

MINUTES,  
Of the New-York State Convention of Universalists

Met in Canton, Tuesday, August 25th, 1857.—Pitt Morse, *Moderator*; L. C. Browne, *Clerk*; and E. T. Marsh, of Frankfort, *Assistant Clerk*.

COMMITTEES.

*On Nominations*—D. Skinner, N. H. Benson, and J. Kinney.

*On Sunday Schools*—D. K. Lee, W. N. Barber, and G. H. [George Henry] Roberts.

*On Education*—W. S. Balch, J. W. Bailey, and A. A. Thayer.

*On Reforms*—C. W. Tomlinson, J. M. Austin, and P. Thomas.

*On Missionary Enterprise*—D. Skinner, L. C. Browne, and B. B. Hallock.

*On the state of the Church*—G. W. Montgomery, R. Eddy, and J. N. Parker.

*On the report of the Trustees of the Relief Fund*—Brs. Balch, Bailey and E. Taylor.

Heard report of Q. McAdam, on the Book and Paper Establishment. Voted to adopt and publish it.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26TH.

Prayer by Br. L. Paine.

Adopted the following Resolutions, introduced by the following brethren:

1. By Br. J. M. Austin.

*Resolved*, That we recommend Universalists in every Town and Village where real estate is rising in value, to secure forthwith, either by donation or purchase, ample grounds for a church and parsonage; and we further recommend, for the especial benefit of new settlements in the West, the immediate formation of an incorporated Joint-Stock Company entitled the

“UNIVERSALIST CHURCH PROPERTY ASSOCIATION,”

For the purpose of purchasing in such new Towns and Village of the West as may be destitute of a church lot, one acre of ground, one half to be transferred to the first Universalist Society who will build thereon, at the cost of the whole, adding interest, and the other half to be retained by the company as a source of revenue until such time as the Directors shall deem it advisable to sell—the stock of such company to draw annual interest not exceeding ten per cent, and all surplus revenues to be devoted to extending the objects herein set forth, either by adding new purchases or improving property in its possession, as the best interests of the cause may dictate.

2. By Br. Martin Thatcher.

*Resolved*, That the Standing Clerks of the several Associations in this State be requested to furnish to the Standing Clerk of this body, a list of all clergymen and Societies in fellowship with their respective Associations; and that when the list is completed, the same be published in the *Ambassador*.

3. By C. W. Tomlinson.

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*Resolved*, That a home altar being one of the chief hopes of the church and the world, we commend the use of the Gospel Liturgy for family devotion.

*Resolved*, That upon brethren "scattered abroad," we urge the importance of regularly assembling for christian worship, and suggest that in the absence of any better method, the Gospel Liturgy and Gospel Sermons be employed as an aide thereto.

4. By Br. D. Skinner.

*Whereas*, The Clinton Liberal Institute is involved in a debt of ten thousand dollars, by the erection and furnishing of the Female Department of that useful institution, and said debt is seriously burdensome to the Trustees, and materially impairs the usefulness of the schools, and

*Whereas*, This Convention, at its annual meeting two years since, unanimously, and by the votes of the delegates of each and every Association in its fellowship, resolved to receive said Institute under its patronage, and assume the payment of its debts, therefore,

*Resolved*, That the Trustees of said Institute be requested, in connection with a Committee appointed by this Convention, to employ and send into the field at once, an Agent or Agents to solicit subscriptions or donations for the liquidation of said debt.

5. By Br. N. Crary.

*Resolved*, That a Committee of *three* be appointed by this Convention to confer with the Trustees of the Clinton Liberal Institute, and with them to devise and put in operation such means as they shall deem best, to liquidate the indebtedness of the Institution, and that such Committee have and possess all the powers over the property of that Institution now possessed by this convention; and that they report their doings in the premises at the next meeting of this body.

The Convention appointed as the Committee provided for in the 4th and 5th resolutions, Hon. E. [Ezra] Graves, of Herkimer, A. C. Moore, of Buffalo, and N. Crary, Esq., of New York.

Heard the Occasional Sermon from Br. C. W. Reynolds, voted him thanks of the Convention, and requested copy for publication.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26TH.

Prayer by Br. F. M. Alvord.

Heard and adopted Report of the Committee on the Relief Fund.

*Voted*, Thanks to the Methodist and Baptist Societies in Canton for their kindness in opening their churches for our accommodation.

Heard, accepted, and laid on the table, the Report of the Committee on Reforms.

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*Voted*, To accept and place on the minutes, the Report of the Trustees of the Universalist Education Society.

Heard and adopted the Report of the Committee on Nominations, which was as follows:

DELEGATES TO THE UNITED STATES CONVENTION.

*Lay*—G. Wood, Fulton; R. D. Murray, Watertown; Samuel Matthews, Cedarville; J. [James] P. Bartle, Newark; A. C. Moore, Buffalo; Harvey Mosher, Troy; W. H. Few, and Larkin Harrington, Chautauque county; G. W. Platt, New York; and Calvin Coe, Oxford.

*Clerical*—P. Morse, R. Eddy, J. T. Goodrich, J. N. Parker, and J. Kinney.

Preacher of the next Occasional Sermon, R. Eddy., and B. Peters, substitute.

Place of Adjournment, Branchport, Yates county.

*Voted*, That it shall be one of the Standing rules of this Convention, that all Reports from Standing Committees shall be sent in to the Moderator on the first day of the annual meeting.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Convention be tendered to the people of Canton for their kindness and hospitality in generously entertaining the delegates and friends attending this Convention.

Closing prayer by Br. Lyon.

Adjourned.

Clergymen in attendance—G. S. Abbott, J. M. [John Mather] Austin, F. M. [Francis Milton] Alvord, W. [William] S. Balch, L. C. [Lewis Cresaba] Browne, J. W. [James Wilson] Bailey, W. N. Barber, J. G. [John Glass] Bartholomew, H. H. Baker, A. [Albert] G. Clark, J. Douglass, R. [Richard] Eddy, J. T. [John Temple] Goodrich, G. [George] W. Gage, B. [Benjamin] B. Hallock, J. Kinney, H. [Henry] Lyon, P. [Pitt] Morse, L. Paine, J. N. Parker, S. W. [Seth Williston] Remington, S. L. Roripaugh, E. W. [Elhanan Winchester] Reynolds, D. [Dolphus] Skinner, T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Sawyer, A. [Asa] Saxe, J. [John] H. Stewart, A. [Abel] C. Thomas, P. Thomas, A. [Aaron] A. Thayer, C. [Charles] W. Tomlinson, R. [Rufus] O. Williams, S. R. [Samuel Roland] Ward.—33.

L. C. BROWNE, Clerk

REMARKS.

The Convention was admirably accommodated by the friends in Canton. I have never known the Clerk's table so well furnished with every facility for his purposes. There were interesting meetings of the Education Society, and of the Trustees of the St. Lawrence University. The preaching, in the daytime, was held under the tent of the County Agricultural Society, on the public green, which was well fitted up with seats. There were evening meetings in the Universalist and Methodist churches. The sermons were

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given by Brs. Parker, Reynolds, A. C. Thomas, D. Skinner and Balch. The Communion was administered after Br. Balch's sermon, in the tent on Thursday afternoon, by Brs. Morse and J. M. Austin. The friends were highly interested in visiting the University building. It now belongs to the Theological School, but will probably soon be transferred to the University, which will put the Theological School on a permanent basis of prosperity. It is a fine building, and on an eligible location.

There was much sharp discussion in the Council, but no ill feeling. The ministerial delegates talked, as Sydney Smith says, "with a forty-parson power," and there was no opportunity for members of the Council to hear any preaching, except the Occasional Sermon. That was a splendid production, worthy of the genius and spirit of its author.

L. C. B.

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REPORTS.

The following Reports were submitted to the Convention and adopted, during this session:—

UNIVERSALIST RELIEF FUND.

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*Thirteenth Annual Report of the Trustees of the New-York Universalist Relief Fund.*

To the Council of the New-York State Convention of Universalists to be convened at Canton, St. Lawrence county, on Tuesday, August 25th, 1857.

The Trustees of the New-York Universalist Relief Fund, since their last annual Report to the Convention, have received three applications for relief.

The first is the personal application of Mrs. Ellen Skeele, widow of Rev. Samuel A. Skeele of Cowlsville [Cowlesville], N.Y., and a member of the Buffalo Association. Br. Skeele has died since the last session of the Convention, having received an annual donation from the fund—his aged widow, who has heretofore participated with him in the benefit of the fund, now asks for a small donation.

The Trustees would therefore recommend that Fifty dollars be paid to her order in the month of October, 1857.

The second is the personal application of Mrs. Polly Hayward, widow of Rev. Isaac Hayward of Burlington Flats, and a member of the Otsego Association. Mrs. Hayward, now of Ashland, Massachusetts, secured a small donation from the fund in 1852, and now renews her application to the Trustees, who are not possessed of the necessary information for a favorable report in her behalf.

The third is the application of Rev. J. M. Austin, in behalf of Rev. B. [Benjamin] S. Hobbs, of Webster, Monroe co., N.Y., and in fellowship with

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the New York State Convention. An application of Rev. A. [Aaron] B. Grosh was made in 1855 in behalf of Rev. B. S. Hobbs. At that time the Trustees were informed that his situation precluded him from the benefit of the fund, and they are not advised that his application (under the limitations of the fund) is now entitled to a more favorable consideration; and therefore submit it for the discretionary action of the Convention.

The Treasurer's report hereto annexed, shows a balance in his hands of twelve hundred and thirteen dollars and ninety-one cents. The Trustees ask authority from the Convention to invest of this balance a sum not exceeding twelve hundred dollars to be added to the Permanent Fund.

The Trustees further report, that they have, as a special committee performed the duty confided to them by the New York State Convention of Universalists at their last session, and that the Legislature of the State of New York promptly complied with their petition by the passage of an "Act to incorporate the Trustees of the New York Universalist Relief Fund," in form and language as presented to them by your Committee.

A copy of the Act is appended and forms a part of this report.

Respectfully submitted by order of the Board.  
JACOB HARSEN, President.

New York, August 22, 1857.

[The account of Abner Chichester, Treasurer of the New York Universalist Relief Fund, is omitted here.]

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE TRUSTEES OF THE NEW-YORK UNIVERSALIST  
RELIEF FUND

*The people of the State of New-York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Jacob Harsen, Abner Chichester, and Stephen Van Schaaick, of the city of New-York, Pitt Morse, of Watertown, New-York, and Martin Thatcher, of Canton, New-York, and their successors, duly elected and appointed in the manner hereinafter prescribed, are hereby constituted a body corporate by the name of "The Trustees of the New-York Universalist Relief Fund," to be applied to the uses and benefits of sick and infirm clergymen of the Universalist faith, and of the widows and orphans of deceased clergymen of the Universalist church, who, previous to their death, were in fellowship with the said Convention of the state of New-York, and by that name shall have perpetual succession, and be capable of taking and holding by gift, grant or devise, real and personal estate, or both, for the purposes of said corporation, provided the yearly income of the same shall not exceed the sum of ten thousand dollars.

§ 2. The object of said corporation shall be the management and care of the fund now provided, together with that which may hereafter be

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contributed or acquired, and any accumulation accruing from the investment thereof, for the uses and benefit of sick and infirm clergymen of the Universalist faith, and of the widows and orphans of deceased clergymen of the Universalist church, who, previous to their death, were in fellowship with said convention of the state of New-York, and the appropriation of the same to that purpose, according to the directions from time to time given by the New-York state convention of Universalists at their annual session.

§ 3. The affairs of said corporation shall be managed by a board of five trustees, three of whom shall at all times be laymen of the Universalist faith, to be appointed by the Convention of the Universalist church of the state of New York, together with the moderator and clerk for the time being, of said Committee of management. The five persons named in the first section of this act, shall be the first trustees of the said corporation, and shall hold their offices during the pleasure of the said convention, and all vacancies occurring in said board of trustees shall be filled by said convention, or in such manner as the said convention may direct. The said trustees shall appoint from their number a president, treasurer, and secretary, and they shall also have the power to appoint their own agents, and to change the same at pleasure; but no act of said trustees shall be valid, unless authorized by a resolution adopted by a majority of the trustees, at a regular meeting duly convened, and recorded by the secretary in a book to be kept as a record of their proceedings, which book shall be open to the inspection of the convention. The said trustees, in addition to the duties hereinbefore named, shall receive applications for relief, ascertain the situation of the applicants, and annually report their doings to the New-York state convention of Universalists, exhibiting also the condition of the fund entrusted to their charge, together with receipts and disbursements; but no relief shall be granted by the trustees except by the vote direction of the said convention.

§ 4. The treasurer of said fund shall always be a member of the board of trustees, and shall have the custody of all the property of which said fund shall be composed, and shall hold the same subject to such directions as a majority of said trustees shall from time to time give in relation thereto.

§ 5. The trustees of said fund shall invest the same and the additions thereto, as soon as practicable, in bond and mortgage on unencumbered real estate of at least double the value thereof; the interest moneys of which fund (but no part of the principal,) so invested, shall be applied according to the provisions herein contained, and the directions herein given.

§ 6. The said trustees shall be bound to conform to any instructions that may from time to time be given them by the said convention, as to the management of said fund and the disposition of the same, provided that

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such instructions shall be in writing, and shall be entered on the journal of said convention.

§ 7. The trustees of said corporation shall have power to make and adopt a constitution and by-laws, rules and regulations, for their guidance and government.

§ 8. The said corporation shall possess the general powers and be subject to the provisions of the eighteenth chapter of the first part of the Revised Statutes, so far as the same are applicable and have not been repealed.

§ 9. The legislature may at any time alter or repeal this act.

§ 10. This act shall take effect immediately.

REPORT.

The Committee to whom was referred "The Thirteenth Annual Report of the Trustees of the New-York Universalist Relief Fund," report, that they have examined the same, together with the report of the Treasurer and find the same to be correct.

In reference to the second and third applications, your Committee report that they are not in possession of any evidence to justify them in recommending any action different from that of the Trustees. But they recommend to those and all other persons applying for the benefits of the Relief Fund that they should in all cases, be careful to comply with the rules prescribed for the distribution of such benefits, in the management of that Fund; otherwise it is impossible to afford them the desired and deserved relief.

Your Committee recommend the passage of the following Resolutions:—

*Resolved*, That the Trustees be and are hereby authorised to pay to the order of Ellen Skeele the sum of fifty dollars in the month of October, 1857.

*Resolved*, That the Trustees be and are hereby authorised to invest with good and sufficient securities the sum of twelve hundred (\$1200) dollars out of such money as shall be in the hands of the Treasurer.

*Resolved*, That this Convention approve and accept the "Act of Incorporation," obtained from the Legislature of this State, and hereby authorize and empower the Trustees therein named, to organize, and hereafter transact their business under the authority, and in accordance with the regulations therein prescribed.

WM. S. BALCH  
JAMES W. BAILEY  
ELIAS TAYLOR

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Universalist Education Society

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The trustees of the Universalist Education Society, submit their Fifth Annual Report to the New York State Convention of Universalists.

This Society was organized in May, 1852, at Hudson, N.Y. At that time Br. Sawyer had a Theological class under tuition, and it was voted to pay him a salary of \$500 per an. from the funds of this Society, for taking charge of the class. Rev. J. T. Goodrich was appointed a General Agent to solicit subscriptions, and instructed to invest in a permanent fund all over \$600.

In 1853, Rev. Eben Francis was appointed General Agent, and Bros. Balch, Havemeyer and Harsen a Finance committee to invest the funds collected.

In 1854, the Trustees were directed to procure an Act of Incorporation for the Society, if they deemed it necessary for the objects in view. Rev. W. S. Balch was chosen General Agent and Brs. Harsen, Havemeyer, Barstow, Committee of Finance. Bros. Balch, Havemeyer, and Van Nostrand were appointed a committee to procure a location for a Theological Seminary.

In 1855, at the annual meeting at Utica, this Committee reported the results of their examinations, enumerating Canton, Cazenovia, Cortlandville, Newark, Perry, Clinton, and some other places, as suitable for the site of a Theological School. The Society authorized the trustees to make the selection, and the Trustees conferred that power upon the committee having the subject in charge.

Messrs. Sawyer, Wallace and Thatcher were appointed a Committee to procure a General Agent, and Messrs. Sawyer, Baker and Thatcher were appointed a Committee on Incorporation. The Finance Committee of the previous year was continued.

In 1856, the Committee on Location reported that they had chosen Canton, St. Lawrence co., N.Y., as the place for the Theological School, and had proceeded to the erection of a building for the use of the School. Their report was adopted, and the Committee, consisting now of Bros. Balch, Van Nostrand and Wallace, were empowered to superintend the completion of the Building, and the laying out of the grounds appertaining thereto, according to the plans set forth in their Report.

The Committee on Incorporation reported that they had procured from the Legislature, an Act incorporating the "St. Lawrence University and Theological Seminary," to be located at Canton.

The Charter was deemed a highly favorable one in its terms and provisions, and was, with the report of the Committee, unanimously adopted. The number of Trustees named in the Charter is twenty-five, of which sixteen are Trustees of this Society.

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The Legislature has appropriated \$25,000 towards the endowment of the University, and efforts are now being made to have the same sum subscribed by individuals for the same purpose.

In addition to this over \$40,000 have been subscribed and contributed for the Theological Department, including the building and site valued at \$15,000. Of this amount about \$18,000 have been collected and invested in good securities, as a Permanent Fund.

A meeting of the Trustees of the University was held at Canton, in Dec. last, when the Board was properly organized by the appointment of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the necessary Committees. A Code of By Laws was also adopted at this meeting.

Such are some of the first fruits of this Society.—But the end is not attained yet. Neither are the objects of our Education Society confined to the establishment of the Institution we have been considering. In the words of the Constitution (Art. II.)—“The object of this Society shall be *to promote the cause of Education* in connection with the Universalist Denomination; and to aid in the education of men of good reputation and promise, who may be desirous of entering the ministry.”

It therefore seems advisable that this Society shall maintain its independent existence, and in every proper way promote the cause of Education in the denomination throughout the State. The Society should have funds of its own to be used as the Board of Trustees may direct.

At the first meeting of the Society, fifty members paid their annual dues, and during the year at Associations and otherwise 129 additional members were added. In 1853 about the same number of members joined the Society. Subsequently the practice of soliciting members at Associations and in Societies has been neglected, and our members now consist of only such as we gather at the State Convention at our annual meeting.

The original plan of obtaining members throughout the State at every suitable opportunity, is urgently recommended. A contribution of one dollar makes a member, and Fifteen dollars a life member. It is hoped that some action will be taken at this meeting to greatly increase the number of members during the coming year.

The Board of Trustees of this Society as at present constituted, consists of Messrs. Austin, Baker, Balch and Montgomery. Terms expire in 1860.

Harsen, Thatcher, Barton and Browne, 1859.

Sawyer, Wallace, Moore and Barstow, 1858.

McAdam, Van Nostrand, Bitley and Barber, 1857.

The collection of Funds for the endowment of the Theological School has been under the charge of the Finance Committee, Messrs. Wallace, Thatcher, and Van Nostrand.

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The legitimate funds of this Society consists of what may be received from annual and Life memberships. It is suggested that hereafter these Funds should be kept separate from the contributions to the Theological School, and be appropriated to general objects, as the Trustees may direct, or the State Convention recommend. In this way we may anticipate that this Society will become one of the most useful organizations in the denomination. Our great want as Universalists, is, confessedly, a larger number of well educated ministers—and we may add of laymen too. Let it ben then our endeavor to sustain, and to increase the usefulness of our present Institutions of Learning, and at the proper time to add to their number.

While we are by no means to neglect our duties as individuals, we may find in a Society like this a convenient and powerful means of promoting the cause of Education in the Universalist denomination.

In behalf of the Board of Trustees,  
GEO. E. BAKER, *Secretary*

*Canton, Aug. 26, 1857*

Book and Paper Establishment

*To the New York Convention of Universalists, assembled in annual session, at the Village of Canton, St. Lawrence County, N.Y.:—*

The undersigned, Agent for the Convention to represent its interest in the "Universalist Paper and Book Establishment," begs leave to report,

That, at the last meeting of the Board of Directors of the Concern, held in 1856, the assets of the Concern appeared to be:—

In debts due the concern,	9,000,53
In books, stationery, &c,	3,075,23
In Copy rights, Stereotype plates, Furniture, &c.,	<u>1770,00</u>
Making the total assets,	\$15,368,94
Its liabilities at the same time amounted to,	1,572,10
Showing the net assets, or estimated value of the concern to be,	\$13,796,84
The net assets at the date of the annual meeting in 1855, amounted to,	13,007,06
Showing an apparent gain during the last year (irrespective of \$767, of stock redeemed) of	\$789,78
The interest of the Convention in the Concern at the time of the last annual meeting of the Directors may be shown thus:—	
Amount of nett assets,	\$13,796,84

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Amount of unredeemed stock	4,444,57
<i>Apparent</i> value of the interest of the Convention,	\$9,352,27

Since the time above mentioned, additional stock has been redeemed by the New York Agency to the amount of \$125, reducing the unredeemed stock to \$4,319,57.

(Note.—In addition to the above, there has been redeemed in behalf of the Convention, at the Auburn Office, stocks to the amount of one hundred and fifty (\$150,) dollars—reducing the unredeemed stock to \$4,169,57.

By order of the Convention,  
L. C. BROWNE, Clerk.)

A comparison of the value of the interest of the Convention in the Concern, as shown by the above figures, (\$9,352,27) with the value of the same interest in December, 1855, as shown by my report of last year (\$7,795,49) exhibits an increase in the value of the interest of the Convention, for the year, of \$1,556,78. But, while the concern actually earned that amount for the Convention during the year, and while the assets of the Concern show a gain to that amount, on examining the character of the assets, it appears that under the head of "debts due to the Concern" we have in 1856, \$9,000,53, while in 1855, such debts amounted to only \$7,853,44, showing an increase of outstanding debts during the year of \$1,147,09.

What proportion of these "debts due to the Concern" may be deemed reliable assets, and how far an increase in the amount of such assets, can be deemed a gain by the Convention or by the Concern, you are as well qualified to determine as I am. It is on this account that I have set down \$9,352,27, as the apparent, rather than the real interest of the Convention in the Concern; the value of its actual interest depending upon the amount of the debts due, which may be ultimately be collected.

It is gratifying, however, to have the assurance, which we find in the above results, that taking the most unfavorable view of the value of the debts due, there has still been an actual gain on the part of the Concern, during the past year.

Although it may be needless and ineffectual, I cannot refrain from advertising to the self-evident, and oft repeated fact, that if our delinquent subscribers were but true to themselves, the whole of the paper and book establishment might become at once the property of the convention, entirely free of indebtedness, and with a surplus in the Treasury of over \$3000.—Think of that, ye who have stood indebted to the Concern for one, two, three or more years past. It may be a matter of two or three dollars to each of you; it is a matter of over nine thousand dollars to the Concern. For so small a consideration, how can ye stand in the way of so grand a result?

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A special meeting of the Directors and stockholders of the Concern was held in the City of New York in December last, at which, as your agent, I was invited to be present, when a proposition was submitted by responsible parties for the purchase of the Concern, on terms which by the stockholders were considered highly favorable. Not feeling that I had any authority from you to act in such an emergency, I declined on your behalf to take any action in the premises. The result was that the proposition was received and held over for further consideration.—Whether it is still to be deemed a proposition open to our acceptance I am unable to say, but I would suggest that it might be well for the Convention to empower some one to act in its behalf, in the event of the same, or any similar proposition being again brought before the stockholders.

I took the liberty of making some suggestions relative to a sale of our Book Establishment, in my Report last year, to which I now beg leave to refer you.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

Q. McAdam, Agent.

*New York, August 20th, 1857.*

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*Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 21 Jun 1851*

Transcribed with notes added in Mar 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY