

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the New York
State Convention of Universalists for 1846

Met according to adjournment in Newark, Wayne county, N.Y., May 27, 1846. Called to order by Br. T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Sawyer, Moderator at the last session, and after uniting in prayer with Br. M. B. Smith, the following roll of delegates was made out:

Allegany Association.—Clerical, T. L. Clark, J. B. Sax; lay, L. Graves. *Black River*—Clerical, G. S. Abbott, J. S. Kibbe; lay, F. W. Winn, Wm. Williams. *Cayuga*—Clerical, J. M. [John Mather] Austin. *Central*—none. *Chautauque*—Clerical, C. H. [Charles Heman] Dutton. *Chenango*—A. O. Warren. *Genesee*—Clerical, W. B. Cook, J. S. Brown. *Hudson River*—Clerical, J. Moore; lay, C. Townsend, S. Van Shaack. *Mohawk*—Clerical, D. Skinner, J. Douglass. *New York*—Lay, P. Price, E. Whitefield. *Niagara*—Clerical, J. [Jacob] Chase, U. Clark; lay, J. S. Church. *Ontario*—Clerical, O. [Oliver] Ackley, C. [Charles] Hammond; lay, M. [Morris] W. Hemiup, James Armstrong. *Otsego*—Clerical, Job Potter. *St. Lawrence*—none. *Steuben*—Lay, W. Goff.—*Buffalo*—Clerical, S. [Samuel] Goff, G. [Gideon] S. Gowdy; lay, P. Cobb.

The council was then fully organized by the appointment of Br. JOHN MOORE, of Troy, *Moderator*; Br. P. PRICE, New York, *Clerk*, and Br. J. [John] S. BROWN, of Perry, *Assistant Clerk*.

Br. A. [Alfred] C. Barray, submitted his resignation as Standing Clerk, which was accepted, and a vote of thanks tendered for the faithful discharge of his duties.

Br. H. [Henry] L. Hayward was appointed Standing Clerk of this body.

Minutes of last session read and approved.

The Buffalo Association asked the fellowship of this body which was granted.

Appointed Brs. Potter, Cobb and Abbott, Committee on adjournment, who reported Scipio, N.Y. as the place. Report accepted and subsequently adopted.

Appointed Brs. J. M. Austin, D. Skinner and T. L. Clark, a Committee to nominate a Brother to preach the next Occasional Sermon, who reported the name of Br. O. [Otis] A. Skinner, of New York city, with power to appoint a substitute. Report accepted and subsequently adopted.

Appointed Brs. H. C. Mason, E. Whitefield and C. Townsend, Committee to nominate delegates to the United States Convention, who reported the following names: Brs. S. R. [Stephen Rensselaer] Smith, Buffalo; T. B. Thayer, Brooklyn; T. J. Sawyer, Clinton; A. A. Davis, Glen's Falls, *Clerical*. P. Price, New York; J. D. Ford, Newark; D. M. Moore, Schenectady; Paul Marshall, Plattsburgh; A. R. Ransom, Buffalo; Calvin Cole, Oxford, *Lay*. Report accepted and subsequently adopted.

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Appointed Brs. G. W. [George Washington] Montgomery, T. J. Sawyer and S. Goff, Committee on Fellowship. Brs. D. Skinner, S. R. Smith and Job Potter, Committee on Correspondence.

The second Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the N.Y. Universalist Relief Fund was submitted, read, and adopted, and ordered to be placed on file, and to be published with the minutes of the body.

Appointed Brs. Chase, D. Skinner and O. Ackley, a Committee to take into consideration the several recommendations and suggestions contained in the Report of the Trustees of their Relief Fund, who reported the following:

Resolved, That One Hundred Dollars, be appropriated from the proceeds of the Relief Fund to the aid of the Widow and Orphans of the late Rev. Oliver Wilcox, one half of the sum payable immediately, and the other half on the 1st of November, 1846, to the order of Rev. Pitt Morse. Also, that Fifty Dollars be appropriated from the same source, for the benefit of the surviving child of the late Rev. Joseph Eaton (Julius Savillion Eaton)—payable to the order of Joseph Mumford. Resolution subsequently adopted.

On motion of Br. J. M. Austin, the Moderator was desired to invite some Brother to give an address on Education before this body; whereupon Br. T. J. Sawyer was called upon by the Moderator, and consented to give such Address.

The Committee on adjournment were instructed to take the subject of changing the time of meeting of this Convention into consideration, who subsequently reported the following *Resolution*:

Resolved, That the Constitution of this Convention be amended so as to change the time of the Annual Meeting from the last Wednesday in May, to the third Wednesday in August, in each year. Adopted, to lie over to the next session according to Constitutional provision.

Appointed Brs. J. M. Austin, D. Skinner and G. W. Montgomery, a Committee to take into consideration the condition, and direction of the Theological Seminary at Clinton, who submitted the following Report:

The Committee to whom the subject of the Theological School at Clinton was referred, Report as follows:

Whereas a Class has been formed in Clinton, for the better preparation of young men for the ministry—Whereas, this Class has already proved itself to be of great importance, not only to the sixteen individuals who have received instruction from its judicious teacher, Br. T. J. Sawyer, but also to the denomination who will receive these pupils thus better prepared for their duty, into its ministry—Whereas it is of vast consequence, that the Universalist denomination should encourage and strengthen every effort for the thorough education of candidates for the ministry—and Whereas, this School at Clinton needs not only the sanction, but also the aid of all those

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who wish the promulgators of the Restitution to be well fitted for the work of spreading the Truth; it is therefore by this Convention

Resolved, That a Committee of fourteen persons, (seven laymen and seven preachers) shall be chosen, who, in connection with Br. T. J. Sawyer, or his successors, shall constitute a Board of Trustees, whose business it shall be, to devise such means and plans as shall sustain and gradually perfect the effort now being made in Clinton for providing instruction for ministerial candidates; to solicit donations of money and books, either personally or by agents, for the support and use of the School; to take all such measures as shall tend to give permanency to the School. This Board shall meet as soon as convenient, and shall report its doings to the Order through our State Papers. Three members shall constitute a quorum to do business.

Resolved, That as the proposed subscriptions for sustaining this School for five years, are not yet sufficient for that object, this Convention earnestly calls upon the friends of our cause, to subscribe to its funds, that at least, if for no other object, the utility of such a School may be tested by the present experiment.

Resolved, That as the School is suffering from the want of a sufficient number of library and class books, this Convention earnestly solicits the friends of the cause to make donations of standard theological works. (It was expected Br. Sawyer would make out a list—he commenced one, and I designed the completion of it, but parted with him before it was attended to. Will he do it now?)—P.P.

The Report accepted, and after discussion, adopted.

Brs. T. J. Sawyer, Stephen Van Schaack and Job Potter were appointed a Committee to nominate Trustees of the Theological Seminary at Clinton, in accordance with the first of the foregoing resolutions, who subsequently reported the following names: S. R. Smith, Buffalo; John Moore, Troy; D. Skinner, Utica; J. M. Austin, Auburn; G. W. Montgomery, Rochester; J. T. Goodrich, Oxford; O. A. Skinner, New York; *clerical*; James Hall, New York city; Stephen Van Schaack, Albany; Jacob Harsen, New York city; David Moore, Schenectady; E. Cory, Cooperstown; Ira Curtiss [Curtis], Auburn; E. [Ezra] S. Barnum, Utica. Report accepted, and the names adopted as the Board of Trustees. Adjourned to half past 7 o'clock, A.M., Thursday.

Thursday morning. Met pursuant to adjournment. United in prayer with Br. O. Ackley.

The following Preamble and Resolutions were submitted by the Clerk:

Whereas, The Sunday school cause is rapidly assuming that importance in the public mind which it is so eminently entitled to; and whereas we regard

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it as *among* the most important, if not the most important, means of advancing the cause of impartial grace and salvation, therefore

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Council equal prominence should be given to the services of the State Sabbath School Association, as to those of the Convention; and that a specific time should be set apart for listening to the Annual Address of that body, as is now the rule for the Occasional Sermon before this body; and in accordance therewith we recommend, that hereafter, Wednesday forenoon (as is now the rule) be appropriated for the Occasional Discourse before this body; and that Thursday forenoon be in like manner appropriated to the Annual Address before the Sabbath School Association.

Resolved, That the success which has thus far attended our efforts in the Sunday school cause, imperfect as has been our organization, is the best evidence we can have of the utility of the Institution, and the great benefits that must of necessity follow a thorough concert of action in its behalf; and we would therefore renewedly urge upon the denomination in this State increased zeal in this cause; by fostering and encouraging schools already established, and the establishment of others wherever practicable; and by all other appropriate means that are available. Adopted.

Appointed Brs. Sawyer, Montgomery and Potter a Committee to take into consideration the subject of Fellowship with this body, who made a partial report in the following resolutions:

Resolved, That any disabled clergymen, or family of a deceased clergymen making application for assistance from the Relief Fund, must accompany that application with a certificate from the Committee of Fellowship and Ordination, or Standing Clerk of their respective Associations, certifying whether the clergyman, in whose behalf, or in whose name, the application is made, is or was, in full fellowship with the Association in which he resides, or did reside previous to his death.

Resolved, That this rule remain in force until the next session of the Convention.

Resolutions adopted, and leave granted to the Committee to sit again, with instructions to report through the Periodicals at their earliest convenience, some permanent Rules of Fellowship, to be acted upon at the next session of this body.

Voted, That the Clerk of this body prepare the Minutes for publication in the various denominational papers, accompanied with such remarks as he may deem appropriate.

Br. J. M. Austin submitted the following resolution:

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Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to the members of the Universalist Society in Newark, for the kindness and generous hospitality extended to us during our sojourn in their midst.

Adjourned to meet in the Church immediately after the morning services.

Met according to adjournment, at the close of the morning services.

Br. D. Skinner moved the thanks of the Council to Br. T. J. Sawyer, for his Address on Education, which had just been listened to by the Council and audience; with a request for a copy for publication. Passed.

After uniting in prayer with the Moderator, the Council adjourned, as per previous vote, to meet in Scipio, Cayuga county, on the last Wednesday and following Thursday in May, 1847.

JOHN MOORE, *Moderator*

P. PRICE

} Clerks

J. S. BROWN

ORDER OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Tuesday evening—Prayer, Br. D. Skinner; Sunday School Address, Br. H. L. Hayward.

Wednesday morning—Prayer, Br. J. Moore; Sermon, Br. J.M. Austin, text, Rom. xi:20, 'Be not high minded, but fear,' &c., to the end of 21st verse.

Afternoon—Prayer, Br. D. Pickering; Sermon, Br. J. Moore, text, Col. i:19,20. The reconciliation of all things.

Evening—Prayer, Br. A. G. Laurie; Sermon, Br. G. W. Montgomery, text, Johan iv:9,10,11.

Thursday morning—Prayer, Br. J. Potter; Address on Education, Br. T. J. Sawyer.

Afternoon—Prayer, Br. M. B. Smith; Sermon, Br. D. Skinner; The Closing Address, Br. D. Skinner.

Preachers in attendance—O. Ackley, Geneva; M. B. Smith, Albion; J. Potter, Waterville; D. Pickering, Buffalo; J. Moore, Troy; J. [Jacob] Whitney, G. W. Montgomery, C. [Charles] Hammond, Rochester; J. Chase, Middleport; T. J. Sawyer, Clinton; J. M. Austin, Auburn; G. S. Gowdy, Boston; F. M. [Francis Milton] Alvord, Panama; J. S. Brown, Perry; N. [Nelson] Brown, Howlet[t] Hill; D. Skinner, Utica; J. Douglass, Salisbury; U. Clark, Lockport; T. L. Clark, Yorkshire; G. S. Abbott, Dexter; H. [Harvey] Boughton, Watertown; G. [Grosvenor] Swan, Richville; A. O. Warren, Smithville Flats; W. [William] Queal, Bristol; C. H. [Charles Heman] Dutton, Lavonia [Livonia]; John H. Campbell, Clinton; J. J. Austin, Lebanon; James Foster, Cicero; L. L. Spaulding, Webster; H. L. Hayward, Scipio; J. S. Kibbe, Mexico; S. Goff, Willink; W. B. Cook, Alexander; L. M. Hawes, Fulton; ___ Johnson,

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___; J. B. Sax, Hume; J. P. Averill, Chaumont; J. M. Peebles, Kelloggsville; A. G. Laurie, London, Canada West [Ontario]; H. Beckwith, Massachusetts.

(Remarks, &c, next week)

Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate, Utica NY, Fri. 12 Jun 1846

MINUTES...—Concluded

REMARKS. The first thing which seems to demand attention, and may I be allowed to say, also, to require a word of reproof, is the limited representation in the Council. There are now sixteen Associations in the State, each entitled to four delegates—2 clerical and 2 lay—in all 64. By a reference to the Minutes, it will be seen that only 19 clerical, and 12 lay delegates were present—*less than half the number entitled to seats!* Brethren, 'these things ought not to be.' It is needless to look for that full measure of prosperity to our cause, which we profess so ardently to desire, without we can make some little personal sacrifices, to promote its interests—at least, so far as to discharge our duties in these convocations of its ecclesiastical bodies. These annual social gatherings are of great benefit. They reciprocally warm and invigorate each and every heart. Let one quarter, one third, or one half of the members absent themselves, and it throws a chill over the zeal and ardor of the remainder. This result is inevitable—it follows in the very nature of things. But let our Councils be *full*—let them be animated in their deliberations by the attendance of 'great numbers of people,' and every heart is strong.

In the matter of Statistics, also, there is great remissness. But [only] a solitary report on this subject was submitted at the present session, from all this Empire State. That Report was from the Standing Clerk of the St. Lawrence Association—Br. Waggoner. It represents the cause in that Association as in good condition—the principles of our faith are continually gaining ground, and prospects becoming more cheering. "The Association numbers 17 societies—three more than at last year's report. Three new houses [church buildings] are going up to be finished before the close of the year. Preachers are active, friends steadfast, the Death Penalty, few remaining advocates, and Temperance—'no license'—a large majority."

It is greatly to be regretted that so little attention is paid to this subject. The Standing Clerk of this Convention will find himself but poorly prepared for the discharge of his duties, towards the General Convention. Will not societies, and Associations, be persuaded to give greater heed to it? It is

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important in many respects—particularly for our own encouragement in our struggles with the many difficulties with which we have to contend as a denomination, and to enable us to give an official refutation of some of the slanderous representations of a bitter opposition.

By the Minutes it will be perceived that some action was taken in reference to the Theological Class under the charge of Br. Sawyer, at Clinton. This being an important movement, I can not suffer the occasion to pass without a brief word, in allusion to it. In the Council it elicited considerable remark, all decidedly testifying to its importance, and the necessity of some efficient action in elevating the standard of ministerial qualifications. It was argued that the growing importance of our cause, the spirit of the age—every thing, in short—demanded it. The experiment of a School had been commenced—(by individual effort)—and had been prospered beyond expectation thus far. It was now the duty of the denomination to lend a helping hand, by some concert of action in its behalf. It was proposed that a Board of Trustees be appointed, to look after its interests, to obtain funds, &c., &c. Before the question was put, however, Br. Sawyer addressed the Council at some length, embodying some plain, common sense remarks, which it is hoped will be remembered by every one who listened to them. He urged upon the Convention mature deliberation upon the step they proposed to take, showing conclusively that it was useless—yea, worse than useless—for them to move at all in the matter, unless they had fully counted the cost, and had deliberately resolved to go through with what they should undertake. It was a work in which no man should engage thoughtlessly—the hand once to the plough, the watchword must be onward, until the work was accomplished. Better—by far—leave the Class in its present unpretending situation, than give it any degree of notoriety, merely to pine away under denominational neglect. He hoped every one voting would realize all these things. The question on appointment of trustees was put and carried with but one dissenting voice; and that brother immediately explained—that the importance of the action, and a fear that it might not be efficiently sustained, was all that withheld his vote; but now that it had passed, the measure should have his whole heart and soul in its support.

It is believed the affairs of the School are entrusted to efficient hands. And now it only remains to be seen whether the Universalists in the State of New York will actively co-operate in this measure, and give of their substance and influence to bear it on to a triumphant termination. There is ample ability—only secure concert of action, and that promptly. In six months, or a year at farthest, the Theological School may be placed in an enviable condition—may be made an ornament to our cause in this State,

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and a source of inestimable benefit to the denomination at large. Brethren of the Empire State, will you suffer a word of exhortation in this matter, and promptly respond to it.

Intimately connected with the preceding subject, is the interest of the general Literary and Scientific Institute, at Clinton. It will be remembered that last year some steps were taken to bring this institution under the more immediate patronage of the denomination. These incipient measures have been attended with all the success that could scarcely be expected—perhaps more than could have been justly anticipated at the time. Within the year the valuable labors of Br. Sawyer have been secured as President of the Institution, a visible change has taken place in its prospects, confidence is increasing, and the school enlarging. With a property worth at least, ten thousand dollars above all claims, admirably located for the accommodation of the whole State, and a denomination boasting its *two hundred and fifty* societies, *one hundred and fifty* meeting houses, and *one hundred and thirty nine* preachers, within the bound of that State, what can hinder the school in its onward course to all desirable prosperity? *Nothing*—but our own supineness!

The able Address on Education, by Br. Sawyer, on Tuesday morning, presented some wholesome and important truths for our consideration, as a denomination. When published, we hope they will meet the eye of every Universalist in the State, and be an instrument in bringing forth fruits worthy of the great them of the Address. The average of One Dollar each, from every Universalist in the State, and those who would prefer supporting such an institution to most others in the State, would endow it in a manner, that it might demand its collegiate privileges, and place it upon a footing with any College in the State. Can any one doubt the favorable influence—the immense advantage to us—of such a state of things? Let every preacher take up the subject seriously in the field of his labor—let every active friend of our cause consider himself a committee to press this subject among his friends, and the work is accomplished ere the most sanguine of us could hardly look for it. I pray heaven that the denomination in this State may enter into this work, heart and soul, and thereby erect a monument to their zeal and munificence worthy of the blessed faith they profess to love above all things else, and which they would thereby most signally honor in practice.

The action touching Fellowship with the Convention, will be seen to be important so far as it has bearing on the Relief Fund, or a participation in its benefits. Some Specific Rule should be adopted, and it should be uniform through the State—that is, the same in all Associations. Then, no question could arise on the score of Fellowship, or of claims to the benefits of the Fund. The Rule may be very simple and easy of application.

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Finally, the present Convention has been a very pleasant one. Never, I may safely say, have I listened to more energetic and faithful preaching, than on this occasion. Every thing was conducted in harmony—the public services were all largely attended, and every countenance bore evidence of inward joy and rejoicing in the rapid progress of the cause of impartial and efficient grace.

The brethren in Newark, I should say in closing, opened their hearts and homes liberally to our accommodation, for which they will be gratefully remembered by those sharing their hospitalities.

P. PRICE

Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate, Utica NY, Fri. 19 Jun 1846

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