

[Third Universalist Society, New York City]

MEMORIAL EVENING AT BLEECKER ST.

The Thirty-Second Anniversary of the dedication of the Bleecker Street church was celebrated on the evening of Friday, June 19th. The occasion was one of great and peculiar interest. The ceremonies took place in the vestry; and large as is that room, it was hardly capacious enough to accommodate the multitude of friends who assembled to do honor to the event and to enjoy the varied festivities. All ages were represented, from the white-haired men who were present at the laying of the corner-stone, to the little children who had been recently dedicated to the service of their God. Nearly a dozen, we were told, of the original pew-holders of the church were there, some of them accompanied by two, and even three generations of their descendants. The desk [i.e. pulpit] and tables were decorated with bouquets, and baskets and pyramids of the most beautiful and rare exotics, while the delicacies provided were unrivalled both in generous supply and tempting excellence.

After prayer by the Rev. W.R.G. Mellen, and some commemorative verses by Mr. D.I. Stagg, the pastor, Rev. D.[Day] K. Lee, addressed the audience, giving a succinct yet intensely interesting memorial record of the thirty-two years' work of the Society. He was followed by the Rev. Mellen, the Rev. Mr. Canfield, and the Rev. Mr. Young—the latter a Universalist minister from Swindon, England, temporarily sojourning in America; after which Mr. Daniel Whitney, one of the dear and venerable men who had assisted in laying the corner-stone, read the names of those members who have passed away, giving brief but touching testimonies to their worth and to the estimation in which the Society had held them, and its sorrow at their deaths.

A resolution was then offered by Rev. D.K. Lee, to the effect that the labors of the former pastors, Revs. C.[Clement] F.LeFevre, W.[William] S. Balch, and M.[Moses] Ballou, [unreadable] rising vote was taken, and it is needless to say that it was unanimous!

And then came *the* feature of the occasion. The President of the meeting, Robert T. Smith, Esq., read a certain circular which for two or three weeks had been passing from hand to hand in the congregation, the contents of which had been kept sacredly secret. But the time for a revelation had arrived, and Mr. Stagg was deputized to surprise the pastor. The two, the surprier and the surprised, arose; when Mr. Stagg, in a rhyming address, as graceful as it was unaffected, presented Mr. Lee with a folded paper. The latter, upon opening it, discovered it to be a check for \$758. Although taken entirely by surprise, and as a matter of course greatly overcome with emotion, at such a testimonial of affection, Br. Lee returned his thanks in one of the happiest speeches to which we have ever listened. We all echoed his devout wish that God would bless his good, true people.

After the address and surprise, the collation was served, and an hour of pleasant social converse and gayer succeeded. Taken altogether, it was a time of very great interest, the past and the present blending their story harmoniously, and the future looming up in brilliant and beautiful perspective.

The Ambassador, New York NY, Saturday June 27, 1868