

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF THE

# PIONEER PREACHERS

OF

# INDIANA.

BY

MADISON EVANS, A. M.

I say the pulpit (in the sober use  
Of its legitimate, peculiar pow'rs)  
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,  
The most important and effectual guard,  
Support and ornament of Virtue's cause."

Philadelphia:

J. CHALLEN & SONS,

1308 CHESTNUT STREET.

1862.

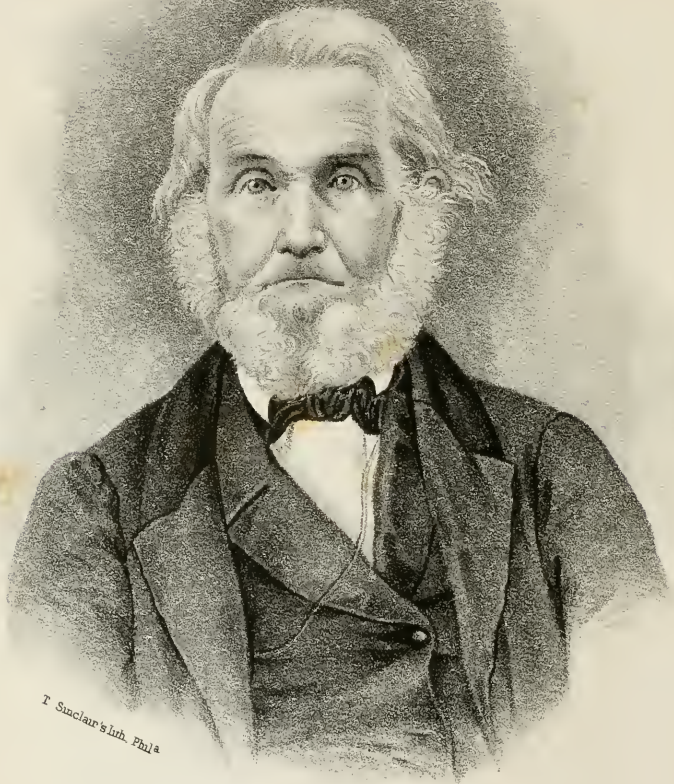
---

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by

MADISON EVANS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the  
District of Indiana.

---



T. Sinclair's Lith. Phila

Respectfully  
John Longley

## JOHN LONGLEY.

---

THIS most aged of Indiana's pioneer preachers is a native of the Empire State, born in New York city, on the 13th of June, 1782. It will be remembered that this was one year before the independence of the United States was acknowledged by Great Britain, and seven years before the first inauguration of Washington. He entered upon life, therefore, in the midst of a political revolution; and he will fall as a soldier in an ecclesiastical reform fraught with even greater blessings to mankind.

His grandfather, on his father's side, was a Welchman, and his grandmother was a native of old England. His mother's ancestors were Hollanders. Prior to his earliest recollection his parents were devout Baptists. His mother, especially, whose maiden name was Ann Floyd, was one of "the holy women of the old time who trusted in God." She assiduously strove to bring up her son "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and, though the outlines of her dear face have well nigh faded from his memory, her religious instructions are still plainly written on his heart. When very young, he was taught the Lord's prayer, and required to repeat it every night; and it is as true of this silver-haired father as it was of the youthful Timothy, that "from a child he has known the Holy Scriptures." He remembers a sample of needlework wrought by his mother, on which were the following words:

"Ann Floyd is my name,  
New York is my station;  
Heaven will be my dwelling-place,  
For Christ is my salvation."

This simple stanza he treasures up in his memory as a humble little monument commemorative of her ingenuity and faith in God.

His father, Thomas Longley, was a boot-and-shoe dealer in the great metropolis. But, in the year 1790, a Baptist preacher came to New York, and persuaded him to sell out and emigrate to Kentucky, representing the village of Washington, in Mason county, as a better location for one in his business. Perhaps the good but short-sighted divine was prompted to give this advice by the fact that, when he left his Western home, many of the people of Mason county were bare-footed; or he may have believed that Washington was "predestinated" to become a greater mart than New York. However this may have been, Mr. Longley set out early in the season with his family, consisting of his wife, four children, and their grandmother, then seventy-five or eighty years of age.

In that day—1790—a journey from New York to the West was something like a journey, now, over the plains to the Golden State; for in all the New World was to be seen no track of the iron horse. But at last they reached the head waters of the Ohio, and embarked, with their earthly possessions, in rudely-constructed boats. The passage down the river was long and perilous. They were once caught in a storm, in which they lost one of their boats and its cargo; and they were several times fired upon by Indians from the inhospitable shore. Thus, early in life, Elder Longley was "in perils of waters," and "in perils of the wilderness."

About the middle of June, they disembarked at the mouth of Limestone creek, where Maysville now stands. This point was some four miles from Washington, to which place they made their way, expecting to be received and entertained for awhile by the preacher who had induced them to exchange the blessings of civiliza-

tion for the privations of frontier life. But, when they appeared before the preacher's cabin, he informed them that they could not be admitted—that they must pitch their tents as others had done, and dwell therein until they could erect a cabin for themselves. Finally, the hospitalities of a Mr. Cox were extended to them, and gladly accepted. He had a hewed-log house, with two small rooms, and a good puncheon floor. In this the two families lived, on terms of the *closest* intimacy, until Mr. Longley could select a site, and erect thereon a dwelling. Thus this pioneer family, like the Trojan hero, "having been tossed about much, both on land and water, suffered many things, until they could build"—not a "city," but—a *cabin*.

The Indians, at that time, were very troublesome in Kentucky; and, for a long while, property and life were in perpetual danger. Father Longley is perhaps the only man now living who saw the celebrated Major Simon Kenton, when, Mazeppa-like, he took his famous ride on an unbroken colt. The Indians had taken him prisoner, and, in order to amuse the *papooses*, had bound him upon the colt, to the tail of which they attached several cowbells. But, fortunately, the animal was one which they had stolen from the whites; and, when liberated, it fled home, carrying the doomed prisoner back, very unexpectedly, into the midst of his friends.

In the community in which such scenes transpired, Father Longley passed his boyhood. His educational advantages were therefore very limited. He had been sent to school a short time in New York, and he does not remember when he was unable to read. But, after his removal to the West, it was several years before an old Irish schoolmaster made his appearance in the neighborhood. In about five three-month terms of the common subscription schools of the eighteenth century, he com-

pleted his education ; having pretty well mastered a *post-diluvian* arithmetic, which was the only text book in the mathematical department ; and having passed several times through the *classical* course, which comprised the old-fashioned "Speller" and "Reader."

In his fourteenth year he lost his kind mother, whose influence over him had ever been talismanic. In a short time his father married again, and all went on smoothly enough for awhile ; but, finally, the children of the first mother were scattered abroad to give place to the fruits of the second marriage. John went to learn the trade of a tanner, being then in his eighteenth year. Unfortunately this movement brought him under the seductive influences of wicked associates. The man to whom he was apprenticed was himself very passionate and profane. The others about the establishment were of like character ; so when he walked it was in "the counsel of the ungodly," when he stood it was "in the way of sinners," and when he sat it was "in the seat of the scornful." Under such circumstances he soon became expert in the practice of sin.

Thus things went on for a year and a half. At length he was induced to reflect upon his condition, by hearing the remarks of a young woman who was relating her experience at a Baptist meeting. She quoted, with great feeling, the first psalm, and said many things which seemed to be strangely applicable to his case. By this means he was led to recall the admonitions and last request of his dying mother ; and to resolve that he would endeavor to take the cup of salvation, and pay his oft-repeated vows to the Most High. He sought repentance with many tears and some doubts ; for, under the unenlightened teaching of that day, he feared that he had grieved the Holy Spirit, and that it had departed

from him forever. He prayed and agonized with God for many months, but could obtain no message of peace from the skies; neither could he find rest on earth because of the taunts and jeers of his companions.

They concluded, one day, that John was good enough to be baptized, and, with the proprietor at their head, they undertook to immerse him in a filthy tan vat. He resisted with all his might, but for awhile was like a helpless babe in the hands of pedobaptists. Finally, however, he fastened his hands in the hair of his "boss," and, by vigorous pulling, made him glad to release him.

After this occurrence, he avoided their society as much as possible. Having completed his day's work, he would repair to the house of some of his Baptist friends, there to find sympathizers, and to converse about the interests of his soul. When he asked them for advice, or inquired of them what he must do to be saved, they told him he could do nothing but "*pray on*, and wait the Lord's own good time." How similar this direction to that given by the apostles! How admirably calculated to fill his heart with love towards God, who, he was constrained to believe, was alone responsible for the delay of his pardon!

