

WESTERN NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE

HENRIETTA CONFERENCE AND DEDICATION—DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH LIFTING THE DEBT—MEASURES TO SECURE A PASTOR—TEMPERANCE MEETING

During both days of this meeting, (the 13th and 14th of March) the weather was sour and rainy, and the wheeling would rival, in some small degree, the prairie mud of Iowa. Otherwise, there would have been scant space for the people, who crowded the Church, and the homes of the hospitable neighbors, in spite of rain and mud.

THE NEW CHURCH

is a comely edifice, of wood, white exterior, and modest, symmetrical spire, with commodious horse sheds on two sides of the Church lot, which are a great convenience, and will go far to secure attendance in harsh weather. Universalists are usually careful of their horses, particularly on Sundays; and I have an idea the Mr. Bergh is not far from the liberal kingdom. The building is 50x34; its height 16 feet, at the corners; and the ceiling arched, or rather, gambreled, to the height of 20 feet over the central aisle. The wainscoting and pews are in native woods—ash and black walnut. The carpet is of the best, dark red prevailing; the seats cushioned throughout with brown rep; and the lamps and chandelier are brilliant and becoming. There is, on each side of the central aisle, a row of double slips [pews], unpartitioned in the middle, which promotes convenience of passage and saves room. Thus there are 48 single slips, each seating four persons. There are, also, hanging benches, hinged to the walls, which can be raised and propped in case of a crowd. They were brought into requisition, and additional chairs were used during the Conference.

The platform for the desk, on the rear end of the house, is three steps high; and on the minister's right had, extends to the wall; this part of the platform projecting forward far enough to make room for the choir and instrument. Thus the choir and preacher are near neighbors, and stand on the same level. The windows are high, there being no galleries, of plain glass, with large panes. These, with the plain white walls, make the audience room light and cheerful, so that a preacher fifty years old need not stumble in following his manuscript, unless the blinds are closed so tight as to shed that "dim, religious light," which the earlier Protestants repudiated, along with the other flummery of the Romish Church. If we are to resume the darkened auditorium, let us also retain the lighted waxen tapers, and save the eyesight of the preacher. The end of the pew next to the wall stands some eighteen inches further toward the desk than the other end, making a small angle in the middle, which answers the purpose of circular seats, at less cost.

Mrs. Liday, of the North Bloomfield parish, was chief florist, on this, as on other similar occasions, and among the decorations was a

BEAUTIFUL FLORAL CROSS,

which she made and presented, and which remained as a permanent adornment. A fine new Bible was also presented by Miss Emily Martin and other ladies of Pembroke, the presentation address and response being made by Bros. Brunning and Squires, at the close of the services of dedication. The building is warmed by two coal stoves, one at each end of the house, in corners diagonally opposite. The erection of this Church, at this time, is highly creditable to our friends in Henrietta, and the building is a model of cheapness, the whole cost, including ground, sheds, upholstering, lighting and warming, being only about thirty-three hundred dollars! In this case there must have been some unusually tall financiering. Of this sum, only about seven hundred and fifty dollars were unprovided for the at the opening of the meeting. On

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WEDNESDAY MORNING

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Dr. [George W.] Montgomery, assisted in the preliminary services by Bro. Brunning, gave a discourse from I Pet. i:25—"The word of the Lord endureth forever," &c. Like the preacher, the sermon was replete with the principles and spirit of the Gospel, and was a happy opening of the exercises. In the afternoon, Br. Squires discoursed from II Cor. vi:17—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Wisely taking a hint from a recent letter of Apollos, while as yet, we have no bishop, this brother gave us one [of] his more creamy productions, hitherto reserved too exclusively for home consumption. It was a manly rebuke and protest, applied to Universalists who attend and support the so-called Liberal Orthodoxy of the day, where their influence is needed, and might be made available, in sustaining our own parishes. While free from the bad taste and offensiveness sometimes indulged on this subject, it was marked by that intellectual honesty characteristic of the speaker, and delivered with much grace and animation. Prayer was offered by Bro. Thompson. Bro. Brunning, after prayer by Dr. [Asa] Saxe, preached in the evening from Gal. vi:7. The subject, "Sowing and Reaping," was treated with characteristic force and fervor, and electrified the crowded congregation.

THE DEDICATION

service was held on Thursday morning. Introductory prayer by Bro. Borden. Sermon by Dr. Saxe, from John x:16: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," &c. This discourse was not in the Doctor's usual theologico-philosophical vein; but one of the higher type of old fashioned, Scripturally argumentative kind, well adapted to make converts; and as such we too seldom hear at the present day. In argument, and ingenuity of treatment, it strikingly reminded me of Thomas Whittemore, in some of his most telling discourses. The text and sermon suggested to Bro. Snell, who took general direction of the meeting, a name for the new building: "The Church of the Good Shepherd." And on canvassing among the sheep, this title was unanimously ratified.

At the close of the discourse, a financial statement, admirably compiled, was read by Bro. Robert Martin; and Dr. Saxe made a brief and solid appeal for additional subscriptions to meet the deficit of seven hundred and fifty dollars. He twitted the people of their poverty, alluding to their meagre farms of two and three hundred acres, with their little two-story houses, their flocks and herds, and miserable five hundred dollar teams, &c. At these remarks the farmers became slightly irritated. Then Bro. Brunning arose and went on in the same vein, piling "Ossa upon Pelion," and alluding to a church debt recently canceled in his own field of labor, where the lands of some of the "indigent inhabitants" were held at only two hundred dollars the acre, and who were, consequently, very poor. His remarks were very aggravating; and the people were so provoked that they soon began to provoke one another "unto good works," and to speak in *figurative language*—"fifty dollars, twenty-five dollars, twenty dollars, and so downward, till the whole sum of seven hundred and fifty dollars was secured. The result was not reached, however, till in the afternoon. Bro. Ladd gave an interesting account of financial difficulties and achievements in the Victor parish. He also spoke in *figures* to a generous amount. Friends in Macedon and Rochester are also among the contributors to the Church in Henrietta. This enterprise is largely indebted to the liberality of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Martin.

When the work of cancellation was completed, after a brief

ADDRESS TO THE SOCIETY

by Bro. L. [Lewis] C. Browne, the Dedicatory Prayer and Sentence of Dedication were given, being most appropriately framed and felicitously expressed, by Dr. Montgomery.

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The Church of the Good Shepherd being dedicated and out of debt, in the afternoon Br. Borden gave us a discourse from John xiv:8—"Show us the Father" &c. It was imbued with that glow and pathos which distinguish all his sermons, and well sustained the interest enkindled by the previous services. Prayer by Bro. Baker. Bro. Brunning preached again in the evening from I Cor. x:12—"Let him who thinketh that he standeth take heed," &c. Though not present, a lady who remained informs me that the discourse was excellent, and made a deep impression. He also made some appropriate remarks in presentation of the cross which had been contributed by Mrs. Lidnay.

I must not omit the pleasing circumstance that the choir of the Congregational Church of East Henrietta attended and performed the musical part of all the services, to the great satisfaction of all present. They were accompanied by their pastor—Rev. Mr. Strasenberg, who took part with Bro. Brunning in the Thursday evening service, and showed a liberal and genial, and congratulatory spirit throughout the occasion. The Baptist preacher was also present a portion of the time.

Bro. Baker preached the following Sunday, morning and evening, and his services were well received and highly commended.

A TEMPERANCE LECTURE

was given in the new Church on Wednesday evening, March 20th, to a fine audience, by Mrs. L. C. [Elizabeth, wife of Rev. Lewis C.] Browne. Bro. Thompson is to preach on the last two Sundays in March, and the friends are taking measures to secure the constant [full time] services of a brother who has made a good record in another field.

The Christian Leader, Utica, NY, 6 Apr 1878

Transcribed on 21 Aug 2006 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY