

Dedication at Churchville, N. Y.

The Universalist Society at Churchville having thoroughly repaired and renovated their church, it was dedicated on Wednesday, May 23. The exercises were opened by a voluntary from the choir. The Scriptures were then read by Br. T. J. Whitcomb of Buffalo. The Choir next sang the 705th hymn from Adams & Chapin's Collection, when Br. J. J. Austin of Kendall offered an impressive prayer. This was followed by another hymn, 703; and then Br. McNeal, pastor of the Society at Churchville, preached the Dedicatory sermon. After a somewhat lengthy introduction, in which he spoke of the sacred and interesting cause that had brought the people together—of the fact that the Society had reason to rejoice—and not through any selfish motives, but because the beautiful temple they had erected and adorned must be of great benefit to community; after referring also, in a very touching and eloquent manner to the first dedication of the church by the late Rev. J[ames] M. Cook, which took place some fifteen years ago, he selected a passage from Mark xi:17—"My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer."

Without giving a minute account of the circumstances under which the text was originally spoken, he proceeded at once to affirm that the house in which they had assembled was built, repaired, and about to be re-dedicated to a religious purpose, and that alone: that it should never become a shelter for hypocrisy, knavery, theft, extortion, pride, or evil of any kind, but should always serve as a place of pure, honest worship, as a place set apart for the most sacred and benevolent ends and sacred ends that occupy the attention of men. After stating in the next place that the church was to be dedicated to God, he proceeded to answer the important question—"What is God?" He answered the question in the words of Scripture, "*God is Love.*" It is important that we worship *the* God—the all-wise and good Being whom the New Testament describes, and who answers the highest conceptions of the human mind. He said again that the Sanctuary, in accordance with the declaration of the text, should be a house of *prayer*—such prayer, too, as knows no doubt or slavish fear, but such as rises from a warm, loving heart, and ascends on the wings of a firm, living Faith.

But I do not design to describe the sermon. It abounded with many important suggestions, eloquent passages and beautiful figures, was delivered extemporaneously, and though its style was rather peculiar, it was listened to with evident satisfaction. Br. McNeal has labored two years, and very assiduously for the Society in Churchville, and he has now the pleasure of seeing that his labor has not been in vain. The church has a neat appearance, outwardly and inwardly; the orchestra [podium], pulpit and pews are finished in modern style, and certainly the pastor and people can congratulate themselves in securing a pleasant place of worship.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, two interesting sermons were preached by Brs. D[eWitt] C. Tomlinson and R[oyal] H. Pullman, of Albion. In the evening Br. T[homas] J. Whitcomb gave what seemed to me a lucid explanation of the passage found in John v: 29. The meeting opened again on Thursday morning, when two more able sermons were given us by Brs. J. J. Austin and W. B. Cook. In the afternoon another sermon was preached by the writer. The meeting throughout, as far as it is proper for me to speak of it, was interesting, and I hope profitable. It was a busy time for the farmers, and thus the attendance was not as large as it would have been under other circumstances; but the house was nearly filled. The singing, assisted by Br. Belden, leader of our choir in Rochester, was most excellent.

J. H. T. [Rev. James Harvey Tuttle of Rochester]

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