

The Dedication of Unity Church
from the Brockton Weekly Gazette, August, 1875



The event in North Easton the past week was the dedication of the new church erected by Hon. Oliver Ames and presented by him to the Unitarian Society as a free gift. It occupies a conspicuous site on the grounds adjoining Mr. Ames's estate on the north and with its beautiful surroundings and its elegant style of architecture in which it is constructed gives an exceedingly pleasing impression to all who behold it.

The following description of the edifice in the Boston Journal will give a good idea of the pains which have been taken in its construction and of the value of the gift to the place as a public ornament and as a temple of worship. "The church was designed by John Ames Mitchell, a nephew of the donor and as far as personal supervision and generous expenditure could secure it, every part of the work has been done in the most thorough and finished manner, and is a specimen of ecclesiastical architecture upon which all concerned may be heartily congratulated.

The building includes a chapel which would alone make an elegant church, as well as a church proper which would be an ornament in any of our large cities. The extremely handsome tower and spire finished entirely in stone give to the exterior of the structure an aspect of graceful strength which only noble art can procure. It is surmounted by a stone cross in which a circle obliterates the hard outlines of the Latin cross. The walls over which it mounts so high lack no feature of strong and handsome construction. Within, no pains have been spared to give to the eye a satisfaction which will grow rich and sacred with the lapse of time. All the woodwork of the interior is richly executed and the walls and panels of the high arched roof are beautifully frescoed. But it is in the windows especially, that lavish art has been shown.

High up behind the pulpit shines down from a small round window, the symbolic dove set in a gold cloud and surrounded by a design in varied color. At the other end of the church a large circular window gives a most effective setting to the heads of the six Apostles in a circle about the head of Christ in the center. Below this in four narrow openings are represented four figures of angels with instruments of music. At either side of this window are large pictures painted on the wall... one representing the Good Samaritan, and the other Christ talking with the woman as he "sat weary on the well." It is to the large transept windows however, that the eye of the observer will be most drawn. The west window is brilliantly illuminated with designs both striking and easy of comprehension. Midway of the two side parts of the window are represented angels, each bearing a scroll, and the two scrolls together giving the inscription, "Holy, Alleluia." Across the top in the three parts of the window, appear the anchor of hope, the cross and crown of struggle and victory, and the star of promise. The large central compartment contains a spiritual design from John Bunyan's "Holy War."

The execution of the east window is extremely fine and the effect one of rich and varied beauty. But all the details are subordinated to the figure which forms the centre of the picture, the splendid figure of the first of the arch angels, the highest created intelligence, St. Michael. The figure of the archangel as the design presents it gets the stature not from the height of the body which is that of a modest youth, but from the splendid wings which reach far up as if rich with

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the colors of heaven, they would take hold on eternity. The symbolism as well as the colors of the figure is profoundly impressive and beautiful. It is genuine art turned to a thoroughly religious use. The spirit of it grows upon the beholder and its beauty deepens the more it is seen. the window is inscribed: "St Michael" "In Memory of Oakes Ames" and is a contribution of his sons in testimony of the sacredness of their father's memory.



Beneath the church are parlors fitted up for the convenience of the society on all festive occasions, and all the modern appliances of a thoroughly organized society. The seating capacity of the church is about 300 but it contained on the day of the dedication upward of 500. It has a rich toned organ and a bell of great weight is suspended in the tower. The cost of the edifice is not far from \$75,000. all of which has been disbursed by the generous and public spirited donor."

The services of dedication were of a very interesting character and called together a large audience of citizens and strangers prominent among the latter being Ex. Gov. Talbot, President Stearns of the Old Colony Railroad, Charles F. Choate, Esq., Royal Turner of Randolph, and others. The services opened by a voluntary on the organ by T.P.Ryder following which was the anthem, "Praise the Lord," by a quartette consisting of Miss Ruth Holbrook of Weymouth, Mrs. Ashmead of Philadelphia, and Messrs. Willis and Russell of North Easton.

An invocation was offered by the pastor, Rev. William Chaffin, and scriptural selections were read by Rev. John Snyder of S t. Louis. After the singing of a hymn, the service of dedication took place in which the pastor and congregation united, standing and reading the public declaration of their consecration of the edifice to purposes of divine worship. The sermon was by Rev. R.R. Shippen of Boston in the latter part of which tender allusion was made to the memory of Oliver Ames, Senior founder of the society and of the industry which has built up the village and to his son, Honorable Oakes Ames, its liberal patron and always the friend of the people; the preach also in a few well-chosen words, extended the thanks of the community to the benevolent donor of the edifice for his elegant and munificent gift.

Rev. C.H. Brigham of Ann Arbor, Michigan followed in a brief address in which he spoke in terms of high praise of the filial reverence and regard which had prompted the son to build this structure in memory and to the honor of a noble father, and of the wisdom which had also planned it for the benefit of the living. It stands as a worthy companion gift to the elegant school house presented to the village by the same family ten years ago. The singing of a hymn and the benediction by the pastor concluded the services.