

[Yorkshire, Cattaraugus Co. NY]

Letter from Rev. I. [Ichabod Blakeslee] Sharp  
[excerpt]

RUSHFORD, March 11, 1859

BR. AUSTIN<sup>1</sup>:—Knowing that you feel a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of all, I improve the present opportunity of informing you of our prospects in this vicinity. For over twenty years I have been a citizen of Allegany County, and a careful observer of all the changes, both for and against Universalism, and it appears to me that our cause was never in a more flourishing condition than at present.—All our preachers are zealously at work, and most of the friends doing all they reasonably can to sustain them.

The first week in this month I attended a Conference at Yorkshire Center. During the meeting a church<sup>2</sup> was organized, numbering seventeen in all—four males and thirteen females, if memory serves me correct, to which others will soon be added. There were three preachers present, all of whom took part in the services, viz:—Brs. [Gideon S.] Gowdy, [John B.] Sax, and my humble self. The traveling was very bad, but notwithstanding this, there was a goodly number out. Our friends in Yorkshire are having almost a “protracted effort,” as the “orthodox” would say—of course, not a protracted meeting, but rather, a united, continued effort for good, such as we would like to see everywhere. It would have done your soul good, Br. Austin, to have been with us, and heard the experience of some, the desires, prayers, and resolves of others, to live a more holy and devoted life.

We have had during the past season, in this and the adjoining Associations, some of the best meetings I ever witnessed. If ever God has been with us in the power and demonstration of his spirit, it has been during these Conference meetings. No man with half a soul, can withstand, or throw off the holy and heavenly influence, showered upon him at such a time, neither will he desire to. I pray God they may be continued until every soul shall be brought to know the Lord. Then one law will bind all hearts together, even the law of love.

I. SHARP

*Christian Ambassador*, Auburn NY, Sat. 26 Mar 1859

Transcribed on 12 Feb 2013 by Karen Dau of Rochester, NY

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<sup>1</sup> John Mather Austin, editor of the newspaper

<sup>2</sup> a voluntary group of members from the local Universalist Society who could vote and take communion