

# OLIVE TREES

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## QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR.

### THE CHURCH'S POWER.

*Rev. J. M. Foster, Boston, Mass.*

While Christ was in the Mount of Transfiguration a father brought his son, who was possessed with a devil, to His disciples whom He had left below, and they tried to cast him out, but could not. The disappointment of the father was not so great as the humiliation of the disciples. And when the Master had come down and performed the miracle and dismissed the assembly, the disciples asked Him why they had failed. His answer was, they had lost their faith. Their surprise at the explanation was greater than their chagrin at their defeat.

I. *The Church Has Been Endued with Power from Above.* It is a mistake to suppose that the real power of Pentecost was local and temporary. The miracle-working power ceased with the Apostles. But this was only to confirm the divinity of their message, and is of the same value to us as to them. But the real sources of power abide.

1 The gospel of salvation by the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Paul could stand before Rome, which stood at the climax of law and statesmanship, of language and culture, of art and amusement, of wealth and luxury, and say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe." It is God's enterprise. He

only knows what is necessary to satisfy the breach of His law and vindicate His moral government. He only can bear the load of infinite guilt. He alone can open the gates of heaven which sin had closed, and close the gates of hell which sin had opened. Only the blood of God's Son can cleanse the polluted sinner. Only the life of God can restore the soul dead in sin. The gospel has the same power now that it had when Paul said: "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Peter's words are true in Boston to-day, as then in Jerusalem: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we *must* be saved." But the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a revelation of the history, nature, ground and purpose of redemption by the death of the Son of God. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

Rev. Calvin B. Hulbert, D. D., in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January, 1899, has an article on "The Nature of the Divine Indwelling," in which he contends that as the Spirit and the word are said to dwell in the believer, as he is regenerated by the Spirit and by the word, as he is sanctified by the Spirit and by the word, and as our Lord said, "The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are life," it therefore follows that the Holy Spirit

## MONOGRAPHS.

### MISSIONARIES OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO THE LOWER PROVINCES OF CANADA.

WILLIAM SOMMERVILLE. A. M.

The subject of this brief sketch was born in Ballyroney, County Down, Ireland, July 1, 1800. He was the only son of William and Jane Kirk Sommerville. Many stories are told of his childhood that show him to have been, like many other boys, full of mischief. But in all his boyish pranks there was nothing that any one could seriously condemn. They were simply the bubbling up and overflow of a spirit of fun that he could not repress, and that followed him through life. He saw the humorous side of everything. It was this spirit, subdued and sanctified, that gave such a charm to his conversation in after years and secured the lifelong friendship of many who were not always ready to endorse his views on religious and social questions.

William Sommerville was early dedicated to the work of the ministry by his father, a man of singular purity of character and devotion, who had embraced the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church from conviction, and believed that his only son could be engaged in no nobler service than preaching them. He commenced his studies in preparation for college under Rev. John Stewart, pastor of the congregation at Rathfriland and prosecuted them under the direction of Rev. David McKee, a man of wide reputation and experience as a classical teacher. In 1820 he graduated with honor from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and soon afterward went to Paisley, where his theological studies were pursued under the pious and scholarly Dr. Andrew Symington, who kindled in the mind of the young student a love for the

study of sacred literature, and especially of the Bible in the original Hebrew, that influenced his whole ministry. His licensure is thus referred to in his diary :

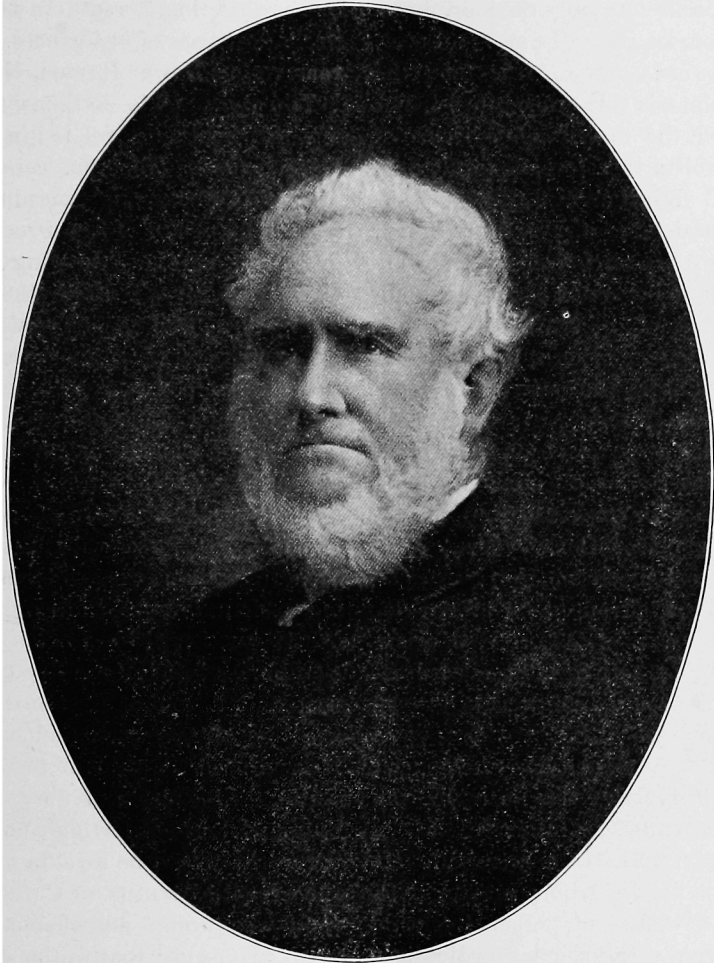
“At Newton Hamilton, on the 5th day of December, A. D. 1826. Having entered upon the sixth month of my twenty-seventh year, I obtained license from the Southern Reformed Presbytery to preach the gospel of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Teach me, O my God, the awful responsibility of the office, and to discharge the duties of it with diligence, with zeal, and with love to Thee for Whose glory and the manifestation of Whose mercy a gospel ministry was instituted.

