

OUR RELIGIOUS WORLD

A Resume of the Doings of the Past Year

[excerpt]

UNIVERSALIST

The Universalist denomination was the most thoroughly shaken up during the years by reason of pastoral changes than any other. Four of its five churches were called upon to part with their ministers. Three were able to supply their places more or less promptly, while one has found considerable difficulty in doing so and is yet, despite having voted a call, without a pastor. The first of the Universalist pastors to resign...was the Rev. Dr. Almon Gunnison who left All Souls church [Williamsburgh] after a most brilliant pastorate of about twenty years to go to Worcester. It was during his incumbency that the present magnificent edifice was erected, and it was through his indefatigable efforts and winning and attractive ways that the church was raised to its present exalted position among the churches of its denomination throughout the land. Regret at his departure was widespread, not only in the immediate sphere of his activities but throughout the city at large, so generally respected and esteemed he was... When Dr. Gunnison went, his church called the Rev. J. Coleman Adams, of St. Paul's church, Chicago, and he came and was installed in the fall. Then his church in Chicago called the Rev. Dr. Andrew J. Canfield, of the Church of Our Father [First Universalist], and he went. A successor for Dr. Canfield was sought in the Rev. S. H. Roblin, of Michigan, but he was probably influenced by the lack of unanimity on the part of the congregation in deciding upon him, for he declined to come to Brooklyn. The other changes in the denomination were the following: Rev. Abram Conklin resigned from the Church of the Good Tidings [Fourth Universalist] and was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. J. R. Taber, of the Church of the Reconciliation [Third Universalist], and Dr. Taber was succeeded by Rev. Frank L. Masseck, whose formal introduction into the pastorate was immediately followed by the dedication of the society's new edifice. The only church of the denomination that suffered no change was Prospect heights [Fifth Universalist], to which the Rev. James Taylor ministers. It is interesting to note that this upheaval of Universalist ministers, which is unprecedented as regards the briefness of time that characterized it, was not confined to Brooklyn, but was general throughout the land. It began in Boston and went to Lynn, Mass., then to Worcester, then to Brooklyn, then to Chicago, then back to Brooklyn, and is not yet ended, as Brooklyn, through the instrumentality of the Church of Our Father, is bound to keep the ball rolling. Universalism in this city dates to 1845¹, in which year All Souls' church was organized. It has somewhat less than one thousand enrolled followers, possesses five church edifices of an estimated value of about \$100,000, with a total seating capacity of about 25,000, and last year raised somewhat over \$20,000 for its various purposes.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, New York NY, Sun. 18 Jan 1891

¹ This statement is in error. First Universalist of Brooklyn, the Church of Our Father, was incorporated on 10 Oct 1842, per Kings County records.