

MINUTES Of the Proceedings of the Universalist  
Convention of the state of New-York, A. D. 1829

The ministers and delegates composing the Universalist Convention of the state of New York assembled in Utica, according to adjournment, at the residence of Br. Dolphus Skinner, on the second Wednesday of May, 1829; and, after uniting in prayer with Br. A. [Abner] Wood, proceeded to organize the council by choosing

BR. NATHL. STACY, Moderator, and BR. PITT MORSE, Clerk.

Made arrangements for public worship; the order of which, during the day and evening, was as follows:

MORNING SERVICE.

Introductory prayer by Br. N. Stacy.

Sermon by Br. A. Wood—Text, Ps. cxxv, 1.

Concluding prayer by Br. Wm. Underwood.

AFTERNOON SERVICE.

Introductory prayer by Br. S. R. [Stephen Rensselaer] Smith

Sermon by Br. J. [Job] Potter—Text, Ps. civ, 31.

Concluding prayer by Br. S. [Stephen] Miles.

EVENING SERVICE.

Introductory prayer by Br. John Freeman

Sermon by Br. P. [Pitt] Morse—Text, Mark xvi, 15-19.

Concluding prayer by Br. D. Skinner.

Thursday morning met again in council; and after uniting in prayer with Br. W. Underwood, proceeded to business.

Voted to adopt the revised Constitution proposed at the last session of this body.

Heard the report of a special committee, appointed last year by this body, to inquire into the standing, etc., of George B. Lisher, formerly a preacher in fellowship with us; and after mature deliberation, adopted the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas G. B. Lisher, formerly a preacher in connexion with this body, has long since discontinued his ministerial labors, and indulged in practices incompatible with the gospel ministry, and being called upon by a committee of this body, appointed for the purpose at its last session, to which he appears not to make a direct or satisfactory reply; therefore

Resolved unanimously, That the said G. B. Lisher be no longer considered a member of this body.

In relation to Rev. Abner Kneeland, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:

Whereas this convention has received certain information that the second Universalist Society in the city of New-York has publicly withdrawn fellowship from Abner Kneeland, its former pastor, being "perfectly satisfied from the

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teachings of Mr. K. as well as his writings, that he has embraced sentiments repugnant to the Christian religion and the faith of Universalists," therefore,

*Resolved unanimously*, That we approve of their proceedings, so far as the facts have come to our knowledge.

*Resolved*, also, That the said Abner Kneeland be hereby requested to show cause at the session of the General Convention of Universalists on the N.E. States, in September next, or to the next session of this body in May, 1830, why the above proceedings of the said Society shall not be confirmed.\*

Voted to appoint a committee of three to visit the General Convention of the N.E. States at its session in Winchester, N.H., on the second Wednesday and Thursday in Sept. next, to present them with our Christian salutations, and request a reciprocation of Christian Feelings, and a co-operation in the spread of the knowledge of divine truth.

Appointed Brs. J. Potter, B. Whittemore and J. Flagg, the above committee.

Heard and accepted the report of the committee of discipline for last year.

Voted that Brs. S. R. Smith, N. Stacy and C. G. [Cornelius Gray] Person be a committee of discipline for the ensuing year.

Voted that Br. D. Skinner prepare the minutes of the proceedings of this convention for publication—that Br. P. Morse write a circular to accompany the same—and that they be published in the Evangelical Magazine.

Voted to adjourn this convention to meet at Utica on the second Wednesday in May, 1830. Prayer by Br. Stacy.

N. STACY, Moderator.

P. MORSE, Clerk.

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\*The Southern Association met at Harford, Ct. one week after the Convention, at which time and place Mr. K. attended. The following is an extract from the minutes of that Association:

"Received the following request:

"Whereas the circumstances which have attended my ministry in the city of New-York, and which have resulted from my labors in that place, are such as to produce a dissatisfaction in the minds of many, and to induce a belief that I am not, what I profess to be, a real believer and defender of the Christian religion—and whereas this dissatisfaction and belief concerning me have become considerably extensive, in other regions among Universalists; it is my desire that all the Associations and individual brethren of the order would allow me to *suspend* myself as to the fellowship of the Order, until I shall be able to give entire satisfaction that the cause of a world's Redeemer—of God—of truth, and of righteousness, is the cause in which I am laboring, and to which my talents are devoted. Wishing you success, Brethren, in all that is good, I subscribe myself yours affectionately in the bonds of peace.

ABNER KNEELAND."

"Voted, That so far as this Association is concerned, the above request be granted."

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CIRCULAR

To the respective Universalist Associations in the State of New York—the societies therein represented, and the several members thereof, “The Universalist Convention of the State of New York,” tenders christian fellowship and salutation.

Brethren—The great importance of union and co-operation in the members of any community, both as the means of securing respect for its institution, and of giving efficiency to its measures, is manifest to all. Yet your Convention has not only labored under the inconveniences of a want of unanimity in the ecclesiastical bodies, from which its being and its support is derived, but has encountered in its very institution, the most determined opposition. Neither to those Associations, nor to their members in general, who have not seen fit to approve the organization of this body—nor to give it countenance and encouragement by appointing delegates to its council, does it impute improper motives, nor any want of regard to the interests of that growing denomination of which they constitute a part. Your convention is much more inclined to impute such opposition, to an ardent desire to protect the religious rights, both of yourselves and community, from a recurrence of the possible abuses which have unhappily too often afflicted the Christian church.

But could it ever have been a matter of doubt, whether you might confide in the uprightness and integrity of your delegates?—appointed from among yourselves—subject to your entire control, and the constitution under which they must act, your own dictation and gift.

It is a subject of high satisfaction to reflect, that the virulence of party excitement, and the consequent irritations and provocations thence induced, are now so far allayed, that a good degree of peace and harmony in relation to this body, prevails throughout the State. Not indeed, that the same opinion exists in respect to the propriety of its organization—but the sober and judicious course of *agreeing to disagree* has succeeded to the warmth of passionate and intemperate discussion.

It will be seen by a recurrence to the Minutes, that the new Constitution which you were pleased to give your Convention, has been unanimously adopted. Thus evincing on the threshold of its deliberations, an entire acquiescence in that measure which of all others, appears best adapted to preserve the general harmony of the order—and to prevent the possibility of future innovations upon the rights of its individual members. We allude to the first article of this constitution which provides—that one half of the delegation which constitutes the Convention, be *Laymen*.

Your Convention is now constituted of a joint delegation of Laymen and Ministers—and its last council was composed of such members. And it is due

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to that council, and to the public to say—that to the utmost cordiality of feeling, was added the most perfect unanimity in all its measures and deliberations. To promote the great doctrine of the restitution—to wipe off the stains of reproach from its profession, to concentrate the energies of a numerous and growing denomination. and to perform every duty with faithfulness, were the objects and the tendency of the labors of all.

The Convention was called to mourn over the frailties of humanity—the deviations from the plain and peaceful path of rectitude, and the aberrations of enlightened intellect from the stability of faith. And its decisions were prompt and unambiguous—but friendly. Where it has withdrawn fellowship, it will not be presumed that the measure was premature—where it has determined to investigate the causes of dissatisfaction and complaint, it has also granted abundant time for preparation. The various sects arrayed in opposition to liberal principles, have long made it a proverb—that *Universalism was identified with licentiousness and infidelity*. The very general and high morality of the great body of Universalists, together with the occasional examples of their unqualified disapprobation of vicious example, sufficiently refute the first part of the above alleged reproach, and the period seems to have arrived, when the further truth will be learned—if bigotry can learn—that obvious infidelity is incompatible with the profession of christianity.

But while there were subjects of deep and lasting regret, there were others of congratulation and joy. At no time since the institution of the Convention, has there been so many evidences of good feeling and cordial fellowship; and at no period since the establishment of Universalism in this State, have the evidences of permanent prosperity been so great.

Let union be your motto, truth your guide, perseverance your watchword, virtue your reward, Jesus Christ your example, and immortality your hope; and your trust in God complete, whom we pray to bless you with all temporal and spiritual blessing.

By order, S. R. SMITH.\*  
For, P. MORSE.

*Utica Evangelical Magazine, Utica NY, Sat. 6 Jun 1829*

Transcribed with notes added on 22 Oct 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

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\*As Br. Morse, who was appointed to write the above Circular, was under the necessity of leaving this part of the country (on a visit to Connecticut) immediately on the adjournment of the Convention, he engaged Br. Smith to attend to this duty, as is seen above.—Ed.