

[Underwood, Anna]

DEPARTURE OF A MOTHER IN ISRAEL!!

Died in Utica, N.Y., May 14, 1851, Widow ANNA UNDERWOOD, aged 82 years, formerly of Litchfield, in this state. She was the widow of the late Rev. William Underwood. With strong faith, she had been long waiting for her change to come. The writer became acquainted with this true "mother in Israel," about two years and a half before her death. In the course of this period, he visited her frequently, and never left her without being deeply impressed with the worth of that hallowed faith she cherished. That was her stay and her staff; her joy and consolation...

Mother U. was a native of Southwick, Mass., but removed when quite young with her family to Great Barrington, where she resided till after her marriage, which took place when she was nineteen. Her husband was then a farmer. Some fifty-eight years ago they moved to Litchfield, Oneida [now in Herkimer] county, N.Y. The journey was made on an ox team, and took a number of days. This will seem strange to those who can now come from Puritan N.E. in a few hours. After Br. Underwood settled in this state, he became a preacher among the Baptists, yet he was not ordained by them. But he continued to labor wherever he had opportunity, until some thirty-three or thirty-four years ago, when it was rumored that one [Nathaniel] Stacy, a heretic—professing Universalism—was going to give a lecture in the school-house in the neighborhood. All was in commotion. It was clear that something must be done, or that "setter forth of Strange Doctrines" might lead some astray. It was determined to nip the poisonous plant in the bud. Br. U. was appointed the spokesman of the Pharisees, to propose certain hard questions, and tangle Br. Stacy in his talk. His wife accompanied him to the school-house, assured that her husband could easily refute the sayings of such a babbler. All was anxious expectation as that little man got up to preach, and as he so gently and fervently presented his message, until Father U. arose and began to present objections. They were answered at once with simplicity. When the meeting broke up none were satisfied with what had occurred except the two or three Universalists, and they were not pleased with the treatment shown them.

Mother U. felt that her husband had failed in supporting his Partialist sentiments. It disturbed her, for she had long been a faithful and worthy member of the same sect with her husband. She began to search the Bible anew for the plain texts, affirming the doctrine of Endless Damnation. The more she searched, the fewer they became, until she was obliged to give it up entirely, and acknowledge that her old religion had nothing but a creed to support it; or as she once represented it to me:—"It was like a pail with the bottom knocked out."

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She thus became a believer in the world's salvation, from *her own investigation* into the Scriptures, alone; and about the same time her husband also avowed the doctrine of Universalism. She thought she got into the kingdom a little before him. From that time forward she was firm in the faith, and seconded her husband's efforts to up-build the cause of which he soon became a public advocate, receiving fellowship and ordination as a Universalist minister. Several years since he finished his course.

Mother U. gradually failed from year to year, constantly looking for the messenger of death with glorious anticipations. She made every arrangement for her departure and burial, with calmness and trust; selected the text for her funeral sermon (2d Timothy, iv. 6-8), the preacher, the hymn, the inscription for her gravestone, &c. She was particularly anxious to have it proclaimed that she died in the belief of the universal restoration of the intelligent creation. May the blessings of the gospel faith she cherished be the portion of her children and friends.

E. F.

*Christian Ambassador*, Auburn NY, Sat. 28 Jun 1851  
[a Universalist newspaper]

Transcribed on 7 May 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY