

[Cook, William B.]

Gaines, N.Y. July 7, 1854

BR. AUSTIN:-I wish to say a word through the *Ambassador*, in relation to the cause of truth in this portion of our Zion. I will begin by saying that on the 1st of April last, I entered upon the fifth year of my labors in Clarendon, where I have preached every alternate Sabbath. Our cause is in a flourishing condition in that little village.— There is no flagging of zeal or interest that I can discover; but rather an increase. The public services on the Sabbath are generally well attended. We have a church of about 40 members, and a Sabbath School of about the same number. And what is much to the credit of the friends in Clarendon, we have an excellent choir of singers. For all these blessings, we feel to thank God and take courage.

In Ridgeway, where I have labored one-half the time for the past four years, our friends are engaged in repairing and remodeling their place of worship. They will expend something over \$1000 on it the present season, and it will probably be ready for re-dedication some time in the coming autumn. This fact speaks well for a lively interest and a zeal in the Redeemer's Kingdom, in that home of hospitality, the Ridgeway Society. May God bless them, and prosper them in every good word and work.

In consequence of the anticipated repairs of their church, I closed my labors with the Society in Ridgeway in April last, and am now engaged every alternate Sabbath to preach to the Society in Alexander, Genesee co., N.Y. Alexander was my first home in Western New York, where for three years I labored every Sabbath. I shall not soon forget my first love. The society has had its seasons of prosperity as well as adversity; and I find it now in a good healthy condition—left so by the persevering labors of Br. C. F. Dodge, who you are aware has removed from this state to the far West.

The ladies connected with the Society recently gave a Festival, from which they realized a handsome sum, which they intend to expend in painting their church internally, and in papering the walls. I trust they will continue their labors of love, until their church shall become a desirable place of worship for all classes of the community. Why should not our churches be rendered inviting and cheerful to the outward senses, while our religion is so joyous and inspiring to the inner man.

When I removed to this section of the moral vineyard, I found it almost a barren wilderness.— No minister of our order was wholly engaged in the work any nearer than Rochester, which is 30 miles east. Nor was there any for about the same distance south, and eighteen miles west. At the same time, north of the "Ridge Road," from the Genesee to the Niagara river, a tract of land from six to eight miles in width, bordering on the beautiful Lake Ontario, and unequalled in the world for productiveness—in all this vast and beautiful territory, no herald of the great salvation was stationed upon the

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walls of Zion, "to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, and to bid the oppressed go free."

After traversing this extended field for something over four years, preaching three discourses every Sabbath, besides riding from ten to twelve miles—and in addition to this, preaching night and day during the fall and winter months—we are glad to discover that the wilderness and the solitary places are beginning to be glad for us, and the moral desert is blossoming as the rose. We have now in this vicinity three able ministers of the New Covenant, besides myself. Our worth young Br. Pullman, residing in Albion, two miles south, Br. D.C. Tomlinson about the same distance east, and Br. J.J. Austin, in Kendall, distant about twelve miles east and north. All these brethren are laboring to good acceptance in the regions round about.

Thus you see the laborers in the vineyard are being multiplied. May they continue to increase until upon every hill top and in every valley shall be proclaimed the glad sound of the Gospel of peace and salvation. But I must close for the present, by subscribing myself

Fraternally yours, W. B. Cook

Christian Ambassador, Saturday July 22, 1854

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