

MINUTES
Of the New-York State Convention of Universalists, for 1838

[1.] Met according to adjournment, at Oxford, Chenango county, on the last Wednesday in May, 1838, and in the absence of the Moderator and Clerk of the last session, and of the Standing Clerk, the Convention was called to order by Br. T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Sawyer, and when the Hon. W. Berry, was appointed Moderator, and Brs. T. J. Sawyer, and T. P. [Townsend Paoli] Abell, Clerks.

2. United in prayer with Br. O.[Oliver] Ackley.

3. Called the roll; whereupon the following delegates appeared and took their seats: Ministerial—G. W. [George Washington] Montgomery, H. [Harvey] Boughton, A. B. [Aaron Bort] Grosh, T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Smith, T. [Timothy] C. Eaton, E. E. Guild, A. [Albert] G. Clark, T. J. Sawyer, S. [Shaler] J. Hillyer, T. D. [Theodore Dwight] Cook, R. [Russell] Tomlinson, O. [Oliver] Ackley, O. [Obadiah] Whiston, M. [Moses] B. Smith, J. [Judah] Babcock, and Z. [Zenas] Cook.

Laymen—W. Berry, Charles Smith, E. Lorton, E. W. [Edwin Sawyer] Corbin, Lewis Seymour, P. [Philo] Price, H. W. Dobbine, Cyrenus Clark, Billy Titus, Ebenezer Cook.

4. Read and approved the proceedings of the last session of this body.

5. Appointed Brs. O. Ackley, A. B. Grosh, and S. J. Hillyer, committee on ordination.

6. Appointed Brs. P. Price, T. J. Smith, and G. W. Montgomery, a committee to nominate delegates to represent this body in the next United States Convention to be held in Boston, Mass., in September, 1838.

7. Resolved, That at the future session of this body, we will take no part in arranging the public services, further than those connected with the annual sermon; and that we recommend to the societies where we shall hereafter meet, to arrange the services to suit themselves.

8. On motion, the committee appointed at the session of this body in 1836 "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," and which committee was continued at the session of 1837—be discharged.

9. Whereupon—Resolved, that a committee of three be appointed to report as soon as may be during this session, rules and regulations for the government of this body; and that it be continued with instructions to report at the next session of this Convention any improvements it may be able to suggest.

10. Appointed Brs. Grosh, M. B. Smith, and O. Whiston said committee.

11. Attended the public annual service of this Convention.

12. Adjourned to meet immediately after the close of the afternoon service.

13. Met according to adjournment.

14. The committee appointed to nominate delegates to represent this body in the U. S. Convention, reported the names of the following persons as said delegation, who were appointed with power individually to appoint substitutes

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and collectively to fill all vacancies. *Ministerial*—R. Tomlinson, Ridgeway; T. J. Sawyer, New-York; S. R. Smith, Albany; and O. Whiston, Cooperstown. *Laymen*—Hon. W. Berry, Homer; S. Van Schaack, Albany; Seymour P. Murdock, Ridgeway; Charles Eldred, Auburn; Lewis Seymour, New-York; and P. P. Hayes, Poughkeepsie.

15. The committee appointed to report rules, etc., reported a code which was adopted.

16. Br. J. Babcock, of the Allegany Association, presented a request of said Association for the fellowship of this body. Granted.

17. Appointed Brs. Grosh, Montgomery, and Tomlinson, a committee to recommend a place suitable for holding the next session of this body, and also for taking into consideration the propriety of changing the time of its annual meeting, and to report in the morning.

18. Met on Thursday morning according to adjournment.

19. United in prayer with Br. M. B. Smith.

20. Read the proceedings of yesterday.

21. The committee to designate "a place for holding the next annual meeting of this Convention," recommended that said session be held in Rochester, Monroe county. Report accepted.

22. Said committee also reported the annexed resolution:

Resolved, That the Constitution of this Convention be so amended that the annual meeting shall commence on the second Wednesday in June, instead of the last Wednesday in May. Accepted for the action of the next session.

23. Appointed a committee consisting of Brs. O. Ackley and R. Tomlinson to recommend a person to preach the next annual sermon before this Convention.

24. Whereas in some cases letters of fellowship have been granted to persons whose moral characters were not sufficiently known, or who could not preach to the acceptance of any of our societies, therefore

Resolved, That we recommend to each Association in our fellowship to consider the propriety of so altering its rules for granting fellowship as to require candidates to signify their intention to preach, which intention shall be entered on the minutes, or otherwise published, if thought proper—and that the committee on fellowship be required to ascertain that the candidate has preached and conducted to the acceptance of the people among whom he has labored, and possesses a good moral character, before they report in favor of granting a letter of fellowship at a subsequent session of the Association.

25. In accordance with the recommendation of the committee for the selection of a preacher to deliver the next occasional sermon, Br. M. B. Smith was appointed, with power to select a substitute.

26. Resolved, That the occasional sermons be considered as the property of the Convention, in common with the Minutes thereof, but that the Convention as a body, shall not be responsible for the peculiar views advanced in such communications.

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We have to regret that owing to the busy season of the year, and the bad travelling, the different Associations composing this body were not so fully represented, as duty seems to require, and we sincerely hope that in future, greater attention will be paid to this subject.—Let Associations appoint individuals as delegates whose attendance may be relied on, and let them be authorized to find substitutes in case any circumstances should prevent their fulfilling, in person, the duties assigned them. Let the delegation when assembled in council be authorized to fill all vacancies that may exist, so far as it may be done from within the limits of their respective Associations.

To secure a more general attendance, the Convention at its session in 1837, passed a resolution designed to relieve delegates from the burden of expenses to which they have hitherto been subjected. That resolution was repeated at this session, and it is hoped will commend itself to the attention of our Associations and societies at large.

The business of the Council, we hardly need say, was conducted with the usual kind and conciliatory spirit. We have no bickerings, and no unfriendly contention here.

The public religious services were fully attended, and were accompanied with the most obvious tokens of heart felt and thrilling interest on the part of the numerous auditors.

So far as we could learn, the prospects of our cause throughout the State were never more truly flattering than at present. In common with other denominations, we have suffered to some extent from the late severe presence of the times¹, but it is believed that little permanent injury has been sustained to the interests of our Zion.

Altogether, this session of our Convention has been eminently gratifying, and, we doubt not, useful. The interest of our beloved cause, we hope, have [sic] been consulted and our prayer is, that many such meetings may be enjoyed.

Brethren in the faith, let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father in heaven. By order,

T. J. SAWYER

Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate, Utica NY, Fri. 15 Jun 1838

Transcribed with notes added on 30 Oct 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

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