

Fulton, Oswego Co. NY

The New Church

Fulton, April 13, 1866

To the Editors:

As you and your readers are aware, our village has been more or less interested for the past three years in the erection of a new Universalist church. The efforts of the Society located at this place, to erect a building suited to the times and to their possible expansion, have been of the most herculean character, and it is but a just tribute to Mr. [Rev. Royal H.] Pullman, the Pastor of the Church, and those who have assisted him, to say that we owe our present good fortune and flattering prospects to the indomitable energy and unflagging zeal which through them have been infused into the work.

But I commenced to tell you something of our first Sunday in our new temple. You know that during the week immediately preceding, the dedicatory services were held...and the enthusiasm of that happy...occasion was in a rich and healthy glow the following Sabbath morning... The new Universalist church was the center of attraction among church-going people, and before the hour of service a large congregation, filling the whole church, had assembled. Mr. Pullman seemed inspired by the circumstances and the impressiveness of the place, and when he raised his voice to invoke Divine blessing, seemed to lift his audience up above all thoughts of worldliness, and carry them with him up to the presence of the Infinite and Eternal.

The sermon was one of those eloquent and masterly efforts which long since have marked Mr. Pullman as one of those able men of our denomination... He selected for his text the 26th verse of the 17th chapter of Acts, and for nearly an hour held his audience in silent attention to his eloquent appeal. The evening services were more largely attended even than the morning. Mr. Pullman's subject was the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses of the 4th chapter of Ephesians. He usually gives us an extemporaneous discourse in the evening, and followed that practice on this occasion. But his sermon was one unceasing flow of masterly logic, and moving eloquence. The audience, though composed of representatives from all the other denominations in town, gave the closest attention, and evidently heard more of the great and liberal ideas of the Universalist faith than had reached them before in many a day.

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Permit me, before closing this communication, to give you something of a description of our new church:

The church edifice is built of brick, facing upon First Street. It is 88 feet long by 45 feet wide. It is built in the Romanesque style of architecture. The front presents the entrance-doorway, arched by a beautiful stained glass window, and a spire or tower upon each side. The tallest or main tower is to be 120 feet in height, and is 20 feet square at the base.

Going into the church at the front entrance, we find ourselves in the vestibule, from which a winding stairway to the right and left leads into the audience-room above, a rise of about seven feet from the floor of the entrance. At the head of this stairway we opened a door, which closes silently after us, and we stand in the midst of the resplendent glories of this temple of worship.

The dimensions of the audience-room are 62 by 43 feet, height of ceiling, 27 feet. It is seated with modern style pews, 70 in number, arranged in two double tiers. The ceiling and walls are frescoed in the Corinthian style of architecture, and the tall columns, heavy cornice, panels, and mysteriously blended colors and light and shade impress the observer with a feeling of grandeur... The ceiling of this room is inlaid with broad panels which give to the eye the illusion that the roof grows higher and higher as you approach the center, and at that point a

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modern reflector is placed, with 36 gas burners, lighting the church with a soft and mellow light unlike anything we have ever before seen. The church is heated by two heaters placed in the basement. At the end of the audience-room, opposite this entrance, is the pulpit platform. Upon this is a beautiful little reading-desk, a perfect little gem. It was designed and executed by Mr. G. G. Ottoman of this village. It is of black walnut, upholstered with crimson velvet. In the front of the desk, a large snow white cross is laid on a black ground-work. Back of the desk, the frescoe-work represents a floor receding between tall columns laid in mosaic.

Opposite the desk, at the other end, is the Orchestra, over the vestibule, from which on the north side 12 feet square opens, designed for the Pastor's study; on the south is another room of the same dimensions, to be used as a store-room.

The audience-room is made doubly attractive by the beautiful windows. There are five on each side, besides the large double-window in the Orchestra over the entrance. These windows are of the most beautiful stained glass. They are made in the highest style of the art, and add innumerable beauties by the colored sunlight which falls through them into the room... bathing all in its golden light. These windows were donated by different churches, and each bears upon a tablet the name of the giver, as follows:

From St. Paul's Church, Chicago
From the Church of the Redeemer, Chicago
From the Church of the Messiah, Buffalo
From First Universalist Church, Rochester, N. Y.
From First Universalist Church, Auburn, N. Y.
From First Universalist Society, Gilbert's Mills, N. Y.
From First Universalist Society, Troy, N. Y.
From Church of the Divine Paternity, New York [Fourth Universalist]
From First Universalist Church, Hudson, N. Y.

The expense of the glass for each window was \$50.00.

The lecture room below is large and spacious, being 40 by 45 feet in dimension, and in height, ten feet. In the rear of this lecture room there is a conference room and fuel room.

In conclusion, allow me to say a few words of our dedication [service]. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. J. H. Hartzell of Buffalo, Mr. Pullman feeling himself too much burdened with the work of raising the money to clear the church from debt, to observe the usual custom and officiate in that capacity himself. Mr. Hartzell came at the express wish and invitation of Mr. Pullman, and never was a place better filled, or a more appropriate effort given to any people... Mr. Hartzell gave the greatest satisfaction and took away with him the generous good-will of all who heard him.

Yours,
B.

The *Christian Ambassador*, New York NY, 28 Apr 1866

Transcribed on 15 Jun 2003 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY