MARSHALL MOUNT WESLEYAN CHURCH BURNED DOWN

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On Sunday afternoon last, between 4 and 5 o'clock, the Wesleyan Church at Marshall Mount was burned to the ground. Just before the occurrence the chimney of the Public School residence, which is situated within thirty yards from where the church stood, took fire, but after some difficulty was extinguished. All was then supposed to be safe, but immediately afterwards smoke was seen issuing from the inside of the church. Mr. Thomas Taylor, the school teacher, Mr. John Smith, a farmer in the neighbourhood, who happened to be passing, and other persons at once exerted themselves in a most praiseworthy manner to endeavour to get at the fire, but after a short time without success, as the door of the building was locked, and the fire was burning inside. Eventually, however, the door was thrown open in some way, and then the fire was found to be raging from floor to roof. The two gentlemen already named, and others who arrived on the scene, did their very utmost to save the seats and other movable articles in the edifice, and with some success. The pulpit and all fixtures, however, had to be left to the flames, as in a very short time the fire had increased to such an extent as to be unapproachable, and it was not long until the whole building was a burning mass, and subsequently a heap of ashes. As regards the cause of the occurrence, it is believed that, as the wind was blowing very strongly towards the church from the burning chimney of the school, a spark must have been carried either through or under the shingles on to the ceiling, which was in a very inflammable state owing to being much damaged by white ants. At any rate, it is, fortunately, clearly certain that the fire was caused in some way by a spark from the burning chimney of the adjacent building, and therefore was purely accidental. So satisfied are all parties concerned that this was so, that we have been requested to mention the matter. The loss will be somewhat heavy on the body to which the building belonged, as like most places of worship it was wholly uninsured. It was a good weather-board edifice, 16 x 32 feet, being lined and otherwise completed, and it was only recently that it had been newly shingled, painted, and otherwise renovated. Doubtless a sympathetic Christian community will not be slack in assisting the people who have thus been deprived of their place of worship.