

[Third Universalist Society, New York City]

CHURCH OF ETERNAL HOPE TO GO OUT OF EXISTENCE
Borough of Manhattan Will Then Have Only One Universalist Church
PROPERTY WILL NET \$75,000
Struggling Little Congregation of Twenty-One Members
Raised \$10,000 Last Year

With a population close on to two millions, the Borough of Manhattan has now practically but one Universalist church below Mount Vernon, where there is a struggling society of ninety members, with an annual income for the church of about \$3,000. In a short time the Church of Eternal Hope [Third Universalist Society], at West Eighty-first street, will be a thing of the past, as the trustees have decided to sell the property, pay off what debts there may be and hand over the money to the State Convention of the Universalist Church in the United States, part of which may come to Brooklyn to assist the Church of the Good Tidings in its building operations.

The Church of the Eternal Hope has an interesting history. In days gone by it was known as the Orchard Street Universalist Church [??], having been organized in 1835. Owing to changing conditions of population and environment, it moved to its present location and was for some years fairly prosperous. For a number of years the pastor was the Rev. W.[Winfield] S. Crowe, who was a prominent figure in the denomination, well known in Brooklyn, and he frequently preached here. The last pastor of the Church of the Eternal Hope was the Rev. W. R. Dearborn, who resigned more than a year ago. Some attempts were made to secure a successor, but it was at last deemed best to dispose of the property and disband.

According to the last available statistics, the Church of the Eternal Hope has a membership of twenty-one, with a Sunday school of (160?), and yet these same statistics credit the struggling little company with having raised a total in 1904 of \$10,000. It has a property set down as \$106,000 on which there is an indebtedness of \$25,000. When this is paid off and whatever there may be of floating debt, it is thought there will be passed over to the Convention about \$75,000.

One reason given for the decline of the Church of the Eternal Hope is the proximity of the Church of the Divine Paternity [Fourth Universalist Society], which is situated on Central Park West and Seventy-sixth street, about four blocks away, and of which the Rev. Dr. Frank Oliver Hall is the pastor, who is regarded as one of the strongest men in the denomination. Being in such close proximity to the Church of the Eternal Hope, the members have gone over to the services at Dr. Hall's church, particularly so since the former society has been without a pastor. This has resulted in naturally diminishing the audiences and the revenue of the Church of the Eternal Hope and caused it to have an added reason for disbanding. The Church of the Divine Paternity has always been a potent factor in the church life of New York, from the strength of its ministers, among whom have been the Rev. Drs. [Edwin H.] Chapin and Charles H. Eaton, who were men of national reputation.

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The disbandment of the Church of the Eternal Hope brings into bold relief a contrast between Universalist conditions in Brooklyn and in other cities of the country. Brooklyn is the metropolitan stronghold for Universalism as it is for Congregationalism. This borough has four Universalist churches: the Church of Our Father [First Universalist], to which the Rev. Dr. Thomas Edward Potterton is ministering and which has just celebrated its sixty-third anniversary; the Church of the Good Tidings [Fourth Universalist], which has just taken possession of the basement of a beautiful new edifice in course of construction at the corner of Lewis avenue and Madison street, and of which the Rev. Charles R. East is pastor; All Souls Church, which last year left the Eastern District, united with the Church of the Divine Love, in Flatbush, and built a beautiful church at Ocean avenue and Ditmas street which will be dedicated free of debt, and of which the Rev. L. Ward Brigham is pastor; and the Church of the Reconciliation [Third Universalist], at North Henry street, near Nassau avenue, Greenpoint, the Rev. George S. Thompson, pastor.

Other cities of the country are strong among the Universalists, particularly Boston, which leads the United States in this respect. In other parts of New England and in the West the denomination has considerable strength, but it seems always to have been more or less of a struggle to extend in the old city of New York.

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Transcribed on 15 Sep 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY