

[Steuben County]

Steuben Association

*Address to the Societies and others who are professed friends to our common cause, within the bounds of the Steuben Association of Universalists.*

At the last session of this body, a general Conference of this Association was appointed, to be held at Howard, on the second Wednesday and Thursday in October next, and a motion was made that the Standing Clerk address you on the important object of said meeting. Therefore,

"Beloved, this epistle I now write unto you; in which I [earnestly desire to]<sup>1</sup> stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance."

This Association was organized eight years ago, under auspicious circumstances; having in fellowship about six societies, and nearly as many preachers. Our way was onward for a while. "Ye did run well, who did hinder?" But after a season darkness began to hang over us, and it has increased ever since. Our standing, as an Association, is now very precarious, and has been so considered for some time past. Our preachers have all left our bounds, *except one*, and he is without employ in the preaching line. And there is now more truth than poetry in the assertion, that nearly all our societies have actually "run down." With deep regret, I have for sometime, marked this downward course, under the humiliating conviction, that there was a lack somewhere—a "something rotten in" more places than "Denmark." The cause of all this, is very evident. A want of energy among the professed friends of our cause, especially in that important particular, *support of the preached word*. This is an evil that needs a remedy. We have centered upon a plan to effect it. If we fail, we can not help it; if we succeed, of course all will rejoice. The object of the aforementioned conference meeting, is to ascertain, as near as may be, our strength in this body. We wish to know where preaching is desired, and how much—or at least, how much can be afforded as a compensation for the services of a preacher. We think best, if you can not support stated preaching any considerable portion of the time, to establish a circuit, or, take any other course that will be likely to produce the desired end.

Where societies of our order have been organized, and in all other places or neighborhoods where there are friends to our common cause, we invite you—we *entreat* you, by all that is dear to us as a body, to look around and see what can be done to aid in bringing the dead to life. I address you thus early, that you may have ample time to act in this case. Make an effort in behalf of the truth, as you profess to believe it. Your brethren and sisters in the faith—your friends, and relatives and neighbors, who do not enjoy the blessing of a faith in universal love—your enemies, who would become friends, had they an opportunity to see, and hear, and understand; *all*, ALL, appeal to you for a decided action in the present undertaking.

I am confident that, within our borders, there are *twenty* places, if not *fifty* more, that would be able and glad to have preaching, more or less. Some probably half the time; some a quarter; and others, at least two, three or four times a year. Come up then, brethren, to our appointed meeting—and let us know your circumstances—what you *can* and *will* do.

Our ministering brethren in adjoining Associations, express a deep sympathy for us. They have rendered and still promise us their assistance. We are grateful for their favors—and thankful to our heavenly Father that he has given them to understand and practice accordingly, one of the great commandments, on which "hang all the law and the prophets." Each

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase is with the brackets in the original.

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Association that adjoins us, is doing well; they are alive. The sound has gone out into the world. So it may yet be with us. But the *sound* is not what we labor for—we want the life-giving power of universal love in our midst. When this is united with an organization to secure public preaching, our march will be forward, or I am no prophet.

We expect several ministering brethren will attend our conference. Public services at the usual hours. A concert, or praise meeting, will be held on the evening of the first day of our meeting, and probably some other exercises, or ordinances attended to on the second day. Some of our brethren will undoubtedly arrive on Tuesday—on the evening of which, in such case, it would be desirable to have a meeting.

Brethren, do not forget the time and place. Remember AT HOWARD, THE SECOND WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY IN OCTOBER NEXT.

I request all our publishers of papers, especially those who send into the bounds of this Association, to publish this article, or, at least, notice the meetings, its object, etc. This Association includes the entire counties of Steuben and Yates, and the southern parts of Ontario and Livingston.

Those who arrive on Tuesday evening, call at Charles Graves' Inn—where they will be directed to places of refreshment, etc.

A. [Asa] Upson, Standing Clerk

Hornellsville, August, 1842

*Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate*, Utica NY, Fri. 5 May 1843  
[a Universalist weekly newspaper]

Transcribed on 16 Sep 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

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Br Grosh<sup>2</sup>—Since the appearance of the address to the societies and friends in the bounds of the Steuben Association, published in the Magazine and Advocate, No. 35, Vol. 13, I have seen no notice of any proceedings of this body. Our Conference met at Howard, according to appointment, of which I expect you have been informed. I never witnessed a more interesting season, especially during our consultations in council. Several resolutions were passed, and every moment in devising ways and means, after social, friendly and earnest deliberation, was unanimously agreed to.

Some time previous to the above mentioned meeting, I made up my mind to have the Conference adjourn to the village of Hornellsville. This was a place, by the bye, where preaching of our order had seldom been heard, the people were unacquainted with our doctrine, and also with our manners and customs when assembled at our two-day meetings. There was high probability that something might be done here if we could bring things about so as to get an appointment. Under these circumstances, you know, Br. Grosh, what my first business would be. I was acquainted with several persons in that place, anti-Partialists, but not Universalists. There were some two or three, however, to whom the latter name would apply. The residue of my acquaintance in that place would come under the names of Presbyterians and Methodists, each owning a meeting house. Of the latter I know some to be of a liberal mind, and as the greatest share of their house was built by Universalists, anti-partialists, and nothingarians, I presumed it would be no hard matter to secure the use of the house for two days.

The promise of the house was obtained, and other matters standing all in sunlight for the time being, the meeting was appointed at Hornellsville, on the 11th and 12th days of January, 1843.

The time arrived, but to our disappointment the great thaw that occurred at that time, had rendered roads, bridges, etc., in many directions totally impassable; so that the meeting was not attended by friends from a distance as we expected. Information had reached me for two or three weeks previous to the time of meeting, from all quarters, and to the distance of more than 30 miles in some instances, that they were coming by sleighloads. I informed the few liberal friends of these things, gave them to understand what our visiting friends would expect, urged them to make the necessary preparations, get as many as they could to assist, of their relations and friends, and if they were like to fail, let me know, and I would procure the additional assistance from our society, about 10 miles distant. (That is, to the centre, or place where we usually meet for worship.)

O, Br. Grosh, you can hardly imagine how highly gratified I was in this case. There were provisions for hundreds more than came to the meeting. The providential occurrence was a general disappointment and regret—not regret at the dealings of our heavenly Father, but that our meeting had not been a week sooner.

It would have been amusing to you, brother, I am sure, had you been there. You would have witnessed something new to you. Did you ever attend a Universalist Conference, where there was no society of our order? In the first place, I did not know of more than two or three, to whom I thought proper to communicate my plan. But when the time so long anticipated arrived, I found many liberal friends. The villagers, of both sexes, exhibited such a friendly and earnest anxiety for somebody to go with them. "I want you to go with me"—"You must come with me"—"Mr. U., can you not send somebody to our house; I am really afraid I shall be

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. Aaron Bort Grosh, associate editor of the paper

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wholly disappointed after all." These expressions would be heard from a dozen at once. It did not disturb me, but in your place it would probably be called confusion. Well, our friends would not be satisfied until we agreed to appoint another Conference before the annual meeting of the Association. This done, our Conference adjourned. Particulars will be noticed in another place.

But my story is not all told. It appears that some of our ministering brethren heard our cry for help, and came along to see what it all meant. Br. T. C. Eaton preached at the village of Hornellsville, about the middle of December, and left an appointment for Christmas Eve. The Methodist house was illuminated, and what was still better, it was filled to overflowing. Br. [Jacob] Whitney of Rochester, tarried a few days after the Conference meeting, preached in the village—also in adjoining towns, Canisteo, Howard and Dansville. Br. Eaton passed along again in the latter part of January—preached several times in the village and around about, and so he chapter ends.

At the Conference in Howard, where we met to mature measures for supplying destitute places with preaching in the Steuben Association, we received a satisfactory evidence, from many places, of an interest in our cause. But to gain a more full information, we appointed a traveling committee to visit the different parts of the Association, and report thereon at our Conference in Hornell, or as soon thereafter as may be. I have received no report yet. I have heard that Br. Cheney has been preaching in the section assigned to him, but have heard nothing of the result. From Brs. [Henry] Roberts and [Walter] Bullard, the other two members of the committee, I have heard nothing. I hope we shall hear something on the side of prosperity, by the time our next Conference or Association shall meet.

The Dansville society, as usual, small but steadfast. Sixteen members—enjoy occasional, but support no stated preaching.

The Conesus society, received into fellowship last summer, I can give no information of it, pro or con. The remaining societies—those that have been in fellowship with this Association, have not yet re-organized to my knowledge.

Thus, Br. Grosh, I have given you all the information I can, of the standing, prospects, and progress of our cause in the Steuben Association. Hardly worth noticing, you will think, in your list of statistical information.

Asa Upson

Hornellsville, April 30, 1843

*Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate*, Utica NY, Fri. 5 May 1843  
[a Universalist weekly newspaper]

Transcribed on 15 Sep 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY