

[Batavia, Genesee Co. NY]

REV. DR. ATWOOD TOLD OF PAST  
REDEDICATION OF THE BANK STREET CHURCH BY THE UNIVERSALISTS

It was as Long Ago as 1812 that the First Proclamation of Universalism  
Was Made in Batavia—The Preacher Then Was the Rev. Nathaniel Stacy—  
Besides Dr. Atwood Other Officers of the Universalist State Convention  
Took Part in the Interesting Services Yesterday.

People turned out in large numbers yesterday at the services of rededication and recognition of the Bank street church, formerly occupied by the Emmanuel Baptist society, as a Universalist church. The church was comfortably filled at both the morning and evening services. Those who participated in the programmes were out-of-town pastors and officers of the Universalist State Convention.

The Rev. A. [Arthur] W. Grose, D.D., of Rochester gave the prayer and act of dedication last evening. The sermon was preached by the Rev. I. [Isaac] M. Atwood, D.D., of Rochester, secretary of the State Convention. Mr. Atwood is an elderly man and a thoughtful and scholarly speaker. His text was "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd," from St. John x, 16.

Mr. Atwood included in his remark a short account of the beginning of Universalism in this section. "The first proclamation of Universalism in Batavia," he said, "was made in a sermon preached by the Rev. Nathaniel Stacy, in the Court House in Batavia on September 12, 1812. Mr. Stacy was a man of extreme poverty. He traveled on horseback all through Western New York preaching.

"One of the first Universalist sermons I heard was at Richville, near here (Pembroke), when I was 12 years old. I became acquainted with Universalist people, read Universalist literature and became a Universalist minister, preaching my first sermon in Alexander in 1859. You can trace this event this evening to the preaching of Nathaniel Stacy, and over one half the churches in the state have originated from the seed sown by that man."

After the sermon greetings were given by three officers of the state convention. Frank J. Tanner of Buffalo, president of the convention, whose office will expire in a few weeks, expressed his pleasure at the Batavia church having been organized in the declining weeks of his office. He spoke of the efforts the Universalists have made in years back to start a church here and said that every attempt had been a dream only until this year, when the dream came true. He said that the achievements of today are but the stepping stones of tomorrow, and he exhorted the people to keep up their good work.

The Rev. A. W. Grose, D.D., chairman of the committee of fellowship, brought the greetings of the fellowship committee of the convention. He spoke of the formality of accepting the Batavia church into the coming state convention. He discussed briefly the principles of the Universalist belief.

Another who spoke was the Rev. L.B. Weeks of Utica, state superintendent of Universalist churches. He reminded the people of the state convention meeting in Watertown the first week in October and exhorted them to send their pastor and delegates and become affiliated with the organization.

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“An isolated life is a mean life to live,” he said. “If you do not live an isolated life in your church work your activities will increase a hundred fold. Today in your village a church is celebrating its centennial. We have learned this evening also that a start was made for a Universalist church in Batavia nearly 100 years ago. Why has it taken 100 years to start, while the other it took only a few days? ‘Died of isolation’ is a sign that could be put on the fifty remnants of Universalist churches in this state. The state convention is your best friend, outside of your local environment.”

Snell's orchestra furnished the music at the service last evening, assisted by the choir. Bert R. Carpenter sang “The Holy City.” The service closed with the singing of “Nearer My God to Thee.”

The Lord's Supper was conducted at the morning service by Mr. Atwood in addition to the other services. The communion is open and many participated. The sermon was preached by Mr. Weeks and his subject was “Knowing the Truth.” Mr. Weeks is an especially forceful speaker. He was formerly a Methodist minister. His discourse was thoroughly enjoyed.

In connection with the morning service the church proper was formally organized with twenty charter members, ten of whom were received by transfer and ten by the right and of fellowship. They were as follows: by transfer, Mrs. Clara Sisson, Mr. and Mrs. Charles McDonald and Mrs. Cora Dobbins, from the Corfu church; Mrs. Mabel Hunt, from Friendship; Mrs. Ina Robinson, from Perry; William H. Parker, Miss Ethel Parker and Allen Parker, from Albion, and Dr. Boughton, from Macedon; by right hand of fellowship, Andrew J. Cummings, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Carpenter, Mrs. Alice Parker, Mrs. Ada Hunt, Mrs. Nellie Johns, Mrs. Zora Boughton and Miss Verna Johns. Mrs. Boughton, Miss Johns and Mrs. Hunt also received the rite of baptism. There are about 35 families in the parish membership.

Music for the evening service was in charge of the choir of All Souls' church of Corfu, Mrs. Florence Whiting, director, and Mrs. Kate Rowley, organist.

On Wednesday evening there will be a Christian Fellowship meeting. The address, “Why a Universalist church?” will be delivered by the Rev. Frederick W. Betts, D.D. of Syracuse. Addresses will be given by neighboring Universalist pastors.

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Transcribed on 4 Apr 2011 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY