

Our Cause in Geneva

The following epistle exhibits a lamentable state of things in Geneva.

BR. HAMMOND: I observe frequently published in the *Luminary* the communications of some brother, showing the onward progress of our glorious cause, which, defended and propagated by the sword of the truth, is making the hearts of the people free indeed; and that, in many places, there is a terrible shaking of the old dry bones of superstition's soul-enslaving institutions. It is truly gratifying to a believer in the restitution of all things, to read of the cheering prosperity and happifying effects attending the preaching of God's love and mercy in other places; and also to understand that the strong holds of error, partialism, bigotry, and dogmatism are yielding before the mighty prowess and irresistible advances of truth, universal grace, reason, and freedom of opinion. And Oh, that we could say the same for our blessed cause in Geneva! Must I confess the fact, must I give utterance to my thoughts and feelings, and own that our place of worship is almost desolate? Must I confess that dissention, that hydra-headed monster, has been, and is now, at work among us, and has almost destroyed us? Must I say that we have traitors in the camp, who would sell us for a paltry mess of pottage? Must I acknowledge that we are betrayed, and that to, by those who ought to be our very best friends, and that the enemy is about to take possession of us? Would to Heaven that I could hurl back these thoughts into deep oblivion forever; but I can not—my duty calls upon me, with an imperative voice, to speak out.

Our Church is deserted, there is no light of the gospel promulgated within, and cobwebs upon the windows exclude the light from without.—The seats where once sat many anxious listeners to the words of reconciliation, are cushionless and dusty. If occasionally the doors are opened, the squeaking of their rusty hinges and the lonely foot-falls of the intruder reverberate between those walls, which once echoed to tuneful praises of the choir and melodious peals of the organ. The stranger, as he views the lonesome building, and learns its eventful history, and the present condition of the society once worshiping there, if he be of the Abrahamic [Universalist] faith, heaves a sigh, drops a tear, and involuntary prays that God may yet prosper his cause in this place.—'Tis true, we have had, from time to time, laborers among us, but they gave up disheartened and discouraged when they found that their seed was sown...upon empty seats and galleries.

Br. Hammond, is there any hope that our cause, in this place, can ever be raised from the low state in which it now is?...There is no doubt but that we have friends enough to fill the Church every Sabbath, were it not for that inharmonious feeling and spirit of discord which exists between certain ones. There is no necessity for disguising the fact that *that* unity does not exist between our friends, which is needed for the upbuilding, onward progress, and prosperity of our society. Now the only way is...to permit the healing influences of the glorious religion they profess, to dray them together in the bonds of unity, peace and brotherly fellowship, that they may be able unitedly to ward off the threatened danger. Perhaps Br. H. will inquire, what the danger can be of which we speak so much? It can be told in a few words. The Presbyterians in this place, are about to divide, and the new school wish to purchase our Church. They say that if they can get possession of our Church, they will kill, and entirely root Universalism out of Geneva, and thus accomplish a two-fold purpose—get rid of Universalism and build up Presbyterianism.

Western Luminary, Rochester NY, Sat. March 1, 1845 (abridged)