

Reminiscences of Universalism in Western New-York
No. II

In the fall of 1822, in the small village of Orleans, Ontario Co., N.Y., for the first time I attended a Universalist Association [meeting]. There also, for the first time, I saw Rev. N. [Nathaniel] Stacy. How truly grateful must it be to his acute sensibilities to view the ripening fruits on the precious tree of promise, whose seed he has by a kind Providence been instrumental in sowing, in the East, West, North, and South. So faithful have been his labors in the Master's vineyard, that with truth may these words be applied to him—"Well done, good and faithful servant." It is to be hoped that he is now reaping the joy in his advanced age which he so richly deserves. In my mind's eye I can see him now, as he there stood, while addressing his brethren in the ministry - his thankful, joy-beaming countenance expressing his gratitude to the good Father for the great advancement of the cause of truth, which lay so near his heart, since he, a few years previous, passed that way, a lonely traveler. At that time he seemed to view himself surrounded by a host of fellow-helpers - thirteen preachers, I think. His soul seemed to melt in thankfulness in view of so great an acquisition.

There also, for the first time, I beheld our much esteemed, excellent, devoted, now lamented, Rev. O. [Oliver] Ackley. It then seemed that his lips were inspired by a coal from the altar of eternal Truth. I became more intimately acquainted with him and his excellent lady, than with any other minister and family of our denomination, and always counted them among my best friends. I never wearied with listening to his pleadings, and his fervent addresses to the Throne of Grace would, for the time being, seemed to exalt one to the very heavens. He preached in the old school house at Hopewell very many times. Alas! a few months since he was called to his eternal home.

At that Association I witnessed the rite of ordination conferred upon a young ministering brother, Rev. A. [Alfred] Peck. He proved faithful to the cause of truth, and has recently been called to his heavenly rest.

In the old school house also preached that venerable father, Rev. Thomas Gross, who established the *Gospel Advocate* in the city of Buffalo, N.Y. It was the first Universalist periodical of which I ever had the perusal. I think it was the first published in the State. None of our preachers was of so high a station but they could condescend to preach in an old school house. And glad we were to listen to the glorious news they proclaimed - even though we could not find a commodious seat, or perhaps no seat at all. There also preached our lamented father, Rev. J. [John] S. Flagler. It is believed he did much good in the dissemination of truth. Rev. S. [Stephen] R. Smith, "whose praise is in all the churches," the faithful and esteemed Rev. J. [Job] Potter; the eccentric but very worthy Rev. I. [Isaac] Whitnal; the young Rev. L. [Leonard] L. Sadler—each in turn delivered his message of truth in the old school house. All have finished their earthly labors, and have been called to grace the courts celestial.

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