

[Aldrich, Sibyl Curtis]

Letter from Rev. N.[Nathaniel] Stacy
[abridged]

....Since my former visit to Central New York, two years ago, an early friend, a zealous disciple of Christ, a bold defender of the doctrine of God's universal grace,..., a mother in Israel, has been removed from this earthly tabernacle, and left a vacant seat, in the little church in Sherburne which was never before vacant on the Lord's day, when she had the strength to fill it; and by some oversight...her demise has never been noted in our denominational journal. Surely, when one has the fidelity and boldness to come out...in the face of a bigoted, persecuting generation, and stem the torrent of popular odium, and espouse the doctrine of Universalism, defending it by argument, and illustrating its excellency by a life devoted to virtue, truth and benevolence, cheerfully meeting the vicissitudes of mortal trials and bereavements, and closing mortal life rejoicing in the bright hope of a glorious immortality—that life should not be buried in the obscurity of forgetfulness, but should be holden up as a beacon to guide the wayward...to the haven of peace and rest, and to encourage the doubting, to cheer the desponding, and strengthen the faint hearted.

MRS. SIBYL ALDRICH was the daughter of James Curtis, Esq., one of the earliest settlers of the town of Sherburne, Chenango co., N.Y. In 1809 or '10 I first formed an acquaintance with the family. Esq. Curtis had two children only, a son Daniel [David], and a daughter, Sibyl. I found him to be a man of liberal religious feelings, of broad charity—indeed, he was pretty well established in the belief of the final restitution; but he had not the independence and moral courage to avow his faith in the face of a bigoted and persecuting generation... Not so with his children. They, in youth...made themselves acquainted with the holy Scriptures which made them "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Capt. David Curtis married Delilah Sears, daughter of a deacon of the Presbyterian church in Columbus, N.Y. But notwithstanding the religious timidity of his father, and his marriage connexion with a...partialist family, he pursued his upward course till he found himself permanently established upon the solid foundation of truth, and in the life-giving faith of universal salvation, which faith and hope sustained and cheered him through all the labors and trials of mortal life, and dispelled all gloomy clouds from the "valley of the shadow of death." He was one of the first, or the very first, settlers of the town of Columbus, Warren co., Pa., where he accumulated a handsome property and reared a most respectable family of children, and where he calmly and cheerfully finished his earthly course at the early age of 46 years, in 1832... Sibyl married James Aldrich, and she and her husband early...united with

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the Universalist Society in the town of Sherburne, among its earliest members, where their integrity and Christian example numbered them among the most active members and ornaments of society.

Mr. Aldrich departed this life in Sherburne, Feb., 1857, in the 78th year of his age, leaving his widow and family in affluent circumstances. She retained her village home in Sherburne, where she resided most of her time, and where she could enjoy the meetings of her choice, but spent a share of it among her children, some of whom were settled in the State of Pennsylvania. Her last days were spent with her daughter, Mrs. D. Brainard, in East Hamilton, where she was taken sick and "finished her course." She was perfectly conscious of her approaching dissolution, and with cheerful composure welcomed the message of her deliverance. She deliberately arranged and settled her temporal affairs, and gave particular direction in regard to her funeral. She wished the services at her funeral to be attended in the church in Sherburne, and a Universalist clergyman to officiate on the occasion. And on the first day of Feb., 1862, in the 74th year of her age, she resigned her spirit to God who gave it. Her wishes in regard to her funeral were complied with, and Dr. T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Sawyer, from Clinton, preached at her funeral. She left seven children all comfortably settled in the world, two of whom reside in Pennsylvania, the remainder in their native state...

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 22 Nov 1862

Transcribed on 12 Sep 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY