

[Aspinwall, Joseph Aikin]

Death of Rev. J. A. Aspinwall

Rev. J. A. Aspinwall departed this life at his residence in Nunda, Livingston co., N.Y., on Wednesday, the 24th inst., after a long and painful sickness of the dysentery, aged 47 years. Alas! that we are compelled to make this announcement! But the sad message must be sent forth, carrying as it will, sorrow to many a fraternal and loving heart. When we noticed, week before last, his dangerous illness, we expressed the hope that his friends were unnecessarily alarmed at his condition, and that we might soon learn tidings of his convalescence. But this hope has been painfully frustrated. A Father who never errs in his wise and benevolent purposes, has ordered that our dear brother should languish into death, that he might the more speedily soar to life, and light, and joy, in the cloudless realms of immortality.

To all who were acquainted with Br. Aspinwall and his history, it is needless to say, that in his death our great cause especially in this State has experienced a heavy loss, and one which will long be felt. For the last fifteen or twenty years he has taken an active and prominent part in all enterprizes [sic] of the denomination in the State of New York, and has greatly aided in maturing its organization and promoting its growth. At the time of his death he was Standing Clerk of the State Convention—an office he had most faithfully filled for several years. Little did we foresee that when we met him, some two months since, at the State Convention in Perry, in apparent health, and full of energy and zeal—discharging the double duty of Standing and Sessional Clerk—that we should so soon be called to proclaim the tidings of his decease. But God rules and knows what is best for his children. The times and seasons—man's health, and life, and destiny—are all in his wide keeping and loving care. Blessed be his name! There are none too high to escape his control—none too low to be overlooked of his watchful eye, or forgotten of his faithful, tender, endless love.

It is not our purpose to write a biography of the deceased. This duty we trust will be fulfilled by some one more familiar with the details of his early history and subsequent labors—and we can fix our mind on no one more competent to this task than Rev. D. [Dolphus] Skinner of Utica. Briefly we can state, that Br. Aspinwall was born and reared in Henderson, Jefferson co., N.Y. He undoubtedly came into the belief of the Gospel of Impartial Grace, under the preaching of Rev. Pitt Morse, who was one of the pioneers of Universalism in that region. He must also, we think, have listened in his younger days, to the beloved Father [Cornelius Gray] Persons, of Ellisburgh, N.Y., (grandfather of our two preachers, the brothers J. B. and Asa Saxe,) and of the venerable and much respected Rev. Seth Jones, still living at a good old age in Sackett's Harbor, N.Y. We have no data at hand to determine the question, but it is our impression that Br. Aspinwall has been in the ministry about twenty-five years. He has been located at Braman's Corners, Cooperstown, Rome, Clinton and

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Nunda—and possibly in one or two other places which have escaped our memory [including South Hartford, Fort Plain and Saratoga Springs]. At Clinton he was for about two years Principal of the Male Department of the Liberal Institute. He aided greatly in carrying out the wise plan of making the Institute building not only a boarding-house, but a Home for the students: the Principal and his family making it their residence—and in introducing those improvements in the edifice, and those measures in the management of the school, which have resulted in bringing the Institute into its present prosperous condition.

Br. Aspinwall ranked well in our ministry as a theologian, preacher and pastor. His leading traits were devotion, zeal, perseverance in the discharge of his duties, both public and private, and in great amiability of disposition and kindness of heart. He was firm, courageous, and untiring in carrying forward any enterprize or measure which commended itself to his judgment, and could be relied on by his friends in any emergency. He was a sincere follower of Christ, and in the best sense a humble, loving, practical christian. In all the moral reforms of the day, he took a deep interest, and was never backward in lifting up his voice against any wrong, any injurious habits, any unjust laws which might afflict society or infringe upon the rights of his fellow men. He has always endeared himself to the hearts of the people wherever he has been called to labor, and hundreds will shed the tear of sorrow as they listen to the tidings of his departure.

He leaves a faithful and loving wife [Frances Maine Aspinwall] and several children [including Joseph, David, Aikin, Murray and Mary]—to mourn his loss—a loss to them irreparable. We trust the denomination will remember them. He, like most clergymen, had probably gathered but little if any property, on which they can rely for a maintenance. The Convention having a fund at its disposal for this especial purpose, we hope the widow and orphans of so true and faithful a servant of the Master and member of our ministry, will receive (if need be) a generous allowance for their comfort. It is our earnest prayer that God's choicest blessing may rest on those called to mourn by this sorrowful dispensation of Providence.

☞ Will someone present or familiar with the facts, send us an account of Br. Aspinwall's sickness and death, also of the exercises of the funeral.

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 3 Nov. 1860

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REV. J. A. ASPINWALL

We have received from a correspondent in Nunda, N.Y., a letter containing particulars of the sickness and death of the late Rev. J. A. Aspinwall, and a statement of the pecuniary condition of his family, and also a call for assistance in their embarrassed condition. We present extracts for the perusal of our readers: —

“The last time Br. Aspinwall preached was in Portageville, N.Y. He came home sick with the diarrhea, which soon took a dangerous form. Several eminent physicians attended him, but their skill was baffled, and all their efforts proved unavailing. He was sick about five weeks. Becoming satisfied he could not recover, he settled his business affairs as well as he was able. About two weeks previous to his departure, he made arrangements for his funeral—selected the text for the sermon, and requested that Rev. G.W. Montgomery of Rochester should officiate on the sad occasion. He was resigned to his allotment, and perfectly calm in view of death. He retained his senses to the last, and died on the 24th of October, praising God for his goodness.

“The funeral was held on the 27th. The Universalist Church not being sufficiently large to accommodate those who were expected to be present, the Baptist Society of Nunda, with a Christian kindness which will long be remembered, offered the use of their church for the occasion, which was thankfully accepted. It was filled to overflowing. The sermon was delivered by Rev. A. [Asa] Saxe of Rochester, the engagements of Br. Montgomery not permitting him to be present. Br. Saxe was assisted in the exercises by Rev. C. [Charles] Cravens of Le Roy, Rev. D.C. Tomlinson of Perry, and Rev. A. B. Raymond of Portageville. The remains of the deceased were followed to the tomb by a long procession,, consisting of his family, his ministering brethren, the Society and Sabbath School of which he had, for four years, been the beloved pastor, and a large number of sympathizing friends in Nunda, and from the surrounding towns.— His family and the Society and congregation and the Sabbath School deeply mourn his loss, and the entire community feel that a good man has fallen.

“Br. Aspinwall had been settled as a preacher in South Hartford, Fort Plain, Saratoga Springs, Braman’s Corners, Schenectady, Cooperstown, Rome, Clinton, and Nunda. He was Standing Clerk of the New York State Convention of Universalists for ten years.

“He has left a family consisting of the widow and her mother, and four sons—the eldest about 22 years of age, and an invalid. They have in their possession a comfortable house, with four acres of land,

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on which there is a mortgage of \$400. There is also a note against the estate, of about \$60.

“Now in view of the devotion of Br. Aspinwall to the cause of Universalism, and his long and zealous labors in its behalf, and in view of the very limited means he has left for the support of his family, we propose to appeal to the denomination. We ask aid to assist in paying the debts against the small estate, and to make his family comfortable in their bereaved condition. To the Societies where he has heretofore labored, we think we can make this appeal with a confident expectation that they will generously respond to the same. Our Society in Nunda is small, but we hope to raise at least \$250 for this needed relief.”

W. W. [Willard Wood]

Nunda, Nov. 17, 1860

We are pained to learn that our dear brother left his family in circumstances so straitened—and several of them, if not all, at present, incapacitated for self-maintenance. Br. Aspinwall was a most devoted and laborious advocate of our cause. All the life of his manhood he devoted to hard toil in its behalf. In his love of its sublime truths, he turned away from business pursuits, in which the same amount of labor and perseverance would, in all human probability, have secured for him and his family an ample fortune... And faithfully did he work, devoting every power and thought to his mission, until God’s messenger called him up to higher and happier fields of labor. [The next sentence is illegible.] We earnestly appeal to all Universalists to contribute something for their support. We make this appeal more especially to those Societies where Br. Aspinwall has been located as pastor. They know his personal worth, his love of Universalism, and his willingness to sacrifice for its advancement. They have received the benefits of his hard toil. We trust they will most liberally respond to this call ... And we trust other Universalists of property and liberality, throughout the State, will contribute generously and promptly, in a case so acknowledgedly proper for the aid of the benevolent. Letters on this subject may be addressed to the widow, or to Willard Wood, Nunda, Livingston Co., N.Y.

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 1 Dec. 1860

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