

Loving the Hell out of the World: Universalists and Their Influence in Northern New York

Part II – 1890-1960
Growth, decline and change

SOAR
October 2015

Last Sermon in the Brick Church





Dedication of New Canton Church April 15, 1897

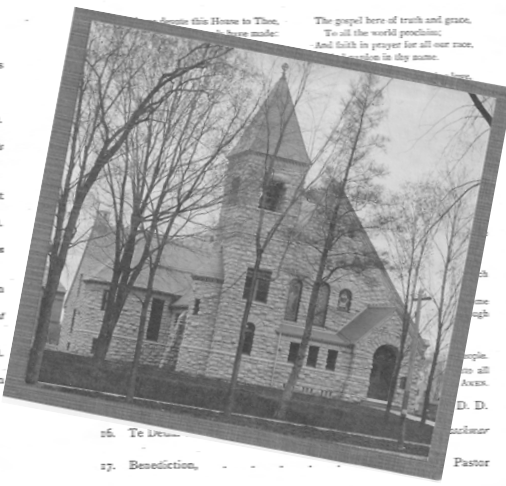
ORDER OF EXERCISES

1. Organ Voluntary, Miss Carrie Storrs
2. Doxology.
3. Invocation, Rev. J. S. Lee, D. D.
4. Anthem—"Seek Ye the Lord," *Robert*
Choir.
5. Delivery of Keys,
Chairman of Building Committee, John F. Post
6. Scripture Reading, Rev. H. P. Forbes, D. D.
7. Duet—"Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord," *Allen*
Messrs. Conkey and West.
8. Sermon, Rev. J. M. Payson
9. Anthem—"Except the Lord Build the House," *Gilchrist*
Choir.
10. Address to the Parish, Rev. L. M. Atwood, D. D.
11. Dedicatory Hymn, sung at the dedication of the old church in
1829. Tune, Coronation.

Let every man's soul rejoice,
In songs their joys record,
In union sweet, with cheerful voice,
Sing glory to the Lord.

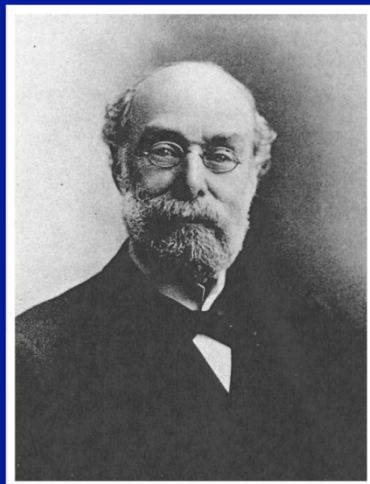
The victory, and the reigning power
Of Jesus loud proclaim,
And dedicate this happy hour,
In honor of his name.

The gospel here of truth and grace,
To all the world proclaim;
And faith in prayer for all our race,
In dedication in thy name.



16. Te Deum—
17. Benediction, Pastor

James Milford Payson 1848-1941



- Minister during building of the new church
- 1907 : Founder of the State agricultural school at SLU where he taught for 22 years
- Returned to Canton church as minister 1920-1923

Where have all the churches gone??