“Enable me, O my God, to feel the power on my own heart of that great mystery of Godliness which I am called to preach to others, to know the value of that Saviour I must recommend, and to maintain at all times a walk and conversation becoming an ambassador of the meek and lowly Jesus. Our whole dependence, O blessed Saviour, is in Thee. Our strength is in Thee. O strengthen me by Thy Spirit dwelling in me, and I beseech Thee to fulfill Thy promise to me which Thou didst condescend to make to the Apostles when authorizing them to go forth and teach all nations, and to observe all things whatsoever Thou didst command them. Precious promise! Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.”

Having offered himself as a missionary to the Maritime Provinces of Canada, he was ordained by the same Presbytery May 31, 1831, immediately after the dispensation of the Lord's Supper at Ballylane. The services were held in the open air in the cemetery connected with the Meeting House, and a large audience, many from distant localities, waited on the impressive

exercises with interest and solemnity. The ordination sermon was founded on the words, "None of these things move me,"

Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings," etc. That night the young



*Given in the bonds of Christ  
Mr. Somerville*

etc. (Acts 20:24), and, after a prayer and an earnest charge to the candidate, the services were fitly closed with a discourse from

missionary made the following covenant of self-surrender:

"O Thou true and eternal God, who art

our Creator and hast an absolute right to dispose of all Thy works as Thou pleasest, to Thee would we, in the strength of Thy grace, desire to devote the remainder of our days in the service of the gospel of Thy beloved Son, and our only Saviour, Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. I resolve, therefore, to study Thy word with all diligence and perseverance, that by the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, accompanying the exercise of those powers which Thou hast bestowed, I may be qualified to teach the way of truth with understanding, to preach the word with all fidelity, according to the measure of fortitude which Thou dost impart, without regard to the fear or favor of man, desirous only of bringing the people amongst whom my ministry may be exercised into subjection to the gospel of Christ, in subserviency to the extension of the Messiah's kingdom and the advancement of Thy declarative glory. Accept, O Lord God, of my unworthy offering, and grant me wisdom, and grace, and strength continually to perform this my vow.—W. S."

In these extracts from a diary in his own handwriting is revealed the secret of the success that attended his ministry.

Early in July, 1831, Mr. Sommerville left Ireland for his field of labor, carrying with him the good wishes of personal friends and many who witnessed his ordination, and after a voyage of forty days reached St. John, N. B., on the 16th of August. For a while he was associated with Mr. Clarke, who had then been in the Provinces for nearly four years. Their circuit extended from the City of St. John along the Halifax and Cumberland road for upward of 200 miles, and embraced an area of not less than 3,000 square miles. Mr. Sommerville selected Chepodey or Hope-

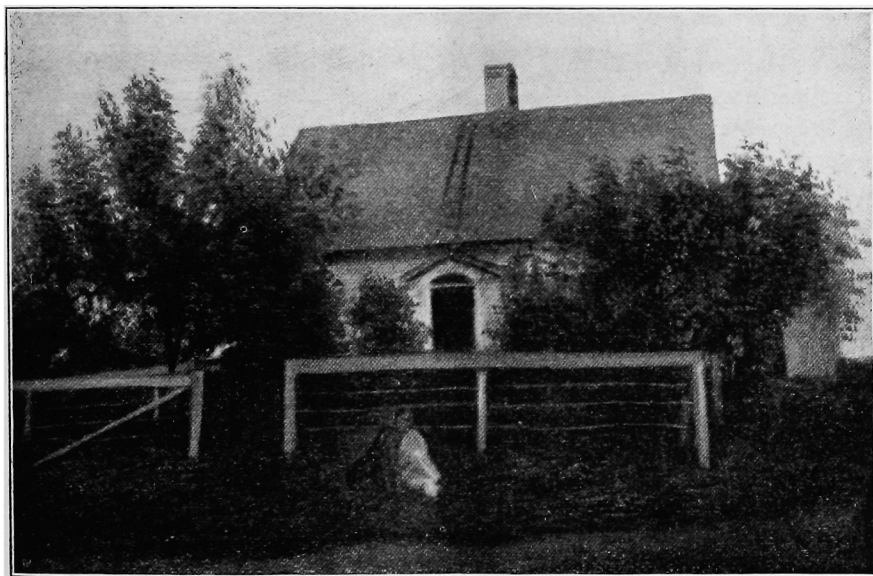
well, N. B., as the center of his work, visiting during the twelve months or more of his residence there St. John, as well as Southstream and many other localities, where there are now good congregations; but at that time the settlers were almost entirely destitute of ordinances. In 1833 he removed to Lower Horton, N. S.

The story of his settlement in that part of Nova Scotia, as related in his letters to Rev. Thomas Houston, convener of the Mission Directors, is exceedingly interesting. The pastor of the Presbyterian congregation in the adjoining township of Cornwallis, Rev. W. Forsythe, had become quite infirm, and needed assistance. Having expressed his willingness to share the pastorate with any one who "held the essential doctrines and conformed to the practices of the Church of Scotland," a letter was addressed to Mr. Sommerville, under date of October 30, 1832, asking whether he could co-operate with Mr. Forsythe on those terms, and also whether he was willing to conform to the practice of using Watts' version of the Psalms and Scripture Paraphrases in the worship of God. The writer, Mr. Elihu Woodworth, an elder and one of the most influential men in Horton, took occasion to describe the spiritual destitution of the community and the importance of having some one among them who would be loyal in his ministry to the essential truths of Christianity. The reply was prompt and characteristic of the man. He said "that to the doctrines and practice of the Church of Scotland, as exhibited in her Standards, he was attached by education, conviction and ordination engagements; that with their usage in regard to psalmody he would not rudely interfere, though he could not compromise a religious obligation for the sake of any situation; and that in the event of his removal to Horton he would bring the matter before them, giving them credit for being

willing to choose the better part when it was brought to their notice." The result was an invitation to preach in Horton 'for one year from the May following on every alternate Sabbath, promising £40 currency (\$160), with a free house and garden.' All the correspondence in this matter was laid before the Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia at its meeting in Amherst, March 28, 1833, and his determination to accept the invitation was sustained. On

change, if it could be made without disturbing the harmony existing in the congregation. This unanimous consent was subsequently embodied in the following paper, the original of which, signed by ten members and thirty-three adherents, is in my possession, and deserves a place among the treasured records of the Church:

"We whose names are subscribed, members or adherents of the Presbyterian Society of Horton, fully persuaded that there



MR. SOMMERVILLE'S HOME FROM '33 TO '46.

the second Sabbath of May in the same year he commenced a ministry in Horton that ended only with his death.

The way in which he substituted the Scottish version of the Psalms for that of Watts supplies a fine example of Christian tact and prudence. On his first appearance in the pulpit he kindly but firmly stated his own views on the subject. Then going from house to house he talked with the people and secured their consent to the

is no impropriety in the introduction of the Scottish version of the Psalms, it being a literal translation of inspired Scripture, and aware that there are many who conscientiously object to the use of psalms composed by uninspired men, however excellent and pious, and also that with the exception of three or four congregations in this Province none else than the Scottish version of Scripture Psalms is used by the Presbyterians in the British Dominions, we agree,

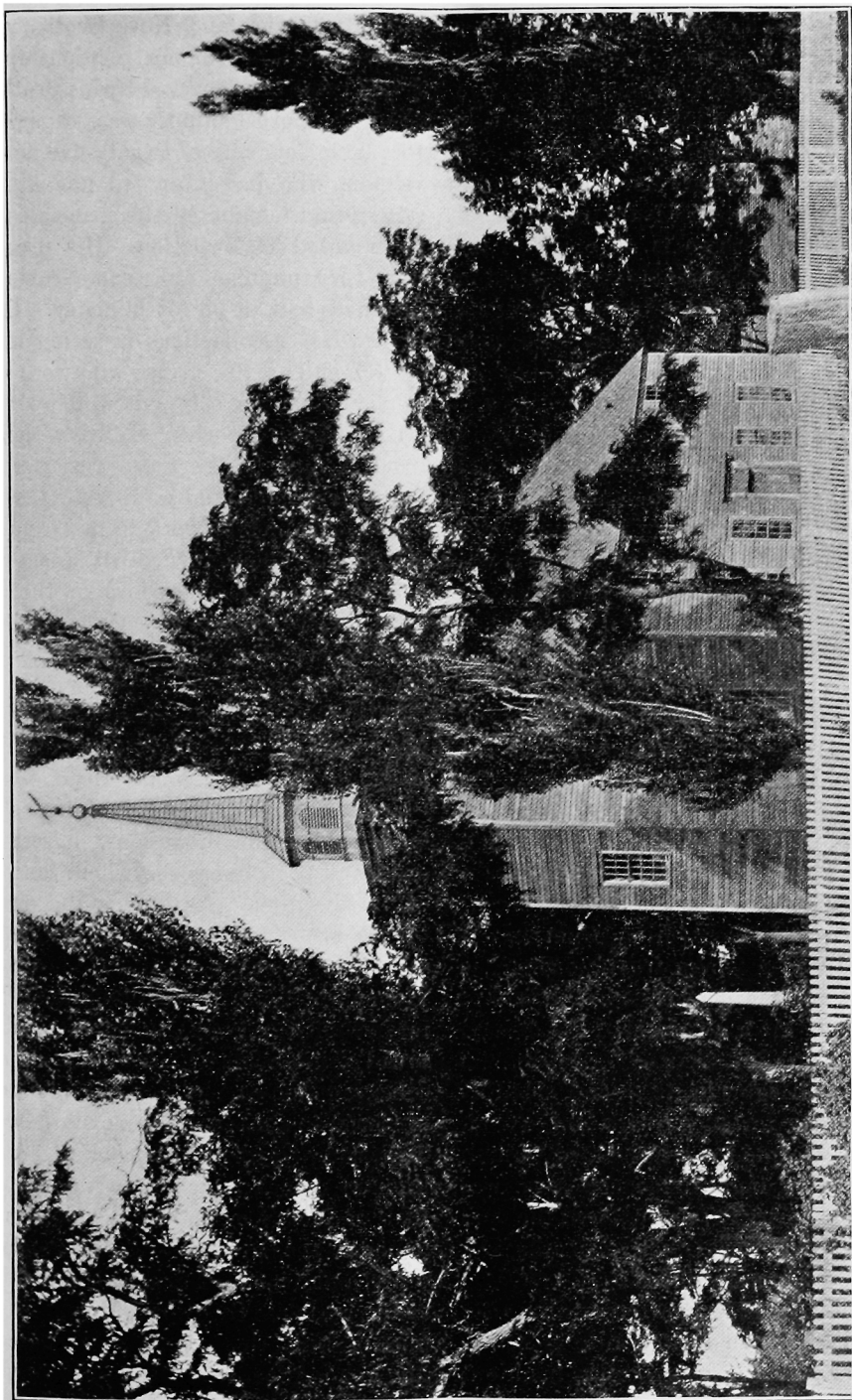
for the relief of such as conscientiously prefer them, and to promote uniformity among the Presbyterians, already too much divided, to the introduction of the literal version of the Psalms, praying that the Head of the Church may afford us His countenance and blessing, as we desire to promote His glory."

The people among whom Mr. Somerville was called to labor were not members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and had to be instructed in its distinctive principles. Every one who has read the history of Canada, or even Longfellow's "Evangeline," knows that Lower Horton, now called Grand Prè, was originally a French settlement. When peace was made between France and England by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, "Nova Scotia, with its ancient boundaries and the inhabitants of the same, was ceded to Great Britain." The French residents in the Province were allowed to remain and hold their possessions and enjoy religious liberty on condition of becoming British subjects. It is apart from my purpose to repeat the story of their wrongs. Enough to say that in 1755, on the false charge of disloyalty, all the French in Grand Prè and other places on the Basin of Mines were deprived of their property and in the most cruel and treacherous manner driven from the country, at least 1,923 souls being forced to leave "their fertile fields and hundreds of acres of meadow lands, reclaimed from the sea at immense labor, to be occupied by others."

About four years after the expulsion of the French the Governor issued a proclamation inviting emigrants from New England. The value of the lands guaranteed in the proclamation and a promise of religious liberty, secured to all except Roman Catholics by command of the King and an act of the Provincial Assembly, proved a great attraction. Emigrants soon arrived

in large numbers, about 200, chiefly from Connecticut, settling in Grand Prè. In course of time they were joined by friends from the same colony and families from the British Islands, making what Mr. Somerville describes in one of his letters to the Board of Directors as "a professing population under the Presbyterian name vastly predominating, into whose organization the element of Congregationalism largely enters, and by whom all differences are treated as non-essentials."

The first Presbyterian minister of whom there is any record came to Grand Prè in 1770, and continued to labor among the people for about two decades. I do not give his name, an honored one, for, though he is said to have been a man of fine presence and an excellent preacher, he was a slave to strong drink, and at last became so degraded that he was forced to retire from the ministry. From the date of his removal to 1828, a period of nearly forty years, the Presbyterians in that community do not seem to have had regular preaching. Rev. George Gillmore resided there from 1792 to the time of his death in 1810, at the advanced age of ninety years. This good man, as papers in the possession of his descendants show, had a singularly chequered career. Educated in Edinburgh and licensed to preach the gospel, he came to Philadelphia, Pa., in 1761, and was afterwards engaged in pastoral work in Connecticut. But being a Loyalist, he was driven out of Church and home during the Revolutionary War, and sought refuge in the State of New York, where he taught school for a time. He was not safe there, however. A reward was offered for his arrest, dead or alive, and men eager for the money were soon on his track. In his flight he crossed the St. Lawrence on the ice with a son on his back and a daughter in his arms. Near the close of the war he acted as chaplain to the British army in Quebec. The



OLD CHURCH AT GRAND PRÉ, N. S. BUILT 1812.

year 1784 found him in Truro, N. S., he having received a grant of land on Ardice Hill. For six years, beginning with 1786, he preached in Windsor, N. S. Then he crossed the Avon into Horton, where he purchased a valuable tract of land along the river. As I learned last summer from his grandson, Captain Henry Gillmore, of Wolfville, N. S., there is an entry in his diary that he had administered baptism in certain families on Gaspereau Mountain, which would indicate that he may have done other ministerial work, though no record has been kept.

The remains of George Gillmore lie in the burying ground connected with the old Grand Prè Church, a rough stone with a Latin inscription marking the spot. And many of his grandchildren became communicants in the church under the pastorate of Mr. Sommerville.

Deprived of regular preaching for so long a time, the Presbyterian Society naturally dwindled away and many lost interest in the cause. There was, however, some life among them. In 1812 they began the erection of a place of worship, which was completed in 1820, and still stands, a conspicuous landmark and a center of attraction to American tourists, who in recent years have carried away fringe from the old pulpit, and even leaves from the Bible, as souvenirs of their pilgrimage to the land of Evangeline. At the request of the society, a young man, Rev. George Struthers, was sent from Glasgow in 1827, and acted as stated supply for four years and a half, when he accepted a situation in British Guiana. His immediate successor was William Sommerville, who entered the field as an avowed representative of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

On March 18, 1834, just ten months after he had accepted an invitation to preach to them for a year, the congregation made out a formal call to the pastoral office. This

call, when presented by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, was accepted, and the solemn relationship then formed was only severed by his death. In 1835 the Lord's Supper was administered to a little company of twenty-five men and women, who had been led under his instruction to embrace the principles of a Covenanted Reformation. His preaching was very popular, and some came long distances to wait on his ministry. One of my earliest recollections is seeing men in church and at the manse who were accustomed, when the tide suited, to row three miles across the river Sabbath morning from Kempt, where there was no Presbyterian service, and walk from the landing to attend public worship, and frequently Mr. Sommerville returned with them in the boat to preach on that shore in the afternoon. Thus was his influence as a religious teacher extended far beyond the place where he was stationed.

With Grand Prè as a base of operations, Mr. Sommerville reached out in every direction, traveling over rough roads, through sparsely settled districts and into destitute localities on the mountains, in search of souls and preaching everywhere the gospel of the Kingdom. As early as the summer of 1833 he received a petition from a society of Irish Covenanters on Stronach Mountain. Wilmot, describing their "solitary condition, having no one to break the bread of life among them," and "earnestly soliciting him as a minister of the gospel of Christ to share with them his labors in dispensing gospel ordinances." Among the ten names attached to this paper is that of Wm. Semple, whose widow is still living at the advanced age of ninety-five years, and a member greatly beloved of the congregation at Glenwood, Minn. In compliance with this request, and urged by Mr. John Allen, who went all the way to Grand Prè to see him, Mr. Sommerville

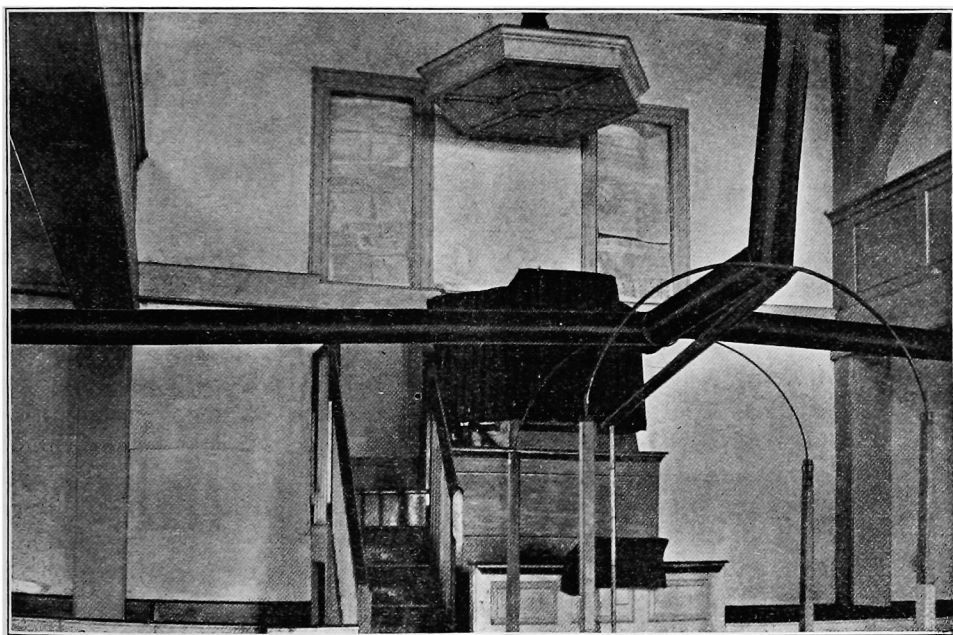


undertook the fatiguing journey, through the woods on horseback, of more than fifty miles. The result of his visit was the establishing of a mission station in Wilmot, which was ultimately organized into a congregation, with a neat place of worship at Malvern Square.

On the way to Wilmot, Mr. Sommerville broke the journey at West Cornwallis, where he received a cordial welcome. In

among us this season, and that the Rev. W. Sommerville be requested to administer it in this meeting house." In harmony with this action, the following application, signed by fifteen men and eighteen women, was put into Mr. Sommerville's hand in the month of August:

"We whose names are hereunto annexed, residing in the western part of the township, and professing to adhere to the West-



PULPIT IN GRAND PRÈ CHURCH.

1835 a society formed there asked for a portion of his time. At first he visited them, as he did the station in Wilmot, only once in seven weeks, but afterward more frequently. In 1842-3 a house of worship was erected, and on the 1st day of July, 1844, representatives of the Society met and took the following action: "Resolved, that it is our earnest desire that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper be dispensed

among us this season, and that the Rev. W. Sommerville be requested to administer it in this meeting house." In harmony with this action, the following application, signed by fifteen men and eighteen women, was put into Mr. Sommerville's hand in the month of August:

"We whose names are hereunto annexed, residing in the western part of the township, and professing to adhere to the West-

minster Confession of Faith, as held forth by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, most earnestly desiring to enjoy the sealing ordinances of God's House, do most sincerely make this our request that the Rev. W. Sommerville will favor us with a visit as early as possible, with convenience, for the purpose of administering to us the Lord's Supper in the Reformed Presbyterian Meeting House in this place."

In order to ascertain how far the subscribers were prepared to adopt the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Mr. Sommerville called a meeting, and with Rev. A. M. Stavely, of St. John, N. B., and Mr. Elihu Woodworth, ruling elder in the congregation at Grand Prè, constituted a Session. He then "explained the Terms of Communion at length, endeavoring to show their Scriptural character and practical bearing, referring to the Declaration and Testimony of the Churches in Scotland and Ireland in illustration of certain points peculiar to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and called upon the subscribers by name to state whether they recognized the Scriptural character of the principles of faith and practice embodied in the Terms." When they had one after another declared their adhesion to them, the moderator, with the approval of the Court, gave the right hand of fellowship to nineteen persons. Eleven others, who were present, had already been received into the fellowship of the Church, and had attended sealing ordinances at Grand Prè. November 1st, Mr. Sommerville met with the societies in Wilmot and others who might desire to unite with the brethren in Cornwallis in their communion services. Twelve gave their adherence to the Terms and received the right hand of fellowship. At the same time the United Societies elected as Ruling Elder David Cruikshank, who had been ordained to that office in the Secession Church in Scotland, to which he formerly belonged, and by which he was certified on leaving for Nova Scotia. Previous to the administration of the Sacrament fifteen more names were added to the Cornwallis communicant roll.

On the second Sabbath of November fifty-two sat down at the Table of the Lord, thirty-five from the two societies of W. Cornwallis, three from Aylesford, eleven from the Southern and Handy Mountain

Societies in Wilmot, one from Billtown and two from Grand Prè: twenty-two men and thirty women. The action sermon was based on the words, "God is the Lord which hath showed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." (Ps. 118:27.)

On the 25th of December the congregation met for the election of elders; on the 16th of May, 1845, the officers chosen were ordained and installed, and on the 26th of the same month the first Session of "the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of W. Cornwallis met and was constituted with prayer."

The foregoing facts are taken from a manuscript account of the organization of this congregation, in which Mr. Sommerville, with characteristic accuracy and attention to details, has given the name of every member, with date of admission, and a list of those who brought certificates, with the denomination to which each one belonged, the name of the pastor and the date of dismissal. The paper also contains the subjects of all the sermons preached on the occasion. It is a document worthy of preservation as marking an epoch in the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America.

Over this wide territory Mr. Sommerville itinerated summer and winter, preaching the gospel, instructing the young, visiting the sick for sixteen years without any permanent assistance. Rev. A. M. Stavely, on his arrival in 1841, became pastor of the congregation in St. John, N. B., thus relieving him of the burden of correspondence with the society in that city, and he often crossed the Bay of Funday for communion seasons. Those were feast days, times of real refreshing. Rev. J. R. Lawson, a few months after his arrival in 1845, was settled at Southstream, now Barnesville, N. B. It was not till Rev. R. Stewart arrived in 1849, and consented to take

charge of the work in Wilmot, that there was any relief from the toil and fatigue of constant travel. And yet these hardships were gladly endured for the sake of the Name.

In 1846 Mr. Sommerville removed from Grand Prè to Woodside, making Cornwallis the center of operations. It was there that his wife, Sarah Barry Dickey, to whom he was married in 1832, passed away, after a short illness, February, 1853. In her removal he lost a companion congenial in tastes and in full sympathy with his grand devotion to the cause of the Lord. He was subsequently married to Mrs. Jane Caldwell Woodworth, a woman of rare prudence, indefatigably tender and faithful during the weakness and suffering that marked the closing months of his life, and still beloved and honored.

A man of splendid physique, vigorous intellectual power and strong convictions, nothing could turn him aside from the work to which he had consecrated his energies. To pastoral work he had to add school teaching to support his family, and he taught not less than twenty years. Efforts were made to persuade him to become a candidate for the Presidency of Dalhousie College, Halifax, N. S. "Your literary taste and talents," wrote one of the governors, "and the high reputation you enjoy for classical and mathematical attainment would give you the situation without a contest." The promised salary of £225 or more would have placed him in independent circumstances and afforded his family many advantages, "inducements," as a friend wrote, "that you can appreciate." But he declined the tempting offer. Among his papers are many letters from eminent ministers in the United States urging him to leave his work in Nova Scotia, and all these letters were written at a time when he was reaching out for brotherly counsel and sympathy. In a lengthy com-

munication dated March 16, 1839, Rev. Wm. L. Roberts wrote: . . . "I am exceedingly desirous of having you amongst us. We need you. . . Our number is small and we are far scattered, and we are utterly unable even to sprinkle, to say nothing of watering, the desolate fields of our heritage. . . . Your situation is isolated, and in the event of a war, which is among the probabilities, your communication with us will be cut off. You are remote from the mother country. Your usefulness will be circumscribed. . . I conclude it to be your duty to come over, and bring as many with you as will come. We have room enough for them all." About the same time Dr. Jas. R. Willson, who had begun as early as the summer of 1836 to point out how much more comfortably situated he would be in the United States than in Nova Scotia, wrote many letters on the subject, filled with expressions of good will. In one is this brief paragraph: "I have consulted with my Brother Roney, and we, with all other brethren as far as I know, think you would be more useful at present in the United States than in any British Province. I do invite you to be with us in Coldenham, if possible, before the frosts of winter obstruct making pilgrimage on the waters." Another letter mentions several vacancies in Vermont, which is described as "about the shape and extent of Palestine, and in its whole aspect comparable to the Hill country of Judea," that "only need skillful cultivation with the dews of heaven from above" to secure large results. It also speaks of a vacant congregation "on the east of the Northern Canal, and within two miles of that great thoroughfare of travel and trade from Montreal to New York." "Were there nothing," he wrote, "more important than one of these vacancies as a pastoral charge for you, it would be, it seems to me, preferable to your present location. But I still

think the Professorship in Biblical Literature and a congregation beyond the Walkill possible and eligible. . . . We hope to see you among us before winter." But he withstood their appeals, and the Lord blessed His servant and rewarded his fidelity. He was able to close a statement of preparation for the second communion in W. Cornwallis (May, 1845) with these words: "The Lord has done great things for us. Let His name be blessed for ever more. Amen."

Perhaps nothing contributed more to Mr. Sommerville's success, in the way of means and instrumentality, than his resistless logic. When at college one of the professors said to him: "William, you never open your mouth, even in prayer, but you begin to reason." This natural gift, carefully cultivated, made him a master in the art of reasoning. Fine specimens of dialectic acumen may be found in his "Exclusive Use of the Psalms of David in Worship," "Dissertations on the Nature and Administration of the Ordinance of Baptism," and "Rule of Faith," a lecture delivered before the Protestant Alliance at Halifax, N. S. Not unfrequently, when other denominations felt the need of some one to defend the truth against false teachers who had crept in among them, Mr. Sommerville would be invited to act as their champion. On these occasions he could not always resist the temptation to make them feel that they were not fully loyal to the truth themselves. Once at the close of an address in which he had demolished the strongholds of the enemy, he quietly remarked, looking at the baffled forces before him: "You remind me of woodpeckers; they never attack a sound tree." The remark was a two-edged sword. He always laid great stress on the early implanting of truth in the mind as a safeguard against error.

I cannot tell how many were led under

his ministry to espouse the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. But they were not a few. His great desire, however, was not so much to add members to his own congregation as to leaven the community with the truth. In this he was eminently successful. As a preacher and an educationist his influence is felt to-day not only in the county where he lived, but throughout Nova Scotia and in other Provinces of Canada. Many in all professions will cheerfully testify that their intelligent acquaintance with the truth and their very position in society are the direct or indirect results of his teaching.

On Saturday morning, the 28th of September, 1878, at Somerset, N. S., the end came, and after fifty-three years in the gospel ministry, forty seven of them as a pioneer missionary, this faithful servant of Christ, like a tired child, quietly closed his eyes and passed within the gate.

#### OUR DEBT TO OUR YOUTH.\*

Some of you may remember the dedication of her child made by Saint Elizabeth of Hungary in Kingsley's "Saint's Tragedy," as she brings him to baptism:

"What Thou hast given me, Lord, here I tender,  
Life of my own life, the fruit of my love;  
Take him, but leave him me, till I shall render  
Count of the precious charge, kneeling  
above."

What a grand thought! Our children must be regarded as dedicated ones, holy to the Lord, consecrated to Him, and our conscious, deliberate, constant aim for them must be fixed on the eternal within the veil, on the treasure that fadeth not away. Oh, that the idea were firmly established in the hearts of all parents that our children are really not ours, but His; His to train, His to keep, His to leave us, His to take back to Himself, the true, the

\* Spoken at a popular meeting connected with Synod of Reformed Presbyterian Church at Walton, N. Y., June 8, 1898.

Heavenly Father! How keenly sensitive we would become of our personal responsibility to God for our children, of our duties to them!

But I am not to speak to-night on our debt to our youth "as parents," if I rightly understand the subject assigned to me; I am to speak to you on our debt to our youth "as ministers and elders of the Reformed Presbyterian Church." The Church of Christ spreads its wings over the whole body of the faithful, but in the softest and tenderest manner broods the young. A great trust is committed to the Church; every child is ever attended with the pleasing commission, "Bear a part in guarding him into the way of right, duty, and eternal felicity." None will, therefore, deny that it is the duty of every individual member of the Church to do something, and all he or she can do to discharge the debt that rests upon the whole Church, but certainly a greater responsibility rests upon the officers of the Church, whom I see before me to-night.

You can pay your debt to the youth of the Reformed Presbyterian Church:

*I. By instructing the young.* The tendency of the age is, I think, too much in the direction of letting things take their course, and trusting in self-development and calling it a trust in Providence. Definite, deliberate, religious training is thought too little of, partly from indolence and indifference, partly from a sort of fatalism, and partly also, I think, from mistaken views of the permanence of natural character and the inheritance of features and instincts which are treated as if they must not be interfered with. Children, I believe, may be made almost anything of, if you begin early, work patiently, train wisely, and pray earnestly. Now, as a rule, Covenanters are faithful to their duty to instruct their children in the scriptures, to "bring them up in the nurture and admo-

nition of the Lord." The "Shorter Catechism" is taught, I believe, in almost every Covenanter home, and the "Larger Catechism" and the "Confession of Faith" in many homes, so that sound theological ideas are instilled into the minds of Covenanter boys and girls. Still the ministers and elders must add to this "instruction in the home" the public instruction in the church. Young Christians should derive knowledge from the public services of God's house, and they must, therefore, attend the services as regularly as possible. Teach the youth at home, from the pulpit and at all other occasions, that the preaching service is the most important of all. It is right and profitable to attend the Sabbath school, it is good and helpful to go to the young people's prayer meeting; but if our youth can go to but one service, the preaching service is the place for them. Let the sermons always contain some food for the young!

The Sabbath school has already been spoken of by another speaker, so that I need not say much about it and its great opportunities for religious instruction. Teach less sacred geography and history, less about the ancient customs and manners, and force home the truths of personal religion! The Lutheran and Episcopal Churches have special (confirmation) classes where the minister gives instruction in Christian life and doctrine. Is there any reason why we should not have the pastor's young people's class to instruct our youth with the definite aim of church membership in view? Gather your young people into such classes, my brethren, and instruct them in the Scriptures, in the glorious history and in the grand principles of the Covenanter Church. In other words, create denominational enthusiasm. "Denominational enthusiasm is akin to family zeal." It is nothing else but love to one's denomination, the persuasion that

the holdings of the denomination come near to divine declaration. Mark well, I do not claim absolute perfection for our beloved Church, nor infallibility, but I claim that we are nearer to the teaching of our Lord than any other denomination. The conviction of the truth of this claim caused me to become a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and, I say it not boastingly, but humbly thankful for God's help, it strengthens me against the temptations of interdenominational fellowship, of which we hear so much at the present time. "The evil influence of attending services where hymns of human composition are used!" I personally have never felt it, because, while the sounds of the hymns and the tones of the organ reach my ears, my heart is filled with pity for those poor Christians whose eyes are blinded to the whole truth as we have it. Create denominational enthusiasm in the hearts of our youth, and there will be no danger in interdenominational fellowship!

*II. Organize the young and give them opportunity for development.* There should be a young people's prayer meeting in every congregation, under the full supervision of the session. If you make this a meeting, not chiefly for instruction, but for communion with Christ and for the strengthening of Christian graces by expression, it will become a link between the Sabbath school and the Church, and will be a source of good. Let the pastor and elders attend the meeting as regularly as possible! It is the experience of the past that to stay away altogether is better than occasional attendance. And, my friends, do not try to dictate to the young people, but give practical instruction! Make short remarks, and let their burden be the invitation to accept Christ *now*.

When we have young people's prayer meetings in every congregation let us organize "Presbyterial Young People's

Societies" as far as possible, yea even, were it possible, a Synodical Society. Yet let us not organize these for the purpose of selfish seclusion from other denominations, but that in large meetings of our own youth we may kindle the fire of denominational enthusiasm, so that we may be able to bear testimony to our distinctive principles with enlarged strength in the great interdenominational gatherings!

*III. Deal justly with the youth.* There are to be discovered in the Christian these two paramount virtues—holiness and love. In the officer of the church, holiness, through natural temperament, through circumstances, through temptations of the devil, might be excited to a degree of severity, impatient of the common follies, frailties, and infirmities of youth. In such a case the heart of the young, turning with abhorrence from religion clothed in the garb of severity, will readily open to the fascinations of the world. On the other hand, love may be perverted to licentious indulgence, so that elders and ministers, themselves grounded in the faith of Christ, permit the irregularities of the youth to abound and suffer them to go on unchecked in the course of evil, like Eli of old, until the frailties and vices of youth, hardened into the crimes of age, leave no hope of mercy behind. If you are too severe or too indulgent with the youth of the Church they will soon seek their pleasures as far away from you as possible and will be lost to the Church. Treat them, therefore, as reasonable beings, not as irresponsible children!

Encourage the young in every way possible! Do not try to keep them in seclusion; it is impossible, and will cause a great loss to the Church! Do not let all your teaching be negative—"Don't do this; don't do that." Develop the young on the positive side and give them sound and pure and healthy tastes! There should be

no scolding, no hint of blame, unless there is sure ground to go upon. For, if the young are stung with a sense of injustice, they are apt to think that they may as well do the things with which they are credited!

And lastly, let your hearts glow with love to the youth of the Church and with affectionate gratitude to God for the pleasing and solemn commission He gave to the ministers and elders—the commission to guide the youth into the way of right, of duty, and of eternal happiness.

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### SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

#### SCRIPTURE LESSON.

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!—Mark 10: 23.

How hardly! Thanks be for the adverb "hardly." It is loaded with a double value. It warns against a dreadful danger, and it sheds a gracious light upon a perilous path. How hardly! Not altogether impossible, but exceedingly difficult! The camel *can* go through the needle's eye (the side gate for passengers on foot), but it must have all the burdens removed, get down on its knees, push with all its might, and endure a *hard* squeeze. Possible, but by no means easy.

How thankful are we that in heaven shall be found princely Caleb, and Barzillai, and Barnabas, and Nicodemus, and Joseph, and a multitude of others who were intrusted with earth's wealth, and with active mind, large heart, and heroic will, nobly guided the industries of the world! Their riches could not shut them out of the Kingdom of God, for in God, not in gold, was their trust.

Wealth in itself can exclude none from heaven. It is a gift, a trust, a power, to be used for God and with great results for good. The danger arises, not directly

from itself, but indirectly from its effects upon the mind. The possession of riches rapidly breeds thought. How shall they be handled? How increased? How secured? How enjoyed? The mind becomes absorbed. It has little room for God or aught else. Religion dies from want of place and breath; it is choked to death, like the good seed with the luxuriant thorns.

The Lord does not admonish men against acquiring riches. It is as much the duty of those who have been gifted with business qualities to be wealthy as it is the duty of him who has good digestion to be healthy. Let each use the powers God has given, and increase in the possessions that come therefrom. The world needs the strong men that can get riches aright, and use them aright. The Church needs them, the Missions need them. They are very necessary on this little planet. And God has wealth to give them. The silver and the gold are His. The great branches of industry also are His. Manufacturing, commerce, transportation, agriculture; these are His industries for the supply of the people. He therefore needs the mighty ones of earth to employ His capital in His work. And we do not know any reason why He is unwilling to distribute the capital largely among His own people, except it be that He finds not grace and conscience strong enough to bear the responsibility; accordingly He distributes the wealth where there is neither conscience nor grace to be lost.

There is no admonition against getting rich. But the rich are warned against the prevalent and terrible effect of riches upon the mind. Let them be ever on their watch against that baneful, fateful "trust." No trust so injurious, so much to be dreaded as the "trust" in riches. It robs God of His glory, and despoils both rich and poor. Let wealth be used with a