

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE NEW-YORK  
STATE CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS, FOR 1837

1. Met in Albany, May 31st, pursuant to adjournment, and after uniting in prayer with Br. [Clement Fall] Lefevre, organized the Council by choosing Br. BENJAMIN ELLIS (layman), Moderator and Brs. L. C. [Lewis Cresaba] Browne, and Pitt Morse, Clerks.

2. Invited all ministering brethren who are or shall be present, to take part in our *deliberations*.

3. Appointed Brs. [Isaac Dowd] Williamson, S. [Stephen] Van Schaack and Abraham Pittinger a committee to arrange the order of public services.

4. Appointed Brs. Williamson, [Dolphus] Skinner and Lefevre a committee on ordination.

5. Appointed Brs. Morse, [Philo] Price, and [Menzies] Rayner a committee to nominate delegates to the United States Convention.

6. The "Committee to prepare a model or models for society, or church and society constitutions, also rules and regulations for the government of this Convention in its deliberations," appointed last session, reported that they had made no progress, and requested further time—therefore,

Resolved, That said Committee perform the first part of their duty as soon as practicable, and publish the result of their labors in our periodicals, and that they make a report on the second portion of their duty to the next session of this Convention. Adjourned.

7. Thursday morning, June 1st.—Met at 8 o'clock, pursuant to adjournment, and united in prayer with Br. Sherburne.

8. Heard and accepted the minutes of yesterday's proceedings.

9. Voted, That Br. W. U. Chase take a seat in council as a substitute for Br. M. J. Bovee.

10. Appointed Br. G. W. [George Washington] Montgomery to deliver the next occasional sermon, with power to appoint a substitute.

11. The Committee to nominate delegates to the United States Convention, reported Brs. J. [Job] Potter, A. B. [Aaron Bort] Grosh, G. W. Montgomery, and C. F. Lefevre, ministers, and Brs. B. Ellis, New-York; P. P. Hayes, Poughkeepsie; S. Van Schaack, Albany; E. [Ezra] S. Barnum, Utica; David Brown, Oxford; and Wm. Berry, Homer, laymen, as said delegation; with power to appoint their respective substitutes, and to fill all vacancies in their body.

12. Whereas several Associations have already originated societies within their bounds for the relief of widows and orphans of deceased Universalist clergymen, and the relief of preachers in indigent circumstances; and whereas it is desirable that each Association should have such a society within its bounds, therefore

Resolved, That this Convention recommend to each Association in its fellowship, the formation of a society for the purposes above named.

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13. Appointed Brs. Grosh, Skinner and Lefevre to report a plan for defraying expenses of delegates to our Associations and State and General Conventions.—Adjourned.

14. Met according to adjournment at 2 p.m.

15. The committee to report a plan for defraying the expenses of delegates, etc., reported the following, which was adopted.

Whereas the annual expenses of delegates to the respective Associations, and to the State and general Conventions, amount to a heavy and often burdensome tax on such delegates, which hitherto has been generally borne by themselves alone, therefore

Resolved, That this Convention recommend the following plan to general adoption, by our order throughout the State—viz. That each society take up a collection on some Sabbath shortly preceding the annual meeting of the Association to which it belongs, and send the amount of said collection to the Standing Clerk of said Association—that said clerk shall defray the expenses of the delegates to the Association so far as necessary, not exceeding one-third of the whole amount received—that the delegates to the State Convention, appointed by the said Association, carry the remainder of said funds to the Standing Clerk of the State Convention at its next session, to be equitably expended by him in defraying the expenses of the delegates attending the next session of the United States Convention, having regard to the distances travelled and the expenses incurred by each.

Resolved, That the Standing Clerk of this Convention be required to keep a correct account and vouchers of all expenditures, and to report them annually to this Convention—and that each Association be requested to require a similar proceeding from its Standing Clerk for the information of the societies contributing to such funds.

Resolved, That it be recommended to each pastor of one or more societies, to mention and urge the taking up of said collections for the purposes above named.

16. Voted, That Br. Grosh prepare a statistical report of the cause of Universalism in this State, and present the same to the next session of the General Convention.

17. Voted, That Br. Browne prepare the Minutes for publication, and write the Circular.—Adjourned.

18. Met according to adjournment at half past 4 p.m.

19. Heard and approved the minutes of this day's proceedings.

20. After uniting in prayer with Br. Browne, adjourned to meet in Oxford, Chenango county, on the last Wednesday in May, 1838.

B. ELLIS, Moderator



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Thursday morning.—Prayer, Br. Doolittle. Sermon, Br. Townsend, John v:39.

Afternoon.—Prayer, Br. Lyon. Sermon, Br. Morse, Luke ii:14.

Evening.—Prayer, Br. Williamson. Sermon, Br. Skinner, Luke xv:20.

*Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate*, Utica NY, Fri. 9 Jun 1837

CIRCULAR  
OF THE NEW YORK STATE CONVENTION

Dearly beloved brethren in the faith of a world's salvation—The season has again rolled round that brings us together in annual convocation, to confer upon those things that concern the prosperity of Zion; and the pleasurable task has devolved on me to address you, as the organ of the Convention.

Our business in council was, as usual, transacted with general unanimity; and a spirit of fraternal good pervaded our deliberations.—We realized "how good and how pleasant it is for *brethren* to dwell together in unity." This is especially the case in the meetings of Universalists, where there is no doubt of our fraternal relationship, and no jealousies or envy, arising from a supposed partiality in our common Parent.

Among the resolutions taken by the Council, that in relation to the organization of societies for the relief of the families of deceased and indigent clergymen, particularly commends itself to your consideration. There are many in the ministry to whom this measure is due, as a matter both of justice and gratitude. They entered the field of labor when it yielded but small pecuniary compensation. They have families which are unprovided for. They must soon go down to the grave and leave these families dependent on the charities of the public. And past experience has demonstrated that the charity of the *unorganized* religious public, is only theoretical. Besides, our pecuniary condition, as a denomination, in this State, is such at the present time, that a brother who enters the ministry destitute of means, and gives it his whole attention, can scarcely hope to secure a competency for the maintenance of a family, in case of his decease. This circumstance presents an obstacle to the increase of our ministry, which this measure is adapted to remove.

Another important measure of the Convention, is the plan proposed for defraying the expenses of the delegates to our State and General Conventions. I trust the only arguments necessary to impress the propriety of this measure, are these: The expenses of attending the meetings of these bodies is considerable—the delegates, particularly the clerical portion, are not, in general affluent—the business to be transacted is important—and the presence of those appointed to transact it, indispensable.

Our Council, you will perceive by the minutes, was not full; and in the lay department, unusually deficient. This may be attributed, in some measure to

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the peculiar state of the community in a commercial point of view.<sup>1</sup> Yet our meeting was a pleasant one. The all-engrossing topic of "the currency" was forgotten in mutual intelligence and congratulations upon the general and local prosperity of our common cause. The religious services were enlightened, devotional and thrilling, and were listened to with eagerness and joy. The aching cares of business seemed removed, for a season, from the mind, and it lightened up to the hallowing touch of devotion's holy power. In short, the only unpleasant occurrence, was the *close*. It was sad for so many friends to part.

A word in relation to the utility of religious association. These meetings bring together many minds from various portions of the heritage—each increases his stock of statistical information, in regard to the condition of our cause—the public derives the advantage of much collected wisdom, in our official deliberations—many new acquaintances are formed that last through life—the social powers are developed and improved, rendering the clergy better fitted for the duties of pastoral visitation—the more experienced and gifted in the ministry are generally called upon to preach, and we who are unpracticed in the work, gather ideas, catch inspiration, and carry home materials for the formation of a style, based upon the blended models of many masters. One of the principal causes of the recent, visible improvement in the mental and social character of our ministry, may be traced in the extension of our public bodies. Minds are thus brought together, and brightened and sharpened by the contact—intellectual resources are accumulated, for sermonizing and conversation—attachments are formed and correspondence elicited that tend to bind us together, and strengthen and confirm our zeal.

May these meetings continue to gain interest and accelerate the spread of truth, till there shall a Convention in every State, and Association in every county, and a society in every village. On your continued and increased exertions, brethren, it depends, in a great degree, to bring about this happy consummation. May the God of impartial grace be with, and bless, and strengthen you; and may the reports that shall greet us, at our next annual convocation, prove that our wishes, herein expressed, shall not have been in vain. Per Order,

L. C. BROWNE

*Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate*, Utica NY, Fri. 16 Jun 1837

Transcribed with notes added on 29 Oct 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

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<sup>1</sup> The country at that time was experiencing a severe economic depression that became known as the Panic of 1837.