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Fort Berkimer Church,

ERECTED IN 1767.

A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE!

DELIVERED NOVEMBER 15TH, 1874.

BY REV. WM. JOHNS.

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# A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE OF FORT HERKIMER REFORMED CHURCH,

PREACHED BY REV. WM. JOHNS, NOV. 15TH, 1874.

"I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."—Psalm 39, 12.

The ancient Israelites dwelt in tents. They were not unlike the emigrant moving west, laying no claims to the land through which they sojourned, simply using the grasses and other available articles for their present necessities. So Israel lived in the days of the patriarchs, and moved along with their families, their flocks and herds from "Dan to Beersheba," in fine, throughout all the land Canaan.

In the days of David a change had taken place. The land had been divided, and the tribes had settled down in their own inheritance, and were no longer "strangers and pilgrims" as their fathers—they claimed the soil, were at home and at rest. The royal psalmist, in his contemplations, thinks of the fathers, how they lived and died, and of the fact that they "confessed themselves to be pilgrims and strangers," he finds in their history a lesson of instruction; their statements were correct; all the scenes in their lives were dissolving views which passed before the vision, beautiful for the time being, but they were dissolving. So is life; it is short and transient.

A tent is an apt illustration, to-day it is here—to-morrow it is taken down, laid away or pitched on some other place. And thus it is with the traveler, he does not intend to be a rover, always to dwell in a tent—the emigrant wagon is not to be his permanent home. When he reaches his destination he intends to build and to surround himself with his family, his flocks and the fruits of his labors. So the Christian—now indeed he is a pilgrim and a stranger, exposed to dangers on the right and on the left, to trials and temptations—many times doth his prayers ascend to God midst tears of inward sorrow, but he lives in anticipation of that rest which is prepared for the people of God—like Moses on Mount Nebo he looks across the river and sees the goodly land—he is cheered with the pros-

pective future of a more endearing and enduring habitation, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2d Cor. 5:1

We have thought that as the psalmist contemplated the lives of the fathers, his ancestors, and drew practical lessons therefrom, so we might on this occasion, find instruction by treading in his footsteps, and take a retrospective glance of this ancient parish, the oldest in the valley this side of Albany—of the fathers who built it and worshiped therein—and of the ministers who instructed and led them in their devotions.

This Church has long been known as "the Fort Herkimer Reformed Church." Its corporate name is "The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of German Flatts." Such is the inscription of its Corporate Seal which was adopted in 1796 and never has been changed.

This church, like the broad acres which extend above and below, took its name from the early settlers. The "Flatts" and the "Germans," two simple words alixed together by the force of circumstances—the Germans settling on the flatts. At first spoken of as a settlement, and subsequently as the town of German Flatts; so the church was called to conform to the settlement and subsequently the town.

The history of this church, and of these flatts, the early settlers, is thrilling, full of interest, and a wonderful subject for thought and reflection. How many practical lessons may be found therein! How different are our circumstances and our emotions to-day from theirs! There is no war-whoop nor war-trump to molest us; there is no danger of our friends being scalped or our infant being pierced through with the bayonet and their brains dashed out by a white savage. Our property will not be destroyed; our families will not be molested. No announcement will be made at the door that the wary Indian is lurking back of yonder mound, ready to pounce upon us when we shall

separate from the doors of the sanctuary. No alarm gun will be fired to-day.—None of our friends will be massacred in our presence, and we ourselves unable to render them assistance. Nothing of this kind will transpire. They witnessed those scenes. Our lots are cast in pleasant places, and we can worship according to the dictates of our consciences.

Yes, the history of these flats and of this Church is an extraordinary one; they received the baptism of blood; many lost their lives by the Indian's tomahawk and the Frenchman's bayonet at an early day; then the contest in the revolution was one which tried men's hearts; their blood ran freely, and many of their remains found repose around these ancient walls. This house also was an asylum, a place of refuge for the inhabitants in case of sudden incursion from the enemy. Many a helpless one has been sheltered herein; these walls have witnessed many scenes. A helpless mother gave birth to her child herein, and how many died and were carried out and laid silently in their graves, none can tell. The minister, as well as the people, has found protection and repose here, and no doubt enjoyed the consolations of religion. How unlike the prayers of the sainted fathers are ours to-day. Ah, those were the days which tried men's hearts, but they found protection here.

It is said that the first settlement on German Flatts was made by a Colony of Germans from the Palatines on the Hudson. Possibly they wanted more lands than that section afforded, or were induced to come here from the favorable reports concerning the land. They came in the year 1722—one hundred and fifty-two years ago.

Among the names of the early settlers, we find Erghamer Harkimer, Harter, Fox, Wolfer, Starring, Editch, Bellinger, Hans Dedrick Stelly and others, names which are still familiar here, but modified to conform to English pronunciation.

It is said that the first church building erected was of logs, in the year 1725, and from references it is supposed that the first minister was an older brother of Rev. Abraham Rosenerantz, as the biographer of Rev. Abraham Rosenerantz said that he succeeded his brother in the year 1767—the year when the builder's stone with the initials J. H. E. & C. 1767, was placed over the old door which faced the north. Rev. A. Rosenerantz, V. D., labored here from 1767 till 1791. In 1798 a call was made on Rev. Mr. Piek, of Stone Arabia. Rev. Fitch Romfen, of Oneida, had preached occasionally before Mr. Piek was called. In 1802 Rev. John P. Spinner was called, and his pastorate

continued till 1848, nearly forty-six years. A singular incident occurred in the Synodical minutes—the next year after his death, German Flatts is left out, and does not appear again—four years afterwards the church has a new minister and a new name, "Fort Herkimer," and so it stands on the classical and Synodical minutes to-day.

Rev. J. Stark preached five years, then he retired to Mohawk; then there was a vacancy of four years. He returned in 1862. In 1863 he died, and was the last settled pastor the church had. Rev. J. Petrie supplied the pulpit one year in 1864. In 1867 Rev. J. J. Quick supplied one year. After that they received occasional supplies. Rev. Mr. Consul preached for awhile on Sabbath afternoons. In the Summer of 1873 Mr. Todd, from the seminary, preached four months, and in 1874 Mr. Hoffman, from the seminary, four months, which ended on the first day of September last.

In the early history of the church there were no statistical reports required by the Synod—probably like many other reports, they were given verbally. But in the Synod of 1812, it was ordered that an annual report should be made from each church of the number of families and communicants. In 1814 Rev. J. P. Spinner for the church of German Flatts, reported 184 families, 230 in full communion. Here is the first statistical record which we have. Rev. A. Rosenerantz's records have been mislaid, lost or destroyed. In 1815 Rev. J. P. Spinner reported 156 families—congregation, 1000. Communicants, 237.—In 1818, 346 in communion, 32 added on confirmation, 35 infants baptized. For the next ten years the church was in a flourishing condition—the number of families and of communicants were kept up and reported to Synod.

In 1833 they were reduced to 140 communicants; the church began to wane—other organizations were springing up—the churches in Frankfort and Warren had been organized, which doubtless took as many as a hundred members—there were internal difficulties principally about their land—death had taken several of their number, and some had been suspended, so that in 1845 the last report made by Rev. J. P. Spinner was 150 families, 113 in communion. "The German schoolmaster had been compelled to give up his desk to the English teacher, and the younger part of the congregation were in a rapid state of transition."—Other influences were brought to bear—the doctrines of repentance and regeneration were presented in a different manner in those new congregations; and deemed to be of more importance than Baptism and Confirmation or even the

reception of the Holy Communion. Mr. Spinner had also been represented as being a high churchman, placing too much stress upon forms and ordinances—as caring more for the letter than the spirit, all of which had its effect, so that in 1855, ten years after Mr. Spinner's death, Rev. J. Starks reported only 70 families, congregation 350, S. School 60, in communion 35, showing a loss of 80 families and 78 members from the communion. In 1858, 50 families, 30 S. S., and 30 communicants were reported. In 1864 Rev. J. Petrie reported 40 families, 25 S. Scholars—communicants—but there were about 20 members left then. Congregational purposes \$160, which probably was the amount he received for his services.—Such is the record in the Synod's minutes. To-day it is a *missionary* field.

The founders of the church were interested in the support of the Gospel. On the 24th of September, 1730, Mr. Nicholas Wolever deeded lot 30 of Burnetsfield patent for "church and school purposes." On the 26th day of April, 1733, Hans Dendrieh Stelly and others, deeded in trust to Peter Remsen, lots 45, 46 and 47 on German Flatts, for the support of the minister in Long Candle, or Burnetsfield, in Albany county. These lands were in trust and could not be sold—they were therefore disposed of by issuing perpetual Leases at an annual rentage of one York shilling per acre.

The amount of land in each lot is not specified. At least there must have been a thousand acres in each, as the revenue amounted to three or four hundred dollars annually. Nothing is known about Rev. Mr. Rosenerantz's salary. When Mr. Pick officiated at the installation of the Elders and Deacons on the 29th of January, 1796, he received the sum of £4 16s for his services, and six shillings for recording their ordination and installation in the Book of Minutes, which certainly was a liberal sum for that day. The next visit he (Mr. Pick) made they paid him £2. Rev. Mr. J. P. Spinner received a salary of seven hundred dollars. But the congregation, in addition to the annual rentage of the lands, raised funds by subscription.

In the Court of Chancery, at Utica, it was shown "that they raised more money by subscription than was paid from the lands." Subsequently they gave up their subscriptions—they lost their interest, the congregation dwindled down, difficulties began to multiply, the spirit of the Master was found in only a few hearts—while the masses gave their souls and strength to the acquisition of wealth. And the word of the Gospel became like the seed which fell among thorns, "choked through the deceitfulness of riches."

Fort Herkimer Reformed Church is in the fullest sense of the term, an Old Landmark. Erected on the German Flatts on the south side of the Mohawk river, nearly opposite the entrance of the West Creek into the Mohawk—within the stockaded work with a ditch and a parapet pallisaded, thrown up by Sir William Johnson, in the year 1756.—The present building was commenced under a permit granted in 1746, but on account of Indian troubles was delayed. In 1751 a new permit was granted and the work went forward slowly, and completed one story high in 1767. Its dimensions were 48 by 58 and 17 feet in height, of stone, supported with heavy angular abutments at each corner; the door was near the center of the north side; nothing is known of the internal arrangement. In 1812 there was an addition of seven or eight feet added to the height of the building. The north door was closed and a new one made in the west end. Galleries were erected on three sides, and the pulpit with its high sounding-board at the east. This work was done during the ministry of Rev. John P. Spinner. A noble old building! Antique but impressive, it stands to-day as when erected. It has recently been repaired internally by its old friends; its walls are firm, and will stand a hundred years longer if not destroyed by accident or the hands of wicked men who have no regard for the sacred memories of past generations. This church is always spoken of as the Fort, because it was the principal building within the fort as seen in the "plan and profile of Retrenched work around Herkimer's house at German Flatts, 1756." Every remaining vestige of the fort is gone excepting this house—even the well which afforded them water is filled up or lost in the Erie canal. It is well that the church stands as a monument of the past. Many events besides those we have already alluded to, took place within this fort. In 1756 all the inhabitants who could, resorted hither for protection when the land was laid waste by Canadians, French and a party of Indians. Then again during the revolution, in July, 1782, this house was a place of refuge, when Indians and Tories murdered so many of the inhabitants. Six hundred Indians were discovered by Peter Wolver and Augustus Hess. They and their families and others fled to the fort and were saved, but Hess lost his life. Valentine Staring was taken prisoner, and tortured first, then tomahawked and scalped. All the buildings in the hamlet were burned except George Herkimer's house which was within the fort; the valley was black with smoke and red with fire.—

Sixty-three dwellings, 57 barns, 2 grist-mills, and 2 saw-mills were consumed; 235 horses, 229 horned cattle, 265 sheep, and 93 oxen were taken and driven away.

As the death of Mrs. Eysaman, relict of Joseph Eysaman, has so recently taken place among you, we are reminded of the cold-blooded murder of that aged couple, her husband's grandparents, John Eysaman, and his wife; and also the first wife of Stephen, his father. She had a babe at that time; some one of the assailants wrenched the infant from her arms and holding it by the feet, dashed its head against a tree, and its little limbs quivered in the agonies of death. Afterward it was rudely and barbarously thrown upon the ground then was driven a short distance from the spot and struck down with a war club, and scalped. The mother saw all this. Such were the horrors of the revolution, and the trials of those who aided in building this sanctuary. Surely we might say again, it has been baptized in blood! There are other interesting facts connected with Fort Herkimer. A Council was held in this fort by Tarbot Francis and others, June 28th, 1775, with the Indians, when the Oneidas and Tuscaroras agreed to be neutral. June 28, 1785, a treaty was made here, when the Oneidas and Tuscaroras ceded to the State that part of their territory lying between the Unadilla and the Chenango rivers.

In 1783, Col. Willett's forces were concentrated in this fort to capture British forces, but in consequence of the small number of troops the expedition failed. The first liberty-pole erected in this valley was raised at Fort Herkimer, in 1775, and was cut down by Sheriff White, of Tryon county. He came from Johnstown with a body of militia for that specific purpose.

But we must pass to notice what has been said of its ministers, and other events mentioned in the history of this church and congregation. Of the first minister nothing is known, as it is only said, "The Rev. A. Rosenerantz succeeded his brother." He was a German, and probably came with the colony, as they were about 6,000 when they left Germany, but many perished on the way. Rev. A. Rosenerantz was here as early as 1751. We have not seen his record of births, baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths, but those who have seen it affirm that it commenced in 1762. His field of labor was co-extensive with the German settlement, along the whole length and breadth of the Mohawk valley, from Little Falls to Frankfort. He was a graduate of one of the German universities, and a scholar in all the

branches of learning that relate to the ministerial office. By marriage he was connected with the Herkimer family, and the donations of land were given for his support. His family connection and his position as a spiritual adviser of a people proverbial for their strong attachment and great respect for the ministerial office, gave him a great influence over his people. The Indians also respected him. On one occasion, when the people would not believe them when they told them that the French and hostile Indians were at hand, they virtually forced him across the river to the fort; others, seeing what was done, followed and were saved. Rev. A. Rosenerantz discharged his ministerial labors during the war of the revolution unmolested. In the year 1796, he died at his residence on Fall Hill, and was buried within the walls of this church near the pulpit. One hundred and twenty double sleighs filled with his late parishioners, followed him to the grave.

Rev. Charles A. Pick, V. D., followed him. His ministry was of short duration, and nothing is said of him except that he ordained the Consistory which formed the first board of officers in the Corporation.

Rev. John P. Spinner's ministry commenced in the year 1802. He also was a German by birth; was born in Warback, January 18, 1786, and was dedicated by his parents in early life to the ministry; commenced his classical studies at the age of 11; spent the regular course at the university and in the Romish Clerical Seminary; at the age of 21 received Clerical orders in the Roman Catholic Church; officiated as priest and confessor 11 years. In the year 1800 he abandoned the Romish Church; married and came to this country the following year; landed at New York, and soon after received an invitation to take charge of this church; commenced his labors, September, 1801. At that time the church was connected with the Classis, of Albany. It is evident from his "Liber Parochiales Ecclesie," or parish book, that he comprehended what was before him—a large book in the form of a felder, which he filled with records of births, baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths, in ten years. He had the same territory or bounds as his predecessor had. It is astonishing to note how many days in the month he was engaged either in baptizing, marrying, or burying some one in the parish. During his ministry he used three large books for parochial records, all independent of the Consistorial records. Herkimer Church was associated with German Flatts. He did not confine his labors to these two

churches exclusively, but preached wherever he could get a congregation—in Columbia, Warren, Indian Castle, Esquawk, Manheim, Schuylcr, Deerfield, Manlius and other places. In 1815, he offered his services to the Synod as a missionary to go to Canada, but the committee declined acceptance because he could not preach English fluently.—He was certainly an active and a zealous man in the discharge of parochial duties, and in sympathy with his people. As it would appear in 1836, this church owed him \$1,324.10; and his proposition, made the 4th of May that year, was to give them one-half the amount provided they would secure him the other half. He was regarded as a good sermonizer, his productions able and eloquently delivered. He exerted a happy influence over this charge. By those who remember him his memory is cherished with respect. He died at his residence in Herkimer, May 27, 1848, aged 80 years, 4 months and 9 days. His death produced a change in the congregation, as those who lived near Frankfort, Warren, and the Central, now known as Ilion, identified themselves with those churches.

Rev. Jared Starks was his successor. He was an aged man when he commenced his ministry here. Besides, tradition says, there were difficulties here then growing out of lawsuits which he could not overcome. The number of families and of communicants seemed to diminish annually; besides his salary was simply the annual revenue of what lands were left—less, probably, than one-third the revenue received by Rev. A. Rosencrantz and John P. Spinner, during the first ten years of his ministry. He was a good man, and generous; for out of the small amount he received he is said to have donated half of it back to the consistory to put a new roof on this house. He died at his residence in Mohawk, in the year 1863. The names of the Supplies have already been given; as they passed along they preached the Word; but it is doubtful whether any other ordinance has been observed since the fathers fell asleep—whether an infant has been baptized, or a single soul commemorated the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We have already mentioned the fact, that at an early day Nicholas Wolver, Hans Dedrick Stelly and others, deeded lands in trust to Peter Remsen; the rents, issues, etc., were for the support of the gospel. Accordingly, the rents were paid to Peter Remsen. He was the first treasurer; but he died about the same time as did Rev. A. Rosencrantz, and meanwhile no one had been appointed in his place. His heirs and assigns either neglected their duty, or if

they collected the money it was not paid over, to the great grief of the church. Mr. Fredrick Frank was therefore appointed to attend the meeting of the Classis at Albany, to consult about what they should do, as their income on the death of Peter Remsen was apparently lost. Doubtless the Classis advised what course they should pursue, for we find that in the beginning of the next year, 1797, they were organized into a corporate body, and through the efforts of John Frank and Rudolph States an act of the legislature was passed, March 31, 1767, requiring the heirs and assigns of Peter Remsen to transfer the rents, accounts and all things on the church lands to the consistory. Thus they were cheered again. But after awhile another difficulty sprung up about the boundary lines, and to settle this difficulty the consistory purchased eighty-six acres of land, at the rate of seven dollars and fifty cents per acre, and executed a bond for the payment of \$645 with interest, five years after date. The consistory failed to meet the payment at the specified time, which would have been in 1820; but from 1821 to 1833 they paid the sum of \$848.20, which was nearly \$100 more than the principal and interest would have been had it been paid at maturity. But there was an accrued interest of \$520 which the holder of the bond claimed. The consistory being embarrassed, proposed to deed to the holder of the bond seventy-five acres of land, which by a lease he then held in possession; but it does not appear that the proposition was accepted, for he sued the consistory and got a judgment, which, including probably, the cost, and the bond amounted to the round sum of \$1,843. To pay this, the consistory presented their petition to the Court of Chancery, asking the privilege to sell their lands to pay their debts. February 25, 1855, an order was granted authorizing them to sell lands to the amount of \$2,000. Thus two-thirds of their lands were swept away. If, however, the Vice-Chancellor had known that the lands which they represented there as being their own were held in trust, no such order would have been granted, as they had no right to alienate those lands from the purpose for which they were donated.

Of the justice of the matter, we will not pronounce an opinion, but you may judge—as the consistory offered them nearly as much land as they had sold them to settle the difficulty.

The next difficulty which the consistory had to meet, was that of certain persons refusing to pay their annual rent, because in the grant of Hans Dedrick Stelly it is said that "the minister of the

Gospel officiating there for the time being (after the death of Rosencrantz) to be chosen by the majority of the freeholders actually residing on the lands last deeded." They claimed that they had not been consulted when John P. Spinner was called. A suit was commenced in the lower Courts, and carried into Chancery, where the Vice Chancellor decided that "the freeholders, to avail themselves of the privilege they claimed, must become members of the congregation, as the minister is called according to the practice of the church without reference to the question, whether the congregation were freeholders of Burnets' patent or not."

And from the fact that they had acquiesced for several years to the action of the consistory, "John P. Spinner was entitled to be considered their pastor, and to enjoy the income of the lands. The bill was dismissed with costs, so that question was settled."

This seems to be the last suit which involved expense and produced bad feelings in the congregation. The only remaining matter to be mentioned in relation to these lands, is that in 1851 an act of the legislature was passed, authorizing the consistory to sell certain lands upon an order issued by the County Court of Herkimer. Several sales were made under this act, and the money invested, the interest to be used for the same purpose as the annual incomes of leases. Several sales were effected under this act. In 1870 an act was passed enabling the consistory to record all leases, title papers, &c., belonging to the church, which was done.

The question has already been asked, how many practical lessons do we find therein? Our answer is, more than we can enumerate just now—but the first we shall mention is the debt of gratitude we owe to God this day, that we are spared from passing through the fiery ordeals through which the fathers passed—that this house is no more needed as a fort, but used for the purpose for which it was erected and set apart. We may not think of this, or agitate the question "what are we"—in what respect are we deserving of these high privileges more than they were? We certainly cannot say that we are more faithful than they were, or even as much so, considering our circumstances. They would have the Gospel preached and the ordinances administered regularly—we care but little about them—not that they are less needed by us or better understood, but like the ancient church of Laodicea, we are "neither hot nor cold"—conforming more to the world than to the commandments of the Lord Jesus. Over this matter our tears should flow, when we re-

member how little for the past twenty years has been done for the Redeemer's cause in this community. Temporal prosperity has apparently sent leanness into your souls.