While observing this commandment of men, he one night had a fearful dream. He dreamed that his departed mother came to him, carried him away through the air, alighted with him upon a beautiful greensward in front of a magnificent palace, took him by the hand, and led him to the door, which was open. They entered; and as they passed along a large hall, he saw his Saviour, who, his conductor told him, was writing for him a commission. Finding themselves at the extremity of the hall, he looked into illimitable space, but could see nothing. "Look a little to the left," said his angelic guide. He obeyed; and lo! he beheld the wicked in torment—



“A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,  
As one great furnace flamed: yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible,  
Served only to discover sights of woe.”

Sixty years have passed since that night; yet he affirms that he still shudders at the recollection of that terrible vision. When we remember that the religious teachings of those times exposed the sinner to an awful perdition, without disclosing any plain and sure way of salvation, it is not surprising that “in thoughts from the visions of the night, fear came upon him, and trembling, which made all his bones to shake.”

Receiving no encouragement from religious teachers, being “plagued all the day long” by his shopmates, and having tried so often to lay hold on the hope set before him, which hope always eluded his grasp, he was *almost* persuaded to abandon forever the path of the just. He now looks back to that critical period with the feeling of the Psalmist, when he said, “As for me my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.” To all this disquietude, to all these shafts of ridicule, to this imminent danger of giving up all aims at a holy and useful life, he was exposed simply because orthodoxy had sealed the lips of Peter that he might not instruct him—simply because a human creed had closed the door against Ananias, that he might not tell him that which was appointed for him to do. Under the gospel of Jesus Christ three thousand Jews sought and found pardon in a single day; under that gospel the persecuting Saul, whose hands were red with the blood of the innocent, obtained mercy within the space of three days; and had the same gospel, in its original purity and simplicity, been preached to this comparatively innocent youth, he would have arisen without delay, been baptized, washed away his sins, and gone on his way rejoicing.

But under the "other gospel" which was preached to him, and which is still advocated among men, he could only resolve, after a hard conflict in his mind, to persevere in penitence, in tears, and in prayer. In this extremity, he shut himself up in his room on Sundays, and spent the hours in reading the Bible and supplicating its Author. Being ignorant of the arrangement of the Scriptures and the design of each part, he sought the way of life as often in *Leviticus* as in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Like most persons of his and our day, he delighted most in the Psalms, and there he looked oftenest for the *commands of the Lord!* One Sunday, he happened upon the twenty-seventh Psalm, which greatly cheered his heart. Part of it supplied him with courage to withstand the gibes of his co-laborers, and part encouraged him to "wait on the Lord." This scripture also met his eye, and touched his heart: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." This beatitude seemed to have been spoken expressly for his sake. Therefore he did rejoice as he contemplated the heavenly reward, and, the wish being father to the thought, he concluded that his sins had at last been blotted out.

He then determined to offer himself to the Baptist Church at Washington. His "experience" being satisfactory, as all experiences are, he was received; and in March, 1801, was immersed in the Ohio river by William Payne.

Such was his entrance into the kingdom of God. If any one thinks the account of it is long and tedious, how does he suppose *their* patience must be taxed who are compelled to pass over such a circuitous route to the kingdom? If any reader of this volume be disposed to complain of long accounts of conversion, let him thenceforth

discountenance all systems of religion that subject men to the necessity of having such facts connected with their history. In the same space might have been recorded a dozen such conversions as that of the "eunuch," which fills only half a page of a common pocket Bible. But many are not taught to be converted in that short and simple way, lest both teacher and taught should be called "Campbellites." This fear is one chief obstacle in the way of the gospel of the Son of God.

In May, 1804, Father Longley was married to Miss Francina Hendrickson, of Fleming county, Kentucky. She had been brought up a Presbyterian "after the straitest sect." She was a woman of sterling piety; and, soon after their removal to their own house, she one evening placed the Bible and hymn-book upon the stand, and requested her husband to read and pray. He complied, with some trepidation, and from that day to this—over fifty-seven years—he has attended to family worship, save when circumstances have rendered it impracticable. The fact is recorded that her example may "teach the young women."

At the time of his marriage he was foreman in a tannery at Mt. Sterling. His employer proved to be dishonest, and withheld the most of his year's salary. On account of this misfortune, he returned to his father-in-law's in Fleming county. There he cast in his lot with the Emancipation Baptists, whose distinguishing feature, the name seems to indicate, was their hostility to slavery.

About this time he began to feel that it was his duty to preach, but he waited a long while for a *divine call*. Upon this point he had a long struggle, the particulars of which need not be related; suffice it to say, that in 1805 he was licensed, by the Baptist Association, to preach the gospel wherever God might open the way.

In the meantime a new church was organized in the

neighborhood, the members of which desired him to be regularly ordained, and to become their pastor. He hesitated to be ordained in that connection, because he had begun to call in question the doctrine of close communion. But upon this question the brethren agreed to allow him some latitude; and, with this understanding, he was formally set apart, and duly installed as preacher in charge.

It was not long, however, until his mind became unsettled upon some other matters. Especially did he distrust the doctrine of eternal and unconditional election. While this subject was under consideration, he had another vision, which claims to be inserted, by virtue of its novelty. He dreamed that he was preaching the gospel of *John Calvin*. His words were visible, and, like so many birds, went flying out at the doors and windows, without producing any effect on his hearers. He sat down perplexed, and left the audience in a state of suspense for several minutes; when he again arose, and began to preach *Paul's* gospel—that Jesus “tasted death for every man.” His words then seemed sharp-pointed arrows, which flew straight to the mark, and pierced the hearts of those who heard him. Though it was but a vision, it left an impression on his mind that was not favorable to the Calvinistic theory. It helped him to realize the importance of the subject, and warned him to “take heed to his doctrine.”

Not long after this he had an interview with Barton W. Stone, who had come into that neighborhood to hold a protracted meeting. The prejudices of Father Longley were strong, but he concluded to go and hear Elder Stone, expecting, no doubt, to find him a *hard* man. But, contrary to his expectations, that holy man of God stirred up no strife, but drew all hearts after him by the irresistible power of the meek, gentle, and loving spirit that

dwelt within him. "He took me out," says Father Longley, "to hold a private conversation, and talked like a father to me, advising me not to give up preaching." After this interview he looked upon the Bible as he had never done before; indeed, he seemed to realize for the first time that it is the Bible, the only, the all-sufficient chart which God has given to guide his dear children from earth to heaven.

Unsettled in mind, he went to see his father, an unshaken Calvinistic Baptist, who, in their long interview, labored hard to prevent him from giving up the precious doctrine of predestination. Together they made a trip to Ohio, during which trip he preached the truth as far as he had learned it; and it is remarkable that, as soon as he began to approximate to the old gospel, he began to meet with success. On this tour he baptized four persons, who were the first fruits of his ministry.

When they were about to separate, his father said to him, "John, I believe it is your duty to preach; and as long as you preach Christ as you learn from the Bible, you cannot be far wrong. If they will not suffer you to preach what you really learn from that blessed book, you have a perfect right to go where you can enjoy this privilege."

His next preaching tour was to Georgetown, Ky. When about to leave home, a justice of the peace, by due legal process, seized upon his horse, in order to satisfy the claims of an impatient creditor. But a friend became his surety for the return of the animal within ten days, and he went on his way. At the meeting a collection was raised to enable him to pay the debt. This was the first money he ever received for preaching.

A short time after this, B. W. Stone and others held a protracted meeting at Cabin Creek, in Lewis county. This meeting Elder Longley and his father-in-law at-

tended. On Sunday morning, Elder Stone informed him that he (Longley) was to preach that forenoon. No excuse would suffice; so at the appointed hour he preached to a large assembly, upon the words, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Comprehending not the Lord's plan of salvation, most of the preachers of that day discoursed chiefly upon the love of God, the wrath to come, the untold horrors of hell, and the ineffable joys of heaven. His theme, on this occasion, was the love of God, with which he proceeded, on the wings of imagination, until he came to the crucifixion. When he had finished the picture, he cried out with a loud, yet pathetic voice, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;" whereupon they all set up such a shout that he could proceed no further. This incident simply illustrates the style of preaching in the olden time, and goes to show that the speaker on that occasion was a *stirring preacher*, possessing superior descriptive powers. He could arouse the people to action, but, as yet, he could not tell them what to do to be saved.

From this time he continued to preach a good deal among the Christians, (called Newlights,) but he still retained his membership among the Baptists. In the year 1810, he removed from Fleming to Lewis county, taking with him a letter from the Baptist Church at Blue Bank Run. Upon this recommendation he united with the Church of Christ at Cabin Creek. This movement brought him to the Bible alone, and the name Christian.

Upon this platform, and under this name, he continued to preach with tolerable success, until the great union effected by B. W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. Into this union he entered heart and soul, and has ever since been an untiring advocate of the claims of the current Reformation.

In the year 1813—some twenty years prior to the union above mentioned—he moved over into Adams county, Ohio, and settled in a community of Shaking Quakers. He immediately began to proclaim the gospel among them, and such was his success that, within a single year, the Disciples bought out their “dancing-house,” as Elder Longley called it, and converted it into a house of worship. In this house he organized a small church, which increased so rapidly that in a short time it numbered over one hundred and fifty members. They then built an excellent stone meeting house, which still stands a monument of the zeal of those early times. In the providence of God, Father Longley had the pleasure, not long since, of preaching in the old stone house, nearly half a century after its erection. Like the earthly house of his own tabernacle, it exhibited unmistakable signs of decay.

After laboring a few years in Adams county, he returned to Kentucky, advocating chiefly the claims of the Bible, to the exclusion of all human creeds.

About the year 1826 he removed to Cincinnati, which then contained a population of only about eight thousand. When he first saw the town, some years before, its more appropriate name would have been Zoar—“a little one”—and from that small beginning he has seen it expand into its present magnificent proportions. To him belongs the honor of having planted the first church of Christ in Cincinnati; and he has had the pleasure of witnessing a growth of truth almost commensurate with that of the city. He remained in that place some two or three years, during which time the Bible cause prospered in his hands, and his little flock increased to about sixty. In the meantime he was bereft of his first companion, who died at Cheviot, in the suburbs of the city, in the year 1826. The following is an extract from her obituary

notice published in the October number of the *Christian Messenger*.

“Died, August 17th, the wife of Elder John Longley, Hamilton County, Ohio, after an illness of about three weeks. From the very day on which she was taken sick, she viewed death as certain and near, and without fear talked with perfect composure about it. \* \* \* Just before she breathed her last, she said, ‘All is peace—the victory is gained—O he is a God of all grace,’ and yielded up her spirit to him who gave it, without a struggle.” Thus with prosperity in heavenly things came adversity in earthly things, turning his joy into heaviness.

The next Spring after this sad event he once more returned with his children to Kentucky. Not long afterward he was married to Agnes Hendrickson.

In the Spring of 1830 he removed to Rush county, Indiana. Thirty-two years ago, therefore, he began to plead in Indiana, for the principles which he had already advocated for twenty-one years in Ohio and Kentucky.

In Rush county he toiled, arduously and under many disadvantages for several years. There being but few, if any, churches in which he could preach, he frequently taught the people from house to house; there being no railroads he travelled on horseback or on foot; and his preaching being considered heretical, he was looked upon by many as “the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things.” As the ancient seventy, being persecuted in one city, fled unto another, so he removed from place to place, not transgressing the bounds of his Judea, the county.

Receiving but little or nothing for his preaching, he established a small dry-goods store, hoping by that means to make a support for his family without giving up entirely the work of the Lord. In this enterprise he was unfortunate and well nigh became a broken merchant.

While misfortune thus overtook him in business, death



entered into his dwelling and robbed him of his second wife, who died in March, 1834. Within the same year he was again married, to his present wife, whose name was Emily Huntington.

After his ill fortune in Rush county, he removed his family and the remnant of his merchandise to Yorktown, Delaware county, where he was entirely broken up in a second effort to maintain his family by selling goods. His heart and thoughts were engaged in the work of the ministry, and for this reason he was unsuccessful in his attempts to "buy and sell and get gain." His failure was but a verification of the Saviour's dictum, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." The great book of remembrance will doubtless reveal the fact that it has been verified many thousand times by failures *in the business of serving God*. Father Longley is one of the few comparatively who have chosen to fail in things temporal rather than in things eternal.

Though unsuccessful in his own affairs, the work of the Lord prospered in his hands. He built up, in Delaware county, a large and influential church, which still shines as a light in the world, holding forth the word of life. Among his co-laborers at that place, were Benjamin and Daniel Franklin, who were just then entering the field in which he had been reaping for thirty years.

In 1840 he removed to Noblesville, Hamilton county. At that point he preached, with good results, for about four years, receiving for his labor what was barely sufficient for the support of his family.

