

[Riga (Churchville), Monroe Co. NY]

Letter from Rev. W. McNeal  
Churchville, N. Y., March 13, 1855

Br. Austin: When we met *en route* for Ridgeway, you wanted to know why so many of your Churchville subscribers discontinued the *Ambassador*. Well, I shall not undertake to answer for them. They are of age, and if applied to, can answer for themselves. But this much I will say, they are not drunkards, nor the worst of sinners; neither have they any particular sympathies with “*rum* democracy,” [ a reference to the Prohibitory Liquor Law which had just been passed in the state], nor do they complain of any want of talent in the conduct of “our” paper, the *Ambassador*. It is admitted that you cater well to the intellectual and moral wants of your readers: and I am proud to say, that those of whom we now speak are at least as good as the generality of mankind. It was undoubtedly their right to discontinue the *Ambassador*. They used it, and now, in the free exercise of that right, they call *for* the *Ambassador*, and herewith send you their advance payment for the same.

These men are conservative of their religious and political rights, which no man can take from them; and they are independent of both *men* and *rum*—being *no man’s* men, but men of principle, doing what they think is right. It would be well for our country if every American knew as well the value of liberty, and were as determined to preserve it, as are the men of the Churchville Society. Liberty and independence, though often misunderstood and misused, are far preferable to the tyranny of catholicism.

But to change the subject. Looking back two years, I find you informing the public that an unfavorable impression was abroad in regard to the Churchville Society. This was justified by the Trustees of that year. When I came here nearly three years ago, I found a state of things correspondent with the “impression abroad.” Since that time the Society has gradually improved. It has acquired a better reputation, and is *now* rebuilding the interior of its church, which we trust will be re-opened and re-dedicated about the 1<sup>st</sup> of May.

Thine fraternally,  
W[illiam] McNeal

*Christian Ambassador*, Auburn NY, 24 Mar 1855