Another fact may be mentioned, namely, that a church without a pastor is in an impoverished condition. Ever since the death of Rev. J. P. Spinner the church has been wasting away. True, the supplies have preached the Gospel as faithfully as the pastors did, but preaching is one thing, and taking the oversight of a congregation is another. Ascending the pulpit on the Sabbath is necessary—so is going from house to house during the week. Supplies seldom administer the ordinances. Now if a church neglects its ordinances it has a damaging effect.—Christ instituted the supper because He knew that we are prone to forget Him—He would have us keep Him fresh in our remembrance. Yes, it is a loss for the christian to live without the ordinances—it is a loss to the community and especially to the youth and rising generation—it has a tendency to lower the standard of Christianity, and to make light of the Christian ministry.

Another thought is that church litigations are great calamities, especially when apparently, men are grasping that which does not justly belong to them.—How blighting and withering is the influence? What a legacy of enmity and bitterness? It is not confined to a single generation, but somehow or other transmits itself unto the children and lives in spite of all efforts to remove its effects.

But we must not overlook the interest taken in this congregation by Nicholas Wolver, Hans Dedrick Stelly, and others, who, at that early day, deeded in trust "for the support of the Gospel here" no less than 3,000 acres of land. This should certainly make an impression upon our minds. We have no means to ascertain their wealth, whether great or not. All must concede that for that day, it was as munificent as the gift of seventy-five or one hundred thousand dollars to-day. And from it we may learn that they had correct views of their moral obligations, of the higher law of love, and of their just debts to God and man. Most men have been taught to think that they have an absolute right to their money, that it is their privilege to use all according to their own pleasure, and no man has any reason to complain. Such are the thoughts of the masses, because it is so in the eye of the civil law. So when they do anything, or give anything away, they take the credit to themselves, not considering that the higher law of love to God and man has any claims on them. The law of unity requires that we should care for



others as we would for ourselves. The Lord Jesus illustrated this thought in the parable of the Good Samaritan. If a man has fallen among thieves, we should help the man and not the thieves. Too often men do otherwise, they take what the thief has left. As in the history of this church when one man had taken eighteen hundred and forty-three dollars, others attempted to take the rest, and I was told that there are men on the Burnetsfield patent, or near it, who would gladly, if they could, take the little remnant which is left. Property is a sacred trust. Not merely in the Banker's hand, but in our hands. No man should use his money exclusively for his own gratification—he owes a debt to God and man—it is a just debt and ought to be paid. Some are beginning to see it, and are canceling their debts, they are coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and are advocating the right use of property. As the temperance men affirm that no man has a right to make or sell intoxicating liquors, because it is demoralizing and debasing men's moral character.

But to return, Nicholas Wolver and Hans Dedrick Stelly left us a noble example, they showed us how much they appreciated the Gospel, enough to give for its support and to give liberally. And if we should do our duty, we would follow their examples so far as God hath prospered us, and made us stewards in his

heritage. This church would have a pastor and would support him; you would not presume to live on the mere remnant of so noble a gift; you would contribute liberally of your own; yes, you would support a minister, as the fathers did, on a liberal scale; you would scorn the idea of only four months preaching in the summer; you would not go from year to year without a communion season or a prayer meeting; you would take a deep interest in the conversion of your children, and of your friends; you would soon awake to righteousness and delight in the law of the Lord, your God. All difficulties would vanish, a kinder spirit would soon make place for a gracious awakening, and a precious ingathering of souls, bought with the blood of Jesus. It is well that you have done what you have towards the repairing of this ancient sanctuary. May this be a beginning of better days. May the spirit of God cleanse and beautify your hearts. May the Saviour's love be shed abroad. Oh how much it is needed—the fathers, where are they? they are gone “the way whence no man returns.” We are following hard after them. Are we prepared? Are our sins pardoned, and our names written in the book of life? May these reflections awaken within us a just view of the truth, of duty, of love to God and man, and of the blessed privilege of being with his people here, and with the redeemed in glory.





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