

[Skinner, Warren]

Rev. Warren Skinner, son of Timothy and Ruth (Warner) Skinner was born in Brookfield, Mass., June 2, 1791. He was the oldest of a family of nine children, the late Rev. Dolphus Skinner, D.D., of Utica, N.Y., being a younger brother. Before Warren was three years old his family moved to Westmoreland, N.H., where he spent his youth and learned the clothier's trade. He afterwards worked at that trade two years in Brownville, N.Y. He taught school for one year. He embraced Universalism in 1808, and it would seem that a sermon he heard in Westmoreland on Matthew XVI:25-26, by Rev. A. [Abner] Kneeland, (then a popular preacher in Langdon, N.H.) had something to do with his adoption of that faith. He commenced preaching in Ellisburg, N.Y., in 1823, and in the same year received the fellowship of the General Convention, which met that year in Clinton, N.Y. He was ordained in 1825. It appears that he lived in Brownville from 1814 to 1825, inasmuch as the first five of his children were born there in that period. For the years 1826, '27, '28, he lived in Langdon, N.Y., as is shown by the fact that his inventory is found on the records of that town for these years. But while living in Langdon he preached in all the region round about, on both sides of the Connecticut River, in Alstead, Jaffrey, Walpole, N.H.; and in Andover, Chester, Ludlow, Plymouth, Springfield and Cavendish, Vt., and gave a powerful impetus to the gospel truth wherever he labored. As early as 1828, possibly 1827, he removed his family to Proctorsville (Town of Cavendish) Vt. where he preached regularly for about 14 years, i.e., until 1845, deducting the interval from August 1833, to Sept 1836, which he spent in Shaftsbury, preaching there in Bennington. He continued in Proctorsville from 1845 to 1849 without any pastoral charge, yet preaching in many different places as occasion called, and officiating at many funerals, where his able services were in great request and were very acceptable. In 1849, he removed to South Woodstock, in the same county, and took charge of the boarding-house connected with the Liberal Institute (now Green Mountain Perkins Academy) in that place. In 1851, he again returned to his home in Proctorsville and resided there till 1867, when he went to live with a daughter, first in Waterbury, then Burlington, Vt., and finally in Claremont, N.H. He was the contemporary co-laborer in the gospel ministry of John E. Palmer, William Bell, Samuel C. Loveland, Thomas Browning, Russell Streeter, Kittridge Haven, and Robert Bartlett, of whom only the last four remain to this present time, and all of them octogenarians. On March 30, 1874, he preached for the last time at a funeral in Acworth, N.H. On the 12th of the ensuing Sept. he went to visit his son in Proctorsville, and it is thought by his family that he felt that his end was near. For, it is said, "after reaching Proctorsville he failed rapidly." Still he was cheerful, and his mind was clear and bright to the last. Scarcely an hour before he died an old friend, Ex-Governor Ryland Fletcher, who is a Baptist, called upon him. In

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their early acquaintance their contests of faith had been many and warm. In the last hour of his life the contest was renewed, and Father Skinner said to Gov. Fletcher: "I have no more doubt of the truth of the doctrine I have preached, than I have that I breathe." These were almost his last words. He died October 6, 1874, in the 84th year of his age, of heart disease, as it is supposed, with which he had been afflicted for many years. He died, too, as we have seen, rejoicing in the faith which with eminent ability and fidelity he had preached for more than 50 years. A large congregation attended his funeral in the Methodist Church in Proctorsville, and the officiating minister, Rev. John Gregory, was assisted in the services by Elder Freeman (Baptist) who paid a cordial and deserved tribute to the moral worth of Father Skinner. The Freemasons were present in large numbers, from Cavendish and the neighboring towns, and buried him according to their usages. Thus the grave closed over the mortal remains of a valiant Christian soldier; a man of venerable age and distinguished ability as a writer and preacher, a clear thinker, a logical reasoner, a man mighty in the scriptures; a forcible and fluent speaker; and upright and honest man. In 1830 Father Skinner published a series of 12 able and well-written Essays "On the Coming of Christ". At various times he contributed elaborate and scholarly articles to the "Universalist Expositor" and "Quarterly Review," and one of them, "On the Popular Doctrine of Atonement" (Expositor for 1833), as we happen to know, elicited from the editor (Rev. H. Ballou, 2nd) the high praise of being the best article which, up to that time, had been furnished him. Father Skinner was twice married; first, March 5, 1815, to Miss Nancy Farnsworth of Stoddard, N.H., and 2nd, Nov 24, 1831, to Mrs. Lucretia (Slapp) Reddington of Lebanon, NY, who survives him in her 75th year, with two of her four children, together with seven of the first wife's. Among the latter is Rev. Charles Augustus Skinner of Hartford, Conn.

*Universalist Register & Almanac*, Boston MA, 1875, pp. 130-133

Transcribed on 12 Sep 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY