

A Great Throng Attends the Dedicatory Exercise Not a Dollar of Debt on the Edifice

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The new Methodist Episcopal Church is finished and with impressive ceremonies has been dedicated to the use of the Lord, and the members of that faith are justly proud of their house of worship.

The edifice is 96 by 60 feet on the foundation line, is built of brick and trimmed with red granite. The building is of Italian-Gothic architecture, after the style of the Roman Renaissance, with many of the graceful lines of the present century added to modernize the whole. There are two entrances of pure Gothic construction, over (the) southerly one of which is the belfry, surmounted by a high pinnacle. The roof is four sharp gables joined in the center by a pinnacled turret, which serves for an ornament as well as a ventilator. In the center of the front gable a group of three high windows give(s) light to the gallery, and below three smaller windows light up the lower floor, and on each end of the building a large Catherine-wheel window sheds its mellow radiance.

But it is the inside of the church that causes one to exclaim: "How beautiful!" Coming in at the western entrance, two folding doors lead from the vestibule into the auditorium and at the left a massive, elegant square stairway leads to the gallery. Entering the auditorium, one of the handsomest church rooms in the State meets your eye. The floor is carpeted with a heavy body Brussels carpet of an olive shade, making a very pretty contrast with the heavy cherry seats, with their cushions of peacock blue. The seats are in amphitheatre style, and it is a credit to the skill of the architect, M. Oscar S. Teale, of New York, that there is not one seat in the whole building where the pulpit and the choir are not in full view.

The ceiling is formed by two great arches composed of five arcs each running at right angles with each other, at the intersection of which the large, elegant chandelier with its thirty electric lights hangs suspended. The monotony of ceiling is broken by squares formed by ribbon moulding finished in cherry, as is all the woodwork of the interior. In all the corners a groined arch, supported by iron columns and delicately moulded corbels, receives the square union of the gables with the walls.

A heavy balustrade forms the altar rail. The pulpit furniture is mahogany, upholstered in a dark cardinal plush. Back of the pulpit in a deep recess stands the grand organ, in front of which seats for the choir are arranged. The gallery is semicircular in form and is carpeted in red, and red cushions adorn the seats. From this point the beauty of the architecture is best observed, and it will undoubtedly be the most popular of the house.

The seating capacity of the church is between 1,000 and 1,100 and while it is spacious and roomy it is so gracefully broken by curves and angles that it gives the idea of coziness and comfort. There is but one inharmonious point in the general appearance, and that is the color of the organ recess, a dark, sombre hue, almost destroying the delicate tints of the beautifully decorated organ pipes. But it is only to Mr. R. V. Kinsey, who painted and finished the woodwork, to say it was not his selection, but, in the hurry to have the work done, one of the building committee called in another workman. The color will be modified next week.

The Organ Opening Concert

On Monday night the general public was first admitted to the church, the occasion being the organ opening concert, at which Mr. Wenham Smith, organist of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, and the Courtney Ladies' Quartette, of New York, appeared. There were between 700 and 800 persons present, and the entertainment was one of the most delightful and thoroughly enjoyed musical events that had ever taken place here. That Mr. Smith is a master of the instrument is a fact fully established by the position he holds, and he showed excellent taste in his renderings, selecting not only those that required skillful manipulation, but that were also melodious and that could be understood without taking a three years' course at the conservatory of music.

The ladies' quartette struck a popular chord, and it was regretted that they were not oftener on the program. They are fully equal to the famous Meigs sisters and by some considered their superiors, and that is as high praise as a Hackettstown audience can bestow. It was a success artistically and financially, and everybody was pleased.

Dedication Day

Wednesday was indeed a red letter day in the history of the Methodist Church in Hackettstown. It was the day set apart for the formal dedication of their beautiful new church to the worship of Almighty God. It was an hour before the time set for the services that the

people began coming from all directions, and at 10:30, when Prof. Thomson mounted the stool for the organ voluntary, the house was comfortably filled. The pulpit and choir enclosure were indeed a bower of beauty. The new and exquisite furnishings were only heightened and magnified by the elegant display of rare and beautiful flowers from the conservatories of Alfred Sully under the direction of whose gardener they were tastefully arranged.

The program, arranged with happy effect for such an occasion, was carried out without variation. The participants were the Pastor, Rev. J. A. Munroe, Presiding Elder Hammond and Dr. Whitney, and every part was effectively taken. The excellent work of the choir added greatly to the triumphs of the day.

After the devotional exercises of the morning came the financial statement that the Finance Committee regretted their inability to give the congregation at this time a full and detailed statement of the cost of everything that entered into the church, but a careful and liberal estimate placed the cost of the church complete, organ, furnishings, and everything at \$28,000.

Subscriptions

Individual subscriptions.....	\$14, 917.75	
Trustees Centenary Collegiate.....	\$ 2,000.00	
Seminary Kaffee Klatsch.....	\$ 807.00	
Ladies League.....	\$ 1,000.00	
Sunday School.....	\$ 500.00	
Organ Fund Association.....	\$ 135.06	
Church Aid Society.....	\$ 216.13	
(Missing in microfilm copy).....	\$ 90.91	
Organ Aid Society.....	\$ 274.13	
Young People's Union.....	\$ 197.70	
Organ Concert.....	\$ 183.70	
Miscellaneous.....	\$ <u>557.80</u>	
Total		\$20, 880.18

Amounts Received

In cash.....	\$18, 850.34	
In notes.....	\$ 195.90	
Carriage.....	\$ <u>100.00</u>	
Total.....	\$19, 145.34	

Balance unpaid.....\$1, 734.84
Of which \$1,200 is good beyond doubt.

After receiving the above statement with many signs of approval on the part of the congregation, the pastor introduced the Rev. Dr. Couch, of Brooklyn, who from the 33rd verse of the 25th chapter of Deuteronomy preached a most scholarly and eloquent sermon, closing it in the practical way demanded by the occasion. He said: “Your Finance committee tells you that this beautiful house of worship is all paid for within \$8,000, and that sum we propose to provide for here today. It can be done; it should be done; it will be done. This church is to be dedicated this evening by Bishop Foss with every dollar of indebtedness provided for.”

The congregation showed by unmistakable signs that sentiments so earnestly and eloquently voiced by Dr. Couch were their own, and a murmur that was dangerously near applause arose when Dr. Whitney announced a subscription of \$1,000 from W. W. Gibbs, of Philadelphia, and \$500 from Alfred Sully. That opened the ball, and three more \$500 subscriptions quickly followed. Then came two of \$250 each and fourteen of \$100 each. Following in quick succession was one for \$75, nine for \$50 each, eighteen for \$25, fifteen for \$10 each, and eleven more for \$5 each, came with a little coaxing, or a grand total in all of \$6, 080. After this announcement it was decided to adjourn for dinner, and with “Praise God” and the doxology the congregation dispersed, satisfied that the \$1, 920 remaining would be raised before the formal service of dedication was performed.

Evening Services

When Rev. Randolph arose to announce the opening of the evening services he was greeted with an audience that filled every part of the house, even the aisles having been utilized to seat the great numbers that had assembled to listen to the dedicatory sermon by Rev. Bishop Foss, and yet many were compelled to stand. The electric lights failed to materialize until after the services began, owing to the fact that either by accident or from design some oil had gotten into the generating brushes, but when they did come the effect was grand. They came slowly, and as their light rays began to steal through the dusk, the soft, subtle motion of a thousand waving fans lent a weird charm to the scene.

Prof. Stivers opened the evening exercises with an organ voluntary, followed by a hymn, after which Rev. E. W. Barr offered up a fervent prayer for the sanctification of the edifice. The choir rendered the beautiful anthem “Except the Lord Build the House”, when Rev. John Lowry, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, read Psalm LXXXIV. After another hymn, Rev. Bishop Cyrus D. Foss, D.D., LLD, delivered the dedicatory sermon, taking his text from the

eleventh chapter of Hebrews, first verse – “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” It was a strong, powerful sermon, and possessed the great merit of lucidity.

At the close of the Bishop’s address, Rev. Dr. Couch mounted the pulpit and announced that \$1,955 was yet needed to wipe out the debt of the church, and the work of lifting the debt began with a subscription of \$150, followed by hundreds, fifties, twenty-fives, tens, fives, threes, twos and ones, until at eleven o’clock the whole amount was raised and a surplus of between \$50 and \$100 was pledged to cover shrinkages.

Then came the formal dedication, after which impressive and solemn ceremonies the doxology was sung with a fervor that attested the thankfulness at the successful culmination of a project that was begun with many misgivings more than a year ago. The congregation has done nobly, and can now enjoy the results of the labor involved.

Last night Rev. J. A. Munroe occupied the pulpit of the new church and delivered one of his most impressive sermons, which was listened to with a great deal of pleasure by his old parishioners and friends who turned out in goodly numbers to hear him. Previous to the regular exercises Miss Lizzie Clawson rendered a voluntary in a manner that showed her fully capable of mastering the intricacies of the instrument to the study of which she is devoting a great deal of time. Tonight Rev. Ferd C. Inglehart will preach the final sermon of the dedication program.

Sunday morning Bishop Vincent will preach the C.C.I. Baccalaureate sermon in the church, and in the evening Rev. Dr. A. A. Brown, of Morristown, will deliver the annual sermon.

Rev. Randolph, pastor of the church, will preach his first sermon in the edifice a week from Sunday.

(NOTE: The church was completed at a cost of \$28,000.00, including pews and organ. The cornerstone was laid July 14, 1887 and the church was dedicated June 6, 1888.)