

Robert Townley was the minister of the Charlestown Universalist Church from June 1849 to Sept. 1852. He is listed in the Universalist Companion (the almanac/year book for Universalists) as a "former partialist" (meaning he had former pastorates in non-Universalist churches).

His arrival in the US in 1848 is described in the Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate for Nov. 10, 1848, p. 354, which I've attached as a pdf. The second half of the article is not displaying very well in the pdf. I'll be happy to transcribe whatever you can't make out, although it's largely more about his character.

The book that got him into so much trouble in England is in Google books at <http://books.google.com/books?vid=OCLC05272423> (that's our copy, by the way).

His farewell sermon to the church in Charlestown, preached Sept. 26, 1852, was printed as "Christianity in the Nineteenth Century." In it, he explains his reason for leaving the ministry: scientific discoveries are making him no longer able to take the Bible seriously (and what his congregation really wants are Bible-based sermons). This is available on microfiche from the American Theological Library Association (ATLA monograph preservation program ATLA fiche 1991-2150).

We have the records of the Charlestown Church off site. I will request them and look through to see if there is any additional information I can get to you.

The only additional piece of information I could find is his marriage to Mary Wilkinson of Exeter, England, on Aug. 24, 1848, in Charlestown. This from the Massachusetts Ploughman and New England Journal of Agriculture, Aug 18, 1849, p. 2.

I hope this helps.

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Historic Society

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years, Chaplain to the Borough Gaol, Liverpool, and is now incumbent of Houghton, Stanwix, near Carlisle. The Rev John Leighton Figgins, B.A., now officiating in St. Clement's, Manchester, and author of at least one published sermon, took charge of St. Matthew's from 1838 or 1839, till the close of 1843; the Rev. Robert Townley, B.A.,* now minister of the Universalist Church, Charlestown, Boston, U.S., during 1844; the Rev. William Duncan Long, B.A., in 1845 and part of 1846; the Rev. George Cuthbert, M.A., 1847, 1848; and the Rev. Thomas W. Moeran, B.A., 1849.

I may here mention the fact of my having heard from the pulpit of St. Matthew's Church, in the autumns of 1823 and 1824 respectively, two most logically composed and impressive discourses addressed to the Jews, by the reverend and celebrated Charles Simeon, M.A., Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

The Rev. Henry B. W. Hillocoat, D.D., who for many years was incumbent of a chapel in Bath, had long been proprietor of St. Matthew's, as well as the party by whom its officiating ministers had been appointed. By him the church was disposed of to a Railway Company: its site, as already stated, having been required for the Liverpool *terminus*. Having received in exchange,

3.—St. Matthew's, (*present*),

he removed to, and took possession of it about three years ago, with his congregation.

The particulars connected with the origin, building, and early history of this religious structure, which stands in Scotland Road, are so remarkable, that I shall not merely be excused, but probably thanked by the members of the Society for bringing them under their notice. They may be relied on as authentic. Joseph Robinson, Esq., of Falkner Square, in this town, who had no small share in the transactions which I am about to mention, and was one of the original Trustees, is, by the high respectability of his character, a sufficient guarantee for the truth of the facts with which, from documents in his possession, he has been polite enough to furnish me.

trovsey in 1840, and 1841. A retiring pension of £80 a year was allowed him by the Corporation, in the spring of the year last-named. It will, no doubt, be in the recollection of several members of the Society, that Dr. Buck did duty, in a very zealous, and efficient manner, as Curate at Trinity Church here, during the autumn, winter, and spring of 1848 and 1849.

* Mr. Townley published in 1845, a work, entitled, "The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ a Past Event," in which are contained many startling positions.

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falls with the Judgement and Second Coming of the Lord." He shuns this point where the interest of the argument is greatest.

ii. **The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ a Past Event.** By Robert Townley, A. B. Late Minister of St. Matthew's, Liverpool. London. Simkin Marshall & Co. 1845.

This work enters at great length into an attempted Scripture-proof that the following events are already past, viz. "the Restoration of the Jews, the First Resurrection, or Millennium, the End of the World, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Day of Judgement, and the Last Day; for now there is no more time." It is a book of much thought, and gives proof of laborious and critical study of the Sacred Writings. The spirit manifested towards the Priesthood and the Established Church is fiery enough, and the general temper of the argument is far from being commendable. But there is very much in the work worthy of attention.