within the Presbyterian family.⁵²

The only non-Presbyterian was Reverend Charles B. McGuire, the founder of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the first Roman Catholic priest permanently located in Pittsburgh. Though a Romanist, he was a warm personal friend of his Presbyterian colleagues and served as professor of Modern Languages and

⁵¹ A. L. Starrett, *Through One Hundred and Fifty Years, The University of Pittsburgh*, p. 70 (Pittsburgh, 1937).

⁵² "Western University of Pennsylvania Organized," article in *Pittsburgh Recorder*, May 16, 1822.

Universal Grammar.⁵³ Quite appropriately, the installation services of the principal and faculty were held in the First Presbyterian Church, whose pastor, the Reverend Francis Heron, was a member of the Board of Trustees, in which capacity he contributed effectively of his time and wisdom for many years.⁵⁴ Under the tutelage of these five scholarly and broad-minded clergymen the new University of Western Pennsylvania began its splendid career of education and character building.

The first graduating class, the class of 1823, was small in number, just three men, all future ministers of the Presbyterian family.⁵⁵ As its first finished product this University, which may justly be regarded as the child of Presbyterian consecration and persistence, thus gave to its Presbyterian forebears a grateful contribution to the continued work of the Presbyterian ministry.

Throughout how many years Dr. Swift continued his teaching at the University cannot be determined from available sources of information. He was on the faculty at least as late as the spring of 1827. The evidence for that statement is the oldest diploma which has survived the vicissitudes of time, a diploma granted to John McMaster in 1827. The diploma is signed by the entire teaching staff and includes the signatures of Professors Bruce, Black, Swift, Maguire and Hopkins.⁵⁶

In that year Dr. Swift was called to serve in a new educational responsibility which was closer to his heart than even the University with its faculty of ministerial professors. He was asked to teach in the Western Theological Seminary, and he could not and would not refuse. The opening of this infant institution was the realization of a dream he had cherished for several years and for which he had struggled diligently. He was one of the scholarly seers who had visualized the need

⁵³ *University of Pittsburgh, 125th Anniversary Celebration*, "Historical Address" by W. J. Holland, p. 113 (Pittsburgh, 1912).

⁵⁴ "Western University of Pennsylvania," article in *Pittsburgh Recorder*, May 16, 1822.

⁵⁵ S. B. McCormick, *History of Western University of Pennsylvania*, p. 9 (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1908).

⁵⁶ Starrett, *Through One Hundred and Fifty Years*, p. 87.

of a well equipped training school for Presbyterian ministers in the heart of the rapidly expanding western country.⁵⁷ The General Assembly elected him to serve with twenty-nine other directors in the task of establishing a "Theological Seminary in the West," to be styled "The Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States." He was also one of the five ministers appointed to raise funds for this new Seminary.⁵⁸ At the first meeting of the Board of Directors he was chosen its secretary and thus began that long official connection with the Seminary which covered forty years of distinguished service in the varied capacities of professor, president, director, trustee, and financial agent.⁵⁹

Subsequently another and more vital responsibility was laid upon him. The professor, elected by the General Assembly to serve as the entire faculty, was Reverend Jacob J. Janeway, of Philadelphia.⁶⁰ He felt he could not accept. In this emergency the Board of Directors turned for temporary help to two of its own members, Reverend E. P. Swift, the scholarly pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, and Reverend Joseph Stockton, who had served as principal of the Pittsburgh Academy. The former was to give instruction in Theology and the latter in Hebrew.⁶¹ The inability of Mr. Stockton to respond until the following summer placed the entire teaching task upon Dr. Swift. He accepted the heavy load.

On November 16, 1827, the nascent Seminary opened its doors in a temporary home in the Sunday School room of the First Presbyterian Church. Four students formed the first class and received instruction from Dr. Swift throughout the entire term, extending from November 7 to April 3, 1828.⁶² During the summer session Mr. Stockton was in charge, while Mr. Swift journeyed extensively in search of funds for the Seminary. Relief from the teaching load was found in the

⁵⁷ Howard, "Life and Labors of E. P. Swift," p. 43, included in *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

⁵⁸ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, June 14, 1825.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, August 9, 1825.

⁶⁰ *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1827*, p. 130.

⁶¹ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, October 30, 1827.

⁶² James Brownson, "A History of the Western Theological Seminary," *Presbyterian Centennial Convention*, p. 137.

reconsidered decision of Dr. Janeway to accept the chair to which he had been elected by the General Assembly. Very appropriately Dr. Swift was chosen to preach the sermon at the inauguration service of the new professor on October 16, 1828.

His discourse was a thoughtful exposition of "The Duties and Responsibilities of the Professorial Office in Theological Seminaries." It was the expression of a mind that perceived the absolute necessity of broad scholarship in the training of men who were to expound and defend a reasoned and intelligent Christian faith. Nay more, it was the uncompromising enunciation of the high ideals that were motivating the zeal of the noble men who were laying broad foundations for the theological Seminary of the West. It was a fervent plea to the Church to furnish the necessary support to bring those ideals to practical fruition in the faculty and student body of a mighty institution.⁶³ Reaching a stirring oratorical climax he exclaimed:

If there ever was a cause for which it becomes us to be active and liberal and united; if there ever was one which earnestly addressed our feelings as Christian patriots, our denominational loyalty as Presbyterians and our compassion as Christians, surely this is the one. . . . We shall leave behind us on yonder hill already designated as the mount of Sacred Science and of Prayer an institution which shall there, for revolving ages, continue to bless the unborn generations of our children with the word of life; an institution whose massy structure, while it continues, as long as suns rise and set, to glitter in the earliest rays of nature's cloudless day, shall designate to the passing stranger, a Spiritual Fountain, whose beams of heavenly truth, go forth to the rising, and backward to the setting sun, diffusing the knowledge of the Son of Righteousness to the ends of the earth.⁶⁴

The story of the united and untiring labors of Dr. Swift and Dr. Herron in struggling to give reality to that inspiring vision is reserved for narration in a later chapter.

⁶³ Swift, "A Sermon Delivered at the Inauguration of the Reverend J. J. Janeway," pp. 1-39. Published originally in 1828 and included in *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38 f.

Dr. Swift's broad interest in education found further expression in his efforts to foster a religious periodical. He perceived the educational value of the press and sought to capitalize its possibilities for the causes that lay close to his heart. He was not the pioneer in this field, as others had blazed a trail even in Western Pennsylvania. Yet it was his resourceful energy, more than any other single factor, which gave to Pittsburgh the religious weekly which still serves the church in unbroken succession.⁶⁵

As early as 1802 the Synod had appointed twelve of its members to establish and edit a monthly magazine which would carry spiritual stimulation to the settlers scattered over the western frontier. They succeeded in that task for only a few years and published in Washington, Pa., *The Western Missionary Magazine*.⁶⁶

The second venture was the personal contribution of Reverend John Andrews, who began in 1814 the publication of *The Weekly Recorder*. It was printed in Chillicothe, Ohio, and aimed to develop a circulation throughout the entire region west of the mountains. The prospectus indicated a broad scope covering the three general heads of "Theology, Literature and National Affairs."⁶⁷ Seven years of labor brought very little response and much discouragement to the editor, who then discontinued his venture, "due to the general pressure of the times, the depreciation of western bank paper and other causes."⁶⁸ The last issue was dated October 6, 1821. Mr. Andrews moved to Pittsburgh seeking employment.

The presence in Pittsburgh of this unemployed editor appeared to the resourceful Dr. Swift as a providential opportunity to promote a religious periodical under the direction of

⁶⁵ Throughout the years it has continued to be published in Pittsburgh under the successive names, *Pittsburgh Recorder*, *The Spectator*, *Pittsburgh Christian Herald* and *Western Missionary Reporter*, *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, *Presbyterian Banner and Advocate*, and the *Presbyterian Banner*. Publication of the *Banner* was discontinued in 1937.

⁶⁶ Each issue included about forty pages and sold for fourteen cents. The first number was dated March, 1803. Issues of March, 1803, to January, 1804, inclusive, are bound together as one volume and preserved in the Library of the Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh.

⁶⁷ *The Weekly Recorder*, March 21, 1814.

⁶⁸ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, January 25, 1822.

Synod. At his suggestion Synod appointed a committee "to inquire into the expediency of establishing a periodical publication of religious intelligence under the sanction and patronage of this Synod designed to disseminate religious information to the churches under our care."⁶⁹ The committee was composed of the Reverend Messrs. Elisha P. Swift, Elisha Macurdy, Francis Herron, William Speer and Thomas E. Hughes. The favorable report of this committee was adopted after considerable discussion and resulting amendment.

The new paper bore the title *Pittsburgh Recorder* and appeared in its first issue dated January 25, 1822, with the Rev. John Andrew as the editor. "The *Pittsburgh Recorder*," the editor explained in this introductory number, "is intended for the diffusion, not only of religious, but every other kind of useful information. Its principal design is the spread of intelligence relative to the Kingdom of God—the rise, progress and happy fruits of the revival of religion, the institution, operations, contributions and success of benevolent societies and the blessed effects of the Gospel, as exhibited in the holy lives and triumphant deaths of the humble disciples of Christ."⁷⁰

Launched with these noble objectives and undertaken upon the unanimous recommendation of the Synod of Pittsburgh, the new paper attempted a service that was not widely appreciated nor desired. The annual subscription price of \$2.00 made it appear as too costly a luxury for the average home, especially where reading habits had not been cultivated. Limited circulation and financial difficulties hampered the editor. Loyal Dr. Swift supported the paper and pleaded with his ministerial brethren to foster greater interest throughout their congregations. In the issue of December 20, 1822, he published this personal appeal which was signed also by three of his fellow enthusiasts:

The undersigned consider periodical publications of religious intelligence among the great and precious means which the Head of the church is employing to diffuse among his people the spirit of expansive charity, and of moral and religious enter-

⁶⁹ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, October, 1821.

⁷⁰ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, January 25, 1822.

prise—and they are persuaded, that when properly conducted, they become the vehicles by which correct sentiment and evangelical piety, as well as Christian benevolence, with all their benefits, are often conveyed to those who are in a great measure, destitute of the ordinary means of religious instruction.

Are our brethren in the ministry, may we not ask—are the friends of religion and missions willing that this publication should stop? We believe not—and we have therefore taken the liberty to state, what we presume most of them do not know, that its continuance will be rendered extremely problematical, unless its patronage is increased; and respectfully call the public attention to the necessity of renewed and more general efforts in its favor. In many large and able congregations, not remote from the place of publication, it is scarcely known; and in others, the number of subscribers might be greatly increased.⁷¹

Sufficient subscribers responded to keep the paper alive throughout the seven years Mr. Andrews continued as editor. But he lacked the resourceful audacity needed to popularize a new venture. Subscriptions dwindled to a total of only 447.⁷² Discouraged, he asked Synod to secure a successor. After some hesitancy Rev. Samuel C. Jennings agreed to assume the financial and editorial burden.⁷³ Synod placed its official stamp of approval upon the change in editorship. To assist the new editor in developing a more responsive constituency Synod again turned to the ever reliable Dr. Swift, whom the previous year it had honored with the responsibility of moderator. He, with the Rev. Thomas Hoge, another former moderator, “were appointed a committee to prepare an address to the public on the importance of sustaining and extending the influence of said publication.”⁷⁴ The prestige of Dr. Swift’s growing influence was a helpful factor in launching this revamped publication as, under changed name and editorship, it went forth to serve the church with increasing effectiveness.

But great as were Dr. Swift’s services to the cause of Christian education through his diligent labors in the Sabbath School, in the Western University of Pennsylvania, in the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, December 20, 1822.

⁷² Jennings, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, p. 8.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁴ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, October, 1828.

Western Theological Seminary, and through religious periodicals, it was as the prophet of Foreign Missions that he made his most memorable contribution to the progress of religion. He, of course, was not the originator of Foreign Missions. In a very real sense the Christian Church throughout all the centuries of its expansion has carried forward a missionary program. From the days of the Apostle Paul onward Christian missionaries have been heeding the command of Christ: "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." ⁷⁵

The Presbyterian Church was never disobedient to this call of missions. As Dr. Pears has emphasized: "The Presbyterian Church from its very beginning was a missionary church. At its second recorded meeting in the year 1707 the Presbytery agreed upon the recommendation that every minister supply desolate places where a minister is wanting and opportunity of doing good offers." ⁷⁶ Among the Indians and along the receding western frontier the Presbyterian Church sent its commissioned representatives to preach the Christian message.

Into this missionary task the Synod of Pittsburgh entered promptly. The first business of that Synod after its initial organization in 1802 was to form itself into the "Western Missionary Society," with the avowed object of diffusing "the knowledge of the gospel among the inhabitants of the new settlements, the Indian tribes and if need be among the interior inhabitants, where they were not able to support the gospel." ⁷⁷

Nor had the Presbyterian Church been indifferent to its responsibility upon the foreign field. When in 1806 four students from Williams College gathered informally for what has since been immortalized as the Haystack Prayer Meeting, and a new zeal for foreign missions was generated, the Presbyterian Church soon manifested its responsiveness. The denomination coöperated heartily with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which was organized by

⁷⁵ Mark 16:15.

⁷⁶ T. C. Pears, Jr., "The Foundations of Our Western Zion," *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.*, Dec. 19, 1934, p. 146.

⁷⁷ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, September 29, 1802.

the Congregationalists in 1810.⁷⁸ It was to this Board that Reverend E. P. Swift, while a student at Princeton Seminary, presented himself as a candidate for missionary service upon the foreign field.⁷⁹ In the interest of this Board he traveled among Presbyterian churches seeking to raise funds for its world-wide program of missions.

Moreover, the Presbyterian Church joined with the Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed Churches in forming the United Foreign Missionary Society in 1817. "The object of the Society," as stated in its Constitution, "shall be to spread the Gospel among the Indians of North America, the inhabitants of Mexico and South America, and in other portions of the heathen and anti-Christian world."⁸⁰ After about eight years of independent work this United Society decided that its objectives could be achieved more successfully through a merger with the American Board. Accordingly, at a meeting on July 3, 1826, a resolution was adopted agreeing: "That the missionary stations, papers, books and property of the United Foreign Missionary Society be forthwith transferred to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions."⁸¹ This merger left one united interdenominational agency through which as many Presbyterian Churches as might desire could make their contributions toward the extension of the Gospel into foreign lands.

In what sense, then, can Dr. Swift be regarded as the prophet of foreign missions in the Presbyterian Church? With the denomination in voluntary coöperation with a foreign mission agency that for a number of years had already carried forward an extensive program of evangelization among the heathen, why is the historian justified in placing the prophet's crown upon the brow of Dr. Swift? What was his distinctive prophetic rôle?

The answer is clear. He it was who saw that the foreign

⁷⁸ A. J. Brown, *One Hundred Years, A History of the Foreign Missionary Work of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.*, p. 19. New York, 1936.

⁷⁹ See *supra*, p. 163.

⁸⁰ Brown, as cited, p. 16.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

missionary enterprise was an inherent and inescapable part of the Church's task, which it could not delegate to any outside organization on a voluntary basis. It was his determined leadership and practical wisdom which resulted in the adoption by his denomination of a plan for carrying into action that essential duty.⁸² He persuaded the Synod of Pittsburgh to undertake and carry forward a missionary program which gradually expanded until it was adopted by the denomination as a whole in the erection of its present Board of Foreign Missions in 1837.⁸³ He was the tireless and resourceful leader whom obstacles could not daunt and losses could not defeat. To that distinctive achievement he gave unsparingly of his thought and energy.

When in 1831 Dr. Swift presented to the Synod of Pittsburgh his carefully prepared argument for the creation of the Western Foreign Missionary Society, he was merely calling attention to a plan which he had long been developing. Two years after coming to Pittsburgh to serve as pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church he was elected Secretary of the Western Missionary Society, the official organization of the Synod of Pittsburgh. He served in that capacity until the initial purposes of this pioneering agency were fulfilled in 1829 and it was merged into the newly formed Board of Missions of the General Assembly.⁸⁴ The faithful discharge of his responsibility as secretary throughout those years involved much travel and an extensive correspondence. It was a service rendered voluntarily and without financial remuneration as an expression of his enthusiastic interest in the cause of missions.⁸⁵ It brought him into contact with many churches and gave him opportunity both to plead the cause of missions and to enlist the coöperation of leaders over a wide area.

⁸² R. E. Spear, "Elisha P. Swift," *Centennial Western Foreign Missionary Society*, pp. 170-188.

⁸³ For a detailed story of the difficult struggle to persuade the General Assembly to adopt the principle of a church missionary board as distinguished from an independent society of individuals, the reader is referred to Brown, *One Hundred Years*, pp. 20-49.

⁸⁴ E. E. Swift, "Missionary History," *Presbyterian Centennial Convention*, pp. 163-166.

⁸⁵ E. P. Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 26, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

Throughout those years of travel and missionary promotion the conviction was growing in the mind of Dr. Swift and other leaders in Western Pennsylvania with whom he discussed the problem, that the Presbyterian Church should organize a foreign missionary agency which would become the direct responsibility of every member of the Church. His convictions won the ready support of a few prominent leaders in New York, Philadelphia, and Princeton, such men as W. W. Phillips, Ashbel Green, Archibald Alexander, and Samuel Miller.⁸⁶ At the General Assembly of 1831 the question was debated. Swift and his supporters were in the minority. The majority preferred to establish closer relationships with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. No action was taken other than a recommendation of more generous financial support to the American Board.⁸⁷

Dr. Swift decided that now was the time to act. He recognized that the General Assembly would favor carrying forward its missionary work under the direction of the American Board which was only a voluntary society and beyond the control of the Church. He determined to appeal to the Synod of Pittsburgh to do what the General Assembly would not undertake. In a memorable meeting of the Synod in October, 1831, in his own church, he presented an overture which resolved: "That it is expedient forthwith to establish a Society or Board of Foreign Missions on such a plan as will admit of the coöperation of such parts of the Presbyterian Church as may think proper to unite in this great and important concern."⁸⁸ The resolution was preceded by a carefully prepared preamble which paid generous tribute to the work being carried on by the American Board but which expressed the conviction that the resources of the Presbyterian Church were not being utilized as they should be. "No judicatory of the Presbyterian Church can act at this time on this subject with as much propriety and prospect of unanimity as this."⁸⁹

⁸⁶ R. E. Speer, "The Founders and the Foundations," *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 142.

⁸⁷ Brown, *One Hundred Years*, p. 20 f.

⁸⁸ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, 1831, p. 348 ff.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 348 f.

The overture aroused considerable discussion. It was referred to a committee for further study. Dr. Swift marshaled his arguments forcibly and pleaded with fervid eloquence. His resolution was adopted and the Western Foreign Missionary Society organized as the authorized agency of the Synod of Pittsburgh. To give form and direction to this new enterprise a Board of Directors was chosen, consisting of six ministers and six elders, elected by the Synod, of persons residing in Pittsburgh and its vicinity. To these were to be added one minister and one elder from each of the eight Presbyteries in the Synod. Hon. Harmar Denny, an elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, was elected president and Reverend Elisha P. Swift, the corresponding secretary.⁹⁰

Into the work of this Western Foreign Missionary Society Dr. Swift entered with tireless zeal and quenchless enthusiasm. For two years he labored gratuitously to promote its interests, visiting numerous Presbyteries and Synods and making frequent trips to the east to assist in the embarkation of missionaries.⁹¹ The duties were heavier than he could carry with his necessary pastoral responsibility. Success was crowning his labors. The cause was winning support and demanding the full time leadership of a secretary.

Accordingly, Dr. Swift asked that someone else be chosen for the office of secretary. His brethren refused to accept his resignation. They recommended instead that his pastoral relationship with the Second Presbyterian Church be dissolved so that he could devote his entire time to developing an enterprise for which he was supremely fitted. He yielded to the advice of his fellow ministers and closed his happy Pittsburgh pastorate on February 27, 1833.⁹² When he came to Pittsburgh the church had only 88 members and a debt of \$10,000. When he resigned, thirteen and a half years later, the membership had grown to 385,⁹³ the debt was almost paid, the congregation united and well organized into numerous societies. He

⁹⁰ "Organization of Western Foreign Missionary Society," *Christian Herald*, October 29, 1831.

⁹¹ Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Address," p. 20, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

⁹² *Christian Herald*, March 2, 1833.

⁹³ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, 1833, p. 17.

loved his people, but he loved the cause of foreign missions more dearly.

To resign a large prosperous church and enter upon a pioneering task of organization was a venture of faith and sacrifice. Yet he never hesitated when he felt duty was calling him. "On the morning after I did this," he wrote some years later, "I found myself committed to a feeble institution without a dollar in its treasury. But mark the loving goodness of God! In less than three weeks, there came from a distant and then unknown individual, a draft for \$1,000, expressly to pay my salary for the first year."⁹⁴

The better to carry forward his new work and to serve as an effective channel of information to all the churches, he edited the *Foreign Missionary Chronicle*. The new publication appeared monthly with its first issue in March, 1833.⁹⁵ Those pages tell the story of griefs and rejoicings, defeats and conquests, heroic sacrifices and glorious martyrdoms. They reveal a faith that flamed forth most brightly when crushing sorrows would have broken the spirit of men of lesser consecration.

After nearly three years of service in this capacity of editor, secretary, and crusading leader, Dr. Swift turned over to his successor an enterprise which had grown in finances and personnel, and which was rapidly winning the confidence of the Church. The new secretary was the Honorable Walter Lowrie. It was he who had given the \$1,000 to pay the salary of Dr. Swift for the first year.⁹⁶ He was a former United States senator and at that time was serving as permanent secretary of the Senate. He was slated to be Secretary of the Treasury in the next administration. But he turned his back on political glory in order that he might give his life to what seemed to him a nobler cause.⁹⁷ Beginning in 1835 he continued to direct for thirty-two years the work which Dr. Swift had

⁹⁴ Fortieth Anniversary Address, p. 29, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

⁹⁵ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, March 23, 1833.

⁹⁶ Swift, "Missionary History," *Presbyterian Centennial Convention*, p. 176.

⁹⁷ R. E. Speer, "Walter Lowrie," *Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 202 f.

organized some four years earlier. After two more years the Western Foreign Missionary Society became the recognized Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church and under that name has rendered a century of service to Christ and his Church.⁹⁸

Freed from the burdensome duty of travel in the interest of foreign missions, Dr. Swift returned to the pastorate. On October 9, 1835, he was officially installed pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny, Pa. Dr. Riddle, of the Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, preached the installation sermon and Reverend A. D. Campbell and Reverend J. W. Nevin delivered the charges to the pastor and people.⁹⁹ In this developing church in Allegheny he labored with power and approval throughout the remaining days of his strength. He closed his ministry in death, April 3, 1865, after nearly thirty years of service to a congregation which responded to his constructive leadership. To the very end he retained his enthusiasm for foreign missions and trained and challenged his people to give generously and sacrificially.

⁹⁸ Brown, *One Hundred Years*, Chapter 2, p. 33 f.

⁹⁹ Minutes of the Session, First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny, Vol. I, p. 20.

CHAPTER IX

EARLY PRESBYTERIANISM IN ALLEGHENYTOWN

On the northern bank of the Allegheny, directly opposite Fort Pitt, lay a wooded marshy tract of land where the General Assembly of Pennsylvania in 1783 hoped to establish a town to rival the thriving community of Pittsburgh. Three thousand acres of this uninhabited wilderness were set aside as the site of the unborn village of Alleghenytown, which in subsequent years developed into the city of Allegheny and later was merged to form the north side of Pittsburgh. Here the Assembly planned to erect a county seat and to realize from the sale of lots sufficient funds to redeem both the depreciated certificates and the promises of land made to the Pennsylvania soldiers in 1780.¹

But the plans of the Assembly were more ambitious than the topography of the land seemed at that time to justify. When surveyed in 1788 the ground appeared suitable for only six small farms, and 100 town lots, measuring 60 by 240 feet.² The purchasers of the town lots were also given title to an outlying plot of ground of similar size which was to be used for a common pasture field and which could be sold and used for other purposes only with the united agreement of all the holders of lots. When in 1791 the act establishing the County

¹ A. Warner & Company, *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, p. 515 f., Chicago, 1889.

² The surveyor, David Redick, in a letter to Benjamin Franklin, dated February, 1788, wrote: "On Tuesday last I went with several other gentlemen to fix a spot for laying out the town opposite Pittsburgh, and at the same time take a general view of the tract, and find it far inferior to my expectations, although I thought I had been no stranger to it. There is some pretty low ground on the rivers Ohio and Allegheny, and there is but a small proportion of dry land, which appears any way valuable either for timber or soil, especially for soil. It abounds with high hills and deep hollows almost inaccessible to the surveyor. I cannot think that ten-acre lots on such pits and hills will possibly meet with purchasers, unless, like a pig in a poke, it be kept out of view." Letter quoted in Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 661.

of Allegheny was amended, Pittsburgh, not the uninhabited reserved tract across the river, became the home of the court house and the logical center of the county government.³

Throughout the next two decades Alleghenytown was almost totally eclipsed by Pittsburgh. Settlers were slow to arrive, while merchants and craftsmen found the trading advantages of Pittsburgh sufficiently alluring. Though Pittsburgh achieved the status of a borough in 1794 and the dignity of a city in 1816, it was not until May, 1828, that Alleghenytown had grown large enough to merit its incorporation as a borough. Even then the population was small with only 127 votes cast in the first election for burgess.⁴

Among the settlers who had sought homes in the small village of Alleghenytown were a few Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who found ferrying to church in Pittsburgh was a little too inconvenient. One of these religious pioneers, Mr. Robert Stewart, invited Reverend Joseph Stockton to cross the river and preach to as many of the scattered families as he could persuade to assemble in a leafy sanctuary formed by the shade of a large grapevine which had arched itself over the limbs of a tree.⁵ He probably had heard Mr. Stockton preach in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh when he was supplying the pulpit during the months which intervened between the death of Dr. Barr and the coming of Dr. Herron in 1811.

Mr. Stockton was the Presbyterian minister who two years earlier had resigned his pastorate in Meadville to serve as principal of the Pittsburgh Academy.⁶ With the arrival of Dr. Herron he was freed from his pulpit duties in the First Church and was eager to respond to any opportunity to carry forward religious work on the Sabbath day. Accordingly, he

³ Sarah H. Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh, Its Rise and Progress*, p. 104 f., Pittsburgh, 1906.

⁴ Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 698.

⁵ The authority for that statement is the verbal testimony of Robert Stewart. He was one of the original trustees of the church and related his early experiences to Dr. Swift, who became pastor of the church in 1835. See Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 5.

⁶ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, p. 31.

accepted the invitation of Mr. Stewart and his neighbors and began what is recognized as the first religious activity in Alleghenytown. Throughout the summer he preached on numerous occasions but not regularly. On alternate Sabbaths his work was supplemented by the sermons of his fellow Presbyterian ministers in Pittsburgh.

As a result, the following spring a formal request was presented to the Presbytery of Erie for official recognition and help. The community was too small to be known by name and was designated only by location. "An indigent and needy neighborhood situated on the Allegheny River opposite Pittsburgh," so the Minute reads, "having applied to the Reverend Messrs. Herron and Hunt, of the Redstone Presbytery, for supplies of preaching from them and the Reverend Robert Patterson, of Erie Presbytery, as frequently as convenient, it was deemed proper by them to lay the case for consideration before the Presbytery of Erie. On motion, resolved that they with discretion attend to this application."⁷

The importance of this plea for religious services was increased temporarily by the presence in Alleghenytown of some two thousand soldiers. In the summer of that year (1812) they encamped for six weeks and busied themselves cutting down trees. They hewed to the ground the vine-covered tree on Arch Street under which Mr. Stockton had preached his first sermon. They left in its stead a blockhouse on Monument Hill, where services were resumed.⁸

Responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the Presbyterians in Alleghenytown was shifted that year from the Presbytery of Erie to Redstone Presbytery by the action of Synod which enlarged the bounds of that presbytery to include the territory along the Allegheny River.⁹ To that latter presbytery Reverend Mr. Stockton at its meeting on April 19, 1814, presented a request that he be permitted to preach regularly both at Alleghenytown and Pine Creek, some eight miles apart

⁷ S. J. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 75., which quotes this minute recorded April, 1812. New York, 1868.

⁸ Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 5.

⁹ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, 1812, pp. 91, 92.

on the Allegheny River.¹⁰ He was still serving with growing success as principal of the Pittsburgh Academy, but he desired to devote Sunday to the distinctive work of the ministry and sought the privilege of serving these two small congregations without any compensation.

Unfortunately at that time Mr. Stockton had not won the full confidence of his brethren of the Redstone Presbytery. He was before the Presbytery for trial on various charges, including the affirmation that he had baptized a child whose parents were not members of the Presbyterian Church and that he played chess, had attended theatrical exhibitions and the circus and had dined with parties on the Sabbath day.¹¹ As a result of these diversified charges, Presbytery declined his request to preach at Alleghenytown and Pine Creek.

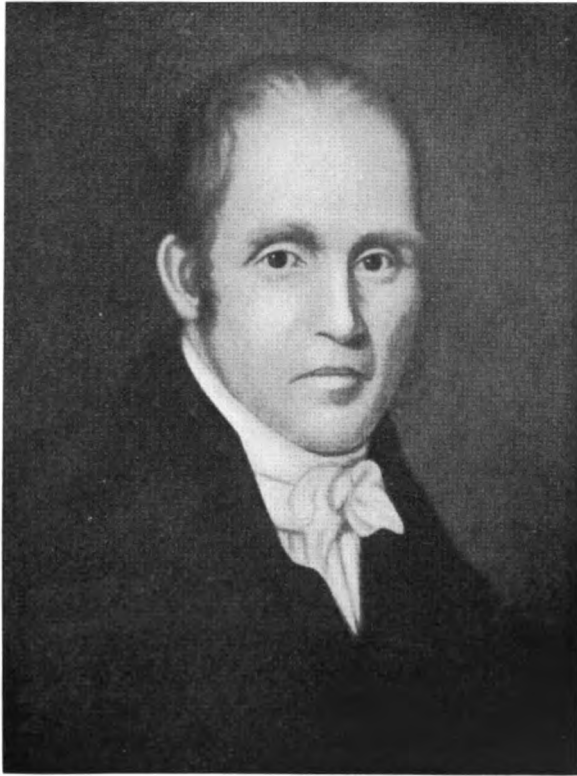
Two months later, however, during an adjourned meeting of Presbytery, these charges were carefully investigated at a conference with Mr. Stockton. He admitted baptizing a child of non-Presbyterian parents since the child appeared to be at the point of death. He denied the other accusations, which Presbytery discovered could not be substantiated and therefore dismissed. He agreed to conform to his brethren in Presbytery on all rules regarding baptism and join with them in vigorous "disapprobation of all fashionable vices." With the points at issue thus dissolved, Presbytery then granted the renewed request of the Alleghenytown and Pine Creek congregations for the ministerial services of Mr. Stockton and appointed him stated supply. From that year on to 1822 the records of the Presbytery reveal that he served continuously in that capacity at both congregations.¹²

Encouraged by the approval of his fellow presbyters, Mr. Stockton now undertook the difficult task of erecting a church building in Alleghenytown. The site chosen was the southeast corner of the burying-ground fronting on Stockton Avenue. This plot of ground was a portion of the pasturage set

¹⁰ *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, April 19, 1814, p. 263.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 268.



Courtesy Mrs. Agnes L. Starrett

REVEREND JOSEPH STOCKTON

Principal, Pittsburgh Academy (now University of Pittsburgh) 1809-1822. Acting pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Alleghenytown, Pa., 1812-1831



Courtesy First-Central Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, (N.S.), Pa.