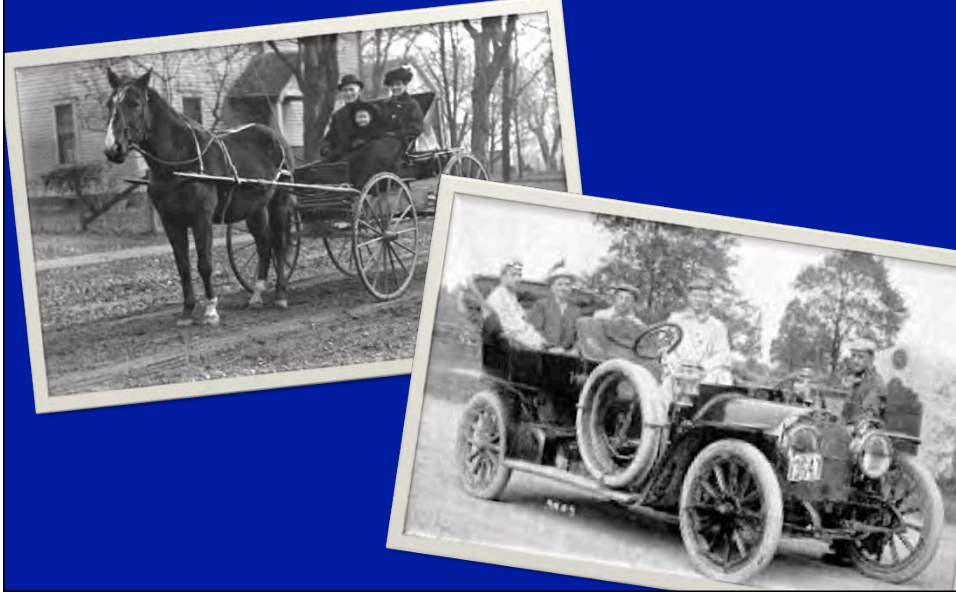
- Population shift
- Transportation
- Theological shifts within Protestant Christianity

Population Shifts



Rural → Urban

Modes of Transportation



Theological shifts within Protestant Christianity



Evolving Statements of Faith

- 1790: Philadelphia Articles of Faith:
- 1803: Winchester Profession
- 1899: Boston Profession of Faith
- 1935: Washington Profession
- Contemporary Avowal of Faith Statements
- Unitarian Universalist Covenant and Principles

Boston Profession of Faith (1899)

We believe in

- The Universal Fatherhood of God
- The Spiritual Authority and Leadership of his Son, Jesus Christ
- The trustworthiness of the Bible as containing a Revelation from God
- The certainty of Just Retribution for Sin
- The Final Harmony of all Souls with God

Washington Profession (1935)

“The bond of fellowship of this Convention shall be a common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it and to cooperate in establishing the Kingdom for which he lived and died.”

Key Points of the 1935 Washington Profession

- ✧ God as Eternal and All-conquering Love
- ✧ Spiritual Leadership of Jesus
- ✧ Supreme worth of every human personality
- ✧ The authority of truth known or to be known
- ✧ Power of me of good will ...to overcome all evil and progressively establish the kingdom of God.
- ✧ *This statement shall not be imposed as a creedal test*

An Avowal of Faith

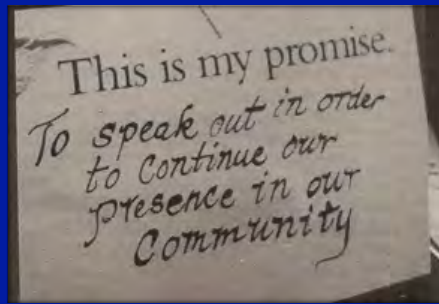
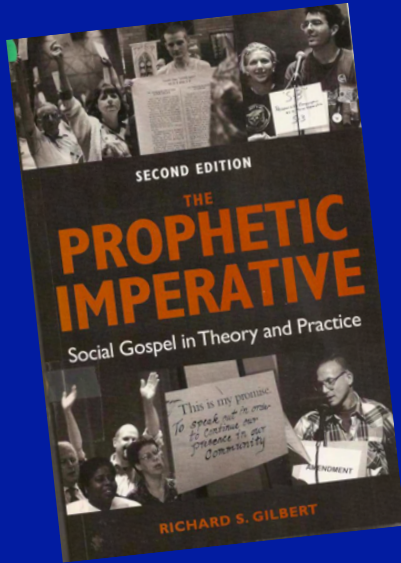
- Love is the doctrine of this church,
- The quest for truth is its sacrament, and service is its prayer.
- To live together in peace, to seek knowledge in freedom,
- To serve mankind in fellowship to the end that all souls shall grow in harmony with the divine.
- Thus do we covenant with each other and our God. (by L. Griswold Williams)

A Contemporary Statement

(by James Vila Blake)

- Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law.
- This is our great covenant:
- To dwell together in peace,
- To seek truth in love,
- And to help one another.

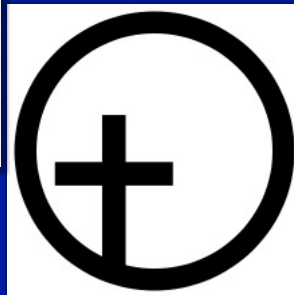
Theological Universalism or Ethical Universalism



Symbols



Universalist
General
Convention



Universalist
Church of
America



Unitarian
Universalist
Association

The Arrival of Humanism 1930s

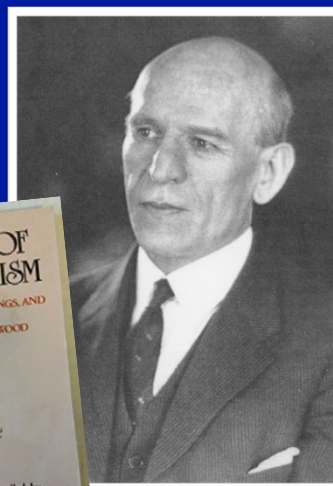
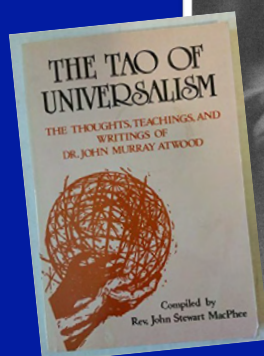
- Discussion of humanism began with the Unitarians in the 1920s
- Humanist Manifesto (1933): signed by two Universalists

Debates:

- Was the Universalist Church Christian?
OR
- Was it a universal religion of Christian origin?

John Murray Atwood (1869-1951)

- Dean, Canton Theological School (1914-1951)
- A Theologian's Theologian
- Son of Isaac Morgan Atwood



Social Gospel

- ❖ Focused on the role of religious community in social change
- ❖ Social Responsibility
 - ✧ Social service
 - ✧ Social education
 - ✧ Social witness
 - ✧ Social action

Clarence Skinner (1881-1949)



- Universalist, graduated from St. Lawrence University in 1904
- Spearheaded the Social Gospel reform movement among Universalists
- 1917: Authored Declaration of Social Principles

Major Social Movements 1800-1960

- ✧ **Suffrage for Women**
- ✧ **Abolition and Civil Rights**
- ✧ **Temperance**
- ✧ **Separation of Church and State**
- ✧ **Peace**
- ✧ **Criminal Justice Reform**

Universalists and Suffrage



Susan B Anthony
1820-1906



Olympia Brown
1835-1926

Women in Church Leadership



Olympia Brown
Ordained 1863



Edna Bruner
Canton 1945-51

Ending Suffering



Dorothea Dix
1802-1887



Clara Barton
1821-1912

Beginnings of collaboration

- Publishing House- Beacon Press
- Women's groups
- 1930s: Sunday School curricula
- Summer Institutes
- 1940s: Service Committees
- 1950s: Liberal Religious Youth formed

Sunday School Curriculum



Sophia Lyon Fahs
(1876-1978)

- *Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage*
- Shift from Bible-centered to experience-centered learning
- Shift from adult-driven to child-driven pedagogy



Service Committees

- **Universalist Service Committee (1862-1963)**
- **Unitarian Service Committee (1940-1963)**



Summer Institutes



Youth Programs

- 1844: Young People's Missionary Society
- 1889: First national meeting of the Young People's Christian Union
- 1933: Cooperation with the Unitarian group (Young People's Religious Union);
Joint Committee on Social Responsibility
- 1953: Merger, forming *Liberal Religious Youth*



**Moving Toward Merger
with the Unitarians**

