

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

The delegates composing the Convention of Universalists for the State of New-York assembled at Mohawk, on Tuesday, Aug. 23, 1859, at 10 o'clock, A. M. The meeting was called to order by Rev. L. C. Browne, Moderator of the last meeting, when the following members appeared and took their seats:—

Buffalo—J. H. [Hazard] Hartzell, *clerical*; A. C. Moore, *lay*.

Chautauque—I. [Isaac] George, *clerical*; J. E. Baldwin, *lay*.

Chenango—R. [Rufus] O. Williams, W. [Wm.] M. DeLong, *clerical*; B. Hodges, *lay*.

Genesee—J. A. [Joseph Aikin] Aspinwall, *clerical*; J. H. Bolton, Earl Kidder, *lay*.

Hudson River—E. Sprague, *clerical*.

New-York—H. Blanchard, *clerical*.

Mohawk River—Geo. W. Skinner, *clerical*; C. Johnson, *lay*.

Otsego—L. C. [Lewis Cresaba] Browne, C. [Charles] W. Tomlinson, *clerical*; A. D. Brown, *lay*.

Ontario—G. W. [George Washington] Montgomery, *clerical*.

St. Lawrence—H. H. Baker, J. T. [John Temple] Goodrich, *clerical*.

Steuben—W. [Walter] Bullard, *clerical*.

A quorum being present, the Council was duly organized by the choice of Rev. I. George, Moderator, and Rev. R. O. Williams, Clerk.

Prayer was offered by Rev. R. Eddy of Canton.

Rev. G. W. Skinner moved the appointment of an assistant Clerk. The motion prevailed, and thereupon Mr. Skinner himself was duly appointed.

On motion a vote was taken to appoint a Committee of three to make nominations of officers for the ensuing year; whereupon Rev. J. A. Aspinwall, Rev. E. Sprague and Br. J. E. Baldwin were appointed by the Chair.

Reports of Committees appointed at the last session were called for.

The Committee on Sabbath Schools, the first in order, were not present. Report deferred.

The Committee on the State of the Church reported, through its chairman, Rev. C. W. Tomlinson. (See Document marked A.) After some desultory discussion, a motion was made that the report be published. Laid on the table and the Council adjourned.

At 2 o'clock P.M. met according to adjournment.

Rev. G. W. Montgomery, having in charge, as agent of the Convention, the interests of that body in the New-York Universalist Book and Paper Establishment, presented a report of its condition.—(See Document B.)

Next followed the Report of the Committee on Education, presented by Rev. H. Blanchard. (See Document C.)

After this, the condition of the Missionary and Tract Enterprise was reported by Rev. A. [Albert] G. Clark, Chairman of the Committee on that

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

subject, together with suggestions with reference to future action. (See Document D.)

A motion to adopt the report with its suggestions, after some discussion, was carried, and to this succeeded a motion, which also prevailed, to re-commit the report of the Committee on the Missionary and Tract Enterprise, with instructions to draw off and report to this body such resolutions as may indicate distinctly the course they intend to pursue.

The Report of the Trustees of the New-York Relief Fund was presented by Rev. L. C. Brown[e], in behalf of the President of that Board, who was absent. (See Document E.) The general report was accompanied with the Treasurer's Report. (See Document F.)

The general report, together with the recommendations made, was by a vote of the Council referred to a special Committee consisting of the following gentlemen, who were required to consider the same and report during the session, viz: A. C. Moore, Geo. W. Montgomery, and N. Crary.

The following additional members, most of whom had already taken their seats at this stage of the proceedings, presented themselves and took part in the business of the Council during the session.

Allegany—E. Nicholson, *lay*.

Black River—A. [Aaron] A. Thayer, L. Rice,* *clerical*; R. D. Murray, *lay*.

Cayuga—J. M. [John Mather] Austin, J. [Jacob] H. Harter, *clerical*; H. Boynton, *lay*.

Chautauque—S. L. Roripaugh, *clerical*; John Fuller, *lay*.

Central—D. [Dolphus] Skinner, S. R. [Samuel Roland] Ward, *clerical*; P. B. Ring,* W. Kimball,* *lay*.

Genesee—T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Whitcomb, *clerical*.

Hudson River—B. Hobbs,* *clerical*; N. H. Benson, D. C. Chase, *lay*.

Mohawk River—J. [John] D. Hicks,* *clerical*; S. Taylor, *lay*.

New-York—H. [Henry] Lyon,* *clerical*; N. [Norman] Van Nostrand,* Isaac Tinkey,* *lay*.

Niagara—R. H. [Royal Henry] Pullman, J. Hemphill, *clerical*.

Otsego—De Witt Clinton, *lay*.

Ontario—J. W. [James Wilson] Bailey, *clerical*; Alexander Martin, J. [James] P. Bartle, *lay*.

St. Lawrence—N. Crary, *lay*.

Steuben—J. [Jacob] Whitney, *clerical*.

A resolution presented by Rev. J. T. Goodrich was adopted, as follows:—

Resolved, That this Convention approve of the sentiments of the Report of the Committee on Education.

* These marked with an asterisk are substitutes.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Rev. H. Blanchard, one of the Committee on Education, offered the following, which was adopted:—

Resolved, That the various Societies in the State be invited to contribute toward a *Loan Fund* for the benefit of needing students belonging to the Theological School in Canton, and that arrangements for notifying the Societies and receiving said Fund, be entrusted to the Committee on Education.

A special Committee appointed last year in relation to the By-Laws, made a report through Rev. J. A. Aspinwall.

The Committee appointed to receive and take charge of the Paper Establishment in behalf of the Convention, presented their report through Rev. G. W. Montgomery. (See Document G.)

The report of the Committee on the State of the Church, which had been laid on the table, was called up for action. The motion then pending, to publish the document, was finally adopted.

As the mere publication was not deemed a full endorsement of the views of the Committee, the following resolution, presented by Rev. J. T. Goodrich, was adopted:—

Resolved, That this Convention endorse the views of the Report of the Committee on the State of the Church.

Here a series of resolutions, appended to the Report of the Committee on the State of the Church, were presented by the Chairman of that Committee for the action of the Council.

Pending the consideration of these resolutions, the Council adjourned until to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock.

Wednesday, 8 o'clock, A.M.—Council met according to adjournment.

Prayer by Rev. S. L. Roripaugh.

The minutes of the proceedings of yesterday were read and approved.

The roll of delegates was called; and remarks followed in relation to the admission of substitutes for delegates elected by Associations, but being informal, the subject was passed over.

The resolutions on the State of the Church were the first business in order; and on motion of Rev. L. C. Browne, it was

Voted, That the resolutions be taken up *seriatem*.

The first in the series, resolving that the discontinuance by Societies of meetings for public worship for one year, without "definite arrangements for resumption within a reasonable time," should operate as a law of excision, cutting off all Societies so offending, from the fellowship of their respective Associations, after much discussion and some amendments, was at length indefinitely postponed.

The second and third of the same series were adopted, as follows:—

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Resolved, That Associations in the jurisdiction of this Convention, are hereby instructed to require of all Societies and clergymen in their fellowship, that, under penalty of forfeiture of that fellowship, they respect the action of proper tribunals in the case of those subjected to discipline.

Resolved, That, where jurisdiction is in question, the action of any Association, or Committee thereof, shall be binding until a decision shall be had from this body.

A communication from the United States Convention of Universalists was presented, read, and referred to a special Committee, who were instructed to consider and report thereon during the session.—(See Document H.)

Committee—D. Skinner, N. Van Nostrand, E. Graves, G. W. Montgomery and N. Crary.

The question relating to the Ambassador Establishment came up for consideration; whereupon the following preamble and resolution, offered by Rev. J. M. Austin, were adopted.

Whereas, The Universalist Paper and Book Establishment has tendered the proprietorship of the *Christian Ambassador* to this Convention, to be published for the benefit of the cause of Universalism, therefore,

Resolved, That this Convention accepts the proprietorship of the said periodical, and will hold it in trust, and publish it for the purpose above designated.

The Committee on Nominations presented their report, which was as follows, including the place for holding the next meeting of the Convention:—

Place of Adjournment—Three were reported—Perry, Troy, and Potsdam.

Preacher of Occasional Sermon—J. H. [James Harvey] Tuttle.

Delegates to the U. S. Convention—H. Lyon, E. [Ebenezer] Fisher, D. Skinner, A. [Alanson] Kelsey, and I. George, *clerical*; I. Tinkey, M. S. Raynor, New-York; E. Graves, Herkimer; R. D. Murray, Watertown; T. Caldwell, Canton; H. Mosher, Troy; B. F. King, Nunda; Geo. A. Moore, Buffalo; H. [Horatio] Robinson, Auburn; Martin Scott, Friendship.

Committee of Publication—Norman Van Nostrand, C. G. Briggs, Ezra Graves, G. W. Montgomery, D. Skinner.

The report relating to the place of adjournment was laid on the table. The remainder of the report was adopted, and the gentlemen whose names were presented were duly appointed by a vote of the Council to the respective offices therein designated.

The Committee on the Missionary and Tract Enterprise, to whom was re-committed the report they had previously made, with instructions to report resolutions indicating distinctly the measures they wished to carry out, reported the following, which, after discussion, were adopted.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Resolved, That your Committee would recommend the immediate organization of a Missionary and Tract Society, to be connected with this Convention, consisting of as many Trustees as there are Associations in the State, whose business it shall be to take the general supervision and charge of all Missionary and Tract Societies which shall hereafter be organized, and thus extend the work of the Gospel Reconciliation the State over.

Resolved, That after such organization is completed, an agent be employed as a traveling Missionary and Tract distributor, to canvass the State, and stir up the minds of the people on this important subject, and that the Committee on the Missionary and Tract Enterprise, be appointed as constituting such central organization.

The following standing committees were appointed by the Chair:—

On Sabbath Schools—L. C. Browne, J. H. Hartzell, N. H. Benson.

On the State of the Church—J. T. Goodrich, S. L. Roripaugh, J. N. Parker.

Missionary and Tract Enterprise—D. Skinner, R. [Richard] Eddy, W. M. [William Millins] Delong.

On Reforms—H. Blanchard, S. R. Ward, J. R. Sage.

On Education—T. J. Sawyer, J. A. Aspinwall, A. A. Thayer.

The report on adjournment was called up, whereupon it was voted that the next meeting of this Convention be held at Perry.

Adjourned to 3½ o'clock P.M. for the purpose of attending the public service during the delivery of the Occasional Sermon by Rev. I. George.

Met according to adjournment at the hour appointed.

Rev. H. Blanchard being obliged to return home, appointed Rev. T. J. Sawyer to fill his place as a member of the council.

The Committee to whom was referred the 15th annual report of the Trustees of the "Relief Fund" having examined the subjects embodied in that document, presented their report, accompanied with resolutions, the following of which were adopted:

Resolved, That the sum of Fifty Dollars be appropriated to the relief of Mrs. Ellen Skeelee, widow of the late Rev. Samuel A. Skeelee, and that the sum be paid to her order, out of the New York Universalist Relief Fund, in the month of October next.

Resolved, That the sum of Fifty Dollars be appropriated to the relief of the widow of the late Rev. T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Smith, of Bridgewater, N.Y., and that the same be paid out of said Relief Fund to the order of Mr. George Tuckerman, for her benefit, in the month of October next.

Resolved, That the sum of One Hundred Dollars be appropriated to the relief of Rev. B. [Benjamin] B. Hallock, of New York, and that the same be paid on the order of Mrs. Alice C. Hallock, out of the Relief Fund, one-half in the month of October next, and one-half in the month of April next.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Resolved, That the Trustees of the New York Universalist Relief Fund, be, and hereby are, authorized to invest on the requisite security, from the balance now in their hands, and from interest that will accrue on the funds already invested during the year ensuing, One Thousand Dollars, to be added to, and form a part of the permanent fund.

The resolution which follows, presented by J. A. Aspinwall, was adopted.

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed to prepare a set of By-Laws, for the Convention, and present them at the next session of this body.

On motion of Rev. H. Lyon, it was voted that the Moderator, Rev. I. George, be Chairman of that Committee. Rev. J. A. Aspinwall and Rev. R. O. Williams were appointed by the chair as members of the same committee.

The following resolution, which was passed in substance, at the last session of this body, proposing an amendment of the Constitution, by transferring from the Standing Clerk to the Occasional Clerk, the duty of notifying the Standing Clerk of the U. S. Convention, of the election of delegates to that body, was adopted.

Resolved, That the words "and shall transmit to the Standing Clerk of the United States Convention, a certified copy of the list of Delegates from this body to that" be stricken out of Sec. 4th, Art. 4th of the Constitution, and added, after the words "Book of Records," to Sec. 3rd of the same article of the Constitution.

Rev. D. Skinner, Chairman of the Committee on the communication from the U. S. Convention, presented the following report and resolution, all of which was adopted.

To the Council:—Your Committee appointed to take into consideration the subject of the *Ambassador*, and the proposition of the United States Convention of Universalists to take said *Ambassador*, from our State Convention, assume and provide for its publication, as the paper of the United States Convention, and divide its profits *pro rata*, according to its patronage, among the different States of the Union, would beg leave to report the following resolution, as setting forth the views they entertain upon the subject.

Resolved, That from knowledge possessed by said Committee of the present condition and prospects of the *Ambassador*, and other denominational papers, they cannot accept any such proposition as that made, unless the United States Convention will secure the merging of the various denominational papers in the *Ambassador* establishment, and the harmonious co-operation of the publishers of said papers, or a majority of them, in the consolidated publication.

On motion of Rev. T. J. Sawyer, the following resolution, presented by that gentleman, after a somewhat spirited debate was adopted.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Resolved, That this Convention instruct the committee, having charge of the publication of the *Ambassador*, to take into serious consideration the propriety of doing away with one of the present publication offices, and making other such changes as the interests of the Convention may require, *with powers*; and report their action to the next session of this body.

Rev. R. O. Williams presented the following resolution, which was adopted.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed by this body, to inquire whether by any statute now existing in this State, this Convention can form itself into a corporate body to promote its own specific objects, and if so, to take such measures as may enable it thus to become legally incorporated at its next annual session; if not to make application to the legislature for a charter for such purposes.

N. Crary, E. Graves, and N. Van Nostrand were appointed a committee to carry out the objects of this resolution.

Voted, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to Rev. I. George for his able Occasional Discourse, and that a copy of the same be solicited for publication.

Voted, That the clerk of the Convention be requested to furnish the minutes of the proceedings of this Convention for publication in the *Ambassador*, and to forward a copy of the same to the Standing Clerk.

Adjourned.

Thursday, 8 o'clock A.M. Met according to adjournment. Prayer by Rev. S. R. Ward.

Rev. J. Whitney having left the council, appointed Rev. A. G. Clark to supply his place.

The proceedings of yesterday were read and approved.

On motion of Br. P. B. Ring, the council considered, discussed and adopted the following preamble and resolutions:

Whereas, This Convention duly appreciates the importance to our denomination of a more thorough and efficient church organization—the creation of a denominational fund—the establishment of a publication office, by which a wider circulation may be procured for tracts, circulars, &c., and also the establishment of a denominational paper to be the property, and under the control, of the United States Convention of Universalists; therefore

Resolved, That this Convention will heartily co-operate in the carrying out of a judicious plan in the furtherance of each of the above objects.

The Moderator vacating his seat, called temporarily to the chair Br. N. Crary.

On motion of Rev. I. George the following resolution came before the Council and was unanimously adopted.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Resolved, That we recommend to our clergy in this State, not only an earnest missionary spirit, but the frequent holding of Conferences in each association, in places destitute of preaching, and also the holding of series of meetings in particular localities, for the purpose of exciting a large degree of religious interest in different portions of our Zion, and especially for the purpose of creating a deeper devotional spirit in our midst.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee on Sunday Schools, having arrived and appeared in Council, presented a Report in behalf of that committee, accompanied with a series of resolutions. (See Document I.)

A motion was made by Rev. J. A. Aspinwall that the resolutions accompanying the foregoing report be adopted. The motion was carried. (Resolutions will be published in connection with the report.)

Reports from the Associations were called for, and the call was responded to by the Standing Clerks of the following, some in writing, and others verbally, viz. Black river, Chautauque, Chenango, Central, Genesee, Hudson river, New York, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Steuben.

From these reports, it appears that the cause throughout the State is in a prosperous condition.

The following resolution, presented by Br. N. Crary was unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That in view of the great utility of our denominational paper, the committee having in charge its publication be instructed to employ whatever surplus of income there may be above its expenses during the present year, in improving the quality, and extending the circulation of the *Ambassador*.

Another resolution, which follows, was presented, and adopted, but in the haste of proceedings at the close of the session, the name of the mover was omitted.

Resolved, That this Convention earnestly recommend to the Associations composing it, that they take immediate measures to secure a representation of the *churches*, as well as *Societies*, in the fellowship of their respective bodies.

Voted, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to the officers for the ability and faithfulness with which they have discharged their duties.

Adjourned to meet in Perry, on the 4th Tuesday in August, 1860.

I. GEORGE, Moderator

R. O. WILLIAMS, Clerk

G. W. SKINNER, Assistant Clerk

Visiting Clergymen present.—W. H. Waggoner, Mass.; J. A. Bartlett, Maine; T. Gorman, Ohio; J. R. Sage, R. Eddy, C. C. Gordon, B. S. Fanton, (Unitarian, Trenton Falls;) Nelson Snell, F. B. [Francis Benson] Peck, B. [Benjamin] B. Hallock, H. Bowen, New York.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Sermons were delivered by J. H. Hartzell, I. George, H. Blanchard, C. W. Tomlinson, R. H. Pullman, G. W. Montgomery, T. J. Sawyer, D.D.

The Session was one of uncommon interest and importance. From small beginnings the Convention has grown up to a very enviable position of weight, character, and usefulness, having in charge the varied and momentous concerns of the denomination in the State, involving not only its religious and ecclesiastical condition, but the large and growing financial, educational, and charitable responsibilities. The debate in Council, except occasional useless sparring on parliamentary usage, were grave, dignified, and decorous. A large amount of business was done in the way of resolutions. The number passed, if they are carried out, will furnish business enough for all the *working classes* of the denomination, whether clergy or laymen, for the year to come.

R. O. W.

Reports of Committees

(A.)

ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.

To the New York State Convention of Universalists, assembled at Mohawk, August, 1859, the undersigned, "Committee on the State of the Church," desire to present the following Report:

To determine the numerical condition of our denomination is no easy task. All the efforts which have been made to secure regular and reliable reports from the Clerks of the Associations, or from other sources, have as yet proven utterly unavailing. In many cases, it is doubtless difficult for the Clerks to obtain the desired information. The number of clergymen may, perhaps, be determined with some effort; but no means seem to suffice to ascertain how many Societies, churches, and Sabbath Schools are actually in existence. The rule which prevails with regard to *individuals*, is reversed in the case of religious *Societies*; the press heralds their *birth*, but is silent concerning their *death*. Indeed, it seems to be an open question, with reference to religious organizations, what *constitutes* death. Is a Society dead, when it no longer maintains public worship? or when it ceases to be represented in the councils of an Association? or not until the last half-dozen members have discontinued their annual meetings, in the village store, for the election of trustees? When these questions shall be definitely settled by the competent tribunal, the difficulties which now beset the work of numbering our Israel, will be greatly diminished.

It is passing strange that we should be in a condition to have such inquiries raised. Presumably, the prime object in the organization of a religious Society, is religious growth by means of public worship, and the institutions therewith connected. If a Society discontinues its meetings for Divine worship, even though it be unable to secure the services of a pastor, it by that act, and in that day, ceases to be. Several of our Associations

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

have a law, requiring clergymen to preach a given number of times a year, under penalty of a forfeiture of fellowship. Should Societies be required to hold meetings for public worship weekly—even monthly—though our numbers would be less on paper, our actual vitality and effectiveness would be vastly increased. All over the State there are Churches called Universalist, where vermin hold undisputed possession, and spiders' webs festoon the pulpits undisturbed for years. There should be no partiality in our rule; but Societies, no less than clergymen, should be required to prove themselves alive by at least an occasional respiration.

INSTABILITY OF PASTORAL RELATIONS

In this restless age, and among this most restless of people, perhaps it is not strange that our clergymen should partake of the prevailing spirit. No longer do the third and fourth generations continue to reside where their ancestors were born; but at the bidding of fancied gain, the old homestead is passed into strangers' hands, and the tent pitched in the wilderness, now here and now there—never long anywhere—from sea to sea, and from zone to zone. Instead of the eagle, our country's emblem should be a wandering Bedouin.

Often Societies are so reduced by this migrating spirit, that clergymen, who would gladly have continued to minister to them, are compelled to remove. Oftener, clergymen themselves become subjects of this infectious disease, and wander from Dan to Bersheeba, hoping to benefit their state.—Hence, Societies decline, and Churches die. It could not be otherwise. Whatever other causes conspire to that end, this is one of the most certain and speedy. However mad ambition may endeavor to falsify it, the common experience has established the fact that all genuine improvement is the result of steady and persistent effort; and the truth holds good, not only in secular business, but religious aims. It is not the Churches in whose pulpits the fires of genius are kindled, nor the masterly intellect is displayed, that most do flourish; but it is those where constant, rather than spasmodic, ordinary rather than unusual efforts are made, and where the union of pastor and people is most perfect and prolonged.

Viewing the matter, therefore, simply in the light of the clergyman's welfare, it were surely better that he endeavor after permanence. Except in regard to climate, there is but one normal method by which he can improve his condition; and that is by improving the condition of the charge already assumed. If he wishes a larger and more flourishing field, let him labor to create it where he is, rather than seek it elsewhere. If evils exist in his parish, if the shortcomings of his people oppress his spirit, both wisdom and duty dictate that he shall not flee from them until he shall have patiently endeavored to remove them. The faithfulness of the true pastor, who labors in the spirit of the Master for the religious growth of his people, will seldom

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

fail to realize [for] him its fruits within a reasonable time. But to this end, he must be in truth a pastor, and not simply a frequenter of the firesides of his people for the retailing of gossip. Preachers are scarce, and in great demand; but the clear vision cannot fail to discern, that our most pressing need is more devoted pastoral effort on the part of preachers already in the field.

Where there is true pastoral consecration, the dissolution of ties between the clergyman and his people, can be no thoughtless and hasty work. It is the man who goes from his pulpit with the thought that his work is done, rather than just commenced, who can form and break unions with successive bodies of worshippers each returning moon. Let our presses, whilst crying for preachers, insist that they shall be pastors also; and let our ordaining councils second the demand. Then might we look for a return of those halcyon days when clergymen commenced and closed a life-long ministry with the same people; though not, as then, by previous contract, but by virtue of success, merit, and spiritual oneness.

ORGANIZATION VS. CONGREGATIONALISM.

The subject of the preservation of our organic denominationalism, seems destined to come up for definite settlement. Shall we preserve or abandon our organized form of government, is the question before our General Conventions. Though modified in form, it arose thus, and that is its present spirit.

It must be admitted that our ecclesiastical government has not proven as effective as could have been desired. It has fallen far short, indeed, of meeting our necessities. Not unfrequently have there been instances wherein it has tendered rather to hinder than to promote our welfare. Its fruits have been insufficient both in number and kind. It has borne oppressively, where sometimes it should have been lenient; and it has failed of power where it should have been rigorous. Its laws have been violated with impunity, and its decisions contemptuously disregarded, by both individuals and churches. The evils we have suffered from these causes, it would occupy volumes to relate.

But will the abandonment of our ecclesiastical organization remedy these evils? Will congregationalism prove a panacea for all our ills? With all due respect to those worthy brethren from whom the recent proposition originated, their reasoning appears to your committee, to be every way analogous to that of those who urge upon us the abrogation of civil government and of the institution of marriage. The State fails largely of its ends; as an inevitable consequence of its human origin and administration, it does not do equal and exact justice; its laws are violated daily, and the perpetrators of crimes go unpunished; bribes are in the hands of its legislators; and the judicial ermine is polluted. Wedlock has many a chapter

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

of crime and of suffering; unfaithfulness on the one hand, and tyranny on the other, are its daily phases; unions are formed rashly, and repented of bitterly; the wisest judgment may err as to the qualities of the one it joins at the altar; years may change what once was pure into loathsome corruption. Therefore, we hear it urged, civil government should give place to individualism, and the marriage relation should cease at the option of its parties.

Yet these points we have a right, before this body, to consider as settled in favor of the existing systems. Shall we, then, hesitate to decide this parallel case? Congregationalism might remove the particular evils we lament; but would it not, in their stead, bring an endless train of woes yet more to be deplored? It might relieve the guiltless of responsibility for the guilty; but guilt would remain, to flourish with greater freedom.

We have conceded the evils that exist. We concede, we urge, that they must be speedily remedied. But surely, even did congregationalism contain a remedy, we are not yet justified in applying it. Beheading should be the last resort for the cure of toothache. However much these evils have been mourned by leading and observing men in our midst, they have never been properly laid before the denomination at large. When stricter discipline and obedience to ecclesiastical authority have been urged, it has been with reference to isolated cases, which have appealed to personal prejudices and deep-rooted passions. In their broad and general features they have never been presented widely for denominational action. Hence, we have no right, as yet, to presume our people would not consent to adopt and execute the necessary policy.—Our laws may have been good or bad; but laws will not execute themselves. They are but means for individuals to use for expelling the wrong and establishing the right. Should a uniform system of government be adopted by our General Convention, or at its suggestion, it will remain the duty of each Universalist, clerical or lay, to consider himself a committee of one for the enforcement of its laws. Insomuch as he suffers himself to be intimidated by thoughts of personal enmity, he will prefer wrong to right, and self advantage to the general welfare of the Christian cause.

Each one boldly confronting the wrong, and bringing it to judgment, a more healthy state will soon ensue. Yet it must needs be that offences come. Perfection in government can be only the dream of the visionary. In the best organization the evil must be accepted with the good, and for the good's sake. The surgeon may be frequently required to perform amputation; but only in the last extremity should we accept the services of the hangman.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

DISCIPLINE OF SOCIETIES

The evils to which we have alluded, grow largely out of the fact that Societies and Churches practically recognize no ecclesiastical authority. Associations and Conventions, composed mostly of laymen, sit in judgment upon accused *clergymen*, but when was a *Society* ever made the subject of such discipline? Probably memory reaches not to the instance. We must conclude either that Churches are immaculate, or that they are beyond the reach of "the judgment." The former, alas! too many facts forbid us to believe. But if Churches may bring action against a clergyman in councils composed mainly of laymen, why may not *he* challenge his accusers there also? As it is, the clergyman has only the choice of enduring quietly the wrongs which Churches inflict upon him, or of vindicating himself or exposing them through the public press—a medium which should never be thus defiled.

The discipline of clergymen, too, is rendered a mere farce by the inability or negligence to hold Societies amenable to discipline. Not infrequently, very generally indeed, a suspended or expelled clergyman finds ready acceptance to the bosom of some Society where personal friends have influence. Perchance that Society is in the fellowship of the very Association where the clergymen was legally tried and condemned. Yet no action has ever brought against it for contempt of that authority to which it has promised allegiance, and whose protection it would claim against the wrongs which any clergyman might inflict upon it.

Injustice, real or imaginary, can form no valid excuse for harboring a clergyman thus condemned. The remedy for such injustice must be sought, not in defiance, but in appeal. Personal right to defy government exists only when government willfully, persistently, and generally arrays itself against justice, and closes every other avenue to rectification. An error, or temporary and individual injustice, no more excuses rebellion in ecclesiastical affairs, than such error or injustice in trials for crime against the State would justify a mob in opening the prison doors to a convict. A Society that would engage, temporarily or otherwise, a clergyman expelled from, or denied, our fellowship by a properly constituted ecclesiastical tribunal, usurps powers fatal to all government, and becomes a subject of necessary discipline. Our rule must fall equally upon all parties, or it must be ineffectual upon any. Probably our system of discipline is already good enough upon paper, but it needs to be vitalized by a general determination to enforce it.

CLERICAL FRANCHISE.

When a clergyman resides in one Association or State, and preaches in another, where do his ecclesiastical privileges and obligations centre? Does he thus duplicate himself, his privileges and responsibilities? It has probably

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

been the general, though far from uniform rule to consider the place of residence as alone determining these things. That this however in some respects it may be expedient, is not without its evils, must be manifest at a glance. If a clergyman has no charge within the Association where he resides, but only at a great distance therefrom, a complaint originating in the vicinity of his labors surely should not, except at the most imperious necessity, be removed for trial to his distant home. On the other hand, the difficulties of such a regulation may be seen in the principle that privilege should accompany obligation; and it is already [a] matter of complaint, calling for action, that it is common for clergymen to vote in two or three Associations, by virtue of preaching within the limits of each. In many important matters, they thus can exert undue influence, and stifle the real opinion of our councils. If "the wisdom of the wise" could show us a just passage through this labyrinth of interests, it would promote the general purification and stability.

Your committee have confined themselves to the *material* conditions of the Church, because action pending in the General Convention rendered it expedient to treat largely of that theme; and they could not add more, without transcending the ordinary bounds of a report. Of our *spiritual* state, whilst we would not speak without great reservation, we could yet report a hopeful improvement.—We believe the Church is growing in grace. We behold signs of greater consecration among our clergy, and an increasing devoutness among our people. We are growing in inward life, even more than in outward strength. Many are yet sleeping; but the spirit of the Lord is surely abroad among us, and we hope that none will be found to sleep unto death. The kingdom is being offered unto us; and we have only to be faithful to the trusts of the present hour, to make the children of those who were outcasts for Christ the recognized kings and princes of the Church.

Respectfully submitted,
CHAS. W. TOMLINSON

} Committee

RICHARD EDDY

(The remainder of these Reports will appear next week.)

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 10 Sep 1859

Transcribed with notes added on 14 Feb 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Reports of Committees.

The following are the remainder of the Reports presented to the State Convention at its recent session in Mohawk.

(B)

TRANSFER OF THE AMBASSADOR ESTABLISHMENT.

The undersigned, Agent of the Convention, in the New York Universalist Paper and Book Establishment, offers the following Report to the Council:—

REPORT.

The Board of Trustees met in Auburn, Dec. 9, 1858, and very kindly permitted me to take a full and free share in their deliberations. Their frankness was duly appreciated and heartily acknowledged. At this meeting a plan was proposed and matured to place the *Ambassador* under the control of the Convention, at the end of the year 1858. In execution of this plan, the Trustees unanimously passed the following Preamble and Resolution:—

“A proposition having been received and accepted from Henry Lyon and J. [Jacob] H. Harter to redeem all the outstanding stock of the establishment, in consideration of receiving all its assets, and an obligation to that effect having been duly entered into, it was

Resolved, That this Board will transfer all the powers it possesses in the management of the Universalist Book and Paper Establishment to the Committee appointed by the New-York State Convention of Universalists for that purpose, on the first day of January next; but in case said Committee shall refuse or neglect to assume said charge, this Board will retain such powers in full force.”

Your Agent was at first doubtful of the wisdom of thus dissevering the Book Department from the Establishment, and of leaving only the *Ambassador* and its list of subscribers for the Convention. But more thorough reflection convinced him that, all things considered, it promised the Convention an earlier income, than could be had by the continuance of the old arrangement; for then, several years would have elapsed before the Convention could have entered into possession of the Establishment. Your Agent, therefore, concurred in the action of the Trustees.

It will be seen, that by disposing of the assets of the Establishment to Brs. Lyon and Harter, they assuming all its obligations and expenses to Jan. 1, 1859, the Concern had sustained itself, and in eight years paid up stock to the amount of \$7000. It had earned much more than this. For if good faith had been observed, by delinquent subscribers and purchasers of books, it would have had, in addition to the redeemed stock, a nett surplus of about \$9,000—a large share of which is now represented by worthless debts. But

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

notwithstanding this loss, the Trustees were enabled to place the *Ambassador* into the hands of the Convention, entirely free from debt, and with a fair prospect, under good management of yielding an annual income for the use of the Convention.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

GEO. W. MONTGOMERY, Agent

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(C)

ON EDUCATION.

To the Universalists of the State of New York, assembled in State Convention.

BRETHREN:—Among the subjects which engage our attention in our Annual Conventions, an important place is justly assigned to those which re-[obliterated] any community, or of any order of Christians, depend to a very great extent upon their zeal and faithfulness, in the work of training and educating the minds which come under their influence.

We need not now speak of the training imparted in the Sunday School, for that is treated as a separate and specific subject; nor of the training which is the great work of the pulpit, but one particular province is, to speak of the education of the *educators* of our people. Because it will be found that to a large extent such is the practical effect of our Academies, Colleges and Theological Schools. From them should emanate our Sunday School Teachers, our Common School teachers, our Bible class leaders, our church leaders, and our clergymen. Upon the faith, zeal, largeness of heart, and fullness of knowledge which characterizes these, depends our condition, and course, for the next eventful, and to us probably decisive fifty years.

To our centres of education are naturally drawn the young men and women of the largest and most active intellects, of the most energetic and potential constitutions, and their future career depends largely upon the opportunities which they find, and the culture and direction which they receive in our institutions of learning. Of how vast importance is it, then, that those institutions should be endowed generously and directed with ability and wisdom.

A young man in entering our Academy, College, or Theological School, should not have his pride wounded by being forced to admit that they are discredibly inferior, in any important respect, to those of other denominations. We have but few institutions of the kind; we should strive to make those to be of a high grade of excellence. A good commencement is already made, it only remains that we "go on to perfection."

There are, under the patronage of our State Convention, so far as your committee are informed, only *three* institutions of learning, the Clinton

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

Liberal Institute; the St. Lawrence University; and connected with that, the Theological School.

The information of your Committee is unhappily not complete with regard to any of these, but such information as they have they herewith subjoin.

The Clinton Liberal Institute went into operation in 1833, and during the quarter of a century which has elapsed since that period, it has exercised a marked and salutary influence upon our denomination. Nearly fifty of our clergymen have been trained within its walls; among its graduates are some of the most useful and honored men in our ministry. The institution as is well known had become fearfully involved in debt, so much so indeed that there existed imminent danger that it would wholly be lost to us.

Its affairs were investigated in 1857, when it was found that its debts amounted to between 11 and \$12,000, and at the same time a committee was appointed, one in each Association of the State, to raise the necessary amount. The action of this committee was unavoidably delayed by the monetary crisis of 1857, which for a season rendered all operations of this nature hopeless. At length when matters began to assume a more hopeful aspect, in the spring of 1858 our faithful brother Dolphus Skinner, agent of the Central Association, stepped forward to the work, calling upon other agents to assist him. But slight response was made to his call by any other of the appointed agents, so that upon him has fallen the almost undivided labor, and to him must be awarded a large share of the glory of rescuing and reinstating the Clinton Liberal Institute. It is an instance of faithfulness and devotion which may well be remembered, as one of the notable things in the history of Universalism in New York. Through the heats of summer, through autumn, and winter, and summer again, in city and country he has pursued his laborious, and doubtless sometimes irksome calling, until at last, thanks to his labors, Clinton is well nigh free. Something like \$10,000 has been collected and paid upon the old debts, and about \$1000 has been expended upon repairs of the buildings, on furniture, and other things necessary to the existence of the school. About \$12,000 in all has been pledged for the school since Br. Skinner commenced his labors, and he estimates that some \$2,500 more are needed to complete his work, and place the school in good standing, free from debt.

To raise this amount he still continues his appeals to the generosity of the Universalists of this great State, and he may well point to his faithful and self denying labors to stimulate others to do their part. Examples of such noble zeal are not so common amongst us that we are called upon to dampen this well directed enthusiasm by any ill timed prudence. Let Clinton be fully redeemed and reinstated, for were it good for nothing else, it should be preserved as a memorial of things which have been done.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

But your committee are sanguine in the hope that many fruitful years are yet before the Institute. The male department was opened last spring, under the charge of Mr. Nehemiah White, and strong hopes are justly cherished that it will under his charge assume a creditable position among institutions of its kind.

The Female Department, under the charge of Miss Parkhurst, has a reputation to sustain, but none to make. It stands deservedly in high repute for all that is needful to impart grace, propriety, and solid intellectual training to the character of its pupils.

The number of pupils in the Male department is now—[blank].

In the Female—[blank].

The St. Lawrence University is to be considered under two divisions: the Collegiate department, and the Theological School. Although these two are united to the University, yet their interests and operations are kept quite distinct from each other, and must be treated separately.

It is not necessary at this period of time to recount the movements and untiring labors of many zealous friends, which have resulted in the present auspicious conditions of the affairs of the Collegiate Department. A grant of \$25,000 made by the State has been met by a corresponding subscription on the part of promoters of the College, has been paid, and is securely invested for the benefit of the Institution. In the absence of authentic reports from the Secretary and Treasurer of the Institution, your committee cannot state the exact amount of funds now belonging to the College, but think it safe to state that the total is about \$54,000.

Admonished by the mistakes and failures of other institutions, the Trustees have wisely determined to [obliterated] they have delayed, and will for a little time, still delay to put the College into operation.

In the mean time, however, to form a beginning for their future operations, they have established a preparatory school, under the charge of Prof. J. S. Lee, well known as a competent and faithful teacher, and those pupils who enter, and pursue their studies with him, will assume such standing in the College, when it shall open, as they shall be entitled to by their acquirements.

It is proposed that the Theological School shall, for a just equivalent, surrender to the College the large and commodious building now occupied by them, and that another and smaller edifice be erected on the University grounds, more suitable to the wants of the school. By this arrangement the college will be accommodated with ample room for its present needs, while the Theological School will be the gainer by whatever amount the new building costs less than the former one.

It will thus be seen that some of the most important preliminary steps have been taken towards the establishment of a College such as the

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

interests of our order demand. It is located in a flourishing and healthy part of the State, free from all immediate and overshadowing rivalry, and in the neighborhood of academic institutions which are of high standing, and which will, if the College is well conducted, give it a very considerable local support. It should be added that the people of that division of our State have a deep and growing interest in the cause of education, which has been already manifested in our behalf by a very general and active interest, and liberal aid bestowed on the College, irrespective of religious differences, in the confidence that our affairs will be administered in a spirit energetic and thorough, while it will be catholic and generous. It behooves us to see that this confidence is in no way disappointed or impaired.

The responsibility of this institution rests on us, and we are abundantly able to meet it in such manner, both as to endowment and administration, as to meet every just expectation. The work of establishing and properly endowing such an institution is a work of time. Let us be thankful that it is so well commenced, and see to it that it does not languish. We must not forget the liberal aid which has already been received from our friends in Vermont, and we doubt not that, if our affairs are well managed, we shall continue to receive aid and patronage from them.

The Theological School was opened on the 15th of April, 1858. It certainly made a very modest beginning, as the class during the first term comprised but four students. The middle class now numbers 10, and the junior class 5, with one more to join at the commencement of the next term. The students stand high as to character and ability, and promise to make a valuable and much needed accession to the ranks of our ministry. They are already making their influence to be felt in the region round about. They are organized into a Missionary Society, which has appointments equal to the labors of four constant [e.g. full time] preachers.

By the liberality of its friends, the school is already placed upon a stable foundation. It owns the large building before mentioned, and already possesses, by the munificence of one of its patrons, a well selected library of 4000 (four thousand) volumes. In funds actually invested and paying interest, it has some \$25000 (twenty-five thousand) dollars, and is free from debt.

It will be necessary, in one year from this time, when the third class is formed, to appoint an additional Professor of Theology, and measures should be early instituted to secure the funds needful for that purpose.

Previous to the commencement of the Spring term if this year (when the last class was organized,) letters were received from fifteen young men who were desirous of entering the School. Of that number only *five* actually entered. Most of those who failed dared not come because they had not the requisite means to meet their expenses, which would amount to about \$300,

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

or \$100 per year for the course. Now as the School was instituted to train young men for the ministry, and all its endowments are useless if the men do not come, the question presses, can not something be done to meet the difficulty? It requires no more money, and little more labor, to teach a class of 15 than it does for one of 5. We need fifteen new preachers every year. We would propose the following plan:—Let there be a Loan Fund of some \$500 to \$800, established and placed under charge of some discreet persons. Whenever any student has exhausted his own means, and is unable longer to remain in the School without aid, let such amounts as he needs be loaned to him, taking his note on demand after three years, with interest, for the same. If he is diligent and capable, he will, after leaving the school, soon be in a condition to repay the loan, when it can again be used for some other needy student, and thus a small fund will aid many young men to accomplish their ardent desires by entering the ministry, who, without such aid, would be debarred from that privilege, and either lost to the ministry, or forced to enter it unprepared. It is recommended that the Convention do at this session take some action with regard to this matter.

But, brethren, the Theological School is so obviously a necessity, and its needs have been so promptly met, not to say anticipated, that we will not on its behalf be so ungrateful, or ungracious, as to imply, by urgent appeals, a doubt of your efficient and fostering care.

May the Committee be permitted to add a single word, on another branch of the great subject assigned to them. We stand forward as a denomination, by all our pretensions, as the foes of all exclusiveness, and the friends of universal rights and open, unhedged privileges. Nothing is more clear than that our views find most ready favor, and take deepest root in those communities where education is most nearly universal. These, and many other considerations, should incline us to be strenuous friends, promoters, and improvers of our common free schools. It is our duty, it is our policy, because it is eminently true of us, that we can only flourish by that which makes the whole community flourish. The common school is the destroyer of sectarian monopolies and machinations, for no sect can wield or control it. It is the mining ploughshare beneath the walls of Bigotry, to overturn them, because it brings men to feel and appreciate their common interests, and blends them by a common education in one brotherly mass.

Wisdom and prudence bid us care well for our present Academy, but let us plant no more. The course of public opinion is perceptible: in a few years the common school will almost entirely supplant Academies, and all our interests engage us to be leaders in the movement.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

All of which is respectfully submitted,

EBENEZER FISHER,
HENRY BLANCHARD,
Committee on Education.

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 17 Sep 1859

Reports of Committees

The following are the remainder of the Reports presented to the State Convention at its recent session in Mohawk.

(D)

MISSIONARY AND TRACT ENTERPRISE

Your Committee have taken some pains to ascertain the amount of missionary labor, and the distribution of Tracts, in our State for the year past. We are unable to report any organized Missionary effort outside of the New-York Association, and that has in part died out. There have been no Tracts distributed save a few sent out by the friends of the Missionary Society of New-York. We would therefore recommend that some action be taken during this session of the Convention, to organize an effectual Missionary and Tract Society.

All of which is submitted,

A. G. CLARK, Chairman
H. H. BAKER

(E)

THE RELIEF FUND.

Fifteenth 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 Mohawk, Herkimer county, on Tuesday, August 23d, 1859.

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

The first is the personal application of Mrs. Ellen Skeelee, widow of Rev. Samuel A. Skeelee, late of Cowlesville, N.Y., and a member of the Buffalo Association. The Trustees recommend that an appropriation of fifty dollars (the same amount as last year) be paid to her order, in October, 1859.

The second is the application of Rev. L. C. Browne in behalf of Mrs. [Martha S. Chapin] Smith, of Bridgewater, N.Y., widow of the late Rev. T. J.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

[Thomas Jefferson] Smith. The Trustees recommend that the sum of fifty dollars be appropriated to her, payable to the order of Mr. George Tuckerman, in the month of October, 1859.

The third is the application of Rev. Dr. T. J. Sawyer, in behalf of Rev. B. [Benjamin] B. Hallock of New-York.—The Trustees recommend the sum of one hundred dollars be paid to the order of Mrs. Alice C. Hallock, fifty dollars in October, 1859 and fifty dollars in April, 1860.

The Treasurer's Report, hereto appended, shows a balance in his hands, on the 22d of August, 1859, of nine hundred and forty-four dollars and fifteen cents.

The Trustees ask authority to invest, from the balance in their hands, and interest that will accrue on the funds invested, during the year ensuing, one thousand dollars to be added to the permanent fund.

The Trustees regret the absence of the President of the Board, Dr. Jacob Harsen, now in Europe, as it was his design to present some remarks in this report, concerning the construction of his father's will, in regard to the conditions on which appropriations for relief should be made.

Respectfully submitted by order of the Board,

L. C. BROWNE, President, *pro tem*

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(F)

The New-York Universalist Relief Fund in account with Abner Chichester, Treasurer.

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

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(G)

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee appointed to take charge of the Ambassador Establishment, beg leave to make the following
REPORT.

In accordance with the action of the Board of Trustees, which gave up the Ambassador Establishment to the control of the Convention, your Committee held a meeting in the city of Auburn, Dec. 28, 1858, on the call of Br. Van Nostrand. Present—Brs. Van Nostrand, Skinner, Briggs and Montgomery. Br. Graves was unavoidably absent.

After organizing, with Br. Van Nostrand as Chairman, and Br. Montgomery as Secretary, the Ambassador Establishment was formally accepted from the Board of Trustees, to complete the action contemplated in their resolution of Dec. 8, 1858. Your Committee then proceeded to make the necessary arrangements for the management of its affairs.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

The first thing your Committee felt it their duty to consider, was an application made by Brs. Thatcher and Hutchinson, for leasing the *Ambassador*, and its removal to the city of New-York. In reference to this application, the following preamble and resolution were unanimously adopted:—

Whereas, A proposition has been received from Messrs. Thatcher and Hutchinson, to lease the *Ambassador* for five years, at an annual rent of \$1,000, and to enlarge it, and print and publish it in the city of New-York— and

Whereas, The Convention at its session in Branchport, Aug. 24th, 1858, had the following action—“*Resolved*, That this Convention hereby expresses its desire that the present arrangement of publishing the *Ambassador* in New-York and Auburn be allowed to remain undisturbed”—this Committee do not feel authorized either to act in opposition to the wishes of the Convention, or to lease the paper for so long a time; therefore,

Resolved, That the *Ambassador* be printed in Auburn, and published in New-York and Auburn for the year 1859.”

Your Committee then voted to employ Br. J. M. Austin as Editor for the year 1859, with a salary of \$1200—Br. J. H. Harter as the Auburn Agent, with a salary of \$950—Br. H. Lyon as the New-York Agent, with a salary of \$800—Br. Henry M. Stone as printer, on the same terms as had existed under the Board of Trustees.

A resolution was unanimously passed, empowering Br. Van Nostrand to obtain the services of contributors to the columns of the *Ambassador*, at an aggregate expense not exceeding \$400. In accordance with this resolution, Brs. Sawyer, Balch and Lee, and Sister Sawyer have been engaged. Their communications have largely increased the interest of the *Ambassador*.

Yet, this arrangement, together with the additional cost of better paper on which to print the *Ambassador*, has increased the expenses of the Establishment. Your Committee had this fact under anxious consideration, before deciding to incur this expenditure. Their action was determined by the thought that their object should rest mainly in a well-edited and a well-printed paper, as the permanent missionary of the Convention, reaching weekly nearly thirty thousand readers, if we allow that each copy is read by at least four persons.

In order to insure faithful attention to the directions of the Committee, Mr. Van Nostrand was appointed to examine quarterly the books of the New-York Agent and Br. Briggs those of the Auburn Agent. Your Committee have entire confidence in the capacity and honor of Brs. Harter and Lyon, and believe that they have discharged their duties faithfully, and with reference to the success of the enterprise. Of the manner in which the editor has filled his position, you are well aware, since the *Ambassador* has visited you each

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

week. If ability and untiring industry can make a good paper, then Br. Austin has earned that character for the *Ambassador*.

The pecuniary success of the enterprise cannot be accurately determined until the close of the current year, when its entire business can be summed up, and its income and expenditure compared. By the reports from January to July, 1859, furnished by the Agents, a probable estimate of the nett profits of the concern may be approximated.

RECEIPTS.		
Cash collected from subscribers at both offices,	\$6,682.09	
For advertising and the sale of old papers,	151.33	
		\$6,833.42
DISBURSEMENTS.		
For paper, printing, salaries, traveling agents, premiums and commissions, postage, rent, contributors and office charges,		<u>5,425.39</u>
Cash on hand,		\$1,407.39
ASSETS.		
Cash on hand,	1,407.59	
Due for advertising, from subscribers and agents,	2,695.00	
Paper on hand and use of office from July 1 1859 to Jan. 1 1860,	<u>41.00</u>	
	4,143.59	
LIABILITIES.		
For salaries and paper	403.88	3739.71
Number of full paying subscribers at Auburn office	5,660	
" half	125	
" free, and exchanges	323	
" sent to New York office, most of which must be full price	<u>900</u>	
Total number	6.908	

In regard to this Report, your Committee desire it to be remembered that it is necessarily imperfect, because, 1, It cannot be ascertained what amount of salary will be due the two traveling Agents employed, until the close of the year, when their accounts will be examined and the difference ascertained. And 2, Because the business of the two halves of the year so runs together, that it is difficult to make a very reliable separation. Nor can we expect that the net gain of the half year, will be anything like a double amount at the end of the year, since the cash already received covers in most cases the entire year—while the assets embrace about one-half the amount of the subscriptions yet unpaid. The net gain can be decided only in an Annual report. The probability is, however, that it will not be less than

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

from two thousand to three thousand dollars. How much of it will be in cash, and how much in debts due from subscribers, your Committee will not attempt to say. This much is certain, that if every subscriber would pay punctually, the Convention would derive from the current year, a handsome income for the advancement of the cause at large.

This is evident enough, even with the present number of subscribers, which, it will be observed, is smaller than it has been in times past. A satisfactory reason for this decrease, may be found in the fact, that at the commencement of the current volume, several hundreds of names of persons were stricken from the list, who were indebted two or more years—and also in the fact, the prostration of business has seriously affected every pecuniary interest for the time being. It is hoped that the subscription list will not remain as it is, but will be largely increased. It might be, and ought to be. If it embraced only ten thousand names of friends, who felt themselves religiously bound to pay promptly, not only because they receive a full return in the weekly visit of an instructive Ambassador, but because it will aid a noble work, then the Convention would be in a position to keep one or more missionaries in the field, to aid young men in their preparation for the ministry, and to pursue such other measures as would add largely to the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

NORMAN VAN NOSTRAND
EZRA GRAVES
D. SKINNER
GEO. W. MONTGOMERY

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(I)

SABBATH SCHOOLS

Your Committee on Sunday Schools, appointed at the State Convention, held at Branchport in August, 1858, asks leave to present the following
REPORT.

Your Committee would promise that, as, at the time of its appointment, no specific instructions were given by the Convention, and as the previous reports of similar Committees had not by usage determined the nature of its duties, and the sphere of its labors, it has been deemed appropriate for this occasion, *first*, to present and advocate the claims of the Sunday School as a religious means; and *secondly*, to suggest such a course of action for the future as will place the Convention in possession of reliable facts and statistics relative to our Sunday Schools throughout the State.

The need of the recognition of the Sunday School, as a co-ordinate branch of our religious instrumentalities, cannot but be painfully obvious to all who have given this subject their thoughtful consideration.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

The Sunday School generally exists as a kind of accidental appendage to the Society; separated from the religious organization; not amenable to it; not under its supervision; having an independent being; and living, not as a cherished *child* in the home of its parent, but upon the chance charities and the scanty favors of a few benefactors who can give it only a precarious subsistence. Hence, the Sunday School among us is *tolerated*, rather than supported, or permitted simply to live, rather than nourished and sustained in being.

Many parents ignore the existence of the Sunday School, withhold their children from its instruction, and thus practically refuse to sustain its establishment. Not a few of our clergymen maintain a profound silence in regard to this means of religious instruction, have no office in the Sunday School attached to the Society under their charge, or make no efforts to create schools, and aid and cheer those who are engaged in such an enterprise.

It cannot be denied that there is a lamentable apathy on this subject, infecting many in our ranks, both clergy and laity.

Causes may have existed in the past for our indifference and insensibility, which, in our earliest history, may measurably have justified our apparent neglect.

The pioneers of our faith had stern and perilous work to do, which forbade their establishment of Sunday Schools. They were enlisted in an arduous campaign, surrounded by foes, fighting for the privilege to be, and could not, in the midst of an active warfare, cherish the arts of peace. Besides, their efforts were necessarily mainly of a missionary character, and the creation of Sunday Schools was therefore to them premature and impracticable.

In addition to these causes, it may be remarked that the rejection of the popular faith led also to the rejection of the means by which that faith had been taught and propagated. It was believed that the minds of children had been early biased and warped by false religious teaching, and that hence the duty of parents was to keep their offspring from the influence of all religionists, and leave them unprejudiced and untrammelled in the selection of their own forms of faith. But these causes no longer exist, except in rare and isolated cases; and the denomination, having secured for itself an undisturbed position among religious sects, should now be prepared, by all legitimate methods, to propagate its faith and increase its power and influence.

Among the foremost instrumentalities of the age, we place the religious education of the young. We believe this to be one of the surest safeguards of private and public morality and virtue.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

We believe that there is no human interest paramount to that of religion; that religion is rightfully the supreme and controlling power of the life; that all other interests should be subordinated to this; and that the first and chief care of all who would promote the well-being of the race, should be to enthrone Christianity as the guide of all duty and the rule of all action.

We plead for the value and need of religion at every period of life—its indispensableness at the outset—its harmony with the unperverted nature, and its fitness for childhood.

If religion is ever to be the ruling power of the life, plainly there must be a season for its inauguration. That season is early childhood. The training of early life, if judicious, should be prospective; it should have perpetual reference to the needs and perils of the after life.

Children are born into the Spiritual Kingdom; our duty is to keep them there, to preoccupy their hearts with truth and love and righteousness.

We believe there cannot safely be any abandonment of this manifest duty. Education begins with life; and education, good or bad, children will have—if we will not educate our children, others will.—Now, God laid this duty upon *us*, as parents and ministers of his truth—we are the depositories of God's word, the distributors of God's gifts, the possessors of God's revelations, and have been instructed that we may teach. We are the God-appointed guides and teachers of the young, and cannot guiltlessly escape our calling or betray our trusts, neither can we transfer our duty to others—no substitute is possible without infidelity to the tasks appointed us.

We believe that human life should begin right, start in the true path, take a true departure, and be guided in a right course. If a ship should sail from New York for London, she would not lay a course for the Arctic zone or for the tropics; so, if a child is bound for heaven and is to be an angel, the soul of the child should be directed heavenward. To delay the religious education of the young is highly perilous. While we procrastinate and sleep, the adversary may sow tares, and we may find our first labor to be the extermination of evil, before there can be an implantation of good. We should do nothing or permit nothing to be done which needs to be undone. Not doing is misdoing. To undo is difficult—evil habits are inveterate—restoration is painful—it is hard to set wrong right; correction and repentance are sorrowful. By timely care all this may be avoided.

Now we plead the *Church* has an office here.—The Church is set and recognized as the teacher and exponent, the guardian and conservator of religious interests, and it cannot ignore or delegate its duty.—The Church has no factors or proxies any more than parents. It is not enough to instruct adults; children have needs, and claims, and rights, which can not be disregarded. The impressibility and defencelessness of childhood are ample warrants for the claims of childhood. These claims must be heeded, or

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

inevitably both we and our children will suffer. By our default, the cause of religion will suffer also. What we sow we shall reap. The fruit of neglect is sorrow. Religious education (the development of the religious capabilities of the nature) is the work of life; of *all* the life, childhood, youth, maturity and age. There should be no hiatus in religious instruction. It should be unbroken and progressive from the cradle to the grave. The Church, if true to its mission, should embrace *all* in its fold. The Sunday School should prepare for the Bible Class, and the Bible Class for the Church. There should be no outgrowing of the Sunday School, but this growing into the Church. The Church or religious body should make provision for all ages; hence, we reason that the Sunday School is an essential part of a religious organization, and should not be severed from the Society, but placed under its immediate care and control, and that the Pastor of the Society should have an appointed place and office in its teaching and management. The Sunday School is not the parasite or appendage of the Society, but legitimately its offspring, and an essential and integral element of its organization and being. Societies without Sunday Schools are like the married who are childless; they have no continuance, their name perishes with them. Whenever there is a body of christian believers holding worship and having children, we plead for the institution of the Sunday School. These children are soon to be men and women, to fill their parents' places, to assume all the powers now wielded by their parents, social, civil and religious, and to constitute society, the State and the *Church*. If we are ever to grow as a denomination, we must attach our children to the principles of our faith, we must implant in their minds betimes the seeds of Christian life. The activity of opposing sects in creating and fostering Sunday Schools compels us to their adoption in self-defence. It is a lamentable fact that the children of Universalists, in many places, have no provision made for their religious education, or are permitted to attend schools controlled by partialists. It is infidelity to our faith either to neglect the religious education of our children or to intrust it to those who inculcate falsehood and error.

We take up arms against the pernicious and prevalent notion that children may harmlessly listen to false teaching, or be left, free and unguided, to select their own mode of faith, when they shall arrive at the age of discretion. We believe the opinion to be without any defence. It savors strongly of religious indifference and insensibility. The heedless and irreligious call it toleration and freedom of opinion, and are always the readiest in its advocacy. There is a wide distinction between free thinking and a christian charity for those who differ from us, between negligence and toleration—we should never tolerate that which we believe to be false and evil—we should tolerate only truth and the spirit of truth.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

There is, we believe, a broad and irreconcilable difference between right and wrong, truth and error; and the bounden duty of the parent as of the Church is to teach truth and truth only, and not leave children to chance instruction; or subject, unprotected, to error or falsehood.

Parents do not reason and act in this way about other matters, even about those of relatively inconsiderable moment—about social habits and manners, decorum of speech and action, principles of philosophy, life and government. Why do they reason thus about the most vital of all human interests, about religion, the right view of God, of man, of duty, of happiness and destiny? Wherein does this course differ from that of unfaithfulness, apathy and irreligion? The child, it is said, should be left free before he reaches the age of discretion, and yet this season of life is precisely that which most imperatively needs religious and parental guidance. The child is confessedly incompetent for self-government; hence God, who foresaw this incompetence, has constituted the parent the rightful and needful guardian of his offspring. The parent's wisdom is the child's birthright; the parent's discipline is the child's protection. By this false reasoning the child is to be *always* free from parental religious teaching, both *before* and *after* it reaches the age of discretion. The question then arises, *who* shall teach your child religion, or have you decided that it shall have no religious teaching?

But it is pleaded, the parent should teach *morals*, and not religion. *Can* one be taught without the other? If they are not in essence identical, we ask which is the more important? Take care of the religion, and the morals will take care of themselves. If they differ, religion is the more vital and indispensable; morality is built upon religion, not religion upon morality—religion includes morality, while morality does not include religion.

Are we to believe, as this policy teaches, that all religious faiths are equally harmful or equally harmless? Is it of *no* consequence whether truth or falsehood *first* gets possession of the innocent and impressible mind of the child? Ought we to be indifferent to the religious influences to which our children are subject? No, surely not, if we prize our faith as we ought, we shall earnestly desire and by all rightful means, faithfully endeavor to impart that faith to our children.

[obliterated] professedly or by their practice; hence, their indifference to the cause of the Sunday School. But many, while they admit the importance of early religious training, declare that the establishment of a Sunday School in many places is impracticable.—They plead that the place of worship is remote; the services are irregular or intermitted; a school cannot be gathered; teachers cannot be obtained; and many serious obstacles lie in the way of such an enterprise.

But, we reply, if parents can attend worship, children, by the same means, can attend Sunday School; except the distance be extreme, and the

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

weather severe—that the School *can* be sustained, even where preaching is *not* sustained, (this has been tested) that the parents themselves should be teachers; and that, by the aid of manuals, and books provided for the use of Sunday Schools, all persons, of ordinary intelligence, will be furnished to impart valuable religious knowledge to the young. We reply that it will often be found to be easier to sustain a Sunday School than to sustain a secular or day School; that “where there is a will there is a way,” and that most of those who plead the impracticability of the establishment of a School are they who have never made a serious effort in its behalf. It is our conviction that, in many places where Schools do not now exist, during a large portion of the year, they could be sustained, without undue labor or sacrifice. The truth undeniably is that the importance of the Sunday School is not apprehended as it deserves to be. Many preachers rarely advocate it as a religious means; some, we fear, entirely ignore it; and parents cannot be expected to be *more* sensible of its efficacy than their teachers. This fact we recognize as one cause where there are so many feeble, dead and dying Societies in our ranks.

No measures are taken for their reinforcement.—The children of Universalist parents are thus permitted to stray to other organizations, and, by social and other influences to be ostensibly identified with other forms of faith, and attached to other communions. For these things serious blame attaches both to parents and preachers.

Now we believe that the Sunday School must be recognized as an essential instrumentality among us, or the work of religious education of the rising generation will be committed to other hands, and we shall be shorn of our strength and influence. It may be true that we have done something in this behalf; that in some sections we have done much and nobly; that in some Societies the Sunday School is fostered as its importance deserves; and that it has enlisted not only the devoted zeal of the preachers, but the active co-operation of the best minds of the laity. But much more remains to be done. As a denomination we have but commenced the work.

Not the laity alone, but our preachers also, need to be quickened in this enterprise. We fear that if our denominational interest in the Sunday School should be compared with that of other sects, we should [would] be found to be lamentably heedless and indifferent. The popular faith, we have reason to believe, is perpetrated *mainly* by early religious instruction. It is hereditarily transmitted. It is an entailed faith. It is associated with home, early life, social relations, affections and memories. It gets the preemption right over the mind, and holds its place and authority by virtue of occupancy. Its title is the title of possession—it is entrenched by time, habit and educational and social influences, and no means are left untried to keep and to increase its power. If by these means an irrational, inconsistent and

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

pernicious faith can obtain currency, and get possession of the general mind, what might not be hoped for our reasonable, harmonious and satisfying faith, if we should adopt similar measures? Other things being equal, the better faith has the better guaranty of establishment. Means are essential to the upbuilding of any faith.

If the Evangelical sects would suspend the training and discipline of the young, for but one generation, and leave the minds of children free in the choice of religious faith, their sway and influence would speedily wane and cease. And, we may add, if we should do the same, we might look for the same results.

Now, if a new impetus is to be given to the Sunday School Cause, it must be apparent that it must originate with those who are most deeply interested in our faith, and most vitally identified with it, namely, with our preachers.

The christian preacher must enlist heartily in this cause; must set forth its importance, its urgency, nay, its indispensableness; must meet and answer all objections urged against it; must make it a frequent topic for pulpit discourse; must advocate it in his pastoral intercourse; and must take an active personal share in the creation, maintenance and administration of the school.

It is high time that as a religious organization, we should make and declare our determination of our duty in this regard; that Societies should stipulate that pastors shall act as superintendent or teachers of Bible classes; and that pastors should no longer be permitted to escape the duties of the pastoral office.

We believe that a *true* statement of the Sunday School Cause in our State would reveal an alarming apathy in regard to the religious education of the young.

Now, to the end that we may possess reliable information, your committee submits a resolution making the duty of Delegates from the State Associations to make certain statistical returns to the Convention.

In conclusion, your committee would offer, for the consideration of the council, the following resolutions, upon the duties of parents, of Societies, of pastors, of Universalists and of Delegates—and upon the rights of Sunday Schools and Societies.

THE DUTY OF PARENTS.

Resolved, That, whereas parents are the God-appointed teachers and guardians of their children; whereas children are sacred trusts confided to parental care; whereas children have a *right* to instruction; and whereas religious instruction is paramount in importance to all other; therefore, it is the high and solemn religious duty of all parents, by the use of all available means, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Proceedings of the N. Y. State Convention

THE DUTY OF SOCIETIES.

Resolved, That it is the duty of every religious organization (society or church) to make provision for the religious education of persons of all ages, whether [obliterated].

THE RANK OR RIGHT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Resolved, That the Sunday School is an indispensable agency in the work of religious instruction, and that it is a needful and integral part of the Society and church.

THE DUTY OF PASTORS.

Resolved, That it is the duty of pastors to advocate the cause of the Sunday School, to hold office in the school either as Superintendents or Teachers, and by their habitual presence and influence to labor for the religious training of those entrusted to their charge.

THE RIGHTS OF SOCIETIES.

Resolved, That it is the right of Societies to require such service of their pastors in the Sunday School, and it is the duty of Societies to aid their pastors in their discharge of such service.

THE DUTY OF UNIVERSALISTS.

Resolved, That it is the duty of Universalists to teach their children Universalism, and to send them to Universalist Sunday Schools.

THE DUTY OF DELEGATES.

Resolved, That hereafter it shall be the duty of delegates to the State Convention to bring reports from their respective Associations—1st, of the names of the Societies holding stated worship—the preachers who supply them, and the salaries paid for such service; and also, of the names of organized churches; and 2d, of the Sunday Schools within their jurisdiction, the number of teachers and scholars in each School, and of volumes in each library.

C. C. GORDON
J. H. TUTTLE } Committee
T. BORDEN

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 24 Sep 1859

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