In 1844 he went to La Fayette, where he has resided ever since. For several years after his removal to that city, the church there was under his pastoral care; but for the last few years he has been too infirm to perform the duties of the pastoral office. Though he has almost completed his four score years, yet, at times, he enjoys tolera-

ble health. At such intervals he still labors in word and doctrine, resolved to spend his remaining strength in the service of Him whom he has so long, so faithfully, and so usefully followed.

In the course of his long and eventful career he has immersed over three thousand persons, most of whom will stand "about the throne" with the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands," who, arrayed in white robes and with palms in their hands, shall proclaim with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Since his memorable vision of the winged words, he has preached a *free gospel*, almost gratuitously. At no time, perhaps, has his large family been amply provided for by the churches, and now, in his feeble old age, he is very poor and mainly, if not entirely, dependent upon the charities, or rather the *dues* of the Brotherhood. It will be a burning shame if that Brotherhood do not prove to him a "good Samaritan."

But, although he has received but little "of corruptible things, as silver and gold," he has been partly rewarded in beholding the glorious progress of the cause in which he has suffered and toiled. Looking back as he does even beyond the beginning, his view of the Reformation is like Ezekiel's vision of the Holy Waters.—(Ez. xlvii. 3–5.) The truth which had been hid for ages, at last burst forth, like a fountain, among the hills of Western Virginia. He looked upon the stream when the waters were but "to the ancles;" when they were "to the knees," he saw them; when they ascended to the loins he rejoiced; and now his dim eyes beheld them swollen into a mighty river. Having swept away all barriers hitherto, the orthodox no longer attempt to impede its resistless flow. Like the ancient rustic, they patiently wait for it to pass

by; but "it flows and will continue to flow, rolling on forever."\*

Having witnessed the triumphant progress of truth thus far, he is content to have passed the time of his sojourning in battling for principles which he is confident will ultimately prevail. Though he has suffered much, sacrificed much, labored much, and received but little, in this life, he has laid up for himself, in heaven, an eternal weight of glory. There he has deposited his treasure; there are his friends and kinsmen, and there will he soon be also. He now tarries among us as one of a former generation, only waiting, like Job, until his "change come." May the God of all grace loose the "silver cord" with a tender hand, and grant him an abundant entrance into "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Elder Longley was, in his palmy days, a good-looking, sinewy man, of medium height and slender form. He possessed remarkable strength and activity, and his great age attests the excellence of the physical constitution that has sustained him under so many burdens. He is among the best of the many noble specimens of manhood, produced in the age that is past.

His intellectual powers are above mediocrity, and proper cultivation would have rendered them decidedly superior. Though deprived of the advantages of education, yet he has been able to distinguish, for the most part, between good and evil in matters pertaining to doctrine, and to present with tolerable clearness the great facts of the gospel. In the sharp conflicts that attended the introduction of primitive Christianity in Indiana, he shrank from no engagement; and as the militia officer often eclipses the thorough-bred soldier, so he was more successful in

\* *Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.*

*the field* than many who had emerged from theological seminaries.

Though never eloquent, he has been, on all occasions, a ready and impressive speaker; and now that he is so venerable—so near the confines of the invisible world—his tremulous voice affects his hearers almost like the voice of one “sent unto them from the dead.” True, it does not so affect all, for many who assemble in the house of God only “to hear some new thing,” have long since become impatient of his ministrations. He has never belonged to that class of speakers who

“ Fill the allotted scene,  
With lifeless drawls, insipid and serene;”

and he is quite as far removed from that other class—so numerous in the former days—who

“ Thunder every couplet o’er  
And almost crack your ears with rant and roar.”

He moves about but little in the pulpit; his gestures are few and graceful; his delivery, calm, dignified, earnest, and, at proper periods, pathetic.

In the society of his friends he is companionable, though slightly inclined to sedateness. In the family circle he has been indulgent to a fault. It can hardly be said that he is remarkable for his administrative ability.

His sincerity in the sacred cause has never been rendered doubtful by any aberrations from the path of the just; but, during the whole of his long pilgrimage, his conduct has been, “as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

Fearlessly may he look the people of his generation in the face, and say, with upright Samuel, “*I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day:*

WITNESS AGAINST ME BEFORE THE LORD AND BEFORE HIS ANOINTED.”

Having thus loved righteousness and hated iniquity, none can doubt that, when the saints shall ascend the throne, God, even his God, will anoint him with the oil of gladness.