

[Newfane (Olcott), Niagara Co. NY]

Letter from Rev. J. J. Austin

KENDALL, Nov. 19, 1858

BR. AUSTIN¹:—I have just returned from the Conference and Dedication at Olcott; and as I think the recording angel must have been busy lately with reference to matters and things there, I too wish to make record of a few things for the perusal of your readers, and for the encouragement of all the faithful. It is but a little time since Br. R.[Royall] H. Pullman removed to Olcott, carrying with him a clear mind and a noble heart, and commenced the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of a world's salvation. And what do we now behold? A fine Society, Sabbath School, Choir, and Church organization, all of which have grown up speedily by the magic of Gospel light and love; and last of all, to crown the whole, a very beautiful brick church building, containing a fine basement, tower, bell, stained windows, &c., and what is of the highest importance, the entire expense, which is nearly 3500 dollars, has been subscribed and pledged to the very last dollar. Is not that a work to rejoice over?

The Conference and Dedication were of exceeding interest to all present. First came the presentation by a young lad and lassie, of a beautiful Bible and Hymn Book, purchased by the "Mite Society" connected with the Sunday School, which were received by the pastor in a neat and appropriate speech of acceptance. Then followed the service of dedication, in the following order:—

1. Voluntary by the Choir
2. Reading of the Scriptures by Rev. J. J. Austin
3. Hymn
4. Prayer by Rev. E.[Edmund] R. Ottoway
5. Hymn
6. Sermon by Rev. J.[James] H. Tuttle [of Rochester]
7. Dedicatory Prayer by Rev. Lydia A. Jenkins
8. Dedicatory Sentence by Rev. R. H. Pullman
9. Anthem by the Choir
10. Benediction by the Pastor

The sermon was an able presentation of the reasons for building another church. The dedicatory prayer was minutely appropriate: and this is probably the first instance in which a woman was ever known to take part in the dedication of a church.— But as women have assisted to build churches for ages, why should they not be allowed to pray God to consecrate, accept and bless them.

In the afternoon of Wednesday, a sermon was delivered by Rev. L. F. Porter [of Webster, Monroe Co.]. In the evening, Rev. Lydia A. Jenkins preached a very able sermon to a very crowded audience. Thursday morning sermons were preached by Rev's. E. R. Ottoway and J. J. Austin. In the afternoon Sister Jenkins preached again, and it was understood that Rev. W. B. Cook would preach in the evening.

The most noticeable thing about the Conference proper was the glorious out-pouring of the Holy Spirit among the people, causing a large number of brethren

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and sisters to arise and proclaim their faith, and hope, and love, and to consecrate themselves anew to the christian life. The hearts of all seemed to be full to overflowing; and if the rigid shell of orthodoxy had been present, it must have been melted down like ice in a July sun.

On Thursday an appeal was made to the people, which was met by the response of *two hundred and fifteen dollars*, in sums from one to ten dollars; and the people seemed as cheerful and happy as though they were receiving fortunes themselves.— And so they were, upon the ground of that Scripture which says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

On the whole we had a glorious time of thanksgiving and praise. Br. Pullman has made a mark, which becomes him better than a kingly crown; and in saying this, I do not forget that gentle being who walks by his side, speaking and praying and working with him [a reference to the biblical Jesus]; nor do I forget the noble band of brothers and sisters who have so faithfully upheld and sustained him in the arduous yet happy work. God's rich blessing be upon them all.

This is the second church that has been built within a little time, and under very similar circumstances, in the Niagara Association [of Universalists.] Where shall the next be? Let the good work go forward, here and everywhere. There is plenty of room, and very many suffering and despairing hearts yet... The cause seems to be steadily moving onward in all this region. Let us thank the Lord and take courage.

¹ Rev. John Mather Austin, Editor

Yours,
J. J. Austin

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, 4 Dec 1858

Transcribed on 12 Jul 2007 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY