

[Cicero, Onondaga Co. NY]

Universalism in Cicero, N. Y.

A correspondent of the *Syracuse Daily Courier and Union*, writing from Cicero, Onondaga co., N. Y., gives a sketch of the progress of Universalism in that town and vicinity. We present it to our readers:—

One year ago last September, the Rev. A[aron] A. Thayer, formerly of Watertown, came among us, and found us without any regular service, or an organized Society. Although the attempt had frequently been made to sustain regular preaching, and to organize a Society, it had as often proved a failure, and the friends of the project had given up all hope of success.

Mr. Thayer proposed to preach for us a few times, and receive such compensation for his services as the friends of the cause were willing to give him. He delivered a few discourses, after which it was thought advisable to start a subscription list, which was done, and met with unexpected success, and the services of Mr. Thayer were secured for six months. Consequently he continued his services, and his audiences were increased beyond our greatest anticipations. On the 13th day of February following, he succeeded in organizing a Society known as the First Universalist Society of Cicero, and obtained nine names as members of the Society, which has since been increased to over sixty. About this time we had a donation visit for his benefit, and received \$45, which was thought to be very liberal considering the circumstances at that time.

On the first of April last, the time for which we had engaged his services expired. A meeting of the Society was called, and it was thought advisable to procure his services for the year to come. A subscription list was again put in place for that purpose, which succeeded admirably, and his services were secured for a year.

In the September following, a Conference for the Cayuga Association of Universalists was held at Brewerton. The visiting clergy present were the Rev. W. W. Clayton of Auburn, and the Rev. R[oyal] H. Pullman of Fulton... During the time of which I have been speaking, the Rev. A. A. Thayer had been preaching half of the time at Syracuse, and had succeeded in organizing a Society there, which had become so large that they wished him to devote his whole time with them. In view of this he proposed that we should release him at the expiration of six months, and procure in his stead the services of the Rev. W. W. Clayton, he being desirous to change his location.

The friends of Universalism at Brewerton thought that they should be able to support him half the time. A subscription list was circulated there, which proved the estimation of their abilities to be correct. Mr. Clayton commenced his labors with us the first of October last, and his audiences

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have been gradually increasing, and we now have a very respectable attendance.

The church at Cicero is being repaired; the painter has nearly completed his labors, and it will soon be placed in charge of the ladies who design to furnish it...

This is a brief history of the progress of Universalism for the past year and a half in this vicinity, and is it not truly flattering to all lovers of Universalism that we have been thus successful? And here let me say in conclusion, to the friends of Universalism everywhere, if you have no stated services, send for some energetic Thayer to come and assist you. If you do not get a Thayer the first time you attempt it, do not get discouraged as did the friends at Cicero, persevere, and you will surely succeed.

J. W.

Cicero, N. Y., Feb. 22, 1861

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, 16 Mar 1861

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Besides the churches previously mentioned there was one erected by the Baptists in Cicero village in 1832. The society finally disbanded and the edifice passed to Hezekiah Joslyn, John Leach, and John L. Stevens, who subsequently sold it to the First Congregation of Disciples, an organization composed mainly of members of the foregoing Baptist church. In 1867 it was transferred by legislative act to the First Universalist church, which had been organized as a society by Rev. A. A. Thayer in 1859 and as a church by Rev. John M. Austin in 1867. In 1871 the edifice was rebuilt at a cost of \$3,000. Among the members of the Universalist Society were Warren Wright, the first superintendent of the Sunday school, and John R. Wright, John McCulloch, Mrs. Ambrose Sadler, Mrs. Robert Lower, and Mrs. J. A. Dunham.

Dwight H. Bruce, ed., *Onondaga's Centennial*.
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