FIRST BUILDING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ALLEGHENYTOWN
Stockton Street near Sherman Avenue. Erected 1814. Remained
in use until 1832



aside for the common use of the lot owners.¹³ Though the General Assembly had reserved a specified tract for community purposes, including a church and a burial ground, the citizens at a public meeting unanimously agreed not to occupy any portion of the Diamond or public square for a church or burial plot, but voted instead to select for those purposes a suitable spot on the common pasture ground.¹⁴

Since the Presbyterians were the only denomination at work in Alleghenytown, the new church was regarded as a community venture and no objection was offered at that time by any of the lot holders. Late in the year 1814 a frame building, 30 by 30 feet, was completed. It served the joint purposes of a school and a place of worship. When a few years later a brick school was erected, the frame building was used exclusively as the center of community worship. The interior was remodeled and equipped with straight-back pews. The subsequent growth of the congregation necessitated the addition of thirty feet to the building.¹⁵ Here the group worshipped in peace and harmony until 1831, when a more impressive sanctuary seemed befitting the enlarged resources of the community.

The years following the completion of this first frame structure formed a period of obscure and uneventful service. The numerical growth seemed too inconsequential even to be included in the reports to Presbytery. The population of the town increased very slowly. As late as 1819 only thirty or forty houses comprised the village.¹⁶ The Allegheny River was swift and almost impassable by ferry at certain times of the year.¹⁷ But better days soon dawned. On the first day of November, 1819, the first bridge over the Allegheny River was completed amid great rejoicing. The bridge made possible a convenient outlet for the expanding population of

¹³ "History of the First Church of Allegheny," *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, April 21, 1832.

¹⁴ "Allegheny Church Property," *The Pittsburgh Mercury*, April 13, 1832.

¹⁵ Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 9.

¹⁶ Swift, "A Discourse on the Fortieth Anniversary," p. 10, included in *Discourses of Swift*.

¹⁷ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 4, 1818.

Pittsburgh.¹⁸ Substantial citizens sought homes on the healthful north bank of the Allegheny. Among these was the Reverend Joseph Stockton himself who, in 1819, removed from Pittsburgh and established his home on the corner of Stockton Avenue and Arch Street. Soon afterward he closed his work at the Pittsburgh Academy and established the Allegheny Academy which became a very popular school for boys in Pittsburgh and Allegheny.¹⁹

But the new bridge which tempted Pittsburghers to erect homes in Alleghenytown made it equally convenient for them to continue their habits of worship in the Pittsburgh churches of their choice. No other churches were established in Alleghenytown for over a decade. Nor did the Presbyterians gain sufficient strength to merit a formal organization as a church even though the congregation was worshipping regularly in the church building it had erected in 1814. The two large Presbyterian churches in Pittsburgh, served by their distinguished pastors, Dr. Herron and Dr. Swift, held the loyalty of their members living across the Allegheny River. They were willing to contribute to the support of a church in Alleghenytown and encouraged the worshipers by their presence on important occasions, but they were loath to sever their membership in the older churches in Pittsburgh.

At last the need of a formal organization became apparent to the Presbyterians who had established their homes along the north side of the Allegheny River. A meeting for that purpose was held on the 26th of February, 1830.²⁰ Though in that year the census showed that the borough of Allegheny had a population of 2,801,²¹ only fifty-three venturesome Presbyterians could be found to form the nucleus of a church organization. They chose three of their number to serve as elders. Unanimously they elected Messrs. John Han-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, November 5, 1819.

¹⁹ Judge Parke, *Recollections of Seventy Years and Historical Gleanings of Allegheny, Pa.*, p. 259, Boston, 1886.

²⁰ Minutes of Session, First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny, Vol. I, p. 1.

²¹ Boucher, *Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People*, Vol. II, p. 515.

nen, Alexander Semple and John Cameron²³ to that honored and important responsibility. Mr. Hannen was the most gifted and experienced. He had served since 1818 in a similar capacity in the First Church of Pittsburgh²³ and had profited by those years of training in piety and service under the guidance of Dr. Herron. He was a capable and zealous leader "of practical usefulness, exemplary liberality, upright deportment and fraternal sympathy."²⁴ His energy and consecration found numerous channels of expression in the expanded work which the church was soon to undertake throughout the community.

The formal organization was completed with the election of the following twelve trustees: John Irwin, James Brown, Hughes Davis, Robert Stewart, Robert Bowman, Richard Gray, John Patterson, Thomas Sample, Foster Grier, Sylvanus Lathrop, Wm. Robinson and Benjamin Page. All were chosen unanimously with the understanding that the first four were to serve one year, the second four a period of two years, and the third four to continue in office three years.²⁵ At the ensuing meeting of the Presbytery of Ohio, this recently organized church was officially recognized and placed on the roll of Presbytery.²⁶ Thus sixteen years had elapsed since Mr. Stockton was first authorized by Presbytery to serve as stated supply of the unorganized Presbyterian congregation, an exceptionally long period for a Presbyterian congregation to

²³ Minutes of the Session, Vol. I, p. 1.

²⁴ Original Session Minutes of the First Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh, p. 22.

²⁵ Swift, Fortieth Anniversary Discourse, p. 46, *Discourses*.

²⁶ Minutes of the Session, Allegheny, Vol. I, p. 2.

²⁷ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, April 21, 1830, p. 179.

Pittsburgh and Allegheny were at that time included within the territory of the Ohio Presbytery. By order of the Synod of Pittsburgh in 1822, the presbyterial boundaries were changed so that Ohio Presbytery, and not Redstone Presbytery, exercised ecclesiastic jurisdiction over the ministers and churches within the Pittsburgh district. The reallocating action reads as follows: "The Rev. Messrs. John Andrews, Francis Herron, Joseph Stockton, Robert Patterson and Elisha P. Swift with their several charges and so much of the bounds of this Presbytery as lies north and west of the rivers Ohio and Allegheny, were attached by the Synod of Pittsburgh, at their last meeting to the Presbytery of Ohio." *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, October 15, 1822, p. 327.

receive the regular services of a minister without developing an established ecclesiastical organization.

This newly organized Presbyterian Church was exceptional also in another respect. The congregation was small, yet it was served by the joint labors of two ministers neither of whom was installed as the regular pastor. In this unusual arrangement, which continued for more than a year, Mr. Stockton, the founder of the church, had as his ministerial associate Reverend John Joyce.²⁷ Though perhaps without precedent in this denomination, the novel plan proved most useful and fortunate.

Mr. Stockton, it will be recalled, was a preacher on Sunday and a school teacher throughout the week. After fostering the growth of the Pittsburgh Academy into the status of the Western University of Pennsylvania, he had resigned to engage in similar work at an academy which he had established in Allegheny and which was now developing into a popular school for boys.²⁸ He was a recognized scholar and the author of two text-books which were extensively used in the schools throughout Western Pennsylvania. He was also serving as stated supply at Pine Creek. Those diverse responsibilities so absorbed his time that he felt he should have some one to assist him both with the pastoral work and with the preaching at his two widely separated churches. Since his major work was teaching, he did not feel justified in accepting a call to the pastorate of either of the two churches he had established. He preferred to serve as a stated supply, with the understanding that the church would be free to call a pastor at any time that sufficient resources of money and membership were available to support a full-time minister.

The preacher-teacher selected as his coworker the Reverend John Joyce, and together they labored to further the religious life of the growing borough of Allegheny. Mr. Joyce was a comparatively stranger in Western Pennsylvania. His earlier ministry had been in Ireland and later in Philadelphia, after which he spent ten years in missionary work throughout the

²⁷ E. P. Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 34, *Discourses*.

²⁸ Parke, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, p. 259.

South. Early in the year 1828 he was commissioned by the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church "to publish the gospel and administer the ordinances in the neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at discretion."²⁹ He chose East Liberty as his field of labor. Within a year he had organized a group of worshipers into a Presbyterian church and persuaded them to seek a pastor.³⁰

Having thus completed his missionary work in East Liberty, Mr. Joyce was looking elsewhere for opportunity of religious pioneering and accepted the invitation of Mr. Stockton to assist in the needy fields of Allegheny and Pine Creek and also among the soldiers at the Arsenal in Lawrenceville. Possibly it was the added inspiration of his preaching and leadership that resulted in the decision of the Allegheny congregation to achieve the long-delayed organization of a church. At least, when the congregation did organize, it was Mr. Joyce who was chosen to moderate the meeting with Mr. Stockton as secretary.³¹ His preaching gifts were those of a traveling evangelist rather than those of the typical Presbyterian pastor. His education and training had been for the ministry of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Ireland, but after coming to America he transferred to the Presbyterian denomination in 1809.³² Throughout an extended service as an evangelist and frontier preacher in the South his dramatic emotionalism enabled him to gather together crowds of curious listeners. He was a distinct contrast to the scholarly and restrained Mr. Stockton, and because of that fact "his ministrations attracted some who might not otherwise have been drawn to the house of God."³³ He was better acquainted with human nature than with theology and knew how to lead men to definite decisions. A man of "eminent piety, untiring energy, marked

²⁹ John Gillespie, "Historical Sermon," delivered September 23, 1873, bound together with other historical material in *East Liberty Presbyterian Church*, p. 41, Pittsburgh, 1919.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³¹ Minutes of Session, Allegheny, Vol. I, p. 1.

³² John Gillespie, "Historical Sermon," preached September 23, 1873, and printed in *East Liberty Presbyterian Church*, p. 41, Pittsburgh, 1919.

³³ D. S. Kennedy, "Historical Sermon," preached 1905, *The Work of a Century*, p. 8, Pittsburgh, 1930.

sweetness and tenderness of disposition,"³⁴ he added to the appeal of his words the persuasiveness of a noble character.

The newly organized congregation grew rapidly. Within less than a year twenty new members were added to the original fifty-three who had formed the church.³⁵ Many others shared in the worship, as newcomers in large numbers were establishing their homes in Allegheny, making it one of the most rapidly expanding boroughs in the United States.³⁶ To reach these newcomers the two coöperating ministers developed a program of Sabbath School extension which perhaps was the most rewarding feature of their joint service. In the more populous sections of the borough they established mission schools, several of which soon grew into thriving centers of religious instruction and later into churches. It was an ambitious plan which gripped the interest of the congregation and which was carried forward to greater success during the ensuing pastorates of Reverend Mr. Halsey and Dr. Swift.

As early as 1825, while the church was as yet unorganized and its congregation was only a small struggling band of worshipers, Mr. Stockton had perceived the value of a Sabbath School. In coöperation with Mr. John A. Hill, who at that time was employed in the erection of the Western Penitentiary on the Commons in Alleghenytown, a school was opened. The school met regularly each week in the church building and was the pioneer agency for religious instruction on that side of the river.³⁷ The enrollment was not large, but the enthusiasm was sufficient to maintain an average attendance of 100 each Sunday for an entire year. Nine teachers responded to the call for volunteers. They stressed the importance of memorizing Scripture and rejoiced to report that throughout

³⁴ Gillespie, "Historical Sermons," *op. cit.*, p. 41.

³⁵ Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 34, *Discourses*.

³⁶ *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 8, 1831, which thus comments editorially: "Perhaps we might fearlessly assert that no town in the United States is increasing in business, wealth and population more rapidly than the borough of Allegheny."

³⁷ Kennedy, "Anniversary Address," printed in *The Work of a Century*, p. 35. It is impossible to determine the exact date of the first meeting of this school. Mr. Hill was employed at the penitentiary during the years 1819-1826, so that the school was organized somewhere within those years, probably 1825.

the year 1826 upwards of 13,200 verses were committed to memory and recited as a public demonstration of efficiency. Three little girls led the school with the remarkable total of 5,000 verses.³⁸ Owing to the slow growth in the population of the town this one school with its small enrollment continued for several years to be the sole agency of religious instruction in the community. But with the rapid increase in population which followed the incorporation of Alleghenytown into the Borough of Allegheny in 1828, the need of more extensive facilities for instruction and evangelization became apparent.

In the fall of the same year in which the church was formally organized (1830), Mr. Stockton called together the leading workers among his congregation to discuss the advisability of forming a Sabbath School Association for the borough. He had previously served as president of a similar association in Pittsburgh and appreciated the propagating value of Sabbath Schools.³⁹ He was also the logical one to lead the new organization, which took as its name "The Sabbath School Association of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny." Accordingly, the group chose as its president the Reverend Joseph Stockton. The other officers included Mr. Johnston Lecky, the secretary, and John Hannen, treasurer, and a board of eight managers, all active laymen in the church.⁴⁰

These officers entered vigorously into their self-imposed task and within a few years had nine schools under their fostering care. They enlisted the services of the students at Western Seminary and found in these future ministers zealous and capable workers. In schoolhouses, near the factories, in vacant buildings, and even in the penitentiary these centers of religious instruction were organized and carried forward until changing conditions lessened the need or until the development of new churches made possible a more effective service. They flourished throughout the decade 1830-1840 and

³⁸ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, November 7, 1826.

³⁹ McKnight, *Sabbath School History*, p. 43. Mr. Stockton was elected president of the Pittsburgh Sabbath School Union in 1823.

⁴⁰ Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 48.

made an important contribution to the improved moral life of a rapidly growing community.⁴¹

In planting these mission schools and in increasing the membership of the church Mr. Stockton and Mr. Joyce had challenged and developed the congregation to the point where a call could be presented for the full-time service of a pastor. Graciously the two coöperating preachers offered to withdraw and leave the congregation free to select a capable minister to serve as the first regularly installed pastor of the church. They were happy in the realization that their joint labors had borne fruit and that sufficient strength had been added to the church to make possible the financial support of a pastor. They had laid well the material and spiritual foundation of an expanding church organization and concluded that to remain longer would simply retard the cause to which they had zealously devoted themselves.

Mr. Joyce had been with the congregation as a part-time preacher for only two years, but Mr. Stockton had struggled on throughout seventeen years of discouragement and slow growth. In the spring of 1831 he closed his work in Allegheny to devote his Sabbath activity to the churches he had organized and fathered at Pine Creek and Sharpsburg.⁴² At the same time Mr. Joyce withdrew to carry forward similar pioneer preaching in adjoining sections, including Pipetown, and to devote the major portion of his time to securing funds for the debt-harassed Western Theological Seminary.⁴³

After terminating their service in Allegheny neither Mr. Stockton nor Mr. Joyce was privileged to continue much longer in the ministry to which they had devoted their lives. Death soon closed their earthly activities. Mr. Joyce was appointed financial agent for the Western Theological Seminary. He had canvassed for some months the Presbyterian churches throughout parts of the United States and was then sent by the Seminary on a similar financial mission to England

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51. Reverend E. E. Swift in his historical address lists these schools with location, date of organization, and leading workers.

⁴² Parke, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, p. 20.

⁴³ *Records of Synod of Pittsburgh*, October, 1832, p. 383.

and Scotland. But his health had been undermined by too zealous labors. Gradually he sank, a victim of tuberculosis, and died in London on the 29th day of December, 1833, in his 54th year.⁴⁴ More than a year previously pestilence had laid its restraining hand upon Mr. Stockton. He had hastened to Baltimore to cheer and strengthen his son who was dangerously ill. There he was stricken with cholera, which at that time was making the first of its periodic devastations throughout the United States. His suffering, though intense, was of short duration. The morning of October 29, 1832, saw the founder of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny pass into the home of eternal reunions.⁴⁵ But the work to which he had given years of faithful service was moving forward under other leadership. The church was expanding in numbers and usefulness and testifying to the immortality of his influence.

The new leader was Reverend Job Foster Halsey. He was both the inheritance and the choice of the congregation. Early in the year 1830 he had moved to Allegheny in order to make his home with his brother who had entered upon his duties as professor in the Western Theological Seminary. His health had been seriously impaired, necessitating his resignation as the agent for the Tract and Bible Society.⁴⁶ He was seeking rest and recuperation in his brother's home. The period of inactivity and freedom from responsibility proved beneficial, and soon he was able to preach occasionally in the vacant churches within a short radius of Pittsburgh. He was heard with profit and pleasure by his neighbors in the Presbyterian Church of Allegheny. On the 9th of March, 1831, they presented him with a call to serve as their pastor. He accepted and was installed July 1st of that year.⁴⁷

Though a young man of less than thirty-one years, Mr. Halsey lacked the physical stamina of youth. He found the

⁴⁴ Swift, E. E., *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Elliott, *Life of Elisha McCurdy*, with an Appendix containing Biographical Sketches of Deceased Ministers, p. 286.

⁴⁶ Swift, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁴⁷ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, 1831, p. 339.

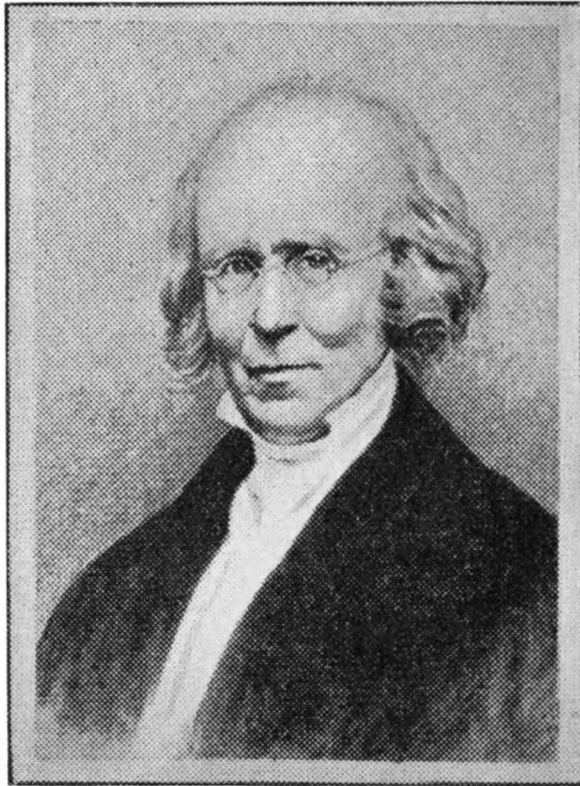
strain of preaching and pastoral work very wearying and after four years of service was compelled to retire.⁴⁸ He was endowed with a keen mind and a pleasing personality and had rare gifts of extemporaneous address. His preaching was designed to charm and not condemn the sinner. He depended on the lure of animated persuasiveness rather than denunciatory warnings in bringing people to Christ and conviction. That his methods were effective is shown by the large increase in membership which crowned his brief pastorate. During the four years he preached in Allegheny 212 people were received into the fellowship of the church. Of these, all but 100 made their first public confession of faith under the influence of his ministry.⁴⁹

But his most impressive achievement was the erection of a beautiful new sanctuary for worship. It was an achievement, however, which aroused considerable turmoil in the community and which so drained his physical resources that he could not carry forward the work of the church much longer. The embittering controversy was not the fault of the pastor nor of the membership but of a few selfish individuals in the community who sought to profit by a peculiar legal flaw in the title to the property upon which the old frame church stood.

This crude church building had been built during the early period of Mr. Stockton's ministry in Alleghenytown. The village at that time was small. The Presbyterians were the only denomination attempting to develop a congregation. The act of the State Legislature authorizing the laying out of the town had reserved a specified tract for community purposes, including a church and burial ground. It had also reserved a common pasturage for the use of the lot holders. The citizens, at a public meeting called for that purpose, had unanimously agreed not to use the public land for a church or burial ground, but voted instead to set aside a portion of the common pasturage as a suitable site for the church and the community cemetery. Upon that ground, thus assigned, the Presbyterians

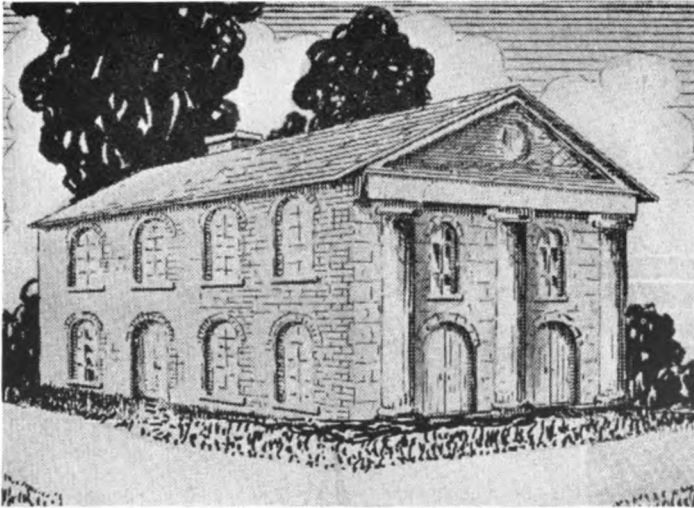
⁴⁸ Minutes of the Session, Vol. I, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 35, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.



Courtesy First Central Church

REVEREND JOB FOSTER HALSEY
First Pastor, Presbyterian Church of Alleghenytown, Pa.,
1831-1835



Courtesy First Central Church

SECOND BUILDING OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ALLEGHENY
Arch Street. Erected 1832. Destroyed by fire 1849



had erected their church in 1814 and the citizens had buried their dead.⁵⁰ No further proof of title seemed necessary. For seventeen years the ground was used for these community purposes and no disturbing question of ownership arose. To make more certain that the Presbyterians had more than "squatters' rights," the council and burgess of the newly incorporated borough of Allegheny had passed an ordinance which permitted the trustees of the Presbyterian Church to occupy a tract of land on the Commons, 240 by 130 feet.⁵¹

Never imagining that their title to the property would be questioned, the congregation had authorized the trustees to tear down the antiquated building and to erect upon the same site a building which would more adequately meet the needs and reflect the growing strength of the congregation. The work of rebuilding was proceeding rapidly throughout the summer of 1831. The old church had been removed and the foundations for the larger structure were laid. The walls of the new edifice were rising to the place where the window frames in the basement were being set, when suddenly the workmen were ordered to stop. Mr. William Montgomery, a citizen of the borough, informed the workmen that legal steps were being taken to test the validity of the Presbyterians' claim to the mound, and presented an official order that construction be terminated at once.⁵² The unexpected action was both mortifying and irritating to the Presbyterians, who were anxious to complete the enlarged sanctuary.

The fear was expressed that if the Presbyterians were permitted the use of the Commons for purposes of worship and burial, other denominations and fraternal organizations might soon present similar requests. The situation in 1831 was vastly different from what it was when the church was first erected in 1814. At that time property was cheap and plentiful. Inducements were willingly offered to the Presbyterians to erect a needed center for worship, which was regarded as

⁵⁰ *The Pittsburgh Mercury*, April 13, 1832, article entitled "Allegheny Church Property."

⁵¹ Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 701.

⁵² Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, pp. 10 and 13.

a community venture. But meanwhile the valuation of the common pasture had risen rapidly. Various denominations were at work in Allegheny and seeking to establish themselves among the expanding population of the borough. The Methodists that same year had purchased a lot on North Diamond Street and were erecting a small frame building.⁵⁸ The Christ Episcopal Church was established in 1830⁵⁴ and was followed by an Associate Presbyterian Church the following year.⁵⁵ Other denominations were canvassing their supporters and were to succeed within a few years in organizing churches. So there undoubtedly was some justification for the fear that denominational rivalry would result in recurring demands for similar favors, if the Presbyterians were permitted to erect their impressive church building on the Commons.

A large meeting of those in opposition was held on September 10th, in which resolutions were passed designed to prevent "any further use of the Commons otherwise than as provided under the law of 1787, and demanded that the Presbyterian building and burial grounds be removed within a reasonable time."⁵⁶ The difference of opinion became a political issue in the election that fall. An anti-church or anti-Presbyterian ticket was elected to Council. As a result Council rescinded the action of 1828 and took control of the burying-grounds from the Presbyterian trustees and lodged it in the office of the Street Commissioner.⁵⁷

The Presbyterians decided to appeal to the court for a final decision. But, fearing a long delay and possible unpleasant reactions, the trustees reconsidered the advisability of risking prolonged litigation. Early in March, 1832, they decided to abandon the disputed location and purchased a lot on Arch Street. The \$750 already spent on the building was a total loss. The burial ground was transferred to another section

⁵⁸ Boucher, *A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People*, Vol. II, p. 217.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁵⁶ Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 701.

⁵⁷ *The Pittsburgh Mercury*, April 13, 1832.

and the way paved for the Commons to be set aside, as it now is, for a community park.⁵⁸

During the summer, the work on the church was rushed to a speedy conclusion. An interesting reflection of the church's rising hostility to the liquor traffic appears in the following action of the trustees: "Resolved that the building be recommended to contractors and others who agree to discontinue the use of intoxicating liquors by persons engaged in the erection of the building and especially to prevent ardent spirits from being bought or dealt out upon the premises."⁵⁹ The new church was a two-story building constructed of brick with a hewn-stone front and ornamented by Doric columns. The ceiling of the sanctuary was concave and afforded exceptionally fine acoustic conditions. The total cost was a little less than \$10,000. The entire structure was dedicated amid impressive ceremonies on December 7, 1832, and remained in use until destroyed by fire in 1849.⁶⁰

Housed in this attractive and commodious building, the congregation grew in numbers and zeal. Each communion saw numerous additions to the membership. The only exception was the October communion of 1834. This unusual omission prompted the clerk of session to write: "This is the first communion season this church will have celebrated since its organization with no additions from the world. It ought to be added, the pastor was unable to preach but very seldom for the last six months on account of ill health and part of the time he was absent."⁶¹ The expanding missionary zeal was reflected in the decision of the Session to recommend that the church support one foreign missionary and that monthly contributions be received for that purpose.⁶² The special interest was partly occasioned by the fact that one of that membership, John Newton, a son of the church, was going forth that year as a missionary to India. When one of their own number was dedicating his life to the missionary cause, the

⁵⁸ Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 13.

⁵⁹ Kennedy, "Anniversary Address," *The Work of a Century*, p. 8.

⁶⁰ Minutes of Session, Vol. I, p. 11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

members felt that the least they could do was to give of their substance to help maintain his support. Two years later another child of the church, Miss Harriet Wells, also sailed for missionary service in India. The following year Stephen A. Riggs was sent as a missionary to the American Indians.⁶³

But the happy peace and prosperity of the church was temporarily disturbed by the failing health of the pastor and by his decision to lay aside the burdens and responsibility of his pastorate in Allegheny. Regretfully the session and congregation concurred in his request that the Ohio Presbytery release him from his obligations to the church.⁶⁴ As an intimate friend remarked: "He had permitted his manly, athletic frame to yield submission to his noble mind, which was constantly working for the glory of God."⁶⁵ He closed his work in Allegheny in July, 1835. After an extended rest he was able to enter the teaching profession. Some years later he returned to the pastorate in New Jersey and lived to a ripe old age, rich in the lofty esteem of friends and parishioners and happy in the consciousness that his ministry had been productive.⁶⁶ His service and achievements were recognized by Lafayette College which, in 1858, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

The church in Allegheny was not long in finding a capable successor. The same month in which Mr. Halsey closed his pastorate, the congregation called Reverend Elisha P. Swift, D.D., the distinguished apostle of Foreign Missions. He had previously served twelve years in the pulpit of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, but had resigned his pastorate in order to devote his full energies to quickening the denomination to a realization of the importance of establishing a foreign missionary agency as a major enterprise of the Church. Four zealous years he had spent in that cause, traveling widely throughout the denomination and carrying a heavy burden of correspondence and administrative work.

⁶³ *The Work of a Century*, p. 53.

⁶⁴ *Minutes of Session*, Vol. I, p. 17.

⁶⁵ *Jennings, Recollections of Seventy Years*, p. 105.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

He had succeeded in developing the missionary program in the conscience and gifts of the church and was ready to return to the pastorate. His availability brought joy to the hearts of the Presbyterians in Allegheny. No other names were considered. Dr. Swift was unanimously called and on October 9, 1835, he was officially installed as pastor.⁶⁷ He was forty-three years old at the time and remained with the church for almost three decades of successful service.

Dr. Swift brought to his new pastorate the same zeal for education and strict ecclesiastical discipline which had distinguished his ministry in Pittsburgh.⁶⁸ In addition to the mission schools which had been organized by his predecessors, Reverend Joseph Stockton and Reverend Job Halsey, Dr. Swift developed a flourishing school for colored people which met in the gallery of his church.⁶⁹ He conducted two Sabbath Schools within the church building. The first session was at 9:00 o'clock, which was followed then by the preaching service at 10:30. Beginning at 1:30 in the afternoon, the school reconvened to continue uninterrupted in a study of the catechism, memorization of Scripture and hymns and a discussion of practical problems based on the text-book which Dr. Swift had prepared. Evening worship began at 7:00 P.M., making a full day for pastor and church workers.⁷⁰

Dr. Swift was a strict church disciplinarian. He believed that church members should be willing to forego worldly pleasures and to seek the deeper satisfactions which religion can bring to its earnest devotees. Shortly after he had been installed pastor, the Session took cognizance of the tendency toward laxness on the part of some of the members. After prayerful deliberation, a formal expression of disapproval was drawn up by the Session and ordered to be read from the pulpit and posted conspicuously in the church vestibule. It re-

⁶⁷ Minutes of the Session, Vol. I, p. 20.

⁶⁸ See Chapter VIII of this book, which discusses in detail the achievements of Dr. Swift.

⁶⁹ Kennedy, "Historical Address," *The Work of a Century*, p. 35.

⁷⁰ Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, pp. 42 and 52.

veals an interesting effort to challenge church members to distinctive conduct. As recorded in the Minutes, it reads:

Session are aware that in some of the social circles in which some of the members of our church occasionally mingle, it is customary when large and sumptuous entertainments are made to introduce card playing, dancing and similar amusements and to recreate the party with them sometimes to a late hour, and that these things have not only proved a source of subsequent regret to some who have thus unexpectedly met their introduction, but of grief to other members of the church who have heard of them. Session would therefore take occasion to remind the members of our church that these amusements are deemed by the General Assembly and indeed by the great body of the Pres. Church as unsuitable and improper for professing Christians not only because they unfit the mind for serious thought and devotional exercises, and imply an injurious conformity to the varieties of the world, but because they impair the sacredness of the moral influence of the Christian character in the eyes of an unconverted sinner. Session entertains the belief that the members of our church occupy such a position in Society that if instead of a participation in these amusements they should whenever and wherever they are proposed courteously intimate to the friend making the entertainment that they are deemed by our church inexpedient and improper, they would speedily be discontinued, in many at least of the most respectable circles, and thus a very useful denominational influence be exerted in one of its most satisfactory forms.⁷¹

In his communicant lectures Dr. Swift was very pointed also in his denunciation of tolerated evils. He spoke with great plainness of speech regarding the duties and responsibilities of church members.⁷² He used freely the disciplinary powers of the Session, but was always kindly in his treatment of repentant offenders. Interspersed throughout the Minutes of the Session are numerous trials and reprimands for those guilty of any one of a number of varied offenses.⁷³ He was not interested in building up a large membership, but in strengthening the religious life of those who would respond

⁷¹ Minutes of the Session, Vol. I. pp. 34, 35.

⁷² Swift, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁷³ See Minutes of Session, pp. 33, 43, 56 and 60, for typical cases.

to the inspiration of his words and consistent example. Under his leadership the church moved forward steadily and consistently and attracted and developed an aggressive and influential membership. The following table visualizes the numerical changes throughout those years, beginning with the organization of the church in 1830.

Year	Members Received		Net Membership
	By Certif.	By Confess.	After Deducting Losses
1830	11	1	65
1831	12	39	116
1832	30	30	166
1833	22	14	170
1834	8	7	187
1835	26	23	161
1836	30	15	204
1837	54	10	252
1838	18	11	285
1839	22	11	274

Throughout that entire period, this growing church on Arch Street remained the only Presbyterian church within what is now the territorial limits of Allegheny (the north side of Pittsburgh). A possible exception may have been a weak struggling Presbyterian church about a mile distant in what was then the village of Manchester. During the summer of 1829 a Sunday School had been organized in that community in a log schoolhouse on property owned by Reverend A. D. Campbell. Two years later it was transferred to more favorable quarters on the corner of Fayette and Charters Streets (now West North Avenue and Chateau Street).⁷⁴ It formed part of the Sabbath School missionary activity of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny.⁷⁵ Members of that church, with assistance from students at the Western Theological

⁷⁴ Information furnished by Harry S. Elwell, Clerk of Session, of the Manchester Church, and included in the manuscript material of the Historical Committee of the Pittsburgh Presbytery on file at the Western Seminary Library.

⁷⁵ Swift, E. E., *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 52.

Seminary, served as officers and teachers and carried forward the work with such success that plans were laid for the formation of a church. Details of the venture are not available, merely the brief statement in the Minutes that the congregation at Manchester was received under the care of the Presbytery of Ohio, September 4, 1838.⁷⁶ The group must have been quite feeble in numbers and the organizational efforts a little premature, since no statistical information nor any subsequent mention of the church can be found in Presbytery's reports to Synod or General Assembly for several years.⁷⁷

But these Presbyterians were not altogether inactive. When in 1843 they again emerge from obscurity, they had succeeded in erecting free of debt a neat, commodious house of worship, with dimensions 70 by 40 feet. The building was constructed of brick and adorned with a cupola and equipped with a melodious bell. It was a notable achievement for a small group of workers and merited the willingness of Presbytery to organize them into a Presbyterian Church. The intervening five years of unrecorded activity were forgotten by the Presbytery, and Drs. Herron, Swift and Campbell were appointed a committee to organize, not reorganize, a church in Manchester. This was accomplished October 4, 1843, when twenty prospective members responded to Dr. Herron's organizational call and were constituted a church with the election of the necessary officers.⁷⁸ Of the four elders chosen, Mr. John Hannen and David McKain had served in a similar capacity in the First Church of Allegheny and were transferring their membership in order to help their brethren establish another center of Presbyterian influence among the expanding population of the borough of Allegheny.⁷⁹

During the closing years of the period under review the peace and progress of the Presbyterian Church in Allegheny

⁷⁶ Minutes of Ohio Presbytery, p. 100.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160, which lists it as a vacant church in 1839.

⁷⁸ *The Presbyterian Advocate*, October 11, 1843. See also Minutes of Synod of Pittsburgh, Vol. V, p. 321. Volume V includes the years 1839-1849.

⁷⁹ Swift, E. P., "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 39, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

was disturbed, but not disrupted, by marked differences of opinion among its members on the question of slavery. It was part of the divisive discussion between prominent leaders of the denomination and formed one of the contributing causes of the denominational schism into the Old School and New School General Assembly of 1837.⁸⁰ As a group, the Presbyterians in Allegheny throughout the decade 1830-1840 were not aggressively interested in the problem of slavery in the South. Dr. Swift, with the approval of the Session, refused to announce from his church pulpit a widely advertised anti-slavery meeting in the community.⁸¹ His refusal called forth some resentment from a few zealous members of the church and one withdrew in protest.⁸² This resignation kindled the activity of others, both within and without the congregation, who shared his views. Together they resolved to organize a Congregational Church which would be independent of denominational control and which would include in its membership only zealous opponents of slavery.

The new church was formed, late in the year 1838, and erected a small building in the Fourth Ward of Allegheny. It attracted to itself a number of members from the First Presbyterian Church, including Mr. Joseph Turner, one of the recently elected elders.⁸³ After a year of feeble existence as a Congregational Church, this group of abolitionists voted to change their denominational affiliation and to seek recognition as a Presbyterian church. Their request was conditioned upon Presbytery's willingness to permit them to refuse church membership to any slave holder or to any one who seemed at all sympathetic to the institution of slavery. They further stipulated that they would not admit into their pulpit, even as a visiting preacher, any minister who owned slaves or who was known as a defender of slavery. These rather unusual conditions aroused considerable discussion in Presbytery and some

⁸⁰ Minutes of the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1837, Vol. IV, p. 238.

⁸¹ Minutes of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny, Vol. I, p. 30.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸³ Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 38 ff., *Discourses*.

misgivings regarding the propriety of such restrictions upon the membership and pulpit of the petitioning church.⁸⁴

Presbytery voted, however, to grant the expressed desire of the congregation, and on March 11, 1840, enrolled them as the Second Presbyterian Church of Allegheny.⁸⁵ This action of Presbytery encouraged other abolitionists to withdraw from the First Church and unite with this newly admitted Second Presbyterian Church. Thus strengthened, the new group was able to call a pastor of like views. On April 26, 1840, Reverend William A. Adair was installed as the first pastor of this first antislavery Presbyterian church within the Pittsburgh district.⁸⁶ Allegheny had now two, or perhaps three, Presbyterian churches to assist in meeting the religious needs of its 10,089 inhabitants.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ *Presbyterian Advocate and Herald*, August 19, 1840.

⁸⁵ Minutes of Presbytery of Ohio, p. 193.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁸⁷ Boucher, *A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People*, Vol. II, p. 515.

CHAPTER X

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

One of the laudable and distinctive achievements of Pittsburgh Presbyterians was the establishment of the Western Theological Seminary along the north side of the Allegheny River. Though the decision "to establish a Theological Seminary in the West"¹ was the action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, yet the original suggestion, the final choice of location, and the triumphing over persistent difficulties are to be credited to a group of Presbyterian ministers and laymen in Pittsburgh and its immediate environs.

Western Pennsylvania Presbyterianism has reason to be proud of its early and consistent emphasis upon education, of which the development of the Western Theological Seminary was simply a culminating manifestation. The four pioneering Presbyterian ministers who in 1781 organized Redstone Presbytery were all graduates of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton). They were cultured men who realized the essential values of education and who believed that a very important part of their ministry lay in the field of education. All taught school in a zealous effort to impart to promising youths in their congregations the rudiments of a classical education.

They were concerned especially with inspiring and training capable young men to preach the gospel and to serve as efficient church workers. "From the outset they prudently resolved to create a ministry in the country," observed Dr. Doddridge, "and accordingly established little grammar schools at their own homes or in their immediate neighborhoods."² They heeded the advice which Dr. McMillan quotes

¹ *Minutes of General Assembly, 1825*, p. 267.

² Doddridge, Joseph, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Part of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763 to 1783*, p. 207, Albany, N. Y., 1876.

his theological instructor as having given to him previous to his departure to the Western frontier: "When I had determined to come to this country, Dr. Smith enjoined it unto 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 the new country at first, yet if they are not careful to raise up others, the country will not be well supplied.'" ³

All four pioneers zealously obeyed similar counsel; so that it is needless to argue whether the honor of priority in establishing schools in the wilderness of Western Pennsylvania should be accorded to the Reverend John McMillan or to Reverend Thaddeus Dodd, or to Reverend James Power or to Reverend Joseph Smith. Much has been written in support of rival claims put forth by appreciative admirers of these four founders of Presbyterian churches and educational institutions, but no clear consensus of opinion has been formed by the discussion. All worked in perfect harmony in rather widely separate fields and there is no evidence of any rivalry or jealousy in developing their agencies of education.

Dr. McMillan's labors, however, covered a longer period than those of his early ministerial comrades and were directed more definitely along theological lines. His Log College was, in fact, an embryo theological seminary from which numerous young preachers went forth to the Christian ministry. It is estimated by Dr. Matthew Brown, the first president of Washington College, that no less than a hundred ministers received their theological training under the guidance of Dr. McMillan.⁴ His prestige as a teacher of theology was recognized by Canonsburg College. When that institution developed from an academy into a college in 1802, he was appointed its "professor of divinity."⁵

His preeminence as a teacher of candidates for the ministry received wider recognition in the action of the Synod of

³ Letter of Dr. McMillan to Dr. James Carnahan, dated March 26, 1832, and quoted by James I. Brownson in *Centenary Memorial*, p. 74.

⁴ J. I. Brownson, "Educational History of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania," an address printed in *Centenary Memorial*, p. 113.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

Pittsburgh in 1821. The Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J., had been established by the General Assembly in 1812 as the official denominational agency for the specialized training of its ministers. But travel was slow and costly and Princeton seemed too far removed from Western Pennsylvania. Synod felt that similar opportunities of theological education should be available nearer home. The first step was to purchase and accumulate a library where students might read and reason under the guidance of a skilled teacher. Accordingly, Synod took this memorable action, which was to eventuate a few years later in the establishment of the Western Theological Seminary:

Whereas, it appears to this Synod that a number of promising young men, who are setting their faces towards the Gospel ministry, are not in circumstances to attend the Theological Seminary at Princeton; therefore, Resolved, That this Synod take measures for procuring a library for the benefit of such, to be under the control and direction of this Synod. That it be recommended to every member to solicit books or moneys for this important purpose, and that this library be located at present in the edifice of Jefferson College, at Canonsburg, and placed under the care of Reverend John McMillan, D.D., Professor of Theology in that Seminary.⁶

The next year a committee was appointed to consider the advisability of further action. This committee was impressed with the need of a theological seminary nearer Pittsburgh and recommended the adoption of the following resolutions:

That in the opinion of your committee, the Seminary at Princeton presents advantages to theological students far superior to any that we can hope to realize for many years to come, in a similar Institution, yet to be established in the West. And knowing that a number of promising young men graduated from year to year at the colleges within our bounds, who have the gospel ministry in view, but are not in possession of sufficient means to support them in Princeton, we feel it a duty incumbent on this Synod to provide the best means of instruction our circumstances will admit of for students of Divinity, who

⁶ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, October, 1821, p. 178.

cannot go abroad. To attain this object, your committee beg leave to recommend the following resolutions, vis.:

1. Resolved, That a Theological School, for the above purposes, be established by this Synod, the present site of which to be at Jefferson College.

2. Resolved, That this Synod appoint an agent in each Presbytery, to solicit donations in books and money for said school; and report to Synod at their next meeting.

3. Resolved, That a letter be addressed to the Synod of Ohio, stating the reasons at large why this Synod think it most expedient at present to adopt this course.⁷

Synod as a whole, however, was not quite ready for this new venture of faith and feared that the necessary resources were not available. The hope was expressed that the Synod of Ohio might be willing to unite with the Synod of Pittsburgh in the suggested undertaking. It was felt that by combining the resources of these two Synods the creation of a seminary might be possible. And so a committee was appointed "to confer with a similar committee, if appointed by the Synod of Ohio, on the expediency and practicability of establishing a theological seminary in the Western country and report at the next meeting of Synod."⁸

The personnel of that committee is significant and suggests the creative influence of Pittsburgh ministers in arousing the Synod to a realization of the importance of a seminary in Western Pennsylvania. The committee was composed of Dr. Herron and Dr. Swift, the two Pittsburgh pastors, and Reverend Obadiah Jennings, the retiring moderator of Synod that year.⁹ But the Ohio Synod did not appear responsive and the following year the committee was compelled to report no progress.

The Synod of Pittsburgh refused to become discouraged so easily, and suggested that perhaps commissioners to the General Assembly might be interested if the Ohio Synod was unresponsive. And so the committee was reappointed with the following instructions:

⁷ *Ibid.*, October 4, 1822, p. 197 f.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

That the Rev. Messrs. Francis Herron, Elisha P. Swift and Obadiah Jennings, be a committee to correspond with the Synod of Ohio, and that they avail themselves of the opportunity which the next meeting of the General Assembly will afford, to have an interchange of sentiment with the commissioners from the bounds of that Synod on this important subject. That the foregoing committee be instructed to address a communication to the Synod of Ohio with as little delay as practicable, requesting that Synod take such order on the subject, as the commissioners to the next General Assembly from the bounds of the two Synods, may be enabled to report to their respective Synods at their meetings in 1824.¹⁰

Again the Synod of Ohio was loath to join the Synod of Pittsburgh in any coöperative effort to develop a new seminary. But the efforts of the zealous leaders in the Pittsburgh Synod were not in vain. Nothing was done in 1824, except to stimulate the growth of sentiment for a new seminary. The following year, however, the General Assembly recognized the need of action. In response to the suggestion of Dr. Swift and Dr. Herron, of Pittsburgh, this important resolution was adopted:

The General Assembly taking into consideration the numerous and rapidly increasing population of that part of the United States and their territories situated in the great Valley of the Mississippi, and believing that the interests of the Presbyterian Church require it, and that the Redeemer's kingdom will thereby be promoted, do resolve that it is expedient forthwith to establish a Theological Seminary in the West, under the supervision of the General Assembly.¹¹

The new seminary was to be styled "The Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States," and was to be similar in scope and control to the older seminary at Princeton. A Board of Directors, consisting of twenty-one ministers and nine ruling elders, was elected for a period of one year.¹² When the directors met there was perfect agreement on all details except the choice of a location.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, October 9, 1823, p. 207 f.

¹¹ *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1825*, p. 267.

¹² *Pittsburgh Recorder*, June 14, 1825.

Thirteen communities bid for the honor of housing the new seminary and offered inducements of land and money in varying amounts and claimed marked advantages in health and in facilities of communication.¹³

The strength of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism was shown in the attractive bid put forth in the name of Alleghenytown. Apparently the political and financial influence of the two Pittsburgh clergymen, including also Reverend Joseph Stockton, of Allegheny, was quite strong. Alleghenytown bid the impressive sum of \$21,000, together with eighteen acres of land estimated to be worth \$20,000. The proffered land was part of the common ground in the reserved tract opposite Pittsburgh. The citizens officially voted the grant and the Legislature of Pennsylvania in 1827 confirmed their action, which suggests the dominant influence of the Pittsburgh Presbyterian clergymen in shaping public opinion at that time. Or the action of the citizens may have been motivated by the conviction that the prestige of a seminary and the money spent on its erection and maintenance was a sound financial investment for a community which was ambitious to grow and develop.¹⁴

The directors, by a vote of eight to five, recommended that the General Assembly accept the bid of Alleghenytown and locate there the proposed seminary.¹⁵ The recommendation stirred considerable discussion at the ensuing meeting of the Assembly in 1826 and marked differences of opinion developed. Many of the commissioners felt that either Cincinnati, Ohio, or Charleston, Indiana, were preferable sites. The disagreement was so persistent that a motion was finally passed to postpone final choice of location until the next year.¹⁶

The Assembly met the following year and still no agreement seemed at hand. Sectional pride and conflicting loyalties

¹³ A. D. Campbell, "The Founding and Early History of the Western Theological Seminary," written by one of the original directors of the Seminary, *The Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, October, 1927, p. 20 f.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-40.

¹⁵ *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1826*, Vol. IV, p. 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

were in evidence. Dr. Herron, who was moderator of the General Assembly that year, requested the privilege of being released temporarily from the moderator's chair in order that he might urge the Assembly to select Alleghenytown as the site of the seminary. His logical and impassioned argument was followed immediately by a call for a vote. The Assembly, by the narrow margin of two votes, decided that the new seminary would be located in Alleghenytown rather than in Cincinnati, as many were urging.¹⁷ Dr. Herron, who, as an honored leader and an esteemed moderator, had great influence in the Assembly, had swayed sufficiently the sentiment of the commissioners.

The Pittsburgh group had won a cherished victory but, in so doing, had purchased for themselves a tremendous responsibility and a heavy burden which in the ensuing years was to test frequently the vigor of their faith and courage. Western Pennsylvania was still a frontier community both in resources and in disposition, and required much persistent education and exhorting before it was ready to support adequately a theological seminary. That fact, combined with the non-coöperative spirit of many leaders in those sections of the church which had urged the claims of other communities to be the seat of the new seminary, made extremely difficult the task which the Pittsburgh ministers had assumed for themselves when they prematurely brought the Western Theological Seminary to the Pittsburgh district.¹⁸

The same Assembly which located the Seminary at Alleghenytown also selected the board of directors and the first professor. The man selected for that latter responsibility was the Reverend Jacob Jones Janeway, D.D.¹⁹ He was a minister of eminent distinction, a former moderator of the General Assembly and pastor of the largest Presbyterian Church in the United States, the Arch Street Church of Philadelphia.

¹⁷ J. I. Brownson, "A History of the Western Theological Seminary," p. 15, *Western Theological Seminary, 1872-90*.

¹⁸ Campbell, "The Founding and Early History of the Western Theological Seminary," *Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, October, 1927, p. 24 f.

¹⁹ *Minutes of the General Assembly*, Vol. VI, May 29, 1827, p. 130.

His selection was a source of great encouragement to the directors who entered vigorously into the task of providing for him earnest students and a place to teach. But he hesitated to accept and finally sent word to the directors that he felt impelled to decline the call. His refusal was a keen disappointment to the friends of the Seminary.

Nevertheless the directors felt they dare not postpone the opening of the new institution. They persuaded two local ministers to rally to the emergency, until General Assembly could elect a successor. Throughout the winter and spring terms Reverend Elisha P. Swift, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, served as instructor for the four students who formed the first class. Dr. Swift had been very active in arousing sentiment for the creation of a new seminary. Willingly he now assumed temporarily the duties of professor, lest delay might imperil the success of the new enterprise. During the summer term Reverend Joseph Stockton, of the Alleghentown Church, relieved him of his duties as teacher in order that he might canvass the Presbyterian churches in Pennsylvania and Ohio in an attempt to raise money for the embryonic seminary. Temporary quarters were found in the session room of the First Church.²⁰

Subsequently Dr. Janeway reconsidered his refusal. He arrived in Pittsburgh ready to teach at the opening of the second year in 1828, accompanied by his son, Thomas L. Janeway, who was the instructor in Hebrew. But Dr. Janeway was disheartened by finding only five students when he had expected a larger group. The crudities of Pittsburgh were offensive to his cultured tastes. The precarious future of the Seminary and the discomforts of semi-pioneer life did not appeal to him or to his wife.²¹ And so he resigned after less than a year of service, leaving the Seminary without a faculty and necessitating the dismissal of classes for the summer.

²⁰ First Report of the Directors of the Seminary presented to the General Assembly 1828, *Minutes of Assembly*, 1828, p. 250.

For a fuller statement of Dr. Swift's varied services to the Seminary see previous Chapter VIII of this volume, pp. 176 ff.

²¹ S. B. McCormick, "One Hundred Years," *Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, April, 1928, p. 34.

The Assembly's next choice of a professor was more lasting. He served until 1837. The new professor was the Reverend Dr. Luther Halsey, at that time professor of Natural Philosophy in Princeton College.²² To assist him the Board of Directors selected Reverend John W. Nevin, a young man who for two years had been substituting as an instructor in Princeton Theological Seminary. The Seminary was now entering its third year of service in 1829, with two professors and fifteen students. The prospects for the future were brightening, although financial clouds still hovered low over the struggling institution. Under the direction of Dr. Halsey and Mr. Nevin, the enlarging student body entered upon a three-year course of study that was somewhat limited in scope, but carefully directed toward a clearly defined purpose.

"It is our wish," explained Dr. Halsey in outlining the objectives of the curriculum, "that every student who finishes an entire course in the Seminary shall have critically read the whole New Testament in Greek and most of the Hebrew Scriptures, besides being well grounded in Jewish and Christian Antiquities and the canons of criticism."²³ The first year's class was called the Biblical Class and was taught by Mr. Nevin. Their Biblical studies were designed to lay a "thorough foundation in the study and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures which is the basis of all sound theological knowledge."²⁴ The report for the year 1829-1830 indicated that this group of six students had studied the first two parts of Jahn's Archæology, had reviewed Sacred Geography, and had read twenty-three chapters of Genesis in Hebrew and I and II Corinthians and Hebrews in Greek. The second-year class, numbering four students, was known as the Theological Class and devoted special study to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. The third-year men included five students and were des-

²² *Christian Herald*, May 9, 1829.

²³ Minutes of the Faculty of Western Theological Seminary, 1829, p. 6. These Minutes are very brief and include the years 1828-1830. The book includes the complete matriculation lists of all the incoming classes since the Seminary was organized. These are the only original records that survived the destructive fire of 1854.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

igned the Ecclesiastical Class. Their specialized work lay in the fields of Church History and Church Government. Hours were assigned, not only for lectures and recitations, but also for supervised study. Each student was required to engage in some healthful exercise each day in order to keep physically and mentally fit for the religious service to which he was dedicating his life.²⁵ As a necessary measure of economy, ten of the students lived together and shared equally in the cost of the essentials of life. The total expense on that communal plan for boarding, washing, fuel and life did not exceed one dollar per week.²⁶

Meanwhile the directors were busy in a determined effort to solicit funds and to hasten the erection of the building. The Board of Directors consisted of twenty-one ministers and nine elders who had been elected by the General Assembly in 1827. At the first organizational meeting the stimulating leadership of the Pittsburgh pastors was recognized in the election of Reverend Francis Herron to the presidency of the Board and Reverend Elisha P. Swift to the secretaryship. Another Pittsburgher, Mr. Michael Allen, a member of the First Church, was chosen treasurer.²⁷

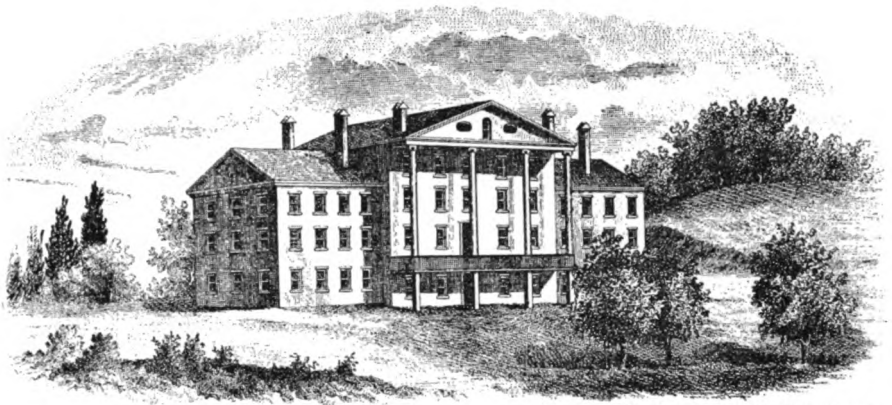
The directors were men of faith and optimism. They saw visions of the expanding greatness of Western Pennsylvania, with churches multiplied in numbers and with an increasing demand for educated and consecrated ministers. They cherished the ideal of an impressive building crowning the summit of Monument Hill, which would be sloped with beautiful and productive gardens. They sought to give reality to those dreams by formulating plans which would both meet the needs of the future and represent in brick and stone something of the glory of religion.

The main building was to be of cut stone and rise four stories in height. Its contemplated dimensions were approximately 150 by 45 feet. It was to stand in the center at the top of the hill and be flanked on either side with other build-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 2 and 7.

²⁶ *Christian Herald*, June 25, 1831.

²⁷ Brownson, "A History of the Western Theological Seminary," p. 16, *Western Theological Seminary, 1872-90*.



Courtesy Western Theological Seminary

FIRST BUILDING OF THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ALLEGHENYTOWN, PA.
Erected 1831. Destroyed by fire 1854



Courtesy Western Theological Seminary

FIRST PROFESSORS

REV. JACOB J. JANEWAY, D.D.
Installed 1828. Resigned 1829

REV. JOHN WILLIAMSON NEVIN
Installed 1829. Resigned 1839



ings, including homes for each of the professors. The ascent would be terraced and adorned with vines and ornamental shrubbery, while to the rear would be planted gardens and fruit yards which would have economic value. The level portions of the eighteen acres were to be sold as prices and population increased, thus providing a welcome source of sustaining revenue. To help substantiate these visions, Pittsburgh quickly subscribed \$12,000.²⁸

But hostility and indifference were soon to disturb the serenity of those dreams and to deter the realization of even restricted plans. Unexpected difficulties developed in the excavation work, which was begun in the spring of 1829. The denomination as a whole was unresponsive. Money was difficult to raise, even though the Synod of Pennsylvania passed resolutions of support and urged all the churches within the bounds of Synod to make sacrificial contributions.²⁹ The walls were rising all too slowly throughout the summer of 1830, but the determined directors reported progress.³⁰

The following year the construction work on the main edifice was almost complete. But it was not the building as originally planned. The central structure had been reduced to the more moderate size of 60 by 50 feet. Brick facing replaced the contemplated cut stone. Crude stone, taken from the excavation, was deemed sufficient for the interior walls. Two wings, each extending 50 feet from the central building, added to the available accommodations and furnished living quarters for the students, a chapel, 45 by 25 feet, and ample space for a library. Though unfinished, it was ready for use during the spring term of 1831.³¹

Twenty students moved into the dormitories and received instruction in the recitation rooms of the two professors. A little less than \$10,000 had now been expended, but the building was neither finished nor paid for. Persistent pleas for money featured the annual reports both to the General Assem-

²⁸ "First Report of Directors of the Seminary," presented to the General Assembly 1828, *Minutes of Assembly, 1828*, p. 250.

²⁹ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1828*, pp. 283, 288 f.

³⁰ Report to General Assembly, 1830, *Minutes of Assembly, 1830*, p. 50.

³¹ *Christian Herald*, June 25, 1831.

bly and to the Synod. Year after year the directors faced crises and discouragements. At last some \$25,000 was raised and all bills were met for the erection of the buildings which housed the Seminary until the calamitous fire of 1854 left standing only the blackened stone and brick walls.³² The struggle to pay for the building had so drained the treasury that operating expenses exceeded the available revenue. Bills accumulated year by year, until in 1839 the Seminary was bankrupt. Debts, totaling more than \$7,800, faced the harassed institution. The end seemed almost at hand. The crisis, however, was avoided by the successful mission of Dr. Elliott to Philadelphia, where he raised \$5,256.00. The Synod of Pennsylvania then rallied to the support of the Seminary for five years of precarious existence. Another financial crisis confronted the harassed institution in 1842.³³

This discouraging struggle for funds throughout these ten years was occasioned in part by two hampering difficulties which the directors could neither anticipate nor control. The first unforeseen difficulty was a prolonged series of litigations arising out of what seemed a defective title to the property. It prevented the Seminary from receiving urgently needed revenue from the sale or lease of any portion of the eighteen acres and necessitated the payment of numerous fees for legal services. What was regarded a remunerative gift in 1825 proved in subsequent years to be only a burdensome drain.

Undoubtedly it was the clear intention of the lot holders to give those eighteen acres of common pasture to the Seminary, both to insure the success of that institution and to induce the General Assembly to place the school in Alleghenytown rather than in Cincinnati. Meetings of the lot holders were held for the purpose of transferring to the Seminary all claim to the property.³⁴ Carefully Reverend Joseph Stockton and Harmar

³² Brownson, "A History of the Western Theological Seminary," p. 20 f., *Western Theological Seminary, 1872-90*.

³³ McCormick, "One Hundred Years," *Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, April, 1928, p. 27.

³⁴ Campbell, "The Founding and Early History of the Western Theological Seminary," *The Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, October, 1927, p. 39.

Denny had canvassed all known lot holders and had secured written releases from them.⁸⁵ On the assumption that all the lot holders had surrendered their claims to the use of these eighteen acres, the State Legislature had, by act of Assembly, donated the property to the Seminary.⁸⁶ Title to the property seemed doubly assured by that joint action, especially when a similar grant had been made for the erection of the State Penitentiary a few years earlier.

But human cupidity and unemployed lawyers form a militant and disturbing combination. Recurrent litigation with appeals to higher courts, animosities growing out of conflicting claims, and prolonged uncertainty preventing the erection of the professors' homes or the sale of desirable lots, resulted in years of turmoil and expense. The details of those suits and court decisions are of no permanent interest; but the recollection of them explains some of the troubles which tested the patience and determination of those leaders who struggled to create a worthy institution in the borough of Alleghenytown.

The long litigation ended at last in a compromise deed, dated December 3, 1849. By the terms of that agreement the

⁸⁵ The Act of Release by the lot holders was drawn up in these terms: "Know all men by these presents. That, whereas the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church have declared their intention of establishing somewhere in the Western Country a Theological Seminary of learning on a plan similar to the one now in operation in Princeton in the State of New Jersey, therefore we the subscribers, residents, lot holders and land owners in the town of Allegheny, opposite Pittsburgh in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, being duly sensible of the advantages that would result from the establishment of such an institution and as an inducement to its location on condition that the Seminary shall be established in said town of Allegheny, and so long as the same shall be continued there we the residents, lot holders and land owners at a public meeting held this day in said town of Allegheny for that purpose do hereby give, grant, assign and transfer unto the said General Assembly all our right, title and claim to the full, free and entire use and right and privilege of use to piece of ground on the public common of said town, containing 18 acres and 37 perches nearly, hereby giving and granting unto the said General Assembly as far as such right, use and privilege is in our power to grant and confer for the sole use and benefit of said Seminary, provided said Seminary shall be established thereon and that the same shall be commenced within four years. And we do hereby warrant and defend the grant and privilege hereby conferred unto the General Assembly aforesaid on the above conditions against us the subscribers, our heirs and assigns forever. In testimony whereof we hereunto set our hands and seal the 11th of November, A.D. 1825." *Ibid.*, p. 41 f.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Seminary surrendered its claim to the original grant of eighteen acres and received in exchange a clear title for the one acre upon which the Seminary buildings would stand. In addition, the city of Allegheny permanently indebted itself to the Seminary for an unpaid sum of \$35,000, upon which the city would pay to the Seminary interest charges of \$2,100. That agreement is still effective and on the first of January and July each year, Allegheny pays to the Seminary "in lawful silver dollars" the semi-annual interest of \$1,050.³⁷

The second unanticipated difficulty was the embittering strife within the denomination which was to result in the Schism of 1837, and which for several years previously prevented united interest in the welfare of the Seminary. Unfortunately, at the very inception of the Seminary sympathetic support of the majority of the Presbyterian churches throughout the West and South had been alienated by the refusal of the Assembly to erect the new theological institution further west, in Cincinnati, as many had urged. Moreover, the wealthier churches in the East were prone to await the generous response of Presbyterians in Western Pennsylvania before making their contributions.

Time, which is a great healer, would probably have soothed the wounds caused by sectional pride and brought the entire denomination to at least a measure of unified support of Western Seminary had the fires of theological controversy not burst forth in the Assemblies of the later years of the thirties.³⁸ Men absorbed in zealous argument are tempted to overlook some phases of their benevolent responsibility and to center their enthusiasm upon causes which reflect their own view-points.

Much of the controversy centered around the theological convictions of the young ministers who were being sent forth as home missionaries in the newer sections of the country. Should these men be trained in the more liberal or the more

³⁷ Brownson, "A History of the Western Theological Seminary," p. 21 f., *Western Theological Seminary, 1872-90*.

³⁸ A. D. Campbell, "The Founding and Early History of the Western Theological Seminary," *The Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, October, 1927, p. 25.

conservative seminaries? The liberal sentiment was uppermost throughout the Synods of New York and Ohio, while Pennsylvania and the Synods south of the Mason-Dixon line were conservative. The liberal Presbyterians were somewhat suspicious of the theology of any school established in Western Pennsylvania and so withheld support. On the other hand, Western Seminary had not been in existence long enough to prove its orthodoxy in the minds of hesitant men in the South. As a result the pleas of the infant Seminary fell on unresponsive ears and responsibility for its financial preservation was shifted very largely to the Synod of Pennsylvania.³⁹

The Seminary directors were cognizant of that unfortunate fact and formally resolved that "the Synod of Pittsburgh be respectfully requested to express an opinion as to their willingness to assume the care, management and support of the Western Theological Seminary."⁴⁰ Synod was sympathetic to the suggestion but voted to postpone a definite decision until the following year. For several years the directors pondered the wisdom of urging the transfer of the Seminary to synodical control. They hesitated, hoping that the entire denomination would be aroused to the support of an institution it had founded. Finally, the long-pondered transfer was approved by the Synod⁴¹ itself, but General Assembly was too busy with doctrinal tribulations to give the problem serious thought.

When in 1837 the denomination split into the New School and Old School branches, the financial difficulties of the Seminary were still further heightened. The Synod of Pittsburgh remained with the Old School branch. It officially recognized its obligation to the Seminary by pledging itself to support the theological institution which was within its territorial limits.⁴² That support, however, was more easily pledged than bestowed. The resulting contributions from the Church re-

³⁹ Minutes of the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1833, Vol. IV, pp. 10 and 30. The records including the year 1832 are printed. For subsequent years they are in manuscript form and available in the Library of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Penna.

⁴⁰ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, October 29, 1831, p. 362.

⁴¹ Minutes of Synod, 1836, Vol. IV, p. 168.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 30, 31.

mained inadequate and discouraging to the loyal friends of that harassed institution.

This continued financial embarrassment had a hampering effect upon the Seminary, preventing the employment of an adequate faculty and making difficult the retention of the professors who were appointed. Resignations threatened the continuity of the institution. Dr. Janeway resigned after less than a year of service. Dr. John McDowell, who was elected by the General Assembly in 1828, refused to accept the appointment.⁴³ Financial stringency prevented the selection of a successor until five years later, when Dr. Ezra Fisk was chosen for the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government. He accepted the new responsibility but died suddenly *en route* to Pittsburgh.⁴⁴ Throughout those years the work of instruction was carried forward by Drs. Halsey and Nevin who were members of the faculty since 1829. In a true spirit of self-sacrifice they toiled on, dividing the entire curriculum between them and enduring the privations of small salary and irregular payments. Without their patience and forbearance, the institution could not have survived.⁴⁵

Temporary relief from the heavy teaching load came through the willingness of Reverend Allan D. Campbell to serve as an instructor. He was one of the original directors of the Seminary and, since 1831, had been the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Northern Liberties (now the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh). He came to help raise money for the Seminary and also to teach in the department of Church Government throughout the years 1836-1840.

But the remarkable addition to the faculty that same year was the Reverend David Elliott. He had been elected to the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government by the General Assembly in 1835. That field of instruction did not appeal to him and he hesitated to accept. Dr. Halsey, however, graciously offered to shift departments and urged

⁴³ *Minutes of General Assembly, May 28, 1828, p. 243.*

⁴⁴ "History of Western Seminary," *The Presbyterian Banner and Advocate*, January 19, 1856.

⁴⁵ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, January 8, 1835.

Dr. Elliott to take the chair of Theology while he would teach History. Dr. Halsey was a very versatile and widely read scholar. He could teach with equal efficiency any part of the seminary curriculum and was reputed to be "the most learned man known to the public in the United States."⁴⁶

This rearrangement appealed to Dr. Elliott and he began his work at the Seminary in June of the following year.⁴⁷ His inauguration was an outstanding event in the development of Western Seminary. As the brilliant pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Washington and as moderator of the General Assembly, he had achieved a prestige that brought needed financial support to the Seminary and which helped to preserve that institution during the stormy years that lay ahead. His long distinguished career at Western closed with his death in 1874 at the age of eighty-seven.⁴⁸

With a faculty complete for the first time in the person of four teachers, Dr. Halsey, Dr. Elliott, Dr. Nevin and Dr. Campbell, and with a student body which had grown to fifty men, the internal difficulties of the Seminary seemed to have reached a favorable ending. But that happy arrangement continued only a year. Financial embarrassment still cast its darkening shadows over the institution and prompted Dr. Halsey to present his resignation in order that he might accept a less sacrificial position on the faculty of Auburn Seminary.⁴⁹

It was a notorious fact that the salaries of the professors were often a whole year in arrears and that it was necessary for the professors to contribute annually from their meager salaries between \$100 and \$300 and to abridge their expenditures to the barest essentials.⁵⁰ Moreover, Dr. Halsey had been severely criticized by his more orthodox brethren in the Pittsburgh district. Dr. Herron had rallied to his defense, but he did not feel fully in sympathy with the more zealous Old

⁴⁶ See remark of a Supreme Court Judge quoted by McCormick in "One Hundred Years," *Bulletin of Western Theological Seminary*, 1928, p. 34.

⁴⁷ *The Presbyterian Banner and Advocate*, January 19, 1856.

⁴⁸ McCormick, "One Hundred Years," *The Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, April, 1928, p. 36 f.

⁴⁹ *The Christian Herald*, July 20, 1837.

⁵⁰ *The Presbyterian Banner and Advocate*, January 19, 1856.

School leaders. He was convinced that the New School seminary at Auburn was more in harmony with his theological outlook than Western, which remained with the Old School.⁵¹ Yet he never lost his interest in the Pittsburgh institution where he had taught and sacrificed for eight years. In 1852, he loaned to Western Seminary his personal library of 2,000 volumes, rich in patristic and Biblical literature. Some years later he made that loan a permanent gift.⁵²

Dr. Halsey's withdrawal from Western was followed three years later (1840) by the similar action of Dr. Nevin, who resigned in order to accept a professorship in the Theological Seminary of the German Reformed Church at Mercersburg, Pa.⁵³ He also had begun to chafe under the rigid orthodoxy of his Pittsburgh environment and welcomed a more liberal theological outlook. Moreover, he had grown weary and disheartened by the continued pecuniary hardships which the professors were compelled to undergo. He came to Western Seminary a young man with only the rank of an instructor. Throughout a period of ten years he taught in various departments and carried the full burden of a professor. Yet he never attained, nor would he accept, the professorial rank, preferring to leave with the academic title he had received during his first year. His subsequent career in the theological world was one of widening recognition and brilliant attainment. His removal from Pittsburgh was a loss to the Seminary but a broader opportunity for his own development.⁵⁴

That same year another instructor retired from Western, Dr. A. D. Campbell. His health had been impaired by his dual responsibility as a member of the faculty and as the traveling financial agent for the Seminary. He had served some four years, practically without salary. He now felt the renewed call of the pastorate and late in the year 1841 was installed pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Allegheny.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *The Christian Herald*, July 20, 1837.

⁵² McCormick, *Bulletin of Western Seminary*, 1928, p. 26.

⁵³ *Minutes of General Assembly*, 1840, p. 318.

⁵⁴ McCormick, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁵⁵ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, October 6, 1841, Vol VII, p. 300.

The discouraged frame of mind which had forced some of these professors to leave Western Seminary is vividly revealed in the letter which Dr. Nevin wrote explaining his resignation. He felt that he had sacrificed sufficiently in struggling to save a seminary whose voice would soon be stilled in saddening silence. He was willing to continue on if he could see some signs of a restoration to vigorous service, but his ten years' experience had disheartened him. Mournfully he laments:

The Institution languishes for want of funds. All its operations drag, and are maintained from year to year with continual discouragement to the Professors. If there were any good prospect of its getting through these difficulties in a reasonable time, it might be well to continue the struggle with them still. Unless the Seminary can be put on a much better footing than it has been for years, it must in the end fail. Of what use then, to cling cold and wet to its leaky bottom, only to assist in keeping it above water a few years longer. As the case now stands, it seems to me much like throwing away both time and strength, to lay them out any further on a cause which, without a new kind of interest and new sort of action engaged for its support, may well be looked upon as desperate.

For some time past the Institution has been a full year behind with me, in the payment of my salary; and latterly the measure of this failure has been steadily on the increase. The arrearage is now upwards of two thousand dollars.⁵⁶

The resignations of Dr. Halsey, Nevin and Campbell left Western Seminary with Dr. Elliott as the sole member of the faculty. It was a sadly shattered institution which faced a darkened future in 1840. Its supporting denomination was split with theological strife and torn in twain. The main building, begun in 1829, had required ten years to reach completion. The prestige of the struggling institution had been seriously lessened by the frequent withdrawals from its very limited faculty, causing even its best friends to distrust its stability and permanence. Debts, totaling \$5,000, hampered its credit.⁵⁷ In all this there seemed to be but little material achievement to mark these thirteen years of persistent effort on the part of Pittsburgh Presbyterians.

⁵⁶ *Presbyterian Advocate and Herald*, October 30, 1839.

⁵⁷ *Minutes of Synod of Pittsburgh, 1839*, Vol. V, p. 31.

With only the assistance of part-time service from the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Dr. Elliott met all the classes during the summer of 1840, hoping better days would soon dawn. Those better days did dawn. Western Seminary is now a thriving institution. But the darkened gray of another decade of heartache and determined persistence must pass before the rising sun of promise could cheer the souls of Western's faithful friends.

Though the year 1840 closed in discouragement and meager material achievements, yet the labors of those previous thirteen years were not without visible gain. The annual enrollment had increased from four to fifty students. A large number of graduates had gone forth into Christian service and were occupying pulpits of varying prominence.⁵⁸ Others had heard the first missionary call of the denomination and had laid down their lives in a sacrificial effort to plant the banner of Christ in India and Africa.⁵⁹ Still others were developing in the practical work of the ministry and were laying foundations of expanding usefulness.

Moreover, the generous beginnings of a notable library had been accumulated. Before even the excavations for a building had been dug, Dr. Campbell had sailed for England and Scotland to solicit books for the nascent institution and returned with over 2,000 volumes.⁶⁰ The persuasive appeal of Dr. Herron resulted in the gift to the Seminary by Alexander Henry of an extensive and valuable assortment of historical and exegetical works which previously had been gathered in Europe.⁶¹ Around these two central collections numerous other donations and purchases of usable books were accumulated, making the reading-room of the Seminary a source of inspiration and instruction for earnest students.

The sustaining interest and resourceful labors of Dr. Herron and Dr. Swift were other invaluable assets that must not be

⁵⁸ D. A. Cunningham, "An Address in Memory of Deceased Alumni," p. 68, *Western Theological Seminary, 1872-90*.

⁵⁹ Brownson, "A History of Western Seminary," p. 51, *Western Theological Seminary, 1872-90*.

⁶⁰ *Minutes of General Assembly, 1830*, p. 50.

⁶¹ Paxton, *Two Discourses on the Life of Rev. Francis Herron*, p. 57.

overlooked in evaluating the attainments of the first thirteen years of the Seminary's official life. In varied capacities, as secretary, instructor, financial agent, and director and spiritual adviser, Dr. Swift had demonstrated an unswerving loyalty which foretold a brighter future for the Seminary. Dr. Herron, at the first meeting, was elected president of the Board of Directors and continued to hold that office by annual re-election until his death in 1860. He gave himself unsparingly to the Seminary he determined to create. From the church of which he was pastor there were raised for the Seminary contributions equaling in amount the total gifts of all the other churches in the Synod of Pittsburgh.⁶² Blessed by his influential and undeterred leadership, the Seminary had reason to anticipate added growth and prestige as the years passed. His memorable service was recorded in these fitting words of appreciation, written by the Board of Directors after his earthly labors had closed in death:

His eminent fidelity and usefulness as the chief officer of the Board we who remain desire here to attest and record. In its darkest days—when sanguine and liberal friends were ready to despair—when insuperable obstacles seemed to arise on every hand and peril the very existence of the Seminary—his faith failed not—he seemed to hope against hope. He was ever ready by renewed personal exertion, self-denial, and sacrifice to add effort to effort, and prayer to prayer, to save the school of the prophets. So effectually had he identified himself with the Institution, and incorporated it in his heart, that at home and abroad its advancement was a prominent theme of his thoughts, prayer, and conversation. When mingling with rich men of all classes, authors, or literary circles, he sought to turn the high regard he always commanded for himself to the advantage of the Seminary. The very last appeal he made on earth was for the Seminary, and rendered effective by this significant and solemn sentence, 'It is my dying request.'⁶³

A seminary which had enlisted the sacrificial loyalty of men of the standing of Dr. Herron and Dr. Swift, which had trained an increasing group of capable ministers, which had

⁶² Brownson, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶³ *The Presbyterian*, January 2, 1861.

accumulated a substantial and useful library, which had erected an impressive and commodious building and which had retained on the faculty a professor of no less outstanding merit than the brilliant Dr. Elliott, had assets and achievements, after thirteen years of service, which ultimately were to insure the stability of the harassed institution.

In the face of great and unexpected obstacles, the Seminary had survived and had carried forward its work with persistent fortitude. The faith and courage of its founders had been tested again and again. Additional trials were to test them still further. Yet those very difficulties and discouragements had aroused within the leaders of Pittsburgh Presbyterianism a will to succeed and a determination to retain the material and intangible assets purchased by sacrificial effort. The Western Theological Seminary was preserved in spite of disheartening obstacles. It grew and expanded into a cherished and influential institution, and a mighty creative force in the religious life of Western Pennsylvania. It stands today as an enduring monument to the vision and faith of the early leaders in the Pittsburgh Presbyterian churches.

CHAPTER XI

THE DECADE OF EXPANSION

The ten-year period of 1825-35 was one of the most fruitful decades in the early activity of the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. The ripening harvest of preceding years of patient planting and careful cultivation was appearing in the increased zeal of church members and in the establishment of new churches. The period opened with only two Presbyterian churches within the present corporate limits of the city of Pittsburgh. It closed with eleven organized Presbyterian churches of varying strength, each seeking to minister to the religious needs in different sections of the growing community.¹ The period marked the beginnings of aggressive campaigns for Sabbath observance, temperance and improved morals. It felt the quickening influence of notable revival meetings and the planting of numerous mission schools in neglected areas. It witnessed a steady increase in the giving of the churches both for missionary and for educational purposes. Whether judged from the standpoint of numbers, program or zeal, the decade formed an encouraging era in the contributions of Presbyterianism to the improved religious life of the city.

This distinctive advance, however, was not the achievement of the Presbyterians only. Other denominations made somewhat similar gains throughout those same years and added materially to the influence of religion. Though Pittsburgh had been incorporated as a borough in 1794 and had a total population of almost 10,000 in 1825, yet only twelve congregations, representing ten denominations, had been established

¹ The nine new churches with their organizational dates were the following: Welch of Pipetown (1828), East Liberty (1828), First of Allegheny (1830), Northern Liberties (Fourth, 1830), Concord (Carrick, 1831), Third (1833), Birmingham (South Side, 1833), Lawrenceville (1833), Minersville (Seventh, 1833).

throughout these thirty-one years.² During the next ten years, however, the number jumped to thirty-five.³ Some of these congregations rebuilt in order to worship in more imposing sanctuaries.

Many of these new groups of worshipers coöperated zealously in raising the moral and religious character of the community. They joined forces in Sabbath School Associations, Bible and Tract Societies, Temperance Societies, campaigns against vice and dueling and in defense of the Sabbath Day. But on the other hand, the increased potency and pride throughout some of these denominations stimulated sectarian controversy and competitive zeal. The Unitarians and Roman Catholics were objects of frequent attacks and embittered discussion.

Atheism and infidelity also appeared and hurled verbal broadsides against religious customs and recreational restraints. Newspapers took opposing sides in some phases of recurrent controversy and joined with or against the ministers and publicity-seeking propagandists.⁴ Religion in its varied aspects appeared to be both a force and an issue during the major portion of the decade 1825-1835.

This remarkable expansion in the program and institutional facilities of the different denominations was due partly at least to favoring economic conditions. Rapid increases in population, stimulated by the growth in manufacturing and the completion of the canal, broadened the opportunity and presented the need for new places of worship. The financial clouds which had hung low over the community from 1819 to 1821 had parted gradually, revealing the sunshine of prosperity and industrial advance. Money was available for church extension and for more attractive edifices. "Our city, at the present moment," commented a newspaper editorial in

² S. Jones, *Pittsburgh in 1826*, p. 97 f. The following churches are listed: 2 Presbyterians, 2 Methodists, Protestant Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Reformed Presbyterian, Associate Reformed, Associate, German Lutheran, Baptist and Unitarian.

³ *Christian Herald*, January 28, 1832; Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 929.

⁴ Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, pp. 928 ff.

1829, "has better prospects, and more substantial and diversified objects of improvement, wealth and prosperity and a greater certainty of the fulfillment of the hopes and anticipations of the citizens, in relation to its future destiny, than at any former period. We have an active, enterprising population and it is almost exclusively of the laboring and productive kind. It is made up of manufacturers and mechanics. . . . It is often remarked by strangers that they have seen no place so entirely free from drones and loungers as Pittsburgh."⁵ The manufacturing and commercial business of Pittsburgh was estimated to have reached the huge total of \$15,000,000 for the year 1835.

Pittsburgh Presbyterianism was fortunate at that time in having as its two pastors men of distinctive ability and wise leadership. In the previous years of discouragement and struggle, they had laid broad and deep foundations for the years of expansion which were now unfolding. Dr. Herron was in the prime of his long pastorate in the First Church, which extended from 1811-51. Dr. Swift was a younger man who had come to Pittsburgh in 1819 and remained the stimulating consecrated preacher of the Second Presbyterian Church until he resigned in 1833. In a rich variety of ways they served both as churchmen and as community leaders.

Throughout the winter of 1827-28 the diligent labors of these two distinguished pastors were blessed by a remarkable revival which manifested itself almost simultaneously in their churches. It took place under their leadership and was part of the fruitage of previous years of prayer and preaching. The first evidence of spiritual blessing was the response stirred by a sermon which Dr. Herron preached early in December from the text, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years."⁶ A large audience gathered to pray following the service, prompting Dr. Herron to announce that a series of devotional meetings would be held each night during the week.

⁵ Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh*, p. 171 f., quoting from the *Statesman*, August 19, 1829.

⁶ Habakkuk 3:6.

So eagerly did the people attend that these services continued daily, sometimes twice a day, for three or four months.⁷

Interest deepened and attendance increased. The church was crowded nightly even though the weather was rainy and the mud deep in the unlighted and unpaved streets. Similar services were conducted in the Second Presbyterian Church where similar evidence of an earnest interest was manifested.⁸ All phases of the church life were revived as the stirred membership sought opportunities of religious activity. Many new members were received, strengthening the personnel of the two organizations. The lives of many throughout the community were transformed and the zeal of other churches rekindled.⁹

One of the most marked results was the awakened interest in Sabbath School work. The enthusiasm for the Sunday mission schools, which had been a notable feature of the religious life of Pittsburgh five years previously, had gradually ebbed. The formerly vigorous Pittsburgh Sabbath School Association, which had fostered these schools as the coöperative work of the Presbyterians and Methodists, had ceased to function, due to hampering differences of opinion.¹⁰ These disagreements, however, were forgotten in the revived zeal for Sabbath School extension. The coöperative association was reorganized at a well attended rally in the First Presbyterian Church and the work continued under the new name, "The Pittsburgh Sabbath School Union."

Both Presbyterian churches entered aggressively into this task of religious education. They organized and carried forward a steadily expanding chain of mission schools. The first annual report of the Second Presbyterian Church reviewed the achievements of its three schools. One was in the church and had an enrollment of 100 pupils and 16 teachers. Another met in "Patchell's upper rooms," enrolling 115 pupils. The third assembled in the lower room of the Western University of Pittsburgh, where 75 boys and girls met regularly

⁷ Paxton, *Two Discourses upon Dr. Herron*, p. 61.

⁸ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, December 25, 1827.

⁹ *The Spectator*, January 17 and March 13, 1827.

¹⁰ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, October 3, 1826.

for religious instruction and drill in memorizing verses of Scripture.¹¹

The First Presbyterian Church that same year had only two schools with a total enrollment of 170 pupils. But the beneficial influence of the religious revival stirred the members of that church to seek wider opportunities of Sabbath School instruction. Out into the streets and alleys of the city they went to enlist the interest of children who were not attending any school. They visited in the homes and conversed with the parents in an effort to win parental cooperation. In their eagerness to increase attendance, the teachers offered rewards of candy. They called Sabbath mornings at unresponsive homes, assisted in dressing the children and washing their faces and triumphantly led them to some conveniently organized school in that neighborhood.¹²

Persistent zeal of that type could not be defeated. Success was inevitable. Within three years the number of schools under the direct supervision of the First Presbyterian Church was increased steadily to eight schools, and embraced 600 enrolled scholars, with 60 teachers and 17 officers. Every worker was a church member. All the schools except two were equipped with circulating libraries, placing at the disposal of the pupils some 440 religious books.¹³

The crest was reached in 1833, when twelve schools were in full operation with a corps of 121 teachers and officers and 1,212 pupils. It was a remarkable manifestation of missionary enthusiasm and zeal for character development, and represented the services of a very large portion of the entire membership of the church. The First Presbyterian Church at that time had only 422 members, yet from those 422 members a corps of 121 Sunday School workers was enlisted to expound the teaching of the Bible.

Most of these schools had two sessions each Sunday, of an hour and a half in length. The morning session began at nine

¹¹ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, April 17, 1827.

¹² McKnight, *Historical Sketch of the Sabbath Schools of the First Presbyterian Church from 1800-1867*, p. 51.

¹³ *Christian Herald*, April 9, 1831.

and continued until ten-thirty, when the teachers adjourned for the church service. The afternoon session reconvened at one-thirty and closed at three to permit the teachers to handle whatever home chores were necessary before they gathered together for the evening worship at 7 P.M.¹⁴ Since four of these schools were transferred in 1833 to the supervision of the newly organized Third Presbyterian Church, the statistics for the ensuing year are less impressive, but do not indicate any lessened zeal.¹⁵

Among other places, schools were organized on Prospect Hill (also called Arthursville), which was a neighborhood of 600 people, mostly of the lower classes; at Temperanceville, Pipetown (also called Kensington), in a sawmill on Irwin's Alley, and in a woolen mill on Virgin Alley. Some of the schools were strategically located and grew into churches. Others were of a purely missionary character and imparted religious instruction to children in sections of the city which could never support a church or Sabbath School.

Difficulties, testing the ardor and consecration of the teachers and superintendents, had to be surmounted persistently. Since some of the schools met in carpenter shops, cellars or stables, considerable work was necessary to make these barren and dirty rooms somewhat clean and comfortable. Many a time the officers had to leave their homes early in the morning and sweep and dust the unattractive room. They had to carry wood and coal and build fires in order that the children might have a warm and cozy place to meet.¹⁶ A superintendent had to be a man of energy and devotion, or his spirit would have fainted in well-doing.

Valuable volunteers were found among the students in the Western Theological Seminary. This training school for ministers began its sessions in the First Presbyterian Church Sunday School room in 1827, and was transferred four years later to the new building erected in Allegheny. The Seminary

¹⁴ *The Spectator*, May 29, 1828, where detailed program for Sunday Schools is explained.

¹⁵ McKnight, *Historical Sketch*, p. 78 f.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49 f.

directors, in their report to the General Assembly, noted with deep satisfaction that all the men at the Seminary were teaching in one or more of these mission schools, thereby strengthening the resources of the church and receiving helpful training in practical service.¹⁷

Throughout the early years these schools relied chiefly upon memorizing and explaining Scripture as the most effective means of character building. But the scope and methods were gradually broadened. The expressed aim was thus stated in the constitution of the Sunday School Association of the First Presbyterian Church: "The great and sole object of this Association shall be to assist youths of both sexes in such course of instruction as will enable them to read the sacred Scriptures and to induce them to adopt the holy precepts of those Scriptures as the rule of their conduct; and thereby to train up a child in the way he should go."¹⁸

To achieve that purpose, the need of trained teachers was soon apparent. The revival meetings had stirred enthusiasm in the hearts of the volunteer teachers and had deepened their spiritual life and thus had imparted to them the basic equipment for character education. But more specialized training in technique and content of instruction was essential to successful teaching. For that purpose two Teacher Training Classes were organized in the First Presbyterian Church, a class for young ladies taught by Mrs. Harmar Denny, and one for young men with Mr. Joseph Pollock as the teacher.¹⁹ These two pioneer classes, formed in 1831, marked a new epoch in Sabbath School work. It was the initial effort of the Pittsburgh churches to develop an adequate plan for training prospective teachers.

Another forward step had been taken one year earlier in that same church. It was the organization of the first infant department in Western Pennsylvania. In the latter part of May, 1830, a Mr. Bacon, from England, visited Pittsburgh on a tour he was making of the growing cities of the United

¹⁷ *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1830*, p. 49.

¹⁸ McKnight, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

States. He brought with him his daughter and a young man, who served as his assistants. His purpose was to demonstrate the possibilities of a new system he was advocating for teaching children who were too young to read or write. After gathering together a group of children and working with them for several days, he asked permission to use the church for exhibiting what he had already taught these children. Permission was granted and a large audience gathered to witness the novel teaching experiment. In front of the pulpit he erected a stage whereon he had arranged suitably lettered and pictured cards, globes, wooden models of various kinds, cords with little balls or buttons strung upon them, and numerous other educational devices. He then ushered in the tiny tots all dressed in neat apparel. By lecture and actual teaching, he demonstrated his new methods.²⁰

So successful was the exhibit, and such enthusiasm was aroused by it, that a kindergarten class was established by an enterprising public school teacher, and an infant department added to the Sunday School of the First Presbyterian Church. The first annual report showed an attendance of from 80 to 100 pupils, ranging in ages from two years upward. Three other churches immediately organized similar departments and a new phase in Sunday School teaching and program was gloriously inaugurated.²¹

Some of the mission Sabbath Schools formed the nuclei of Presbyterian churches, as the desire for a preaching ministry was gradually awakened. Perhaps the first of the schools to develop into a church was the school which the First Presbyterian Church had organized at Pipetown. Pipetown, or Kensington, as it was more frequently called, was a small settlement of some 390 inhabitants, chiefly of Welsh descent. The village lay along the eastern shore of the Monongahela River, a short distance above Smithfield Street. It had been laid out by Mr. William Price, a rather eccentric old gentleman, who had established there a factory for the purpose of manufacturing clay smoking pipes. It extended up the bluff on

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 69 f.

²¹ *Christian Herald*, April 9, 1831.

which Duquesne University now stands, the low wooden houses sticking to the steep hillside as if by magic.²²

The ties of nationality drew to these Welsh immigrants an unordained preacher, Mr. David Stevens. He had been licensed to preach by the Monmouthshire Association of Whitfieldian Methodists, in the principality of Wales.²³ His fellow countrymen in Pipetown welcomed him gladly when he began to preach in their midst. Soon he had gathered together a small but earnest group of worshipers. He formed them into a church and applied to the Presbytery of Ohio both for ordination as a Presbyterian minister and for the organization of his congregation into a Presbyterian church. The required examinations and prescribed tests were met successfully. On the 7th of November, 1828, Presbytery assembled in the little frame church building which this Welsh congregation had erected. There the members of the Presbytery proceeded to ordain Mr. Stevens and to install him pastor of the newly constituted "Welsh Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh and vicinity." His promised salary was only \$208 a year.²⁴

Mr. Stevens was a strong evangelical preacher in the full vigor of life. He, however, did not remain long in Pipetown. He presented his resignation as pastor on the 15th of October of the following year, in order that he might return to his native land for an extended visit.²⁵ Left without a preacher, the small congregation had to depend upon Sabbath School leaders for religious services until some months later, when Reverend John Joyce agreed to serve as stated supply for a time.

But prosperity never crowned the labors of this small group of Welsh Presbyterians. The church was reported year after year in the minutes of Presbytery but with no statistical information, which would seem to indicate that no new members were being received. Sectarian strife, occasioned by the

²² Comment of Mrs. Ann Royall who visited Pittsburgh in 1828, Warner, *History of Allegheny County*, p. 549.

²³ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1829*, p. 303.

²⁴ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, Vol. IV, p. 140.

²⁵ *Records of Synod of Pittsburgh, 1829*, p. 303; *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, Vol. VI, p. 169.

preaching of one of their own members who had been ordained recently to the Methodist ministry, split the small membership into competing factions and, for a time, almost destroyed its functioning as a Presbyterian church. Presbytery attempted to draw the disputing members into a denominational unity, with but little success.²⁶ Prospects of peace and progress seemed to brighten when the Reverend Evans Martyn, a fellow Welshman, began to preach to the scattered congregation in October, 1832.²⁷ He was an ordained Congregational minister whom Presbytery, after careful examination, enrolled as a member and then appointed him the stated supply at Pipetown.

His ministry, however, was not effective either in promoting harmony or in stimulating growth in membership. Friction manifested itself within a few months. Certain leading members of the church refused to sit with other worshipers at the communion table. Hostility to the pastor stirred gossip and later slanderous statements. Charges of conduct unbecoming a minister were circulated so freely that the Presbytery of Ohio felt that "for the credit of religion they should either be established or refuted."²⁸ A long trial before Presbytery resulted in Mr. Martyn's suspension from the ministry on June 10, 1835, and his permanent withdrawal from the Pittsburgh district.²⁹

The disappointment and discord occasioned by Mr. Martyn's unfortunate failure to reflect honor on the Christian

²⁶ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, November 12, 1830, Vol. VI, p. 16, and January 4, 1831, p. 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 225, where charges are listed.

²⁹ *Ibid.* Trial covers pages 231-244 and 249-256. The charges against Mr. Martyn accused him of indiscreet conduct and remarks in the presence of women on repeated occasions. Witnesses for and against the defendant were heard, but nothing of a serious nature proven. Much of the testimony appeared to be motivated by the hostility of certain disgruntled and discredited members of the church. He was guilty, however, of remarks which tended to weaken his influence for righteousness throughout the community, and Presbytery regarded him as a hindrance to the cause of religion and "suspended him from the exercise of his ministerial functions until evidence of penitence and reformation is afforded and the sentiments of the religious public be so strongly in his favor, as to demand his restoration." *Ibid.*, p. 256.

ministry was a severe blow to Presbyterian prestige in Pipetown. The congregation never regained its vitality or its optimism. No further efforts were made to call a pastor. The church gradually faded from the official records of the denomination. Religious activity was limited almost entirely to the Sabbath School. Under the sponsorship of the First Presbyterian Church, that agency of character development was sustained for many years. Tragedy at last overwhelmed the school and church. The church building was destroyed in the great fire which devastated Pittsburgh on the 10th of April, 1845, and which almost wiped out the suburb of Pipetown.³⁰ Since no other suitable building could be secured and since the title to the ground on which the burned church had stood was somewhat in dispute, the project was reluctantly abandoned.³¹ The fire was more destructive than even the discouragements of two decades.

But the mission Sunday School which blossomed forth into a Presbyterian church in the Northern Liberties was more lasting and produced a more extensive harvest over a longer period. The Sunday School had been established some time previous to 1828 in a schoolhouse and was one of the educational projects of the Second Presbyterian Church. Northern Liberties, or Bayardstown, as it was more familiarly known, was laid out by George Bayard in 1816. It had a population of about 800 when it was incorporated as a borough in the year 1829.³² Eight years later it was merged with Pittsburgh, forming the Fifth Ward. It stretched out along the Allegheny River and joined Pittsburgh at about Twelfth Street.

In the borough schoolhouse, Sabbath School was conducted each week. When visiting ministers were available, services of worship were held without denominational discrimination. One of the Presbyterian ministers who preached occasionally was Reverend Allan D. Campbell. He had made his home in Pittsburgh since 1828 and was one of the leaders in developing the Western Theological Seminary at Allegheny. His

³⁰ Killikelly, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 187.

³¹ McKnight, *Historical Sketch of the Sabbath Schools*, p. 90.

³² Warner, *History of Allegheny County*, pp. 549, 625.

visit to Scotland and England in 1829 had resulted in securing some 2,000 volumes as the foundation of a library in that new institution.³³ He was now free to seek a favorable opportunity to gather together a congregation of worshipers.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1830 he devoted much of his time to the visiting of families in the borough of Northern Liberties and seeking to interest them in organizing a church in that community. The response was not very encouraging, but he persisted in his preaching and pastoral visitation and Sunday School work. Late in the autumn of that year he succeeded in organizing a few families into a Presbyterian church and served them as their part-time pastor.³⁴ A little over a year later he was installed officially in the full-time duties of the pastorate of that church. The installation services on the second Thursday of October were presided over by Dr. Swift, who was asked to deliver the customary charge to both pastor and people. The other Pittsburgh pastor, Dr. Herron, preached the sermon.³⁵

The little group could muster only thirty members, yet they began the task of gathering funds to erect a church building. It was a very modest structure they were attempting to build with their own resources and with the generous assistance of the pastor and a few Pittsburgh friends. Their hopes appeared about to be realized as the building neared completion. November 4, 1832, was set as the date for the opening services.³⁶ The plastering was finished and the pews were being placed when heavy and long continued rains loosened the hillside in which the building stood. The sliding ground tore the completed structure from its foundation and so twisted it that the walls and ceiling collapsed. Their labors and sacrifice seemed in vain.

But the struggling congregation, which had now grown to a membership of fifty, refused to be disheartened. Another

³³ A. D. Campbell, *The Founding and Early History of the Western Theological Seminary*, p. 82. *Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary*, October, 1927.

³⁴ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, October 26, 1830, p. 12.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, October, 1831, p. 53.

³⁶ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, November 3, 1832.

lot was purchased on the corner of Sixteenth and Penn Avenue and the task of building started anew. Appeals for aid from their Presbyterian brethren in Pittsburgh brought sufficient contributions to justify the erection of a larger structure.³⁷ The rebuilt edifice was dedicated September 14, 1834, but with a hampering debt that could only be slowly liquidated.³⁸

The congregation increased steadily year by year. In 1837 a membership of 150 was reported and the prospects of future expansion seemed promising. But that same year, on October 5th, their popular pastor resigned in order that he might devote his full energies to the Western Theological Seminary, where he had been asked to serve as both instructor and financial agent.³⁹ For more than a year the pulpit was filled only by supply preachers and the congregation dwindled until a successor to Dr. Campbell was chosen.

The new pastor was Reverend Algernon S. MacMaster. He had come to Pittsburgh from the Presbytery of Albany, New York, early in January, 1839, and had preached frequently in the Fourth Church as an acceptable supply minister. The meager resources of the congregation did not at first appeal to him, and no special effort was made to call him as the regular pastor. Some months later, however, he appeared more responsive and asked to be enrolled as a member of the Ohio Presbytery. A call for his services was then presented and, on the 12th of May, he was installed as the second pastor of the Fourth Church. On that impressive occasion Dr. Herron preached and Dr. Campbell, the former pastor, charged both the congregation and his successor.⁴⁰ The resulting pastoral relationship was of comparatively short duration and terminated June 22, 1842.⁴¹ No special success had crowned the labors of Mr. MacMaster, though he was held in high esteem by his brethren who honored him with the responsibilities of Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. Throughout the three years of his ministry, the church never fully regained the membership it

³⁷ *Ibid.*, June 1 and June 22, 1833.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, September 13, 1834.

³⁹ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, October 5, 1837, p. 62.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 152.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

had acquired when its preceding pastor closed his work in that congregation. The borough of Northern Liberties was now part of the city of Pittsburgh and the name of the church was changed to that of the Fourth Presbyterian Church.⁴²

Previous to the organization of this church in the Northern Liberties (the Fifth Ward of Pittsburgh) in 1831, two other Presbyterian churches were organized in boroughs adjacent to downtown Pittsburgh, a church in East Liberty and one in Allegheny. The reader will recall the story, in a previous chapter, of the slow development of a Presbyterian congregation at Allegheny into the First Presbyterian Church of that borough in June, 1830, the fruitage of sixteen years of preaching.⁴³ The East Liberty Presbyterian congregation had a somewhat similarly retarded growth. Many years of patient and obscure effort passed before the struggling congregation was lifted into an officially organized church.

Perhaps the actual beginnings can be dated as early as 1790, when Alexander Negley began inviting his Pittsburgh pastor to preach occasionally at his farmhouse. Mr. Negley had moved into the East Liberty valley in the year 1778 and was one of the first permanent settlers. He was a man of piety and had assisted in the organization of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh in 1782. Indian raids in outlying sections during the fall of 1790 brought the harassed settlers to the home of Mr. Negley, seeking means of protection both human and divine. The presence of these visiting neighbors seemed a splendid opportunity for a religious service and prompted Mr. Negley to urge his pastor, Reverend Samuel Barr, to ride out to his East Liberty farm and preach to his neighbors.⁴⁴ The invitation was accepted. Services

⁴² *Ibid.*, April 20, 1937, p. 50. The church is now located on Friendship Avenue and Roup Street near East Liberty. Several mergers and changes of location have marked its history. The recorded membership in 1937 was 398.

⁴³ See Chapter IX of this volume.

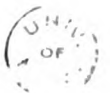
⁴⁴ Georgina G. Negley, "Prelude and Threads of History." It is a historical statement drawn from family records by the great-great-granddaughter of Mr. Negley. Printed in *East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 1819-1919*, p. 6, Pittsburgh, 1919.



Courtesy East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

THE NEGLEY MANSION

Erected in 1808. Site of the first religious services



were held at monthly intervals, but were soon interrupted by Mr. Barr's withdrawal from Pittsburgh.

They, however, had continued long enough to enable Mr. Negley's son, Jacob, to appreciate the charms of Barbara Winebiddle, a neighbor's twelve-year-old daughter. The budding romance culminated in their marriage five years later and the establishment of their home on North Negley and Stanton Avenue. When in 1808 Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Negley erected the Negley Mansion, they bought a portable pulpit so that their spacious living-room could more easily be made to resemble a church, where they and their neighbors could gather to hear whatever itinerating ministers were available.⁴⁵

To better promote the educational and religious interests of the little community of farmers, Mr. Negley built at his own expense, upon part of the ground where the East Liberty Presbyterian Church now stands, a comfortable frame school-house. Here his own and his neighbors' children received the fundamentals of an education. Here services of worship were conducted as often as the meager opportunities to secure the services of visiting ministers of various denominations presented themselves.⁴⁶

On November 18, 1818, Mr. Negley led his neighbors in a community effort to raise funds to erect a church building. Eighty-nine subscribers made donations ranging from one hundred dollars to three dollars. A total of \$1,561.62½ was received. The following spring, he and Mrs. Negley deeded to an elected board of trustees the conveniently located site on the corner of Penn and Highland Avenue where the present church now stands. The generous gift was dated April 12, 1819, and read: "The lot of one and a half acres of land granted by Jacob Negley shall be invested in the President and Trustees and their successors for the use and behoof of the said East Liberty Congregation for a meeting house, School House and Graveyard and no other purpose whatever."⁴⁷ Upon this donated property a brick meeting house,

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11 and 13.

forty-four feet square, was erected. "The hipped roof was supported by an ornamental pillar which ran up through the center of the building and terminated in a pinnacle above the roof." ⁴⁸

It was a much more elaborate edifice than could be erected for the sum originally subscribed. Expenditures exceeded the money on hand even when only the outer structure was completed. Mr. Negley loaned sufficient money to complete the building, but the inside furnishings were crude and temporary. Benches without backs formed the homemade pews and furnished the only available seating accommodations for the people who gathered for the services of worship, which were held at irregular intervals to hear visiting Presbyterian, Methodist and Lutheran ministers.

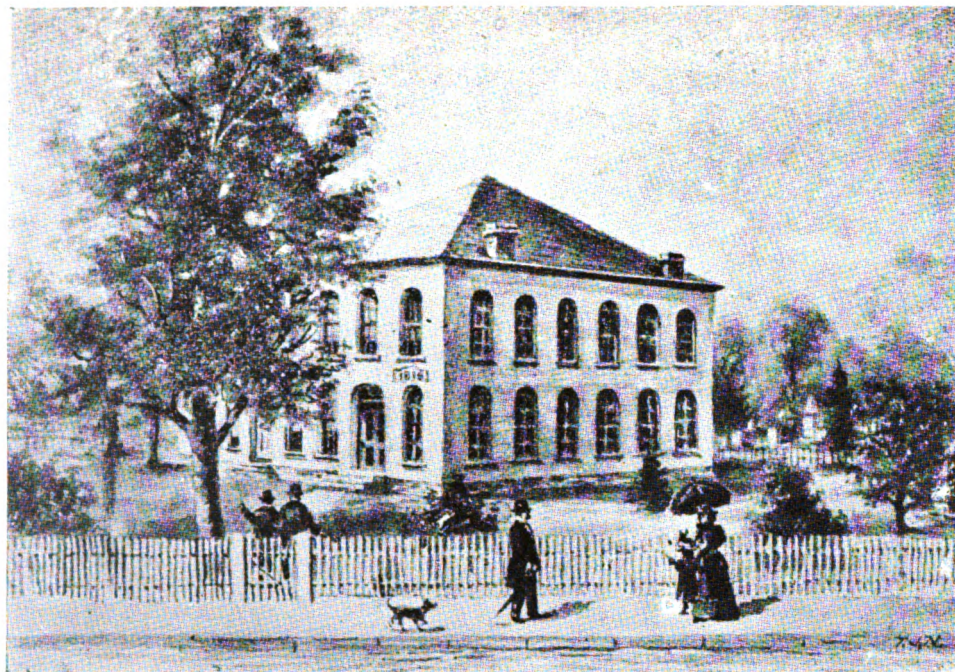
Without a formal church organization, without a pastor or even regular services, with only the most meager financial resources, the little congregation struggled to maintain itself until more favorable opportunities would develop. East Liberty at that time, and in the years which immediately followed, was an undeveloped community of broad farms, surrounding a small village of twenty houses, three taverns, one small store and a steam mill.⁴⁹ The chief occupation, besides farming, was furnishing food and refreshment for the draymen and travelers who passed along the East Liberty pike as they journeyed to and from Pittsburgh, which was about five miles distant.

But the possibilities of constructive religious service in that settlement of farmers and innkeepers appealed to the Reverend John Joyce. He was an unmarried Presbyterian clergyman, whom the Presbyterian Board of Missions on February 8, 1828, had commissioned "to publish the Gospel and administer the ordinances in the neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at discretion."⁵⁰ Previously he had served ten years

⁴⁸ William G. Johnston, "Historical Address," delivered September 30, 1888. *East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 1819-1919*, p. 80.

⁴⁹ *Pittsburgh Recorder*, March 1, 1825.

⁵⁰ John Gillespie, "Historical Sermon," delivered September 28, 1873, bound together with other historical data in *East Liberty Presbyterian Church*, p. 41.



Courtesy East Liberty Presbyterian Church

FIRST BUILDING OF THE EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
In use from 1819-1848



as a missionary throughout the South and had developed an evangelistic type of preaching which fitted him for successful pioneer work. His dramatic delivery and skill in approaching people soon drew the people to regular worship in the unfinished meeting house. A canvass of the community revealed the spiritual eagerness of a small number of Presbyterians, several of whom had recently moved into East Liberty from the First and Second Presbyterian churches of Pittsburgh.

One of these newer residents, Mr. Francis G. Bailey, had been greatly stirred by the notable revival in the First Presbyterian Church. He was convinced that sufficient interest had already been created to justify the organization of a Presbyterian Church. He assisted Mr. Joyce in securing the signatures of a group of Presbyterians to a petition which was presented to Redstone Presbytery April 1, 1828.⁵¹ The petition, requesting Presbytery to organize a Presbyterian Church in East Liberty, met with the approval of most of the Presbyters, but also with the stern opposition of the Beulah Church, which was located about five miles farther east, just beyond Wilksburg. This old but rather small church of 160 members felt that another Presbyterian Church so near would divide the resources of the Presbyterians residing between those two churches and thus seriously hamper the proper development of the Beulah Church. Presbytery, however, after due deliberation, decided the field was large enough and sufficiently removed from neighboring Presbyterian churches to justify the organization of another congregation. A committee was appointed to arrange the necessary details.⁵²

It was an earnest band of Presbyterians who responded to the call of Mr. Joyce for an organizational meeting September 28, 1828. In all, twenty-two certificates were presented, eleven from the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, six from the Second Church, two from Bethany, one from McKeesport, and two from the Associate Reformed Church of Pittsburgh. Mr. Robert Bailey, James Backhouse and Francis

⁵¹ *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, p. 374.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 374.

G. Bailey were elected the first elders.⁵³ Additional names were soon added to the roll, including seven from the Beulah Church, justifying somewhat the exaggerated fears of the pastor of that church.

With the organizational work completed and the building renovated with more comfortable benches in place of the rough logs, Mr. Joyce felt that he had finished his missionary task in East Liberty and withdrew in the spring of 1829 to seek similar opportunities of establishing churches in other parts of the Pittsburgh district. But the spiritual needs of the little congregation at East Liberty were still uppermost in his thought. At the meeting of the General Assembly in Philadelphia, he and Dr. Herron were discussing the possibility of securing a capable man to serve as a missionary in East Liberty. While in consultation with Dr. Ely, secretary of the Board, Reverend W. B. McIlvaine was approached. Mr. McIlvaine thus relates the incident which was to result in his lifelong pastorate in the East Liberty Presbyterian Church:

Dr. Ely at once spoke up and said, "Here is your man," and introduced me to Dr. Herron and Mr. Joyce. In a few minutes a commission was made out and handed to me. After the Assembly closed I went home to Lancaster County and made a hasty preparation and mounted my horse with my wardrobe and library in my saddle bags and started on a journey of more than 250 miles to East Liberty, where I arrived on the 25th of June, 1829. The people received me very kindly, and then and there began my ministerial life work of forty years. After a few Sabbaths a call was made out for my services and the commission as missionary under the Board of Domestic Missions was returned. The salary at that time was \$500.⁵⁴

The call, however, was not presented to Redstone Presbytery, which had organized this new church at East Liberty,

⁵³ John Gillespie, "Historical Sermon, September 28, 1873," where he quotes from the Session book of the minute dated September 28, 1828, *East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 1819-1919*. The present pastor of the church, Dr. Hutchison, reports that all the original records of the Session and Trustees previous to 1840 have been lost, although diligent search has been made to locate them.

⁵⁴ Letter of Reverend W. B. McIlvaine to Dr. Kumler, printed in *East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 1819-1919*, p. 87.



Courtesy East Liberty Presbyterian Church
REVEREND WILLIAM B. McILVAINE, D.D.
First Pastor of the East Liberty Presbyterian Church.
Served June, 1829–April, 1870



but to the Presbytery of Ohio which was to exercise jurisdiction over the churches in the Pittsburgh district. That Presbytery on April 20, 1830, ordained and installed the Reverend William B. McIlvaine in his first and only pastoral charge.⁵⁵ The church for that year reported a membership of seventy-three. Two years later the number reached a total of 118, which increased year by year until in 1840 the church could claim a membership roll of 133 communicants.⁵⁶ That was the high point for almost a decade. The community grew but slowly and remained a rural village supporting a church whose gifts and opportunities of service were quite restricted. But the completion of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1853 was followed by a rapid increase in population and the development of a thriving business and residential center. The church grew with the community and is now one of the outstanding Presbyterian churches in Western Pennsylvania.⁵⁷

The fifth Presbyterian Church to be organized during the decade of expansion from 1825 to 1835 was the church at Carrick, called the Concord Presbyterian Church. Like the East Liberty Church, it can trace its earliest beginning to the pastoral diligence of one of the Pittsburgh ministers. The germinating impulse was the preaching of Dr. Swift of the Second Church. He welcomed the invitation, offered by one of his members who resided in that rural section, to preach in his home at convenient intervals for several years.⁵⁸ As with the East Liberty Church, its organization also was opposed by older rural churches some distance away, which feared that the formation of another neighboring Presbyterian church might result in disastrous intra-denominational competition.

Hon. William Wilkins, a member of the State Legislature and a generous and faithful member of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, had agreed to donate a suitable lot

⁵⁵ *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, p. 319.

⁵⁶ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, Vol. VI, p. 77; Vol. VII, p. 207.

⁵⁷ In 1937 the East Liberty Church reported a net membership of 2,420 with total gifts of \$158,608.00 for the current year. *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1937*, p. 761.

⁵⁸ E. P. Swift, "A Discourse on the Fortieth Anniversary," p. 23, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

along the Brownsville Road. His offer was willingly accepted by the Presbyterian residents in that community, who then presented a petition to Ohio Presbytery for the privilege of being organized into a church.⁵⁹ Presbytery deemed the petition worthy of careful study and appointed a committee to investigate and take such action as seemed wise. Strong protests were offered by the adjoining Presbyterian congregations at Lebanon and Mt. Pisgah, but equally strong pleas were made by the people at Carrick for the organization of a more conveniently located church.⁶⁰ The affirmative argument appeared to be the more convincing. Necessary delays, however, followed, while Presbytery deliberated diplomatic procedure and a conveniently selected site. But, at length, on June 19, 1832, Presbytery officially commissioned Dr. Herron and Reverend Mr. Baird to organize into a Presbyterian Church the Concord congregation consisting of thirty members.⁶¹ No longer would it be necessary for the Presbyterians residing in that section to take the long irksome journey to Pittsburgh or even farther to the rural churches of Lebanon, Bethel or Mt. Pisgah.

In the meantime building plans for the new place of worship had moved forward rapidly. Even before the congregation was formally organized, the church building was erected so that both organization and dedication could take place on the same day.⁶² The completed edifice was ready for use the latter part of May, 1832, and housed a happy group of worshippers, when Presbytery, with impressive ceremony, organized and enrolled the new Presbyterian church. It was the visible answer to the prayers and pledges of thirty earnest people who had expressed their purposes in these words: "We, the afternamed subscribers, being deeply impressed with the importance and necessity of having ye public worship of God established and his ordinances administered among us, do hereby agree to associate together for the above purpose."⁶³

⁵⁹ Minutes of Ohio Presbytery, June 21, 1831, pp. 44, 46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55, October 5, 1831.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 95.

⁶² I. K. McElroy, "Historical Address," p. 2. Mrs. McElroy is a daughter of Reverend James Kirk, an early pastor of the church.

⁶³ Minutes of the Concord Presbyterian Church, p. 1.

The formal organization of the church was completed with the election and ordination of the first group of elders. The men selected by the congregation for that responsibility were John Wilson, Robert Williamson and William Kerr. By the hands of Presbytery they were consecrated to that office on the fourth Sabbath of July, 1832.⁶⁴

But the sacrifices which had made possible the prompt erection of a church building had depleted the financial resources of this little group of farmers. For the next eight years they were unable to raise sufficient money to attempt the support of a pastor and so were dependent upon Presbytery for preaching services. During those years of slow progress, Presbytery attempted to maintain regular services of worship by appointing theological students and newly ordained ministers to preach for periods varying in length from six months to two years.

Mr. Alexander B. Brown was the first of these student preachers to be assigned to Concord. He was appointed October 2, 1832, to serve for six months.⁶⁵ His work proved so acceptable that the members petitioned Presbytery to continue him as their preacher and promised to contribute as much as possible to his support. Their request was granted and Mr. Smith was asked to preach at both Concord and the newly formed congregation at Birmingham. Mr. Brown was then ordained and remained in those two feeble fields until the summer of 1834, when he transferred his membership to another Presbytery.⁶⁶ His period of service was the most regular and the longest continued of the various supply preachers who were appointed by Presbytery to minister to the spiritual needs of the Concord congregation during the subsequent years of slow growth.

No membership statistics for those years are available nor are any reports of the effectiveness of the ministry of men who, like the Reverend Messrs. Timothy Alden, Thomas Galt and John Jones, served for brief periods. That the church

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁵ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, Vol. VI, p. 99.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

had grown both in resources and in faith appeared evident in the desire of the congregation to secure its own preachers and finally in the determination to invite the Reverend Samuel Henderson to serve as the first pastor. The eight years of pastorless growth terminated in the call presented to Presbytery on the sixth of October, 1840, and in the willingness of Mr. Henderson to accept the new responsibility.⁶⁷ He had resigned just a few months previously from the pastoral oversight of the near-by congregation at Lebanon.⁶⁸ His work during those years had brought him into contact with many of the members of the Concord Church, who now welcomed the opportunity afforded by his resignation at Lebanon to secure the benefit of his preaching and leadership.

The little congregation could offer their pastor an annual salary of but \$400.⁶⁹ The membership was still small, numbering less than sixty-five. But Mr. Henderson felt that the call presented an opportunity of appreciated service. He was sixty years old when on October 20, 1840, he was installed pastor of the Concord Church. For eight years he labored faithfully until his failing health prompted him to present his resignation on April 18, 1848.⁷⁰ The recorded membership during those years had reached a total of only 112. Carrick was still a rural church and so remained for many years until Pittsburgh's expanding suburban development transformed the village community into a thickly populated section of the city.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁶⁹ Minutes of Concord Presbyterian Church, p. 14.

⁷⁰ Minutes of Synod, Vol. V, p. 485. He died on October 17, 1856, in the 76th year of his age.

The obituary notice contained these brief biographical facts: "This aged father was a native of Ireland. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbyterian Church of Ireland in 1806; ordained by the same body to the ministry in 1808. He emigrated to this country in 1809 and spent the greater part of his ministry in Wilmington, Delaware, in Williamsport, Pa., and in Lebanon and Concord, near Pittsburgh." Printed in the *Presbyterian Banner and Advocate*, January 24, 1857.

⁷¹ The membership of the church in 1937 was 1,288. *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1937*, p. 761.

CHAPTER XII

THE CREST OF EXPANSION AND DIVISIVE CONTROVERSY

The decade of expansion, which had thus witnessed the establishment of these five additional Presbyterian churches within the corporate limits of the present city of Pittsburgh, reached its crest in 1833. During that one year alone, four new churches were organized, raising the total to eleven Presbyterian churches. The new churches, formed in 1833, were the Third Presbyterian, Birmingham (South Side), Minersville (Herron Hill) and Lawrenceville. Of these, the Third Presbyterian, located in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh on the corner of Third Avenue and Ferry Street, was the largest and most successful. Its organization was the direct result of the renewed religious revival in the First Church which had enlarged the membership and stimulated the enthusiasm of those who worshiped in the oldest of the Pittsburgh churches.

The revival of 1827, which had borne notable fruitage in the multiplication of mission Sunday Schools and in quickened zeal for religious activity, had gradually expended itself. Pittsburgh Presbyterians had settled down to a normal program of work and worship. But in 1832 the fervor of revivalism was again manifested. Dr. Herron had returned recently from a series of evangelistic services which he had been conducting for a brother minister in the neighboring Presbytery of Erie.¹ His own soul was aflame as he preached to his people. He felt moved to attempt similar services in his own church.

Dr. Swift was ready to cooperate heartily. The two ministers arranged simultaneous services in their churches. The daily meetings grew in interest. Many came forward to confess their sins and to seek personal prayer for their forgiveness.² The sudden death of the venerable Reverend Joseph

¹ Paxton, *Two Discourses upon Dr. Herron*, p. 65.

² *Christian Herald*, February 4, 1832, and March 24, 1832.

Patterson deepened the solemnity of these protracted meetings. He had been attending each night and had frequently lifted his voice in prayer and exhortation. The evening of his death he had remained upon his knees unusually long and had to be lifted from his devotions. The announcement that his earthly labors were over cast an expectant hush upon many who gathered for the revival services. Words of testimony and invitation were thus given added effectiveness. The fruitage of these meetings appeared in greater fidelity to all the services of the church and in eighty-two additions to the church membership.³

Though the meetings closed, the renewed earnestness of the members did not fade. It was quickened further by an epidemic of cholera which was soon to bring many people throughout the city to God in repeated prayer for divine protection. The dread disease occasioned great alarm among the residents of Pittsburgh. Aggressive efforts were put forth by the Sanitary Board and by the physicians to check the deadly malady which had taken the lives of many in other cities.⁴

Leaders of various denominations gathered in the First Presbyterian Church for united prayer and conference. Friday, July 6th, was set apart as a "day of fasting, humiliation and prayer," throughout the city and adjoining boroughs. The people were urged "to suspend with one accord their ordinary avocations on that day, to close their offices and shops and to meet together in their customary places of worship, and thus exhibit in public and in private the spectacle of the whole community humbling itself under the mighty hand of God and beseeching him to interpose his help in this time of need."⁵ The leading pastors interpreted the plague as one of God's punishments for sin and as a means of calling people and nations to repentance.⁶

Reverend John W. Nevin, professor at Western Theological Seminary, preached to a thronged gathering of Presbyterians. He declared with great earnestness: "Emphatically the cholera

³ Paxton, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁴ Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 621.

⁵ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, June 30, 1832.

⁶ *Ibid.*, September 22, 1832, and later issues.

has been a scourge, employed by the Almighty himself, for the chastisement of the nations, and every stroke with which it has lighted upon their population has been by his immediate direction. Whatever the cause may be, he has had a controversy with the inhabitants of the earth and has been moving personally among them with terrible judgments."⁷ Mr. Nevin concluded with a stirring call for repentance and a community-wide revival, emphasizing that even the righteous are often called upon to suffer for the sins of their fellowmen. The warning of his words was painfully illustrated in the death of the beloved Reverend Joseph Stockton who was fatally stricken while visiting Baltimore on an errand of mercy.⁸

The same week the youngest son of Dr. Swift was numbered among the victims of the dread disease. Sympathy united the hearts of Presbyterians throughout the city and drew them together in more earnest prayer. They felt anew the frailty of life. They sought the comforting power of a heavenly Father. They were challenged to personal soul-examination. The prayers of the city seemed answered in the mildness of the epidemic as compared with conditions in other cities and in the speedy termination of its ravages with less than thirty victims.⁹ Joy and thanksgiving found expression in worship and in a desire to add to the effectiveness of the Christian Church. Out of tribulation had come a more intensive search for spiritual blessing and purified and chastened character.

When, during the following year, the epidemic reappeared the community again sought protection in prayer. On June 10, 1833, a large gathering of members of the different churches and various denominations heard Dr. Herron lead in earnest prayer. Resolutions were adopted setting aside Thursday evening of each week for special prayer in all the churches to thank God for the comparative mildness of the epidemic and to beseech His continued blessing.¹⁰ The Pittsburgh dis-

⁷ *Ibid.*, July 28, 1832.

⁸ *Ibid.*, November 10, 1832.

⁹ Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 621.

¹⁰ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, June 15, 1833.

tract had a population of over 20,000, yet only about forty-four deaths were recorded.¹¹ By August 3rd, no new cases had appeared. The epidemic was over.

The joyous announcement was the appropriate occasion for a united service of thanksgiving in the First Presbyterian Church. Resolutions, presented by a committee of which Dr. Herron was the chairman, were adopted unanimously. It was resolved that "the second Thursday of October next be set apart for the service and worship of Almighty God, as a day of thanksgiving for his great mercy in the lenient visitation of the late pestilential disease, and by his kind Providence, for its present removal altogether, so that we may say, to the praise of his name, our city is healthy as in times past, and our streets are free from complaint."¹²

It was out of this period of prolonged revival, repeated prayer and grateful thanksgiving that the Third Presbyterian Church was born. Dr. Herron believed that his church, which had received some 114 additions in membership through the spiritual quickening of the city, was now growing past the point of greatest efficiency. He felt that the religious life of Pittsburgh would be quickened if a group of his more capable young members would withdraw and organize another coöperating Presbyterian church in the heart of the city.¹³ Accordingly, early in January, 1833, a little group, gathered from both the First and Second Churches, presented to the Presbytery of Ohio a request to be organized into a church to be known as the "Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh." They also asked that Mr. Riley, a young unordained man, be permitted to supply them for a time. Both requests were granted. Dr. Herron, Reverend E. P. Swift and Reverend A. D. Campbell were appointed a committee to develop a formal organization.¹⁴ That task was completed March 19,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, July 9 and 20, 1833, quoting figures of the Board of Consulting Physicians.

¹² *Ibid.*, September 28, 1833.

¹³ D. H. Riddle, "Historical Address," *Dedicatory Services of the New Edifice of the Third Presbyterian Church*, p. 34, Pittsburgh, 1869.

¹⁴ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, p. 108.

1833.¹⁵ Thirty-six members representing eighteen families comprised the new congregation, which worshiped for a time in the old Court House under the leadership of Mr. Riley.

But this aggressive group of capable workers were not to remain long without a church or a pastor. Within a week after their organization as a church they purchased, at a cost of \$10,000, a lot on the corner of Third and Ferry Streets. Ground for a large impressive church was broken almost immediately. Three weeks later the corner-stone was laid. Late in the fall the basement was ready for use and the congregation moved from the Court House.¹⁶

With equal promptness a pastor was called. By a fortunate coincidence the Reverend David H. Riddle was passing through Pittsburgh to visit his mother in Wheeling. In a chance meeting with Dr. Herron and two or three members of the new church, an invitation was extended to Mr. Riddle to preach in Pittsburgh upon his return from Wheeling. His message was so acceptable that he was called unanimously on June 24, 1833.¹⁷

Mr. Riddle was a Virginian by birth and ministerial experience, but a Pennsylvanian by education.¹⁸ He had graduated from Jefferson College at the early age of eighteen years. Ten years of further study and ministerial experience in Winchester, Virginia, had developed his keen mind and fired his spiritual enthusiasm. The church, which he had served throughout a pastorate of four years, had been merged the year previously with the larger church at Winchester, leaving him in a subordinate capacity to Dr. William Hill.¹⁹ The call to develop a new church in the growing city of Pittsburgh appealed to him as a wider opportunity of service for a young aggressive preacher. He accepted and began on October 22,

¹⁵ Minutes of the Third Presbyterian Church, p. 1. The minutes from March 19, 1833, to January, 1863, are complete and comprise Vol. I.

¹⁶ *The Pastoral of the Third Presbyterian Church*, p. 2. June, 1833, Pittsburgh.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Third Presbyterian Church, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Presbyterian Encyclopædia*, p. 766. Presbyterian Publishing Company (Philadelphia, 1884).

¹⁹ W. H. Foote, *Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical*, p. 477, Second Series, Philadelphia (1855).

1833, a notable pastorate, which was to cover a creative period of more than twenty-three years and which was to lift both the church and pastor into honored recognition throughout the entire denomination.²⁰

The installation service, which took place on the fifteenth of January, marked the happy union of a brilliant consecrated preacher and an energetic resourceful congregation.²¹ The original membership was small, only thirty-six people, yet it included men and women who had served effectively in other churches and who were willing to consecrate to the Lord's service the first fruits of their financial prosperity and their mental endowment. They promised their first pastor an initial salary of \$1,000 a year to be paid in semi-annual installments.²²

A rapid and almost phenomenal success marked the early years of coöperative activity of pastor and people. At the first meeting of the session, following the installation service, thirty-six new members were received, from other churches.²³ Two others were welcomed by confession of faith. To these were added a few weeks later seven others who formerly had been members of the Presbyterian churches and one who made his first profession of faith. Thus the total membership had been more than doubled. Their combined resources enabled the energetic group to conduct not only their own Sunday School but three other missionary schools which had previously been the responsibility of the First Church.²⁴ Two of these schools were located in the downtown section of the

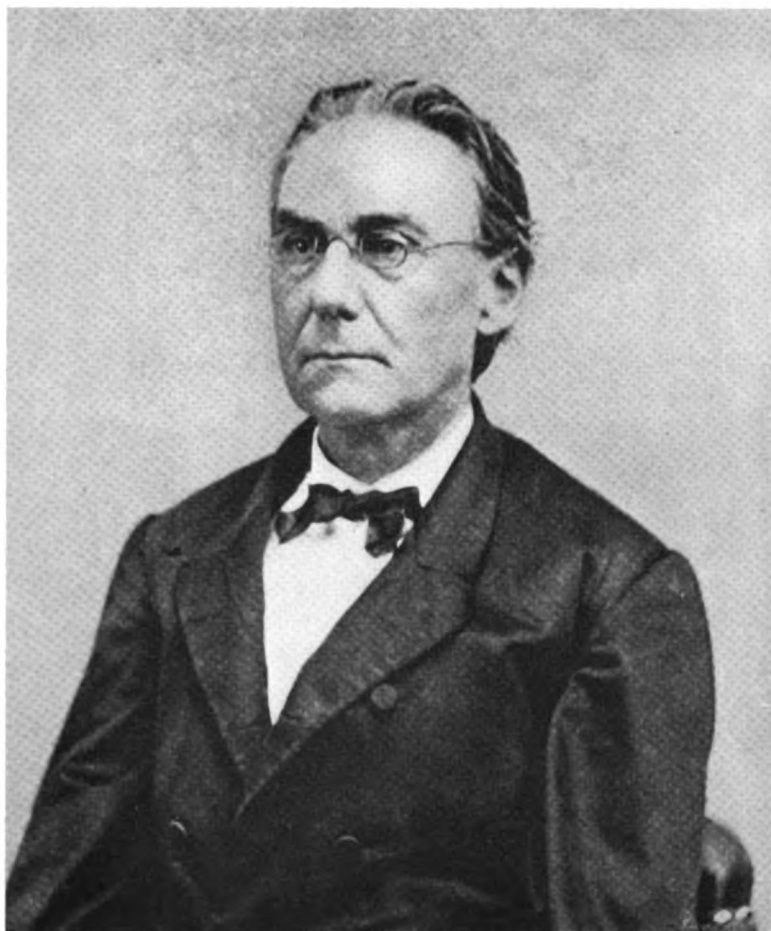
²⁰ During his Pittsburgh pastorate, Dr. Riddle received many honors and was entrusted with important phases of denominational leadership, including the moderatorship of the General Assembly (New School) in 1850. He resigned March 19, 1857, in order to accept a call to the Reformed Dutch Church of Jersey City. Subsequently he served as president of Jefferson College (1862-65), as professor in that college (1865-68), and as pastor of Martinsburg, West Virginia (1868-1879). The Third Church, at the time of his resignation in 1857, had grown to a membership of 283. In 1937 the recorded membership was 1,843 and a total contribution for the year of \$160,137. *Presbyterian Encyclopædia*, p. 766, and *Minutes of the General Assembly, 1857 and 1937*.

²¹ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, p. 160.

²² *Minutes of the Third Presbyterian Church*, p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁴ McKnight, *Historical Sketch of the Sabbath Schools*, p. 79.



Courtesy Third Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

REVEREND DAVID H. RIDDLE, D.D.
First Pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church
January 15, 1834–March 19, 1857

city, one on the corner of Penn and Marbury Streets, and the other on Second Street, between Wood and Smithfield Streets. The third school had been established in Temperanceville (now West End), and sought to bring religious training to the children whose parents were employed there in the Pittsburgh Glass Works.²⁵

But the most remarkable achievement was the rapid completion of what was then the most commodious and beautiful Protestant place of worship in Pittsburgh. Its construction heralded the dawn of a new era in the architectural tastes of Pittsburgh churchmen. The basement was ready for use in December, 1833, less than nine months after the congregation had been organized. Eight months later the complete structure, which had been erected at a cost of \$25,000, was dedicated with appropriate ceremony. That sum of money may now seem small to subsequent generations, which have seen splendid cathedrals rise in Pittsburgh, but in 1834 it meant heroic efforts and loyal sacrifice. "The cost," explained Dr. Riddle, "was unexpectedly great and involved perplexing financial questions, which were all manfully met and overcome. The church was a noble monument of the zeal and self-sacrifice of the congregation . . . who gave of their ability and even beyond. The people had a mind to work, both in temporal and spiritual labors."²⁶

Very appropriately Dr. Herron, whose generous spirit had sent forth some of his most capable members to establish this Third Presbyterian Church, was asked to preach the opening sermon and pronounce the benediction upon the completion of a labor he had watched and encouraged. The solemn services of dedication, which took place on September 21st, set apart for the worship of God a beautiful building with a seating capacity of 800 on the main floor and 400 in the galleries.²⁷ It was an impressive brick structure, covered with cement,

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²⁶ D. H. Riddle, "Historical Address," *Dedicatory Services of the New Edifice*, p. 36. Pittsburgh, 1869.

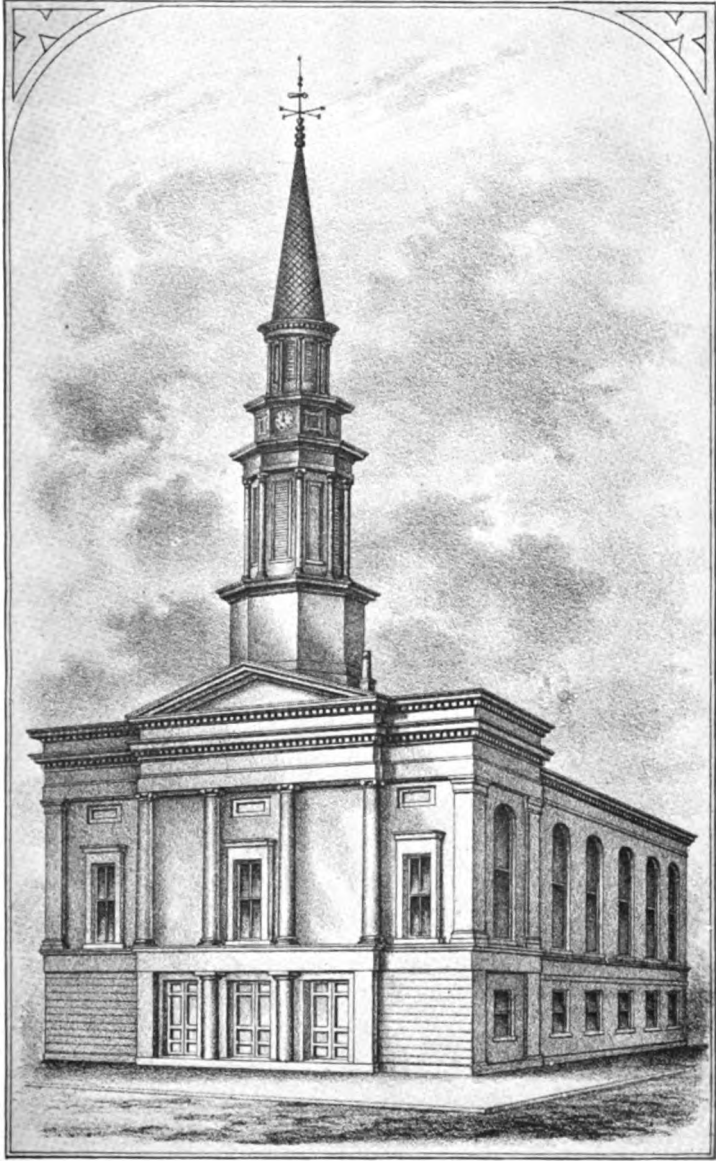
²⁷ *The Third Presbyterian Church, A Century's History, 1833-1933*, p. 20, Pittsburgh, 1933. Also, *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, September 20, 1834.

and fronted 67 feet on Third Street, extending back 97 feet on Ferry Street. Columns of Grecian Doric design adorned the entrances and supported a broad frieze and cornice. The first floor contained a large lecture room, 40 by 63 feet, and two Sabbath School rooms each 30 feet square. The second floor, which formed the auditorium for worship, was elevated thirteen feet from the street. Overtowering the building was a wooden steeple which rested upon the heavy brick walls, which were built up as high as the roof. In the steeple hung a large clear-sounding bell whose pleasing notes called the people to worship, and served also as a community fire-alarm system. Located farther up in the steeple were four massive clocks, facing in all four directions, and encouraging people to look upward as they noted the passing hours. Crowning all was a graceful beautiful spire terminating in a weather-vane. It rose to a height of 163 feet above the ground and visualized in all directions its message of changing weather conditions.²⁸ Beauty and utility thus marked the exterior of the imposing edifice which the new organization of Presbyterians had erected in downtown Pittsburgh.

Equally distinctive and attractive was the spacious auditorium, where a congregation of 1,200 could be seated comfortably. It was adorned with three unusual features which were objects of great interest to curiosity-seeking visitors. The most notable of these features was the first organ which was introduced into any Presbyterian church in Western Pennsylvania.²⁹ Previously the Trinity Episcopal Church had pioneered in the realm of church music and had installed an organ. But Pittsburgh Presbyterians had clung to more

²⁸ *Dedicatory Services of the New Edifice of the Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pa.*, p. 8 f., Pittsburgh, 1869. The church building remained in use without renovation until badly damaged by the great fire, April 10, 1845. It was then repaired and improved, but on October 21, 1863, it was completely destroyed by fire. A new church was then built on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Cherry Alley, and dedicated November 29, 1868. Later the congregation erected the present sanctuary on Fifth and Negley Avenue, November 1, 1903, *Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh—A Century's History*, p. 20 f.

²⁹ Article by E. E. Swift, incorporating memoirs of his father, E. P. Swift. *Encyclopædia of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 688. Philadelphia, 1884.



Courtesy Third Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh

FIRST BUILDING OF THE THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH
Located at Third and Terry Streets. Erected 1833. Destroyed
by fire 1863

conservative customs in church music and were depending either upon a precenter, who lined out the hymns, or upon the united voices of a partially trained choir, which furnished the necessary volume for effective leadership in congregational singing.³⁰ The sustaining music of an organ in the Third Presbyterian Church was a venturesome experiment which attracted the curious-minded, but which was soon to prove its value and be adopted by other churches.

A second attraction was an artistic chandelier. Its brilliancy outshone the beautiful one-hundred-candle piece which Mr. O'Hara had presented to the First Presbyterian Church in 1818.³¹ It was one of Japanese workmanship and was in "the shape of an inverted cone, some eight or ten feet in diameter at the top. The chandelier was supplied with three rows of lamps, each having a reflector. The chimneys, passing through the reflector and the surface of the cone, conducted the heat into the space above the auditorium. The large circular opening in the ceiling was covered by a removable floor and, when the hour of evening service arrived, this was removed and the chandelier, with each lamp regulated, was let down by pullies, until the top was even with the ceiling."³² It illumined the entire auditorium so completely that the minister could read his sermon notes without using the pulpit lamps.

A third object of especial interest was the expensive and elegant drapery which adorned the wall directly in back of the pulpit. "It corresponded in breadth to the length of the

³⁰ As early as 1803 the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh voted to pay \$24.00 annually for a precenter to line out the psalms in public worship. See Original Minutes of Trustees, p. 10.

The development of a choir was a direct result of the emphasis upon singing in the Sunday Schools. Mr. Fish, the precenter of the congregation, trained a group of young people to assist in the different schools. On a venturesome Sabbath morning in 1825 he placed these young people in the "front seats of the gallery and astonished the unsuspecting congregation with the delightful melodies which floated down to them from above." Dr. Herron welcomed the innovation of a choir and it soon became a permanent feature of church worship. McKnight, *Historical Sketch of the Sabbath Schools*, p. 52.

³¹ Original Minutes of the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, August 25, 1818, p. 82.

³² E. E. Swift, *op. cit.*, p. 688.

pulpit sofa and consisted of elaborate drapings of crimson velvet with graceful loopings and heavy folds, and with fringes and tassels to correspond." ³³ It harmonized with the artistic embellishments of the auditorium and caused the new sanctuary of worship to stand out in pleasing contrast to the Quaker-like simplicity which marked the other churches. Many people flocked to the church services, not primarily to hear the brilliant preacher, but to gaze in curious wonder upon the distinctive features of the church. A number of these curiosity-seekers would then leave the service during the pastor's sermon. So annoyed was the worshipping congregation by this discourtesy, which continued for some weeks after the dedication of the church, that Dr. Riddle would sometimes say that, "if there were any who could not remain till the close, an opportunity would be given them to retire before he began to preach." ³⁴

But more important than the imposing building with its interior attractions was the devoted earnestness of the members who formed this Third Presbyterian congregation. Very early the members set forth before themselves and the new recruits, who might desire to join, stern standards of personal conduct. In a carefully worded covenant, they sought to give expression to what they felt should be the professions, purposes and promises of those who would live the Christian life. The covenant was drawn up by the pastor with the approval of the session and adopted as the pledge which every member must take. As he explained its purpose: "The covenant was an earnest protest, by the youthful church, against conformity with the world and fashionable amusements. At the same time it was an earnest effort to elevate the standard of spirituality and personal consecration on the part of the members." ³⁵

The first part of the Covenant consisted of a summary of the main doctrines of the church, especially those which centered around human sinfulness and the need of a Saviour.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 689.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 689.

³⁵ D. H. Riddle, "Historical Address," *Dedicatory Services of the Third Presbyterian Church*, p. 40.

These doctrines the applicant for church membership was required to accept. Then followed a pledge of purified conduct which, among other things, asked:

Do you propose and promise in God's strength, to live an humble and holy life of new and universal obedience; denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, that you will live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, endeavoring by good works to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour; and specially to observe and practice in your life and business the principles of *temperance*, as now generally understood in Christian churches?

That as God shall give you opportunity, ability, and conscientious sense of duty, you will labor, and pray, and contribute for the conversion of the whole world to God, making His service your paramount concern, and everything else subservient thereunto?

That you will habitually attend the stated public and social meetings of this church; daily and conscientiously observe the duty of reading God's word, private meditation, and secret prayer—believing you cannot live the life of God comfortably without their aid, or discharge other duties aright without their influence? ³⁶

The Covenant went further than simply thus to pledge the new member to abstain from worldly conduct and join in regular acts of worship. It also sought to bind the individual to a promise to propagate similar faith and conduct in the lives of dependent members of the household. As a father or mother, the church member was asked to answer affirmatively the following declaration of purpose:

So far as God has placed you at the head of families, that you will fulfil, conscientiously, all the duties of family religion, maintaining regularly therein, the worship of God, giving to your family religious instruction, endeavoring to restrain them from all sin while under your guardianship; neither teaching them nor causing them to be taught any thing prohibited in the catechisms of our church, nor permitting them to attend any such places, or scenes of amusements, or parties of pleasure, as you yourselves do not conscientiously approve and endeavor

³⁶ Minutes of the Third Presbyterian Church, pp. 10-16.

oring in all things to bring them up for God, in His fear and for His glory? ⁸⁷

The Covenant in this rather drastic form was adopted by the session on February 12, 1834, less than a month after Dr. Riddle had been installed as pastor. For eighteen years it remained a test of membership, and apparently was no barrier to the peace, prosperity and progress of the church. "It may have excluded from the communion of the church some of the gay and fashionable," testified Dr. Riddle some years later. "It may have given occasion to what was called clannishness in the earlier periods of its history, but it certainly contributed to homogeneity of feeling and was an element of true spiritual power which has never been wholly lost." ⁸⁸

Though approved by the session and the members of the church, the novel covenant occasioned much debate and criticism. It was different from the usual test of membership in Presbyterian churches. The Presbytery of Ohio hesitated to put the stamp of its approval upon the novel policy. A prolonged debate arose. Differences of opinion were so marked that action was postponed until a subsequent meeting of the Presbytery. ⁸⁹ Even then the members of that conservative Presbytery could not approve of the Covenant. They voted to recommend that the session of the Third Presbyterian Church "consider if the interests and peace of the church might not be promoted by not pressing the covenant on the applicants for membership." ⁴⁰ The session of that church did not take any rescinding action nor did Presbytery press its objec-

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17. The complete covenant including "An Address to New Members" was printed by the session in a twelve-page pamphlet entitled, *The Form of Covenant of the Third Presbyterian Church*, Pittsburgh, 1842.

⁸⁸ Riddle, "Historical Address," *op cit.*, p. 41. On October 9, 1852, the Covenant was superseded by a modified form which had been previously adopted by the Synod of Western Pennsylvania, of which the Third Church was then a member. The new Covenant differed from the old in that it did not lay the same stress on personal conduct nor bind the members to the arbitrary ends which characterized the earlier form. For the revised covenant, see *Manual of the Third Presbyterian Church*, pp. 7, 8. Pittsburgh, 1859.

⁸⁹ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, p. 180.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188, June 17, 1834.

tion as all awaited the test of time. Discussion continued intermittently in Presbyterian circles with voices of approval and opposition.⁴¹ No other church in Pittsburgh felt moved to adopt a similar plan, although the sessions of most of the Presbyterian churches strongly disapproved of indulging in what was regarded as worldly amusement.

The growth and spiritual life of this new church, as well as that of the First Presbyterian Church, was stimulated by a series of fervent evangelistic services which were conducted alternately in the two churches during the winter of 1834-35.⁴² The emotional evangelist was the Reverend James Gallagher who had been serving as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. His meetings stirred a wave of excitement which spread over the entire city. For several months he conducted an intensive campaign. He was the Billy Sunday of that decade. Crowds were attracted by his preaching and sensational methods. He would begin his sermon in the pulpit and would then parade up and down the aisles, directing his remarks to special groups or to individual worshipers.⁴³ Converts in large numbers came forward to the mourners' benches and sought the prayers and counsel of religious workers. Singing groups carried the influence of the meetings into the hotels and along the streets. The resulting excitement was without a parallel in the previous religious life of the city. Many lives

⁴¹ Typical of the more carefully reasoned and less passionate opposition is a pamphlet of thirty-two pages written by an unnamed layman. He opposed the principle of the Covenant as it forbade its members to engage in certain amusements, especially dancing. He writes: "One distinguishing peculiarity of the covenant is the reprobation and renouncement of certain particular sins; whilst as to all others abstinence from them is promised under the general engagement to live a humble and holy life of new and universal obedience. This is its pervading fault" (p. 4). The writer draws a distinction between things sinful in themselves, as lying, and things sinful only by association, as eating meats offered to idols (p. 6). The covenant does not draw this distinction, forbidding dancing, etc., as though they were sins in themselves. "The tendency of the age is to go to extremes. Good men in their zeal too often exclaim with Jehu, 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord'" (p. 28). The pamphlet quotes in full the covenant on pages 31, 32. *An Examination of the Covenant of the Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh*, Pittsburgh, 1834.

⁴² *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, December 27, 1834.

⁴³ Paxton, *Two Discourses upon Dr. Herron*, p. 68 f.

were transformed; others were stirred by the heightened emotionalism into a temporary commitment which placed their names on the church roll, but which left no permanent change in their character.⁴⁴

Dr. Riddle entered enthusiastically into the revival and received forty-seven new members into his church at the first communion service. The entire life of the church was quickened. New converts in large groups continued to be added after the meetings closed, making a net increase throughout the year 1835 of ninety-three members. Nor did the rapid growth cease with that large addition. During the next year, fifty additional members were welcomed into the fellowship of the Third Church and forty-four more the following year. It was the period of most rapid growth in the early history of the church. Much of the credit for that expansion was due, in the opinion of Dr. Riddle, to the quickening influence of the revival meetings. "A large proportion of the persons then received upon confession of faith," he testified, "continued to adorn their profession by consistent Christian deportment."⁴⁵

Dr. Herron, on the other hand, reacted against the emotional excitement of the revival, but coöperated in a spirit of Christian friendship. His church roll was expanded by fifty-seven additional members, but, in his judgment, the working personnel was not strengthened materially. "Some spurious converts and dreadful apostates" revealed that the numerical increase was not all gain.⁴⁶ The harvest may have been gathered too quickly before some of the fruit had had opportunity to ripen properly. The following year only five persons united with the First Church and only three during the next two years.⁴⁷

In this religious excitement and resulting increase in the number of church members the Second Presbyterian did not share to any material degree.⁴⁸ The Second Church was now

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁵ Riddle, "Historical Address," *Dedicatory Services of the Third Presbyterian Church*, p. 42.

⁴⁶ Paxton, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴⁸ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, January 17, 1835. Swift, "Fortieth Anniversary Discourse," p. 43, *Discourses of Dr. Swift*.

under the pastoral supervision of the Reverend Joseph William Blythe. He was a young graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary who, at the age of twenty-five years, was now entering upon his first pastorate and assuming the heavy responsibility of carrying forward the work of Dr. Swift in that congregation.⁴⁹

Dr. Swift had been released from his Pittsburgh pastorate on February 13, 1833, in order that he might devote his full time to the expanding work of the Western Foreign Missionary Society.⁵⁰ It was a task in which his interest had centered for several years and toward which he had given much time and thought on a voluntary basis. This society, the forerunner of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, was to a large extent the creation of Dr. Swift's vision and energy. It was organized in 1831 by the Synod of Pittsburgh upon the plans drawn up by Dr. Swift and under the inspiration of his passionate and persistent pleading.⁵¹ For two years he served as corresponding secretary and labored gratuitously to promote its interests. The combined tasks of pastor and secretary were heavier than his strength and time could meet and he asked to be relieved of the secretaryship. Instead his colleagues on the Board of the Western Foreign Missionary Society pleaded that he resign his church and go forth as the full-time agent and secretary of that pioneer missionary organization. The resulting decision he left in the hands of Presbytery. Reluctantly the Second Church parted with the man who had served so successfully as pastor for thirteen and a half years.

The selection of a successor was not a speedy nor a slight task. Presbytery appointed temporary supplies from among its members, hoping that a capable man might soon be found.⁵² But pastorless months drifted by and the congregation grew weaker and somewhat discouraged. The session pleaded with

* *Presbyterian Encyclopædia*, p. 82.

• *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, p. 111.

• *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1831*, p. 348 f. For a more detailed statement of Dr. Swift's work in the development of this society, see latter part of Chapter VIII of the present volume.

• *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, pp. 112, 131.

the moderator (Reverend L. Halsey) for some definite assistance, "begging his aid to have some supply for our pulpit suitable to our present destitute situation."⁵³ What success greeted the efforts of Mr. Halsey, while at the meeting of the General Assembly in Philadelphia, to respond to this plea of the church is not recorded. But late in the summer a young man, who the year before had been licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, visited Pittsburgh.

He preached on numerous Sabbaths in the Second Church with such success that an influential group of members appeared before the church session with the following request: "We, the subscribers, members of the Second Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh, having now had an opportunity of hearing the Reverend J. W. Blythe preach frequently, and being desirous that an exertion shall be made to procure him as our stated pastor, do request that the session of this church should call a meeting of the congregation for that purpose, that the sense of the members may be ascertained."⁵⁴ The desired meeting was held on October 7, and resulted in Mr. Blythe's receiving a unanimous call to serve the church as pastor at a salary of \$1,000 a year.⁵⁵ He accepted and, on the 17th of November, began his ministerial labors. By request of the session, the young pastor was asked to preach each Sabbath morning and evening and to teach a Bible class in the afternoon at 2:30.⁵⁶ On January 14, he was officially welcomed as a member of the Presbytery of Ohio and two weeks later installed in the pastorate as successor to Dr. Swift.⁵⁷

His service to that congregation, however, was not of long duration nor of unusual success. He remained as pastor less than three years, closing his work July 26, 1836. It was a brief uneventful ministry with no advance either in membership or financial strength. His preaching was overshadowed

⁵³ Minutes of the Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, p. 113, May 14, 1833.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114, September 24, 1833.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵⁷ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, February 1, 1834.

by his more gifted fellow pastors in the First and Third Churches. He lacked the ability of Dr. Swift and sadly watched the church roll dwindle from the recorded membership of 385, at the time his predecessor resigned, to 254 when his pastoral responsibility ceased.

An amusing incident during those brief years of his Pittsburgh pastorate indicates that, although the young man may not have been a gifted preacher, he was blessed with tact and a pleasing ability to adjust himself gracefully to unusual situations. One of the venerable elders of the church, Mr. William Hartupee, occupied every Sunday the first pew on the right of the pulpit. He often had considerable difficulty in keeping awake during the sermon and so would rise and stand for a few minutes when he found himself overtaken with drowsiness. On one Sabbath morning he thus rose to conquer sleep just as the pastor had reached an oratorical climax and was pausing for a moment's impressiveness. The cadences of the speaker and the rising movement of the elder in his conspicuous position combined to produce a most unanticipated effect. The congregation concluded that the sermon had been finished and rose almost simultaneously for the closing prayer. Mr. Blythe gazed in astonishment at the standing audience, since almost a third of his sermon had not been delivered. But without a further word he rallied from his surprise. Graciously he accepted the unexpected response and led the congregation in the closing prayer. Some of the more observant in the audience that morning thought they had discovered something unnaturally abrupt in the termination of the sermon, but the very large proportion went home in complete ignorance of the part they had played in abridging their pastor's discourse.⁵⁸ Perhaps Mr. Blythe passed by the incident in inspired silence, fearing lest a precedent might be set and the congregation be tempted to repeat more consciously the successful experiment in securing shorter sermons.

A welcomed opportunity to seek a more responsive field of service came in the call presented to Mr. Blythe by the West-

⁵⁸ Article by E. E. Swift incorporating memoirs of his father, E. P. Swift, *Encyclopædia of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 687.

ern Foreign Missionary Society to serve as a traveling financial agent for that organization.⁵⁹ Like Dr. Swift, he resigned the pastorate of the Second Presbyterian Church to use his talents in arousing the church to its responsibility to send missionaries to non-Christian countries, and to support with prayer and gifts those who were willing to obey Christ's command "to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." His successor in the pulpit of the Second Church was the Reverend Robert Dunlap, who began, on July 25, 1837,⁶⁰ a notable ministry which terminated in his lamented death ten years later, at the early age of forty-two years.⁶¹

The same year in which the Third Presbyterian Church was established, three other churches of that denomination were organized within the corporate limits of the present city of Pittsburgh. These three additional Presbyterian churches, planted in 1833, were at Birmingham, Minersville and Lawrenceville. Separate petitions for the organization of these three congregations were heard at the same meeting of Presbytery, and the same committee, consisting of Reverend Messrs. Herron, Baird and Halsey, was appointed to make arrangements for the formal organization of these new Presbyterian churches.⁶²

The almost simultaneous organization of these widely separate churches was the culmination of a rather remarkable series of coincidences. It was the early fruitage of the pioneering labor of two young ministers who were classmates at the Western Theological Seminary, and who had been received as candidates for the ministry at the same meeting of Presbytery, and who subsequently were licensed to preach on the

⁵⁹ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, p. 31, July 26, 1836.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52, June 20, 1837.

⁶¹ *The Presbyterian Advocate*, March 31, 1847, which prints an extended obituary notice of which the following is an abstract: "Perhaps no minister has ever dwelt in these cities, who has left a more pleasing general impression of kindness, affability, gentleness and commendable faithfulness in the discharge of the high office with which he was entrusted than our departed brother Dunlap. With the sorrow which embalms his memory is mingled a pleasant, though mournful recollection of his words of faith and labors of love." See also E. P. Swift, "Funeral Sermon for Reverend Robert Dunlap," *Discourses of Dr. Swift*, p. 56.

⁶² Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, p. 119, April 17, 1833.

same day and two years later were ordained together. They began at approximately the same time their missionary activity within the bounds of the same Presbytery and had the joy of gathering together congregations which almost simultaneously sought to be organized as Presbyterian churches. These two successful classmates were the Reverend Aaron Williams, who established both the Minersville and Lawrenceville churches, and the Reverend Alexander B. Brown, who developed the Presbyterian church at Birmingham.⁶³

It was while serving as stated supply of the newly organized Presbyterian Church at Concord that Mr. Brown, then in his third year at the Seminary, became interested in the opportunities of religious work in Birmingham. This thriving community on the southern bank of the Monongahela river had been the center of considerable manufacturing but very little religious activity. As early as 1816, it could boast of fifty houses, two mills, a foundry, a glass factory and a place for worship.⁶⁴ The available records, however, do not indicate how often or under whose leadership the people gathered for worship. When Mr. Brown came, the village had expanded into an incorporated borough, with a population of over 1,200.⁶⁵ He soon discovered among them a few who were responsive to his suggestion that additional religious facilities were needed. He organized a Sunday School among them and agreed to preach as frequently as his duties at Concord would permit. The following spring the congregation had grown strong enough to desire to be formed into a church. The request was granted, and on June 11, 1833, the new organization was placed on the roll of the churches in Ohio Presbytery.⁶⁶

In the more difficult task of erecting a suitable place for worship, the young man received substantial financial assis-

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 22, 28, 57, 62, 138.

⁶⁴ Killikelly, *History of Pittsburgh*, p. 157.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173. The population in 1830 was 1,149. Mrs. Ann Royall, who visited Pittsburgh in 1828, referred to Birmingham as a community of 459 people, and known for the "celebrated Birmingham glass which is manufactured there. The town is well built and makes a handsome appearance from Pittsburgh." Quoted in Warner, *History of Allegheny County*, p. 549.

⁶⁶ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, p. 129.

tance from his father, the Reverend Matthew Brown, D.D. The elder Brown was at that time the widely known and eminently successful president of Jefferson College and pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Canonsburg. He was interested in the pioneer ministry of his son at Birmingham and viewed with sympathetic helpfulness the efforts of that struggling congregation to build a church. Largely because of his generosity, a substantial brick building was soon completed and dedicated early in July, 1833.⁶⁷ It housed a comparatively large and flourishing Sunday school and might have become the center of an expanding congregation had the young minister persevered longer in his pioneering task.⁶⁸

But, a little over a year after the church had been dedicated, Mr. Brown withdrew to accept a call in the Presbytery of St. Joseph.⁶⁹ No available minister appeared to carry forward the work at Birmingham. Only the Sabbath school was maintained regularly, although supply preachers were occasionally assigned by Presbytery to assist the little congregation on special occasions. Their sporadic efforts produced no visible results. More responsive fields absorbed the attention of unemployed ministers and the church at Birmingham gradually slipped from the thought of Presbytery. In the spring of 1838 Presbytery again became conscious of its responsibility to the dwindling congregation. A special effort was made to raise funds to renovate the building and to maintain preaching services.⁷⁰ Different ministers agreed to preach on assigned Sundays. A complete schedule for supply preaching every other Sunday was worked out for the fall, winter and spring of that year.

Even this coöperative venture of the ministers brought no encouraging response. Finally Presbytery abandoned the unsuccessful enterprise and, on April 19, 1842, erased the name of Birmingham from the roll of churches under its care.⁷¹ The

⁶⁷ Aaron Williams, "Religious History," printed in Evert, *History of Allegheny County*, p. 80.

⁶⁸ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, July 13, 1833.

⁶⁹ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, p. 206, October 9, 1834.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96, June 21, 1838.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 319.

neglected brick building was sold to the United Presbyterians, and responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the few Presbyterians in that community was shifted temporarily to this sister denomination.⁷² It was not until 1851 that Presbyterians again entered Birmingham to organize what is now the aggressive South Side Presbyterian Church, located on the corner of Twentieth and Sarah Streets.⁷³

The same year in which the Reverend Alexander B. Brown began his missionary work at Concord and Birmingham, his Seminary classmate, Reverend Aaron Williams, was pioneering in a similar task at Lawrenceville and Minersville and stimulating his small congregations in those places to desire to be formed into Presbyterian churches. As a result of his work, both Lawrenceville and Minersville presented separate requests for the organization of Presbyterian churches in these neighboring communities.⁷⁴ The requests were granted. The same committee was authorized to carry to an early completion the organizational work in both congregations. That pleasant dual duty was soon fulfilled. At the meeting of the Presbytery of Ohio on June 25, 1833, the committee reported the enrollment of these two churches.⁷⁵

Both at Lawrenceville and at Minersville, however, the formal organization of the Presbyterian church was only the stimulated development of previous years of religious effort. The appointment of Mr. Williams to serve as a missionary in these two communities furnished both the spiritual encouragement and the aggressive leadership needed for successful organization.

To the Reverend Joseph Stockton must be assigned the honor of being the first minister to feel a responsibility for the

⁷² Aaron Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁷³ The new church was the result of the missionary efforts of the Pittsburgh Presbytery (N. S.). Previous to the reorganization of the church, several men from the Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh conducted Sunday school each Sunday for a number of years, first in the Old Market House and then in the public school building. Only four members comprised the new church organization in 1851. Subsequent growth in membership was slow. *Sessional Records of the South Side Presbyterian Church*, p. 40, Vol. I, covering the years 1851-1882.

⁷⁴ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio*, p. 119.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

spiritual needs of the people of Lawrenceville. While serving as principal of the Pittsburgh Academy, he journeyed three miles to preach as frequently as convenient to the soldiers and artisans clustered around the Arsenal.⁷⁶ Lawrenceville had been laid out as a village in 1815 by Mr. William B. Foster. Its birth and progress as a village community were occasioned by the erection of the United States Arsenal. It was somewhat isolated from other communities and attracted to itself only those whose business or employment centered at the Arsenal. Naturally the growth of the community was slow and reached, in 1828, a total of only 200.⁷⁷

Though busy with his school work and with his successful efforts to develop Presbyterian congregations in Alleghenytown and Pine Creek, Mr. Stockton found time to minister to these spiritually isolated people. The meager data available do not indicate how frequently nor how long he continued in this volunteered ministry. He began his work some time after the erection of the Arsenal in 1812 and continued, perhaps at irregular intervals, to preach as late as 1829.⁷⁸ During that year he received the assistance of the Reverend John Joyce.

Mr. Joyce, the reader will recall, had succeeded in organizing a Presbyterian church at East Liberty in 1828, and then had withdrawn to be associated with Mr. Stockton at Alleghenytown.⁷⁹ He and Mr. Stockton alternated each Sunday in the pulpit of the Presbyterian church in that community, leaving Mr. Stockton free to preach every other Sunday to his congregation at Pine Creek, and giving Mr. Joyce an opportunity to render a similar service at Lawrenceville.⁸⁰ This joint arrangement continued until the spring of 1831, when both Mr. Joyce and Mr. Stockton withdrew to permit the church at Alleghenytown to call a pastor. Though there are no supporting historical data, it is a reasonable assumption that Mr. Joyce continued his bi-weekly ministrations at Lawrenceville

⁷⁶ J. E. Park, *Recollections of Seventy Years and Historical Gleanings of Allegheny, Pa.*, p. 259, 1886.

⁷⁷ S. Jones, *Pittsburgh in the Year 1826*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ E. P. Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 21.

⁷⁹ See Chapter IX of the present volume.

⁸⁰ Swift, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny*, p. 21.

until the next year, when he was engaged, by the Western Theological Seminary, to serve as a financial agent. In the discharge of this latter duty he had gone to England to raise funds for the Seminary. There he was fatally stricken and closed his earthly labors on the 29th of December, 1833.⁸¹

His withdrawal from Lawrenceville left a small group of worshipers who, for a number of years, had profited by his preaching and by the previous ministry of Mr. Stockton. But they had never been organized into a church. Nor had their numbers and resources justified any organizational efforts. They were separated about three miles from any other Presbyterian church, and were equally distant from East Liberty and from the churches of Pittsburgh. They had no church building and were worshiping in the village schoolhouse.⁸²

Naturally, the little group welcomed the pastoral assistance of a young and capable theological student who was looking for an opportunity of service. That promising young man was Aaron Williams, who was to develop, some years later, into one of the most cultured ministers in the Pittsburgh district.⁸³ He had been licensed to preach by the Ohio Presbytery on October 5, 1831.⁸⁴ During his first two years in Seminary he had served as superintendent of the first Sunday School for Infants to be established in Western Pennsylvania.⁸⁵ It was one of the network of branch Sunday schools fostered by the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. Thus early in his ministerial life he manifested that deep interest in children which was to characterize his subsequent work as a pastor and teacher. In 1832 he resigned the Sunday school in order to have his Sabbaths free for a preaching ministry. Late in

⁸¹ John Gillespie, "Historical Sermon," *East Liberty Presbyterian Church*, p. 44.

⁸² Minutes of the Session of the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church, p. 1.

⁸³ Among other historical works, Dr. Williams wrote that section of Evert's *History of Allegheny County* entitled "Religious History." Throughout much of the latter portion of his ministry he served as principal of the Edgeworth Female Seminary at Sewickley and as chaplain at Dixmont, Pa. See *Presbyterian Banner*, February 15, 1865.

⁸⁴ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, Vol. VI, p. 57.

⁸⁵ McKnight, *History of the Sabbath Schools of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh from 1800-1867*, pp. 69 f., 73.

September of that year he began preaching, first at Lawrenceville, and then also at the neighboring community of Minersville.⁸⁶

Minersville was a little village of miners who were employed in the coal pits, located on the farm of Mr. John Herron, about two miles east of Pittsburgh. As early as 1825, it had acquired an unenviable reputation for immoral excesses, drunkenness and gambling. During one of the numerous brawls, which featured its unwholesome recreational life, a man was murdered. The resulting publicity and shocked comments prompted two Pittsburgh Christian gentlemen, Mr. William Herron and Mr. Moses Johnson, to attempt to bring to that unregenerate community the transforming influence of the Christian religion.⁸⁷ In the very house where the murder had been committed, they opened, during the summer of that year (1826), a Sabbath school. Only a few children responded to their efforts. Yet they persisted with the encouragement of their wives and Miss Rachel Arthurs, who assisted as teachers.

Discouragements followed. The attendance rose and fell with the shifting interest of the pupils. School was not conducted every Sunday, due to the difficulty of securing faithful teachers over a period of years. Still the work went forward. Gradually a change in the moral outlook of the people became apparent. A few Christian families moved into the neighborhood and lent their necessary assistance to the feebly sustained enterprise.⁸⁸

During the spring of 1832, the struggling school found both a benefactor and a leader in the person of John Herron, the owner of the farm on which the coal pits were located and an elder in the First Presbyterian Church. Gladly he accepted the responsibility of serving as superintendent. He succeeded in enlisting the coöperation of another capable worker from his church, Mr. A. P. Cain. Through their combined efforts the school began to flourish. Occasionally Mr. Herron brought various clergymen from the city to assist him in the religious

⁸⁶ "History of Minersville Church," written in 1840 as part of the Minutes of the Session of the Presbyterian Church of Minersville.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁸⁸ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, July 13, 1833.

program of the school and to lead in evangelistic and inspirational services. A prayer meeting was started that summer, led, for a time, by Mr. A. D. Pollock, a student from Western Theological Seminary.⁸⁸

So interested did the people appear in these devotional services that Mr. Aaron Williams, who was graduating that year from the Seminary, felt that Minersville would be a responsive field of service. In the fall of that year, he began preaching regularly both at Lawrenceville and at Minersville. The response to the preaching of Mr. Williams was sufficiently encouraging to prompt Mr. Herron to undertake, at his own expense, the erection of a more adequate place for worship. Construction work on a small but attractive church building was begun during the winter and rushed to completion early in the spring. Dedication services were held on the 19th of May with the sermon preached, on that notable occasion, by Dr. Herron, the pastor of the church of which the donor of the building was a member.⁸⁹

The next step was the formal organization of the encouraged congregation into a Presbyterian church. Mr. Williams, by his preaching and pastoral ministry, had won the esteem of the people to whom he was ministering both at Lawrenceville and at Minersville. These two congregations presented to Presbytery separate requests to be organized into separate churches. They joined in the suggestion that Mr. Williams be ordained and appointed as the stated supply, until such time as they would be strong enough to present a call for his services. The desired plans were carried forward. The young evangelist was ordained on the 25th day of June of that year and both congregations organized and enrolled as Presbyterian churches.⁹¹ Very appropriately the congregation at Minersville elected as its first elders Mr. John Herron and Mr. E. P. Cain, the two men whose energy, consecration and generosity had resulted in the expansion of the Sunday school and the erection of the church building.⁹²

⁸⁸ History of Minersville Church, *loc. cit.*, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, pp. 132, 134.

⁹¹ Minutes of the Presbyterian Church of Minersville, p. 3.

It was just a small group of forty members who sat around the first communion service in charge of Mr. Williams and the two newly installed elders. Yet they were happy in prospects of growth and in the realization that the community had been greatly changed by the religious activity carried forward during the past seven or eight years.⁹³ Their gratitude found expression in an impressive day of rejoicing, which began with a sunrise service of prayer at 5 A.M. and closed at 3 P.M. with a sermon by Professor Nevin, one of Mr. Williams' instructors at the Theological Seminary.⁹⁴

In the meantime the congregation at Lawrenceville, even before the church was formally organized, had also taken steps to erect a more suitable place for worship. The village schoolhouse had housed the worshiping congregation for a number of years, but a permanent home was desired. Through the generosity of a few individuals, a half acre of ground, centrally located, was purchased for \$150. The meager resources of the small group of Presbyterians did not permit the erection of a complete church building at that time. Rather than incur a hampering debt, only the basement was finished in the fall of 1832. There the congregation gathered for worship and Sabbath school instruction throughout more than a year of slow growth and enrichment. Early in January, 1834, the finished structure was completed at a total cost of \$2,600. Dr. Halsey, from the Seminary, preached the sermon and presided at that culminating achievement of some nineteen years of sporadic preaching.⁹⁵

The congregation was now officially organized by Presbytery, had an ordained minister to lead and instruct the people, and owned an attractive church building. Yet no one had been elected to the office of elder. That was a most unusual situation, for which no adequate explanation has been recorded. Ordinarily elders are elected and a session constituted as the governing body almost simultaneously with the formal organization of the church, since a Presbyterian church, as the name

⁹³ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, July 13, 1833.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, July 13, 1833.

⁹⁵ *Anniversary Booklet of the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church*, p. 10, Pittsburgh, 1902.

signifies, is a congregation governed by elders. The unusual precedent was somewhat inconvenient and a little embarrassing. On one occasion fourteen people desired to unite with the church. It was necessary for them to appear before the session of the neighboring church of Minersville, by whom they were publicly welcomed as church members, but with the understanding that they were to be enrolled in the membership of the infant church at Lawrenceville. But in the spring of 1836 this difficulty was overcome. A session was constituted by the election and subsequent ordination to the eldership of Malcolm Leech and D. S. Williams.⁹⁶

After one difficulty had been surmounted, another was soon to confront both the Lawrenceville and the Minersville churches. Reverend Aaron Williams, whose preaching and leadership had resulted in the organization of these two small Presbyterian churches, did not remain long in this dual field of service. The removal of a large part of the garrison from the Arsenal and the resulting decline in the personnel and prosperity of the community may have discouraged him and prompted him to seek another and more productive field of labor.⁹⁷ On October 7, 1834, he requested the privilege of traveling throughout other Presbyteries in search of opportunities of ministerial service. In the Presbytery of Detroit he found an opportunity which interested him. Early in January of the following year he transferred his ecclesiastical membership to that Presbytery.⁹⁸ His withdrawal terminated the unified relationship of the two churches he had served and left them free to make independent choices of successors and to move forward separately each under different leadership.

But good fortune, or a kind overruling Providence, was soon to bless the Presbyterians at Lawrenceville, bringing to them

⁹⁶ Session Book of the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church, p. 2. The earliest minute in this book is dated October 12, 1837, but it is preceded by a historical statement covering the main events of the preceding five years.

⁹⁷ *Anniversary Booklet*, p. 10.

⁹⁸ Minutes of the Ohio Presbytery, pp. 205, 211. Mr. Williams soon renewed his membership in the Ohio Presbytery. On April 20, 1836, he was transferred to the Beaver Presbytery in order to accept the call of the Beaver Falls Church. *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 22.

a capable young man, who was to serve as pastor over a period of more than forty years. The Minutes of the Ohio Presbytery indicate that throughout the year 1835 the church was supplied by various students from the Western Theological Seminary and by different Pittsburgh ministers, who were assigned to that duty by Presbytery.⁹⁹ Among these students was Richard Lea. His sermons aroused the increasing interest of the congregation, as he preached on more frequent occasions throughout the early months of the following year. As soon as he was ready to be ordained, the church presented to Presbytery a formal call for his services.¹⁰⁰

At a special meeting of the Presbytery in the Lawrenceville Church on June 15th, Mr. Lea was ordained and installed in the church where he was to give his entire ministry, and where he was to see the congregation enlarge and mature in a successful program of service and worship. The little group which called him numbered only twenty-eight members and could promise an annual salary of only \$400.¹⁰¹ Yet Mr. Lea was ready to respond in a spirit of sacrifice and consecration. His labors were blessed by God and crowned with the external evidences of success, as the years of a long pastorate brought pastor and people closer together in a developing enterprise of faith and fidelity.¹⁰²

Similar good fortune, however, did not reward the Presbyterians at Minersville in their independent search for a successor to Mr. Williams. Difficulties, discouragements, discord

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁰¹ Historical Statement in the Minutes of the Session of the Lawrenceville Church, p. 2.

¹⁰² Reverend Richard Lea at an early age joined the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh and developed under the ministry of Dr. Herron. His long life-service in Pittsburgh enabled him to know intimately many of the leaders of the church. His historical writings and reminiscences form a very valuable contribution to our knowledge of the religious life of Pittsburgh. He was a devoted friend of the Western Theological Seminary and served for a time as financial agent. He was the leading force in securing the endowment fund which placed that institution on a more stable basis. When he resigned his church at Lawrenceville in 1876, the membership had grown to 315. For a more detailed summary of his notable ministry, see "Remarkable Career of the Reverend Richard Lea," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, January, 1920, p. 33 f.

and division marked the early ensuing years and prevented peace and progress over a prolonged period. The Presbytery of Ohio, for more than a year and a half, sent to the Minersville Church supply preachers from among the students at Western Seminary and from its own membership. Yet not one seemed either to be acceptable to the congregation or attracted to the field. This persistent difficulty in securing a pastor resulted in a stagnant condition within the church. No new members were added to the church roll, which had reached a total of forty-three members when Mr. Williams closed his work in that church.¹⁰³

The receding enthusiasm of the church membership was reflected in the increased difficulty in obtaining teachers for the Sunday school. Though 115 pupils were enrolled, only four teachers could be enlisted. "At times there have been between fifty and sixty scholars and but one teacher beside the superintendent, Mr. John Herron."¹⁰⁴ Failing to find an acceptable pastor within the ranks of the Ohio Presbytery, the congregation had its attention drawn to a Mr. Gauladette, who had been licensed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and who had come to Pittsburgh seeking opportunities of preaching.¹⁰⁵ His work at first appealed to the congregation and he was chosen as the stated supply. But within six months dissatisfaction reached the point where he was dismissed by the disappointed church officials.¹⁰⁶

Again the destitute congregation sought the aid of Presbytery and was dependent upon various supply ministers for preaching services. Of these, Mr. Marshall preached with the greatest frequency throughout the next three or four months. Again the Seminary students failed either to please or to be pleased.

Eager hope of securing a pastor, after more than two years of disappointment, was aroused by the visit of Reverend A. B. Quay from the Presbytery of Carlisle. He preached in the Minersville Church on several occasions and expressed himself

¹⁰³ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, Vol. VI, p. 172.

¹⁰⁴ *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, April 11, 1835.

¹⁰⁵ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, Vol. VII, p. 70.

¹⁰⁶ Minutes of the Session of the Minersville Church, p. 3.

as being willing to assume the pastoral responsibility. Quickly a congregational meeting was called. The terms of a call appeared to be satisfactorily arranged. The call was prepared. Mr. Quay returned to the Carlisle Presbytery with the apparent expectation of making arrangements to move to Minersville. Instead, he wrote a letter informing the session that he "would expect them in a very short time to add \$200 to the salary stipulated in the call."¹⁰⁷ That unanticipated demand was more than either the resources or the patience of the congregation could meet. A letter was sent to him with the blunt information that "the church would not accede to his proposition and that from this cause they had relinquished alike the wish and the expectation of his becoming their pastor."¹⁰⁸

The resulting disappointment was soon forgotten when the Reverend Samuel McClellan Sparks was heard as a supply pastor. He was invited to preach regularly as a stated supply during the autumn of 1837. Eagerly the invitation was accepted. But Mr. Sparks was a minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, an entirely distinct denomination, whose schismatic teaching had resulted in a split from the parental organization. For a minister of that denomination to serve as a stated supply in a Presbyterian Church was an irregular but permissible procedure. Fears were expressed that the Presbytery of Ohio might not grant that necessary permission.¹⁰⁹ Nor was the Presbytery likely to have acceded to this exceptional request had it been presented. Instead the matter never came to the floor of Presbytery either for discussion or for action.

Though a number of the ministers were aware of the action of the Minersville Church in offering its pulpit to a member of another denomination, the irregular procedure was passed by in what was privately regarded as diplomatic silence.¹¹⁰ The Minersville Church had been without ministerial leadership throughout more than two years of difficulty and

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3 f.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ The Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio make no mention of Mr. Sparks' presence in the Minersville Church.

disappointment. The membership needed all possible encouragement and assistance in avoiding causes of friction and discord. Mr. Sparks enrolled as a part-time student at the Western Theological Seminary during the winter and spring of that year and attended the classes in theology.¹¹¹ The hope may have been cherished by the Pittsburgh ministers that Mr. Sparks would accept the distinctive views of the denomination whose guest privileges he was receiving. Thus a year and a half of inaction slipped by and Mr. Sparks continued to serve as stated supply of the Minersville Church without the formal advice or consent of Presbytery.

But the diplomatic silence was soon to appear as a regrettable blunder. Mr. Sparks found himself out of sympathy with the view-points of Presbytery and did nothing to cultivate within his congregation feelings of loyalty to the denomination which had tolerated him as an uninvited guest. When in 1838 the differences of opinion, which were troubling the denomination as a whole, resulted in the drastic action of the General Assembly in refusing to seat representatives from four Synods, and when the majority within those four Synods, along with a group of sympathizers, withdrew from the General Assembly and organized a separate denomination,¹¹² the little church at Minersville, with its acting pastor, was ready to take similarly schismatic action. The Presbytery of Ohio pondered seriously the divisive questions in the Schism which had divided the Presbyterian denomination into the New School and Old School groups. Differences of opinion were expressed freely in frank debate, but when the vote was taken the Presbytery of Ohio officially decided to remain loyal to the Old School or parental branch of the Church. The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the Presbytery:

Whereas, it is the duty of each Presbytery promptly to respond to the call of the Assembly, at a crisis like the present, and to aid by its influence, in putting a speedy end to the distractions, by which the church has been so long and so painfully afflicted; Therefore,

¹¹¹ *Presbyterian Advocate and Herald*, January 16, 1839.

¹¹² *Pittsburgh Christian Herald*, May 21, 1838.

Resolved, that this Presbytery hereby expresses and declares its continued adherence to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, whose General Assembly was organized in the Seventh Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia on the 17th of May, 1838, under the direction of the Moderator of the preceding Assembly.

Resolved, that it be earnestly recommended to all the churches and people under the care of this Presbytery to observe a prudent, conscientious and affectionate course of conduct toward each other, in relation to the present difficulties throughout the church thus endeavoring, while they maintain the cause of truth, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."¹¹⁸

This pledge of allegiance to the Old School or parental body, which the Presbytery of Ohio unanimously recommended to the churches under its care, had no restraining effect upon the Minersville Church, nor upon its guest preacher from the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination. Instead their sympathy and loyalty were with the divisive group which had formed the New School Branch. At a meeting of the congregation on October 30, 1838, the following preamble and resolutions were presented and approved:

Whereas the Presbyterian Church has been in a state of tumult and feverish excitement for several years past, to the great reproach of Christianity, and in open violation of the pure principles of the Gospel of Peace; and whereas the General Assembly of 1837 did, without trial, and without charge, cut off four entire Synods, thus violating the Constitution of the Church; and whereas, the General Assembly of 1838 did divide and transact business in district bodies, each claiming to be the true Assembly; and whereas the Presbytery and Synod with which we are now connected do recognize the Assembly which held its sessions in Raustrad [?] court to be the true and only Assembly; and whereas there is a manifest determination on the part of the Presbytery of Ohio to carry out the measures of that Assembly, therefore,

Resolved, That we believe the general policy pursued by what is called the Old School party is contrary to the constitution and opposed to the best interests of the Church.

That as we cannot approve of the measures of the Assembly of

¹¹⁸ Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, June 20, 1838, Vol. VII, p. 90 f.

1837 and 1838 that held its sessions in Raustrad Court, Philadelphia, of the late act of the Synod of Pittsburgh relative to the Presbytery of Erie, and of the general policy of the Old School party; therefore we feel it to be our duty to quietly and peaceably withdraw our connection with the Presbytery of Ohio, as we feel no disposition to create discord, and cannot harmoniously coöperate with said Presbytery.¹¹⁴

This schismatic action of the congregation of Minersville in withdrawing from the Ohio Presbytery, which had remained a constituent part of the Old School General Assembly, was followed logically by a desire to establish an ecclesiastical connection with some New School presbytery. That subsequent action was taken in December of the same year, when the church made out a call for the pastoral services of Mr. Sparks and presented to the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia a request for admission to that body. At a meeting of that Presbytery on December 20th, Mr. Sparks was received as a member and the Minersville Church was taken under the Presbytery's watch and care.¹¹⁵ At the same time arrangements were made for the installation of Mr. Sparks, as the first pastor of the church, to take place on the 5th of May, 1839. He continued to serve in that capacity until 1861.¹¹⁶

But this little Minersville Church, which so quickly had thus taken the initiative in withdrawing from the Presbytery which had fostered it throughout many years of slow growth, was not the only Presbyterian church to sever its connection with the Presbytery of Ohio. As the lines of division between the New and Old School branches of the denomination became more clearly drawn, the large and wealthy Third Presbyterian Church took similar divisive action, and transferred both its property and its loyalty to the New School branch.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Minutes of the Session of the Minersville Church, p. 5 f.

¹¹⁵ Records of the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia, p. 172 f.

¹¹⁶ The name of the Minersville Church was subsequently changed to that of the Seventh Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, and still later to its present name, The Herron Avenue Presbyterian Church.

¹¹⁷ *Presbyterian Advocate and Herald*, August 14, 1839, and October 9, 1839. This action of the Third Church pastor and session resulted in a partial division of the church membership and an amicable agreement on property rights. Six families withdrew and were given seventy-five per cent of the money they had contributed to the erection of the build-

Around these two seceding Pittsburgh Presbyterian churches, the Minersville and the Third Church, a new Presbytery, called the Pittsburgh Presbytery, was organized by the New School Synod of Western Pennsylvania. The rival Presbytery covered a wide range of territory, but was not large in the number of either its ministers or its churches. It originally included, besides the Pittsburgh churches, only two other churches, one at Greensburg and one at Unity (near Greensburg). The initial meeting, as might be expected, was held in the Third Church of Pittsburgh, and the pastor, the Reverend D. H. Riddle, was elected the first moderator, with Reverend S. M. Sparks as his successor the following year.¹¹⁸ None of the other Pittsburgh churches withdrew from the Ohio Presbytery. The new Presbytery was compelled to depend for growth and enlargement upon its ability to establish new churches. Only a small success attended its efforts and throughout the entire period of division it remained a feeble Presbytery.¹¹⁹

Amid the disturbing influence of this developing controversy and subsequent denominational schism, the decade of remarkable expansion terminated. The decade had opened with only two Presbyterian churches throughout the entire area now included within the corporate limits of the city of Pittsburgh. It closed with eleven churches of that same denomination located in strategic or neglected sections of the expanding city. It had witnessed notable revival movements which had enlarged the membership and quickened the missionary zeal of all the churches and sent forth an enthusiastic corps of Sunday schools to develop a program of religious education that exerted immeasurable influence in strengthening the religious life of the growing community. It also was beginning to feel

ing. This generous arrangement protected the remaining members in their legal title to the property when the congregation transferred to the New School Branch. See D. H. Riddle, "Historical Address," *Dedictory Services of the Third Presbyterian Church*, p. 45.

¹¹⁸ Minutes of the Pittsburgh Presbytery, November 20, 1839, Vol. I, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ It soon organized the Fifth Presbyterian Church in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh and some time later reorganized the Presbyterian Church of Birmingham (South Side).

the blighting effect of an enlarging controversy that was to destroy the unity of the denomination and temporarily check its expansion.

The period had opened also in the encouragement of financial prosperity, when enlargement in wealth and population presented both the challenge and the resources to attempt the establishment of new churches and new enterprises of religious activity. It drew to a close as the approaching panic of 1837 was disturbing the confidence of business men and making difficult the support of benevolent agencies. During 1835, business enterprises of all kinds dragged wearily along with little profit and small hope.¹²⁰ But the destructive crash in 1837 shattered values of all kinds and released pandemonium in business and finance.¹²¹

In this retarding combination of financial fright and denominational division, the rapid increase in the number of Presbyterian churches was halted abruptly. No new Presbyterian churches were organized for a considerable period.

¹²⁰ Wilson, *Standard History of Pittsburgh*, p. 351.

¹²¹ H. E. Kline, "Financial and Industrial Aspects of the Panic of 1837," a Master's degree thesis for the University of Pittsburgh, 1933.

SUMMARY

With this hampering division of the resources of the Presbyterian Church into two distinct and somewhat competitive denominations, the present study of the Early Development of the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh reaches its logical termination. In the preceding pages the story of the struggles of the pioneers has been told with some detail in an attempt to enable the reader to become better acquainted with the personalities and forces that have contributed to the successful expansion of Presbyterianism in Pittsburgh.

Beginning in 1772, when the Reverend Messrs. David McClure and Levi Frisbee established their headquarters in Pittsburgh and preached alternately throughout a prolonged visit of ten months, Pittsburgh Presbyterians have sought to secure for themselves the blessings of worship and have struggled to make religion a regenerative force in the life of the community. The discouragements of war, poverty, immorality and religious indifference formed a disheartening combination that at times almost obliterated the little congregation and made impossible any rapid growth during the remaining years of the eighteenth century. The formal organization of the First Presbyterian Church took place in 1785, when Reverend Samuel Barr became the first settled pastor and erected the first church building in Pittsburgh.

Early in the nineteenth century a Second Presbyterian Church was organized, not because of any marked increase in membership, but because of dissatisfaction with the ministerial labors of Reverend Robert Steele, the second pastor of the First Church. These two Presbyterian churches struggled to maintain themselves without visible results either in numbers or spiritual gain until they were blessed by the leadership of two gigantic personalities of untiring energy and broad vision.

Dr. Francis Herron came to the First Church in 1811 and continued to serve with transforming effectiveness during a

long pastorate of forty years. Nine years later Dr. Elisha P. Swift began a similarly notable service in the Second Presbyterian Church. Through the coöperative labors of these two ecclesiastical giants, Presbyterianism was made a creative force in the religious and cultural life of Pittsburgh.

The membership and spiritual life of both churches were quickened. Revivals brought growth in numbers and resulted in the enlargement of the activities of the Sunday schools and the establishment of an expansive network of mission schools in various sections of the city. The united leadership of Dr. Herron and Dr. Swift was largely responsible for the establishment of the Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny in 1827 and its growth, in the face of discouraging obstacles, until in 1840 the enrollment totaled fifty students. The organization in Pittsburgh of the Western Foreign Missionary Society in the year 1831, with its development into the Board of Foreign Missions six years later, was another fruitage of the constructive career of Dr. Swift.

The decade 1825-35 witnessed notable revival movements and the multiplication of Presbyterian churches. During that ten-year period nine new Presbyterian churches were organized within the present corporate limits of the city of Pittsburgh. These churches reached in 1837 a total of more than 1,600 members and contributed over \$5,700 to missions alone.

But the retarding influence of intra-denominational controversy became sadly apparent in the sudden halting of this increase in churches and members. The period of expansion had reached its height in 1833 when four churches were established in one year. When the schism of 1837 resulted in the separation of the denomination into the New School and Old School branches, only two of the Pittsburgh Presbyterian churches withdrew to form the new denomination. The others remained loyal to the parental organization.

However, in 1869, the schism was healed happily and the two branches of the denomination merged into a permanent unity at a memorable reunion service in the Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

APPENDIX I

ANNUAL STATISTICAL SUMMARIES OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—1808-1840

In the following pages there is presented a statistical summary of important items of information regarding the growth and resources of the Pittsburgh Churches. The information is arranged in convenient statistical tables and presents the more important data of material growth as far as they are available.

For the years 1808 to 1832, the information is taken from the annual statistical reports as printed in the *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*. For the years 1833 to 1840, the *Minutes of the General Assembly*, printed annually, have been the source of statistical information. These annual reports represent the effort of the higher judicatories of the Presbyterian Church to collect accurate statistical information from all the individual churches. However, some of the churches at times failed to furnish all the desired data. As a result, these annual reports are not a complete source of information for every year. Where possible, missing information has been taken from the original Minutes of the Session of the individual churches. However, even these Minutes do not compile complete information. Because of inability to secure this missing information the statistical tables in Appendix A do not furnish a complete picture of the changes in membership or resources throughout the years. Absence of information is revealed by a dash (—) in the appropriate column.

The ecclesiastical year in the Presbyterian Church ends March 31. As a result, the statistical data do not coincide with the calendar years.

In the early years, information is particularly meager and is limited to the following three items: members received throughout the ecclesiastical year, total membership at the close of the ecclesiastical year, and the number of infant and adult baptisms. Beginning with the year 1815, contributions to the Missionary Fund are reported in the annual Minutes and so appear in the following statistical tables. In the years 1821 onward, the Minutes record separately the contributions given to "Missions" and to "Other Benevolences." These two items of information are expanded and become more detailed in subsequent years. But for the purposes of this study they have been added together and presented as two separate items of information under the columns headed "Gifts for Missions" and "Gifts for Other Benevolences."

In the reports from the year 1829 onward, the Minutes list separately members received by "examination of their faith in Christ" and members received by "certificate from other churches." This separation of

information is deemed important since additions upon examination reveal growth in numbers, whereas those received by certificate merely indicate a transfer of responsibility from one church to another. They present growth in the individual church but not necessarily an increase in the spiritual resources of the community.

The above items of information are presented in statistical form on a single page for all of the churches, covering each ecclesiastical year ending March 31. The information covers the period when statistical blanks first appear in the annual reports and concludes with the complete year 1839, which is the terminal point of this particular study.

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—REDSTONE PRESBYTERY

Taken from *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh* from its first organisation. Statistical blanks do not appear until 1807.

Church	Pastor	Members Received	Total Membership	Baptisms	
				Adult	Infant
1808					
1st of Pittsburgh	Robert Steele		45	(No further statistical report)	
2nd of Pittsburgh	(Vacant)		(No statistical report)		
1809					
1st of Pittsburgh	Robert Steele	8	58		18
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt (installed Dec. 27)	(No report)			
(Statistical information for 1809 taken from <i>Minutes of Redstone Presbytery</i> , p. 234.)					
1810					
1st of Pittsburgh	Robert Steele (Rev. Mr. Steele died March 22, 1810)		65		
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt		30		
(Statistical information for 1810 taken from <i>Minutes of Redstone Presbytery</i> , p. 247.)					
1811					
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	10	74		21
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt	27	54	1	15
Totals			37	128	36

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—REDSTONE PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.

Church	Pastor	Members Received	Total Membership (No statistical report)	Baptisms		Missionary Fund
				Adult	Infant	
1812						
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron		54			
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt					
1813						
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron		70			
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt	16	63	1	22	
1814						
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron		80		22	
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt	12				
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton, S.S.	(No report)				
1815						
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron		60			\$62
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt		63			17
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton, S.S.	(No other report)				
Totals			123			\$79

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—REDSTONE PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.

Church	Pastor	1816		Total Membership	Baptisms		Missionary Fund
		Members Received	Infant		Adult	Infant	
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	5	12	120	—	12	\$75
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt	9	87	87	3	19	—
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton, S.S.	(No report)	—	—	—	—	—
Totals		14	207	207	3	31	\$75
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	5	125	125	—	12	\$77
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt	8	95	95	6	20	15
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton, S.S.	(No report)	—	—	—	—	—
Totals		13	220	220	6	32	\$92
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	17	133	133	2	21	\$77
2nd of Pittsburgh	Thomas Hunt	9	104	104	3	20	47
Alleghentown	Joseph Stockton, S.S.	(No other report)	—	—	—	—	2
Pine Creek							
Lawrenceville			28	237	5	41	\$128
Totals			28	237	5	41	\$128

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—REDSTONE PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.

Church	Pastor	1819		Total Membership	Baptisms		Missionary Fund
		Members Received	(Rev. Swift installed Nov. 1, 1819)		Adult	Infant	
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	18	144			\$177	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift						
Alleghenytown	Joseph Stockton	15		1	35	2	
Pine Creek							
Lawrenceville							
Totals		33	144	1	35	\$179	
		1820					
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	21	159		23	\$80	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	(No report)					
Alleghenytown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	15	68		35		
Totals		36	227		58	\$80	

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—REDSTONE PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.*

1821

Church	Pastor	Members Received	Total Members	Baptisms		Girls		Other Benevolences
				Adult	Infant	Missions		
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	30	174	1	27	\$42	\$90	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	—	110	—	—	—	39	
Alleghenytown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	15	75	3	25	—	—	
Totals		45	359	4	52	\$42	\$129	

1822

1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	25	167	1	28	\$31	\$26	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	53	158	36	3	—	—	
Alleghenytown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	8	83	22	1	—	—	
Totals		86	408	59	32	\$31	\$26	

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—OHIO PRESBYTERY

Taken from *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.*

1823

Church	Pastor	Members Received	Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
				Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	45	216	—	12	\$224	\$190
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	30	188	2	18	216	111
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	14	96	1	12	15	—
Totals		89	500	3	42	\$455	\$301

1824

1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	19	194	2	29	\$60	\$141
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	3	188	—	16	50	150
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	14	96	2	13	—	—
Totals		36	478	4	58	\$110	\$291

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—OHIO PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.

1825

Church	Pastor	Members Received	Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts			
				Adult	Infant	Missions	Benevolences	Other	
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	26	219	—	23	\$124	\$95	2	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	56	225	2	23	37	—	—	
Alleghenytown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	12	113	—	17	—	—	—	
Totals		94	557	2	63	\$161	—	\$97	
1826									
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	16	230	—	—	\$76	\$148	—	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	26	239	—	18	25	90	—	
Alleghenytown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	10	108	1	15	—	—	—	
Totals		52	577	1	33	\$101	—	\$238	

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—OHIO PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.

1827

Church	Pastor	Members Received	Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
				Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benovolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	32	262	4	20	\$354	\$168
2nd of Pittsburgh ...	E. P. Swift	26	239	—	18	25	90
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	7	112	1	21	—	—
Totals		—	—	—	—	—	—
		65	613	5	59	\$379	\$258
1828							
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	95	319	8	36	\$235	\$258
2nd of Pittsburgh ...	E. P. Swift	62	286	9	31	182	91
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	18	126	3	18	—	—
Totals		—	—	—	—	—	—
		175	731	20	85	\$417	\$349

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—OHIO PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.

1829

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd		Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
		Exam.	Certf.		Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	13	17	330	5	27	\$224	—
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	7	25	295	1	24	—	—
Alleghentown and Pine Creek	Joseph Stockton	10	—	108	6	18	—	—
Totals		30	42	733	12	69	\$224	—

A Welsh Church near Pittsburgh is mentioned but not listed. The pastor, a Mr. David Stevens, was ordained and installed November 7, 1828. The pastoral relationship was dissolved October 15, 1829.

1830

1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	32	12	359	2	46	\$170	\$1,913
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	13	46	331	2	38	156	410
Alleghentown*	Joseph Stockton	1	11	65	5	16	—	—
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	8	8	75	—	—	35	—
Totals		54	77	830	9	100	\$361	\$2,323

Rev. John Joyce was received June 15, 1830, as stated supply of the Welsh Church.

* Alleghentown organized as a separate church February 26, 1830, with 53 members. Pine Creek is outside present city limits of Pittsburgh.

STATISTICS OF PITTSBURGH CHURCHES—OHIO PRESBYTERY (Continued)

Taken from Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh.

1831

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd Ez. Certf.	Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts		
				Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences	
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	30	389	2	27	\$210	\$1,227	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	18	351	2	42	101	359	
I Alleghentown	Job F. Halsey	39	116	—	—	—	—	
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	19	92	2	2	14	—	
Northern Liberties	A. D. Campbell	(No report)	30	(Organised July 5, 1831)				—
Concord	(Vacant)	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Totals	—	106	978	6	71	\$325	\$1,586	
1832								
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	48	429	3	36	\$271	\$1,574	
2nd of Pittsburgh	E. P. Swift	23	385	3	30	301	160	
I Alleghentown	Job F. Halsey	50	166	4	28	—	—	
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	25	118	3	7	25	—	
Northern Liberties	A. D. Campbell	20	50	6	6	24	—	
Concord	(Vacant)	—	30	(No report)				—
Totals	—	166	1,178	19	107	\$621	\$1,734	

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1833

Taken from *Minutes of General Assembly—1833.*

<i>Church</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Members Rec'd Exam. Certf.</i>	<i>Total Members</i>	<i>Baptisms</i>	<i>Gifts</i>	
					<i>Missions</i>	<i>Other Benevolences</i>
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	26	422	38	\$923	\$1,287
2nd of Pittsburgh	(Vacant)	—	385			
3rd of Pittsburgh				27		
I Alleghentown	Job F. Halsey	14	170			
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	—	118			
Northern Liberties	A. D. Campbell		50			
Concord	(Vacant)	(No report)	30			
Minersville	}(Vacant)					
Lawrenceville		(Organized June 25, 1833)				
Birmingham	(Vacant)	(Organized June 11, 1833)				
Totals		40	1,202	38	\$923	\$1,287

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1834

Taken from *Minutes of General Assembly—1834*.

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd Exam. Certj.	Total Members	Baptisms	Gifts	
					Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	11	404	40	\$502	\$957
2nd of Pittsburgh	Joseph W. Blythe	—	385	—	—	—
3rd of Pittsburgh	David H. Riddle	5	80	6	200	50
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	14	123	21	100	34
I Alleghentown	Job F. Halsey	20	187	24	330	80
Northern Liberties	A. D. Campbell	8	70	—	55	—
Minersville	} Aaron Williams, S.S.	29	15	19	4	24
Lawrenceville						
Birmingham	(No available reports until 1839)					
Welsh Church	Evans Martin	(No report given at any time)				
Concord	(Vacant)	—	30	—	—	—
Totals		87	1,322	110	\$1,191	\$1,145

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1835

Taken from Minutes of Individual Churches.

(General Assembly Minutes contain no statistical data for 1835.)

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd Exam. Certif.	Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
				Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	55	450	6	39		
2nd of Pittsburgh	Joseph W. Blythe	—	302				
3rd of Pittsburgh	David H. Riddle	42	170				
Northern Liberties	A. D. Campbell	—	103				
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	—	131				
I Alleghenytown	E. P. Swift	7	161				
Minersville	} (Vacant)	—	44				
Lawrenceville							
Birmingham	(No report)						
Welsh Church	(Rev. Martin suspended from the ministry June 10, 1835)						
Concord		—	30				
Totals		104	1,391	6	39		

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1836

Taken from *Minutes of General Assembly—1836*.

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd Exam. Certs.	Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
				Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	10	457	35	—	\$503	\$1,625
2nd of Pittsburgh	Joseph W. Blythe	11	254	3	22	987	793
3rd of Pittsburgh	David H. Riddle	10	174	2	12	939	1,000
Northern Liberties	A. D. Campbell	22	127	4	8	108	—
East Liberty	Wm. B. Melvaine	10	137	1	9	162	150
I Alleghentown	E. P. Swift	15	204	—	—	—	—
Lawrenceville	Richard Lea	(No report)					
Birmingham	(Vacant)	(No report available, church very small)					
Concord	(Vacant)						
Minersville	Marshall, S.S.	—	44				
Welsh Church, Pipe- town, Pa.		(No statistical report for any subsequent year)					
Totals		78	1,397	96	—	\$2,669	\$2,568

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1837

Taken from *Minutes of General Assembly—1837*.

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd Exam. Certf.	Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
				Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	9	437	—	22	\$1,566	\$554
2nd of Pittsburgh	Robert Dunlap	5	257	—	—	523	415
3rd of Pittsburgh	David H. Riddle	15	222	—	14	1,932	632
4th of Pittsburgh*	A. D. Campbell	19	150	1	—	187	—
East Liberty	Wm. B. Melvaine ..	16	149	3	14	297	100
I Alleghentown	E. P. Swift	9	252	3	27	1,125	120
Lawrenceville	Richard Lea	11	47	2	14	50	69
Birmingham	John Jones, S.S.	(No report)					
Concord	John Jones, S.S.						
Minersville	S. M. Sparks, S.S.	—	50	—	—	—	—
Totals		84	1,564	9	91	\$5,680	\$1,940

* Name of church of Northern Liberties changed on April 19, 1837, to Fourth Church of Pittsburgh.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1838*

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd		Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
		Exam.	Certf.		Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	—	—	—	—	27	\$900	\$360
2nd of Pittsburgh	Robert Dunlap	18	54	239	5	28	1,352	144
3rd of Pittsburgh	David H. Riddle	18	18	226	4	22	833	410
4th of Pittsburgh	A. S. McMaster	(No report available)						
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	8	4	156	3	13	270	216
I Alleghentown	E. P. Swift	12	39	285	2	30	325	345
Lawrenceville	Richard Lea	23	16	78	3	7	60	52
Birmingham	John Jones, S.S.	(No report)						
Minersville	S. M. Sparks, S.S.	(No report)						
Concord	John Jones, S.S.	(No report)						
Manchester	(Congregation of Manchester received under care of Presbytery Sept. 4, 1838)							
Totals		79	131	984	17	127	\$3,740	\$1,527

* Statistical information for this and subsequent years taken from Minutes of General Assembly, issued annually.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1839

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd		Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
		Exam. Certf.	1		Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	1	2	239	—	—	\$802	\$1,200
2nd of Pittsburgh	Robert Dunlap	17	31	302	1	38	320	660
3rd of Pittsburgh	David H. Riddle	7	22	235	—	—	—	—
4th of Pittsburgh	A. S. McMaster	6	16	125	1	18	78	253
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	2	3	132	—	—	250	210
J Alleghentown	E. P. Swift	8	11	274	2	15	550	207
Lawrenceville	Richard Lea	9	5	83	3	11	40	110
Birmingham	(Vacant)	2	2	11				
Minersville	S. M. Sparks							
Concord	(Vacant)							
Fifth, Pittsburgh								
Manchester	(No statistics available until 1847)							
				14	(Organized July 22, 1839)			
Totals		52	92	1,465	7	82	\$2,040	\$2,640

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1840

Church	Pastor	Members Rec'd		Total Members	Baptisms		Gifts	
		Exam.	Certf.		Adult	Infant	Missions	Other Benevolences
1st of Pittsburgh	Francis Herron	34	19	131	1	12	\$640	\$1,000
2nd of Pittsburgh	Robert Dunlap	30	30	332	3	21	306	780
3rd of Pittsburgh	David H. Riddle	64	26	270	—	—	—	—
4th of Pittsburgh	A. S. McMaster	10	13	131	—	20	—	80
East Liberty	Wm. B. McIlvaine	9	2	133	2	—	165	200
I Alleghenytown	E. P. Swift	12	24	297	4	21	340	250
II Alleghenytown	Wm. A. Adair	(Church organized Mar. 19, 1840. Pastor installed Apr. 26, 1840)			—	—	—	—
Lawrenceville	Richard Lea	12	12	96	1	9	73	321
Birmingham	(Vacant)	(Church disbanded in 1840)			—	—	—	—
Fifth, Pittsburgh	James M. Davis	(No statistics)			—	—	—	—
Minersville	S. M. Sparks	(No statistics)			—	—	—	—
Concord	(Vacant)	(Rev. Samuel Henderson installed October 20, 1840)			—	—	—	—
Totals		171	126	1,390	11	83	\$1,524	\$2,631

APPENDIX II

SUMMARIZED STATISTICS

The information presented in the Annual Statistical Summaries of Appendix I is summarized in three tables which form Appendix II. They reveal in convenient summary the growth and changes of the Pittsburgh Presbyterian Churches as a whole throughout the entire period under review.

Table A summarizes changes in "Church Membership" and covers the period from 1811 to 1840. Since complete information for all churches is not available, the recorded summaries are not as useful for purposes of comparison as would be the case if information for all churches were available. Where large churches have failed to make reports, this absence of information is indicated by the word "incomplete."

Table B is headed "Additions to Church Membership" and records additions to church membership either upon examination or by certificate of transfer for the years 1811 to 1840. Because many members were suspended or transferred to other churches or died, the number of members received in any one year does not present net growth. Information totaling these losses by death, transfer or suspension throughout the major portion of the period under review is not available. And so no attempt is made to include in this study the inadequate reports which are available.

Table C, bearing the caption "Amounts Contributed to Benevolences," shows the varying contributions of the churches for the years 1815-1840. Here again many of the churches at various times failed to record this item of information and the recorded summaries do not form an adequate basis of comparison.

TABLE A. TOTAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, 1811 TO 1840

Year	Church Membership	Year	Church Membership	Year	Church Membership
1811	.....128	1821	.....359	1831	..... 978
1812	.....(No report)	1822	.....408	1832	.....1,178
1813	..... 63 (Incomplete)	1823	.....500	1833	.....1,202
1814	..... 80 (Incomplete)	1824	.....478	1834	.....1,322
1815	.....(No report)	1825	.....557	1835	.....1,391
1816	.....207	1826	.....577	1836	.....1,397
1817	.....220	1827	.....613	1837	.....1,564
1818	.....237	1828	.....731	1838	..... 984
1819144 (Incomplete)	1829733	18391,465
1820227 (Incomplete)	1830830	18401,390

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TABLE B. ADDITIONS TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, 1811 TO 1840

Year	Members Received	Year	Members Received	Year	Members Received
1811	37	1821	45	1831	184
1812	(No report)	1822	86	1832	302
1813	16	1823	89	1833	89
1814	12	1824	36	1834	190
1815	(No report)	1825	94	1835	185
1816	14	1826	52	1836	136
1817	13	1827	65	1837	248
1818	26	1828	175	1838	210
1819	33	1829	72	1839	144
1820	36	1830	131	1840	297

TABLE C. AMOUNTS CONTRIBUTED TO BENEVOLENCES, 1815 TO 1840

Year	Benevolences	Year	Benevolences	Year	Benevolences
1815.....	\$79	1824.....	\$401	1833.....	\$2,210
1816.....	75	1825.....	258	1834.....	2,336
1817.....	92	1826.....	339	1835.....	—
1818.....	126	1827.....	637	1836.....	5,237
1819.....	179	1828.....	766	1837.....	7,620
1820.....	80	1829.....	224	1838.....	5,267
1821.....	171	1830.....	2,684	1839.....	4,680
1822.....	57	1831.....	1,911	1840.....	4,155
1823.....	756	1832.....	2,355		

APPENDIX III

DIAGRAMS SHOWING STATISTICAL VARIATIONS

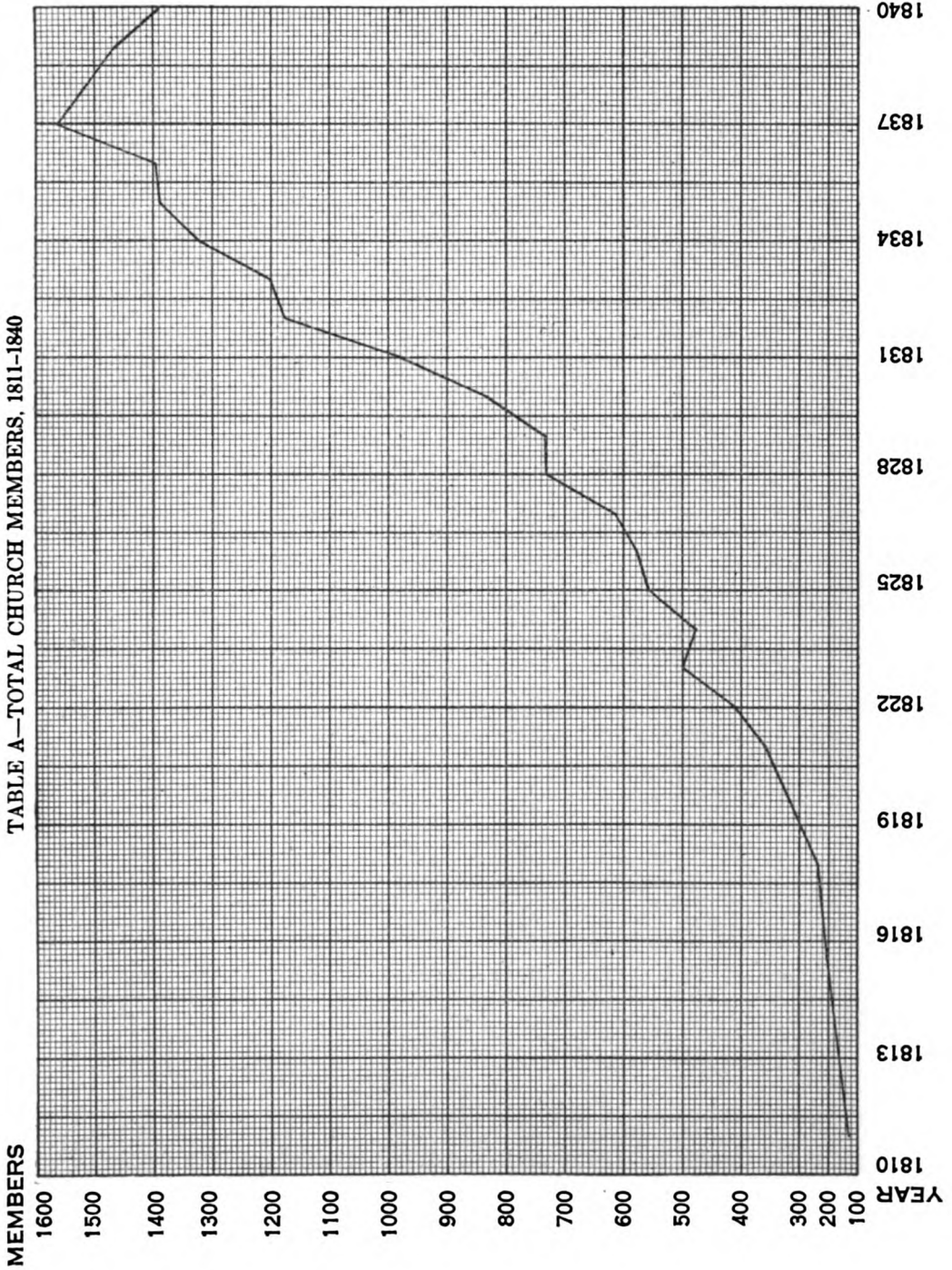
The summarized information of Appendix II is visualized in the three coordinating diagrams of Appendix III. These diagrams cover the period as stated in the explanation preceding Appendix II. They chart the following three groups of data: Total Church Membership, Additions and Benevolences.

Table A visualizes the marked and fairly consistent growth in "Total Church Membership" throughout the period under investigation. In the left hand column are indicated the number of church members, while along the bottom of the page are listed the corresponding years.

Table B is headed "Additions to Church Membership," and attempts to make vivid the varying success which attended the pastors' efforts to secure new members. Some of the years were periods of revival and resulted in large increases in membership. These years of growth were followed usually by a period of stationary or declining reports. This perhaps indicates that excitement and group pressure, rather than individual conviction, led some people to unite with the church. As in Table A, the number of members appears to the left of the table and the corresponding year is listed at the bottom.

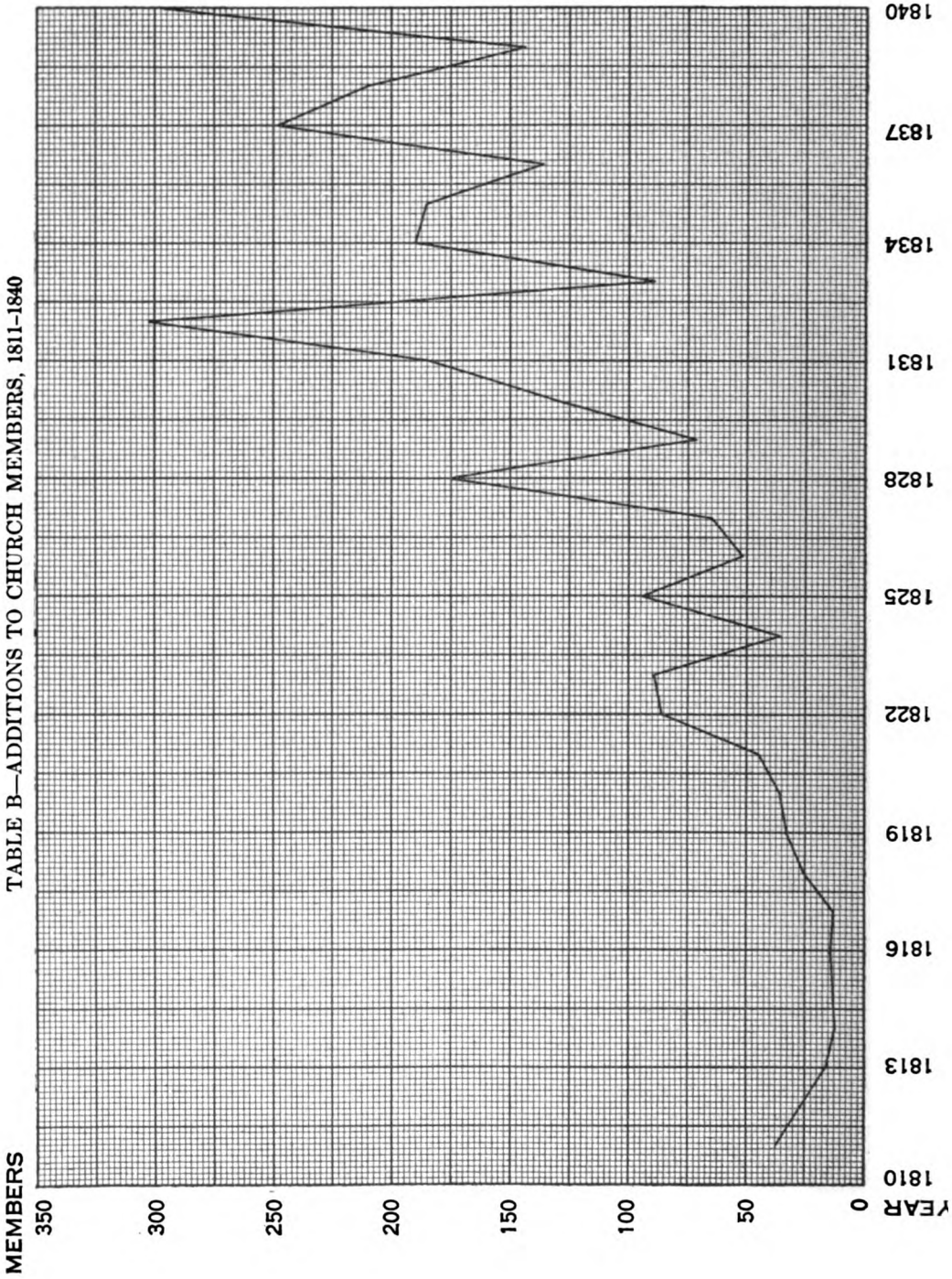
Table C shows the "Amounts Contributed to Benevolences." It reveals the remarkable increase in benevolent gifts following the year 1829 and continuing with alternate advance and recession throughout the remaining period. The sums contributed are indicated to the left of the table and the particular year appears at the bottom.

TABLE A—TOTAL CHURCH MEMBERS, 1811-1840



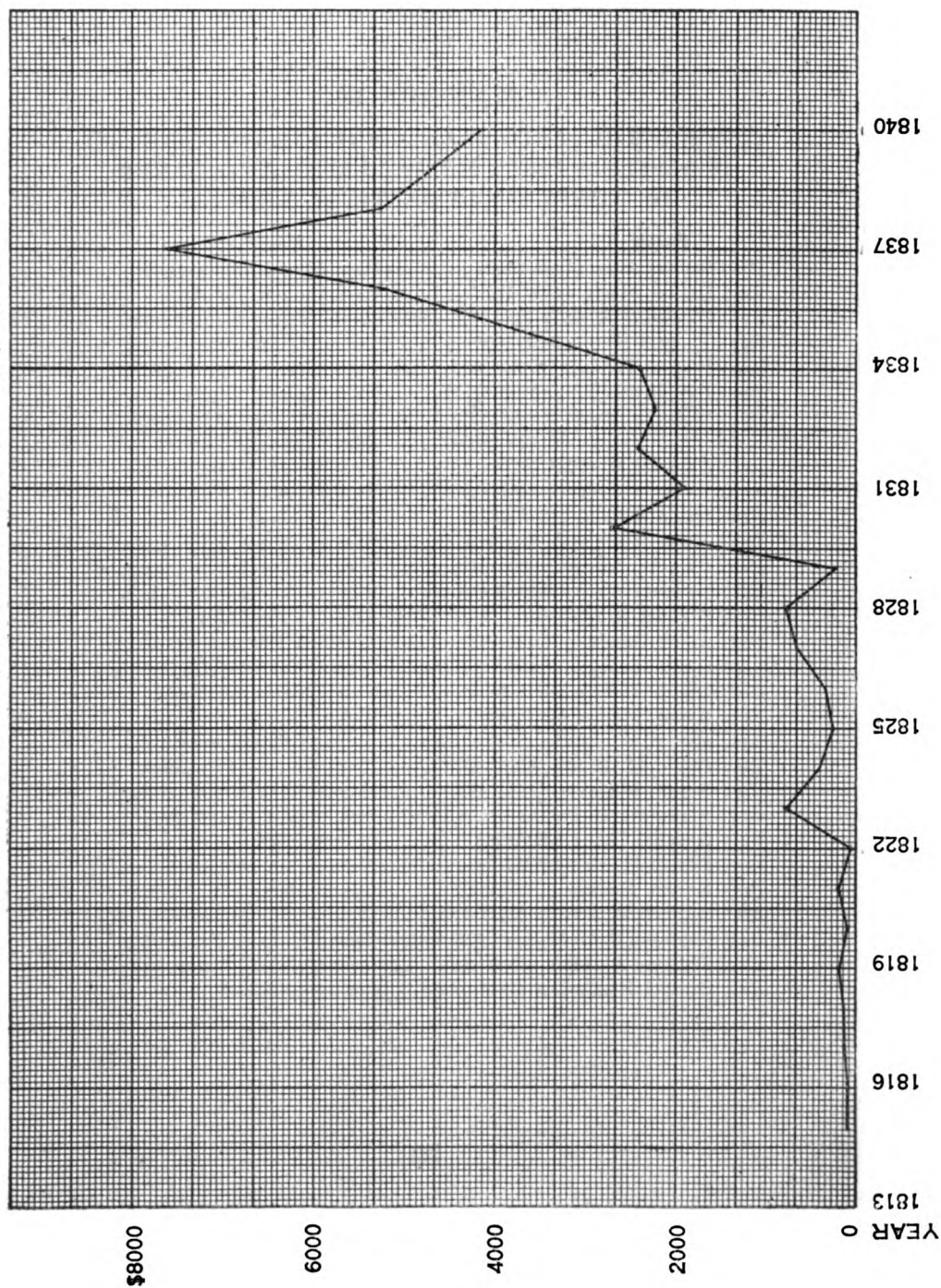
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TABLE B—ADDITIONS TO CHURCH MEMBERS, 1811-1840



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TABLE C—AMOUNTS CONTRIBUTED TO BENEVOLENCES, 1815-1840



APPENDIX IV
 PITTSBURGH PASTORS AND PROFESSORS PRIOR TO
 1840 WITH A LIST OF THE PLACES AND DATES
 OF THEIR ECCLESIASTICAL SERVICE

<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Church</i>
Rev. Samuel Barr (1785-1789).....	First Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. Robert Steele (1800-1810).....	First Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. Nathaniel R. Snowden (1805-1805).....	Second Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. Thomas Hunt (1807-1808).....	Second Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. Francis Herron (1811-1851).....	First Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. Joseph Stockton (1814-1831).....	First Church, Allegheny
Rev. Elisha P. Swift (1819-1833).....	Second Church, Pittsburgh
(1835-1865).....	First Church, Allegheny
Rev. John Joyce (1828-1829).....	East Liberty Church
(1830-1831).....	First Church, Allegheny
Rev. David Stevens (1828-1829).....	Welsh Church
Rev. Jacob J. Janeway (1828-1829)....	Western Theological Seminary
Rev. John W. Nevin (1829-1840).....	Western Theological Seminary
Rev. Luther Halsey (1829-1837).....	Western Theological Seminary
Rev. William B. McIlvaine (1830-1870).....	East Liberty Church
Rev. A. D. Campbell (1830-1837).....	Northern Liberties (Fourth)
(1836-1840).....	Western Theological Seminary
Rev. Job F. Halsey (1831-1835).....	First Church, Allegheny
Rev. Evans Martin (1832-1835).....	Welsh Church
Rev. Joseph W. Blythe (1833-1836)....	Second Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. David H. Riddle (1833-1857)....	Third Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. Aaron Williams (1833-1834).....	Minersville (Herron Avenue)
Rev. Alexander B. Brown (1833-1834)..	Birmingham (South Side)
Rev. Richard Lea (1834-1876).....	Lawrenceville
Rev. David Elliott (1836-1874).....	Western Theological Seminary
Rev. Robert Dunlap (1837-1847).....	Second Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. Samuel M. Sparks (1837-1861)....	Minersville (Herron Avenue)
Rev. Algernon S. McMaster (1839-1842).....	Fourth Church, Pittsburgh
Rev. William A. Adair (1840-1842)....	Second Church, Allegheny
Rev. Samuel Henderson (1840-1848)....	Concord, Carrick

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- (c) **Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.**

Original Minute Book, complete from organization of church. Vol. I covers period January 10, 1863, to April 12, 1863.
- (d) **First Presbyterian Church of Allegheny.**
 - (1) *Minutes of Session*, complete from organization of church. Vol. I covers period February 26, 1830, to April 9, 1861.
 - (2) *Sabbath School Minute Book*, 1835-1838.
- (e) **Concord Presbyterian Church, Carrick.**

Minutes of Session, 1836-51, including brief summary of previous history.
- (f) **Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church.**

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