

An Appeal to the Universalist Denomination

The circumstances of the situation of the Universalist Society in the city of Albany are probably, by recent publications and otherwise, pretty well known to the denomination. The undersigned have been appointed a Committee, by the Society, to lay their case before the public, and solicit such aid as its merits may seem to warrant.

Their church was built by them over twenty-two years ago. It is an excellent and commodious edifice, in good condition, and cost, with the lot, about \$14,500.

Until within the last few months, there was nothing absolutely disheartening in our situation. With the continuance of fidelity on the part of our members, with prudent management, we might have hoped, in no long time, to come out of the cloud which has surrounded us, and take our place among the flourishing congregations of the State. But the recent events, with which the public is to some extent now acquainted, have deprived us of a very considerable share of our Society, as to numbers and means.

The debt now standing against the Society amounts to about five thousand five hundred dollars. The interest on this must, for the most part, be met promptly. It has always been a heavy burden upon the Society. The members still continuing faithful to us are not able to meet the regular demands of this interest, and the other expenses incident to a place of public worship.—Should our public services cease, we have no expectation but that our receipts would, in a very short time, be inadequate to pay our interest money, and the church would, as a consequence, be forthwith liable to a forced public sale, when its whole value would, in all probability, be absorbed by its debts. The consequence of such a sale would be next to, or would absolutely effect the destruction of the Society.

Now, friends and brethren, our object is to endeavor to retain this church. Were it once out of debt, we would undertake to keep it clear of debt, to keep a Universalist Society in existence in this city; to maintain the preached word among them; and, we have no doubt, to make the doctrine of Universalism, in the end, flourish in this community.

Contemplate the consequences of the annihilation of our Society. For over twenty-five years it has existed in an organized form; it has overcome the prejudices of this community against the "heresy;" it has conquered their respect for it, the general character of its friends and supporters; and it has made itself a name here. This fight has been fought. It will not need to be done over again, should the Society be able to hold up its head. But annihilate it for a score of years, and you have this fight to go over again. No. Our true way is to maintain the present Society, keep it in the field, and encourage those who have its interests in charge.

We have no warfare to wage against those in this community, whose objects may be supposed to be kindred with our own. Another

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communication will have placed the position of our Society before the public. So far as the aims of the former are right, we wish them well. Suffice it to say, that we have no faith in their mode of operation, and have confidence in our own organization and mode of operation.

We have now laid our case before the public at as great length as its nature requires. We would not consider it practicable to do what we have above set forth as our work in this city, short of possessing our church free from debt. This would involve the raising of the sum of five thousand five hundred dollars. We have been persuaded by friends that there are those in the community who, under the peculiar circumstances of our case, would assist us in raising this amount. With it, we should be able, we fondly trust, with God's blessing, to go on prosperously.

Will our friends, everywhere, do what they can for us in our emergency. Rev. A.[Albert] W. Bruce, formerly of Madison co., N.Y., who has been with us recently, will receive any sums for us wherever he may be. All sums received under this appeal, unless the donor should otherwise request, will be applied on the principal of our debt, and in no other way. Any amounts, large or small, may likewise be forwarded or delivered to either of the undersigned committee, and will be acknowledged through our papers, or otherwise. Friends, let Universalism be cheered by a generous effort.

S. RANKIN, 87 Quay-street
WM. BROWN, 13 Church-street
N. HAWLEY, 23 Douw's buildings
Committee

Albany, Feb. 11, 1856

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 23 Feb 1856

Transcribed on 14 Jul 2011 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY