

[Madison, Madison Co. NY]

BR AUSTIN:—I have long looked for, but have seen no account, as yet, of our churches in the above named places. I do not know that of friends in either place will expect, especially at this late day, a formal notice of the events; and yet perhaps they ought not to pass wholly unnoticed.

In Madison there is an old Society owning a church, which was built in the neighborhood of thirty years ago, when it was favored with the labors of fathers N.[Nathaniel] Stacy and S.[Stephen] R. Smith. The church had grown old with years, and become somewhat dilapidated and antiquated; and the Society seemingly had for some years partaken of the same characteristics, having lost their former zeal and engagedness, and their meetings being thin when they had meetings, which were far too seldom for a prosperous Society to have. But recently they have roused themselves up from their seeming lethargy, renovated and modernized their church, taken the old and lofty gallery entirely out, raised seats for the choir in the rear end of the church, modernized their pulpit, lowered the seats of their pews, and painted them in imitation of oak, painted the house on the exterior, and in short giving it a new, and most beautiful and inviting aspect, externally and internally, so that it is really one of the pleasantest houses of worship in this region of the country.

On Wednesday the 28th of June, in the hope of revivifying and re-dedicating the hearts of the Society to God and the cause of religion, a meeting was called, and the church re-dedicated to the worship of the common Father of us all. The reading of the Scriptures and Introductory Prayer were performed by Rev. A.[Albert] W. Bruce; the Dedicatory Prayer was offered by D.[Dolphus] Skinner; sermon by Br. T.[Theophilus] Fiske, from John iv.23. In the afternoon and evening, sermons were preached by Br. D. Skinner, assisted in the services by Brs. Fiske, Bruce and J. S. Kibbe. The congregations, morning, afternoon and evening, were large and attentive, giving evidence of deep interest in the services of the occasion; the singing was excellent, the choir evidently singing with spirit and understanding, the weather was fine, and the meeting passed off very pleasantly, and we trust not unprofitably.... There are good brethren and true in Madison. May they not grow weary in well doing. May many others rally with them around the standard of truth. May God soon send them a pastor after his own heart, and may their sun of prosperity never go down.

D. S. [Rev. Dolphus Skinner]

from "Dedications—Madison—Oppenheim" (slightly abridged)
Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Saturday August 5, 1854