

Proceedings of the Convention

The New-York State Convention of Universalists held its annual session for 1852, in the city of Hudson, on the 26th and 27th of May.

The Convention was called to order by Br. Pitt Morse, Moderator of the last session, and the Divine blessing invoked by Br. J. J. Austin.

The roll having been made out, the following brethren were ascertained to be members of the Council:—

<i>Associations.</i>	<i>Clerical Delegates.</i>	<i>Lay Delegates.</i>
<i>Allegany,</i>	J. Whitney	
<i>Black River,</i>	P. Morse	M. E. Turner
	J. M. Peebles	
<i>Cayuga,</i>	L. M. Hawes	J. Hart
	N. Snell	
<i>Central,</i>	E. Francis	C. Foster
	T. J. Sawyer	M. Hubbard
<i>Chautauque,</i>	W. W. King	L. Harrington
	F. M. Alvord	N. A. Alexander
<i>Chenango,</i>	C. E. Hewes	
	W. M. DeLong	
<i>Hudson River,</i>	J. C. Waldo	Dudley Smith
	G. Collins	N. J. Herrick
<i>Mohawk River,</i>	D. Skinner	
	J. H. Harter	
<i>New-York,</i>	W. S. Balch	Geo. E. Baker
	D. K. Lee	L. Seymour
<i>Niagara,</i>	J. J. Austin	
<i>Ontario,</i>	G. W. Montgomery	
	C. A. Skinner	
<i>Otsego,</i>	J. A. Aspinwall	Levi Wood
		Charles DeLong
<i>St. Lawrence,</i>	J. W. Bailey	M. Thatcher
	J. T. Goodrich	
<i>Steuben,</i>		R. S. Davis

The Buffalo and Genesee Associations were not represented.

The Convention made choice of Br. W. [William] S. BALCH, for Moderator, Br. J. A. [Joseph Aikin] ASPINWALL, Clerk, and Br. W. W. KING, Assistant Clerk.

The Minutes of the last session were read, and no objections being raised, were allowed to stand unaltered.

The Moderator appointed the following Committees:—

On Nominations—Brs. D. [Dolphus] Skinner, J. C. Waldo, M. Thatcher.

On Relief Fund—Brs. G. Collins, J. J. Austin, J. T. [John Temple] Goodrich.

On Publications—Br. G. [Gerhardus] L. Demarest.

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On Sunday Schools—Brs. H. R. Nye, G. L. Demarest, N. [Nelson] Snell.

On the state of the Church—Brs. D. Skinner, A. G. Laurie, J. W. [James Wilson] Bailey.

On Missionary and Tract Efforts—Brs. J. T. Goodrich, H. [Henry] Lyons, J. J. Austin.

On Reforms—Brs. G. W. [George Washington] Montgomery, E. [Eben] Francis, E. H. [Edwin Hubbell] Chapin.

On Education—Brs. T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Sawyer, W. R. G. Mellen, J. C. Waldo.

The report of the Trustees of the New-York Universalist Relief Fund was read, and referred to a special Committee, consisting of Brs. G. Collins, J. J. Austin, J. T. Goodrich, who offered the following report, which was adopted:—

The Committee to whom was referred the Eighth Annual Report of the Trustees of the New York Universalist Relief Fund, respectfully report that they have examined the account of the Treasurer's Report of said Fund, and find it correct.

They recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:—

Resolved, That the Treasurer of the New-York Universalist be, and is, hereby authorized to pay the sum of one hundred dollars to the Rev. Samuel A. Skeele, of Cowlesville, (Buffalo Association,) for his benefit, agreeably to the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.

Resolved, That the Treasurer of the New-York Universalist be, and is, hereby authorized to pay the sum of one hundred dollars to the Rev. Benjamin Hobbs, of Bainbridge, Chenango co., a member of the Chenango Association, for his benefit, agreeably to the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.

Resolved, That the Treasurer of the New-York Universalist be, and is, hereby authorized to pay the sum of twenty-five dollars to Mrs. Polly, widow of Rev. Isaac Hayward, agreeably to the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.

Resolved, That the Treasurer of the New-York Universalist be, and is, hereby authorized to pay the sum of one hundred dollars to J. B. Sharp, Cuba, Allegany Association, for his benefit, agreeably to the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.

Your Committee can learn nothing of the present claims of Mrs. Abigail Morton, and therefore leave the case as it is left by the Board of Trustees, without any recommendation.

Your Committee recommend the approval of the investment of two thousand dollars of the Relief fund in bonds of New-York and Erie Rail Road.

The Board of Trustees report that Mrs. Magdalene Ritter Halsted, daughter of the late Col. [Cornelius] Harsen, late of New-York, has left a

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bequest of one thousand dollars to the Permanent Relief Fund. This is another evidence of the deep interest felt by the Harsen family, in the welfare of the aged and infirm Gospel laborer, the widow and orphan; and your Committee recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

Resolved, That this Convention learn with profound gratitude, that Mrs. M. R. Halsted has made a bequest of one thousand dollars to the New-York Relief Fund.

Resolved, That though human sympathy cannot alter the decrees of Providence, yet this Convention sympathizes with the relatives of Mrs. Halsted in their loss, and assure them that her name, as well as that of her father, will always be dear to the Universalists of this State.

Resolved, That a copy of so much of this report as refers to the bequest of Mrs. Halsted, be forwarded to Dr. J. [Jacob] Harsen of New-York [her brother] by the Moderator of this Convention.

G. COLLINS,
J. J. AUSTIN, } Com
J. T. GOODRICH,

The Educational Committee made the following report, which was accepted and referred to a special Committee, consisting of Brs. Geo. E. Baker, J. C. Waldo and P. Morse, who were instructed to report a [line is obliterated].

The Committee to whom was referred the Educational and Theological interests of Universalism in this State, beg leave to submit the following report.

In entering upon the duties of their appointment, your Committee deemed it advisable to ascertain in what relation the State Convention stood to the Clinton Liberal Institute, as that school is the only one in the State under the immediate patronage of the denomination. Accordingly a portion of the Committee met at the annual meeting of the Trustees of the Institute, and proposed inquiries to that body in reference to the object of their visit; the answers to which were in substance as follows:—

The board of Trustees of the Clinton Liberal Institute are a self-constituted body, having power to appoint their own successors, and the school is under the control of the Regents of the University of the State. The State Convention, therefore, has no direct connection with the Institute. The Board of Trustees, however, express a willingness and desire, for the purpose of bringing the school more under the jurisdiction and control of the denomination, to accept as their immediate successors, such persons as the Convention would be pleased to nominate.

In considering that portion of their duty which refers to the Theological interests of our denomination, the Committee re-appointed Br. E. Francis, Treasurer; and entered into an arrangement with Br. T. J. Sawyer for the

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continuation of his Theological class, for another year, notice of which was given at the time in our denominational papers. Subsequently the Committee held a meeting at the house of Dr. Lyman, in Chenango co., and organized by the appointment of proper officers. It was there voted to recommend to your body the formation of a State Universalist Educational Society, and a sub-Committee was appointed to draft a form of Constitution. It was further voted at that meeting that, for the purpose of meeting the engagement entered into with Dr. Sawyer, the subscribers to the paper for the support of the Theological school, circulated in Canton, at our last meeting, should be called upon for compliance with the terms of their subscriptions; and also that a call be made for a collection on the second Sabbath in February. The Secretary of the Committee has performed the duty of complying with these resolutions; how far they have been met will be ascertained by the report of the Treasurer.

The Committee recommended the following as a form of Constitution for an Educational Society.

The Committee to whom this report was referred, subsequently reported the following Constitution and Rules¹, which were adopted, and Brs. Geo. E. Baker, J. C. Waldo and P. Morse were chosen as the Committee recommended by a resolution therein contained.

The Committee on Reforms submitted the following report, which was adopted and ordered published with the minutes.

(This report will be Published next Week.)

The Committee on Publication submitted a report which was adopted and ordered placed on file; and voted to take up a collection to defray the expense of publishing the proceedings of present session.

Br. G. L. Demarest was re-appointed Committee on publication.

The Committee on Correspondence reported that no communications had been received—accepted.

Br. J. M. Austin was appointed a Committee to frame resolutions expressive of our feelings occasioned by the death of our late brother, H. B. [Henry Birdsall] Soule, who reported the following Preamble and Resolutions, which were adopted.

Whereas, it has pleased the Almighty Father, to remove our well-beloved brother, Rev. HENRY B. SOULE from the labors and responsibilities of this world, to the fruition of the Christian's hope and his crown of rejoicing in the immortal existence; therefore,

Resolved, That this Convention, while they bow in submission to the will of God, extend their heartfelt sympathies to his bereaved widow and children in the loss they have been called to experience, and implore the protection and blessing of Heaven to rest upon them.

¹ not in possession of the Clerk

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Resolved, That in the life of our deceased brother—in the purity of his habits, in the dignity of his deportment, in the integrity of his character, in his entire devotion to the legitimate ministerial duties, in his unwearied industry and zeal in laboring for the upbuilding of God's truth, even to the hour of death—an example is placed before our ministry, and especially the younger portion thereof, worthy of their studious and faithful imitation.

Resolved, That this Convention tender their sympathy to the Universalist Society in Lyons, N.Y., in being suddenly deprived by the death of Br. Soule, of the labors and counsel of an able and devoted pastor, in the infancy of their Society[']s existence, and pray the Great Head of the Church to send them soon a teacher competent to fill the office so unexpectedly vacated by the decease of their late minister.

Resolved, That this Convention has learned with great satisfaction, that the widow of our deceased brother, has in preparation, and will soon publish, a Biography of her departed husband, and that we pledge to her our most hearty co-operation in the circulation of the work.

Adjourned to hear the occasional sermon, after which the Council was called to order, and after prayer by Br. F. M. [Francis Milton] Alvord, it was resolved that our thanks be tendered to Br. [Day Kellogg] Lee for his occasional sermon, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

The proposition offered at the last session to change the time of the meetings of this Convention from the fourth week in May to the fourth week in August, was taken up, and a motion to adopt was entertained, when a motion to lay on the table was made and carried.—It was moved to enter the name of Br. J. M. Austin on the list of delegates from Niagara Association which was declared by the chair out of order, from which an appeal was taken and lost. Adjourned to 4 o'clock, P.M.

Afternoon session. The Committee on a Ministerial Mutual Relief Society submitted the following report, which was accepted:—

The Committee appointed at the last session of this body, to take into consideration the means of forming a Mutual Relief Society, composed of the Universalist ministers of this State, report,

That, having attended to that duty, they have been unable to devise any plan by which to meet the wants of the denomination in its present condition, as suggested by the resolution under which they were appointed.

W. S. BALCH, Cha'n.

[line obliterated] presented to the New-York Universalist Relief Fund, the sum of one hundred dollars, subject to the same regulation as the present fund, whereupon it was resolved, that we accept said donation, and tender to Br. Smith our hearty thanks for his kind and christian consideration of the inform, the widow and orphan.

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The Committee on Adjournment reported that requests had been presented by the Societies in Braman's Corners, Utica, Perry and Lockport, for the next meeting of the Convention, from which they reported in favor of Lockport, which, after an ineffectual attempt to amend by substituting Utica, was adopted.

The same committee reported the following nominees, all of whom were confirmed:—Br. C. [Cyrus] H. Fay, to preach the next occasional sermon. Delegates to the United States Convention to be held in the city of New-York next September, with power to appoint substitutes and fill vacancies—Clerical—J. T. Goodrich, J. M. Peebles, J. [John] H. Stewart, and W. W. King. Lay—Robert McKinstry, Hudson; H. S. Barnes, Troy; Ellery Cory, Cooperstown; Geo. H. Roberts, Rochester; Martin Thatcher, Canton; and Amos Warren, Stockton.

The Committee on the State of the Church, submitted the following report, which was adopted and ordered published with the minutes.

To the Council of the New-York State Convention of Universalists. The undersigned, Committee on the State of the Church, beg leave to make the following Report:—

It is with great regret that we feel obliged to state that we cannot furnish the Convention with a detailed statement of the condition of our cause. The reason is, that the Standing Clerks of the various Associations, with three exceptions, have failed to send in the required statistics, as desired by a published notice. Without these, it is impossible to comply with the requirements of the Convention. We can, therefore, only say, that from the personal knowledge we have gained upon the subject, we believe that, all things considered, we have causes of thankfulness for the progress which has been made in the diffusion of our faith, and for the increased prosperity that attends our Societies generally. And where Societies have languished, and fields have remained uncultivated, one of the prominent causes is, the want of a sufficient number of preachers to supply the Societies that desire, and the new fields that crave them. We may congratulate ourselves, however, with the new hopes given us by the success of our Denominational Paper, and the increased attention devoted to the subject of Theological education, that this want will be measurably, at least, supplied by bringing an increased number of faithful laborers into the work of the ministry.

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G. W. MONTGOMERY,
A. G. LAURIE, } Com.
J. H. STEWART,

Thursday Morning.—Called to order by the Moderator. United in prayer with Br. D. Skinner.

Br. G. W. Montgomery, agent of the Convention to confer with the Board of Trustees of the Paper and Book Establishment, submitted the following report, which was adopted:—

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

The undersigned, as the Agent chosen at the last session of the Convention “to act in its behalf with the Board of Directors” of the Universalist book and Paper Establishment, begs leave to make the following
REPORT.

In making this Report, I desire to say, that the Board of Directors have rendered me free assistance, through their Secretary, Br. F. W. Waller of New-York city, by whose kindness I have been made acquainted with the entire transactions and business of the Establishment.

[The expenditure and financial condition data are omitted here.]

ITS PRESENT PROSPECTS

It may and undoubtedly will be able at the close of the present year, to call in a portion of its stock, because the number of its subscribers has increased to six thousand six hundred, since January 1, 1852. And if its list could be extended to ten thousand, it would, in three years, repay the share-holders the money they have advanced, and then become the source of a handsome revenue to the State Convention, by which it could give an impulse to the cause, that would be felt in every direction. And there can be no question, but that there are Universalists enough in the State of New-York [line obliterated] patrons, if they all acted as they should, in regard to this important enterprise.

The object of creating a revenue for the diffusion of pure Christianity, may be aided, to some extent, at least, by a more extended support of the “Young Christian,” a monthly periodical adapted to the young of both sexes. This periodical now belongs to the Establishment. That faithful servant of the cross and of the lambs of Christ’s flock, Br. G. L. Demarest of New-York, has presented the “Young Christian” to the Establishment, and has generously agreed to edit it the present year free of charge. To say that its is an admirable production in its sphere, is only to admit its real merit. To say that its youthful patrons love it, is only to declare the truth. And to say that it should be in all our families, is only to affirm what ought to be a fact. A generous patronage will extend its usefulness and increase the revenue of the Establishment.

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On the whole, we may look upon the Concern with hope and encouragement. For even as it now stands, it will in a few years become the property of the Convention. While proper exertion and zeal on the part of our laymen and preachers, to increase its list, will effect that result in three years. This once accomplished, the Convention will then be enabled to carry out an important object.

And this object is, to sustain a School for the better preparation of candidates for the ministry, to send forth missionaries to proclaim the Gospel far and wide, and to scatter our books and papers broadcast over the land. That we need more ministers, is very evident; and that we can not have them in sufficient numbers, without some action on the part of the Denomination to call them into the field, is equally evident. And that the cause of truth may be greatly promoted by faithful missionaries and by the diffusion of our publications, no person can doubt. I know of no way in which this important work can be so easily effected than by the success of the Paper and Book Establishment. And if every professed friend of the cause would aid it, that success would be immediately sure, while each one would receive a rich return for his patronage, in the weekly reception of a paper that will feed his soul and instruct his family.

THE PAPER

Its business-affairs appear to be well managed, by Br. Fish of the Auburn Office, and by Br. Lyon of the New-York office, who has succeeded Br. [Benjamin B.] Hallock, he having ceased his labors in the department,, only to bestow his attention to a Society. Of the character of the paper itself, under the efficient care of Br. J. M. Austin, little need be said. It speaks for itself.—That it is an excellent paper; that its columns are ever full of interest; that it is so ably conducted as to excite the pride and praise of its supporters; and that it is in every way worthy of patronage; no person acquainted with it, can well deny. Though it has some minor defects, which the growing experience of its editor will correct, yet it this day ranks among the most vigorous papers of our denomination. We say this without the least opposing spirit to the veterans in our cause, conducted by individual enterprise, that have so long and so powerfully proclaimed the tidings of salvation. We trust that we do not forget the gratitude and admiration due from the denomination to their faithful editors, for the talent, zeal, and earnestness they have for years displayed in publishing papers which are second to none. They justly deserve and should receive an extensive patronage. There is room enough for them and for us. Therefore, when we speak of the *Ambassador* as a paper which shows marked ability, we do it without the least wish to detract from the merit or support of any other Universalist periodicals. We speak of it alone. And we affirm, that its high character, its deeply interesting matter, and its contemplated object, should

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command and receive the countenance and support of every Universalist in the State of New-York, and of other States, who can do so without injustice to other papers. All of which is respectfully submitted,

G. W. MONTGOMERY,
Agent of the Convention

The Resolution to change the time of meeting of this Convention to the fourth Tuesday in August, was taken from the table, and after considerable amicable discussion, was carried.

It was moved and carried to authorize the Sunday School Committee to appoint a preacher of the next occasional address on Sunday Schools. Br. H. R. Nye was appointed Sunday School Corresponding Secretary.

The following Preamble and Resolutions were offered and referred to a Committee consisting of Brs. T. J. Sawyer, Bro. E. Baker and P. Morse, with instructions to examine into the relations subsisting between Associations and the Convention, with leave to report at the next session.

Whereas this Convention has adopted a resolution that no person shall retain the fellowship of this Convention who for the space of one year ceases to preach the Gospel, to make it the business of his life, unless prevented by ill-health or other physical disability, and whereas this subject claims careful and judicious action, therefore,

Resolved, That this Convention recommend that the Clerk of each Association in its fellowship, report the name or names of such person or persons, within their respective Associations, who have obtained letters of Fellowship as preachers of our denomination, but who have neglected the duties of the ministry for one year, to their respective Councils, and that if it shall appear that such persons have ceased to preach except from physical disability, and have engaged wholly in secular pursuits, their letters of fellowship shall be demanded by the Association in which such persons reside at the time the report is made.

Br. G. W. Montgomery was appointed to continue as agent of this Convention in relation to the Paper and Book Establishment.

The Committee on Missionary and Tract Efforts, submitted the following report, which, with the accompanying Resolutions, was adopted; and Brs. C. H. Fay, D. K. Lee and H. R. Nye, were appointed the Committee recommended therein.

MISSIONARY AND TRACT EFFORTS

Your Committee on Missionary and Tract efforts, report that Missionary Societies have been formed in the New-York, Chenango, Cayuga, Buffalo, Mohawk River, Otsego, Chautauque and St. Lawrence Associations—the latter during the past year. If there are or have been others they have escaped their recollection. Br. Henry Lyon has labored several years as the agent of the New-York Missionary Society, in various places in that

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Association, and in northern New-Jersey and south-westerly Connecticut. Brs. Bu Hunt and I. [Isaac] George each have traversed the Chautauque Association as Missionaries. The year of the former closed last October, and that of the latter commenced at that time. Several others in different sections of the State have itinerated as much since the last session of this body, as their duty to the Societies with which they are connected and other situations in which they have been placed would permit; but so far as we know, none of them have been employed by Missionary Societies.

Tract Societies have been organized in the New-York, Ontario and Otsego Associations, and perhaps elsewhere; the first named only do we suppose to be in successful operation.

We believe the greatest obstacle to the success of the Missionary enterprise at the present time, to be the lukewarmness of those who should be its warmest [line obliterated] increasing scarcity of preachers of our faith throughout the State—a scarcity created by several causes, the more prominent of which are the following:—

1. The services of those poorly qualified have become in less demand and their number has constantly diminished.

2. Some never adapted to the profession, and generally, if not always, an injury to the denomination, by their visionary and transcendental opinions, or unstable and injudicious movements, have deserted us.

3. Not as many young men have recently entered our ministry as formerly.

4. And last, though not least, within a few years a considerable number of our Societies have so greatly increased in efficiency and strength that they support much more preaching than heretofore—a fact decidedly encouraging.

Other Committees will probably devise means for the increase of the ministry; and proper exertions by the press, the clerical and active lay brethren, and the faithful and devoted sisters of our faith, will kindle that zeal so necessary to successful missionary exertions.

Your Committee are also aware of the immense importance of the Tract enterprise, and have given it a portion of that attention which they conceive it imperatively demands. Nor have they overlooked the difficulties by which it is surrounded. It appears evident to them that the success of the missionary and Tract efforts depend very much on each other. Not that but little can be accomplished by either separately and judiciously prosecuted; for in that event an immense work may be consummated. This is clearly perceived by the great advancement of our cause where missionary labor has been performed or Tract distribution made, when entirely disconnected. But that through the exertions of the former the latter may be scattered and read with avidity, and blessed to the conversion of many souls, where

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otherwise they would not speedily, if ever, penetrate, and that a free and extensive circulation of Tracts of the right description, may greatly increase the number of members of our Societies and churches already existing. Here and there, not a few who would not listen to the public advocates of our faith, it may bring to a knowledge of the truth. And with measures adequate to their wide and general diffusion, it may open the way for the heralds of the salvation, high up our southern hills and mountains, and all along our vast extended northern forests, to the verge of cultivation, and through the length and breadth of our State. It may enable them to establish missionary stations, and by prosecuting their labors in all suitable ways, Societies, Sewing Circles, Sunday Schools, Conference meetings and churches, successively as circumstances will warrant, from our center to our remotest bounds. It may rear houses of worship as if by magic and gloriously extend the triumphs of the cross of Christ. With our present organization, when once procured, we anticipate no mighty obstacles to their almost universal dissemination in the immediate neighborhoods of all our active Societies. If the information can not be otherwise readily obtained, a meeting called for that purpose, by a Society, which can adopt proper measures and learn of suitable individuals in all directions, within and beyond their limits, where it would be expedient to scatter the tracts their liberality purchased, who would gladly, and generally, judiciously, perform the work entrusted to their care. And instrumentalities can easily be devised and employed to extend our theatre of operations to the utmost bounds that the funds we can invest in this enterprise will demand.

The plan presented in the resolutions hereto appended appears to us to be the best plan for the present condition of our denomination in this State that can be invented. In after years its mode of obtaining means may be changed or enlarged, and its manner of distribution varied or more widely diffused, as our situation may require. It is certainly in every respect eminently just, and every Society by adopting it may promote its own increase, and at no distant day aid in the formation of others, nearly in proportion to their liberality. It is suggested as the nucleus of a movement which shall constantly gather strength from one annual convocation to another, and mightily tend to usher in that happy era, when Christ's work on earth shall be finished; when just views of him, of God, of human duty and of our final destiny shall every where prevail; the last mourner be comforted; the last captive of sin and error be liberated; the last rebel subdued and reconciled; the last morally blind see, and deaf hear, and dumb sing the song of Moses and the Lamb; and all the children of a common parent and redeemed of a universal Saviour live together in a brotherhood of harmony and love.

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Resolved, That the duty of man is commensurate with his capacity; that of those to whom much is given much is required, and that Universalist Christians should greatly excel all others in their efforts to disseminate the truths and benefits of the Gospel.

Resolved, That the coldness and indifference of professed believers is, if possible, more paralyzing to the progress of the Missionary and Tract cause than their selfishness and penuriousness, and that they never can succeed without the exercise of a fervent zeal and cheerful liberality.

Resolved, That we recommend those Associations in which there are no Missionary Societies, to organize them at the earliest practicable time, after the plan of those in the New-York and St. Lawrence Associations, or in such other mode as may be best adapted to their wants; and with those in which they already exist, we urge them to such decisive action as will obtain as speedily as possible suitable laborers, the whole or such portion of the time as their means will support.

Resolved, That on the first Sunday in October it be earnestly requested that all Universalist clergymen in this State present the claims of the Tract Enterprise to their congregations, and that a collection be taken up on that day to aid this movement in every place that has meetings; and in those that do not, the first time thereafter of public worship.

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed by this Convention, to whom these collections shall be forwarded with as little delay as practicable; and that with the consent of the proper persons, they shall expend them in procuring pre-printed such selected, or in purchasing such already issued, or in obtaining and publishing such original, brief, pointed, Gospel Tracts for free circulation as they judge calculated to satisfy the honest and candid inquirer and guide the reflecting mind in the way of truth and holiness, and that they shall report all their doings and expenditures to the next Council of this body.

Resolved, That "to accomplish the greatest possible good with the means we have to employ," we should "help those who strive to help themselves," and in such a way as to stimulate them to renewed exertion; and that therefore each Society shall be entitled to such proportion of Tracts as they have furnished funds.

Resolved, That to increase our own interest and that of the friends generally in this noble enterprise, we urgently recommend the formation of a Tract Society, without delay, in all the Societies and in every place within this State, where there are a sufficient number of our faith to make it expedient; which shall require their members to contribute such monthly, quarterly or yearly sum, and demand such amount for life-membership, and raise funds in such other laudable ways as they shall consider advisable; and

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appropriate them and be benefitted by them as in the case of [line obliterated].

All of which is submitted in faithfulness and love by

J. T. GOODRICH

H. L. HAYWARD

The following resolutions were adopted:—

Resolved, That this Convention returns its grateful acknowledgments to G. L. Demarest, Esq., for his gratuitous services as Editor of the Young Christian, for the donation he has made of the same to our Book and Paper Establishment, and for his generous offer of services for the ensuing year.

Resolved, That we accept the offer of his services and recommend the Young Christian to the patronage of every Universalist family, as a work eminently fitted to assist parents in the religious and intellectual culture of their children.

Resolved, That each Universalist Clergyman in this State be specially requested to solicit members and donations for the Education Society.

Resolved, That the Sunday School Committee be requested to recommend a systematic series of books to be used in our Sunday school.

Resolved, That all monies and properties in the possession of the New York State Convention of Universalists, be transferred to the Trustees of the Universalist Education Society, together with all matters connected with the subject of education.

Resolved, That the hearty thanks of this Council are hereby tendered to the members of the Universalist Society in Hudson, and their Pastor, for the kind attention and hospitality they have so cheerfully extended during the session of the Convention.

Resolved, That the Clerk transmit a copy of the above to Br. Collins and his Society.

Adjourned to half past 1 P.M.

Afternoon session—Thanks were tendered to Br. Eddy for his Sunday School Address, and a copy requested for publication.

The following resolution was adopted:—

Resolved, That the Trustees of the Education Society be authorized to receive the Legacy of one thousand dollars, bequeathed by Mrs. Halsted for educational purposes.

W. S. BALCH, Moderator

J. A. ASPINWALL, Clerk

Eighth 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 Hudson, Columbia county, on Wednesday, May 26, 1852:—

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The Trustees of the New-York Universalist Relief fund, since their last Annual Report to the Convention, have received five applications for aid.

The first is the personal application of the Rev. Samuel A. Skeele, of Cowlesville, N.Y., and a member of the Buffalo Association. From his great age, and consequent physical infirmity, the Board recommend that the sum of one hundred dollars—same as last year—be paid to his order, in two equal instalments, in June and November, 1852.

The second is the application of the Rev. Dolphus Skinner, in behalf of the Rev. Benjamin S. Hobbs, of Bainbridge, Chenango County, N.Y., and a member of the Chenango Association. The necessities and afflictions of Br. Hobbs, as communicated to the Trustees by Br. Skinner, eminently entitle him to aid from the fund. The Board therefore recommend that the sum of one hundred dollars, in two equal instalments, be paid to his order, in June and November, 1852.

The third is the application of the Rev. S. J. Gowdy, in behalf of Mrs. Abigail Morton, widow of the Rev. Calvin Morton, late of the Allegany Association. Mrs. Morton has heretofore received aid from the fund, but the Board, not possessing the requisite knowledge, are unwilling to approve her claim, leaving it to the discretion of the Convention, on ascertaining her present situation, to vote a sum for her relief, not exceeding fifty dollars, and payable to her order in June, 1852.

The fourth is the application of E. H. Hayward, in behalf of Polly Hayward, now of Ashland, Massachusetts, widow of the Rev. Isaac Hayward, late of the Otsego Association. Mrs. Hayward has heretofore received aid from the fund, but as her situation is represented to be improving, the Board recommend a donation of twenty-five dollars, payable to her order in June, 1852.

The fifth is the application of the Trustees of the Universalist Society of Cuba, N.Y., in behalf of the Rev. I. B. [Ichabod Blakeslee] Sharp, of the town of Cuba, and a member of the Allegany Association. The diseased and necessitous condition of Br. Sharp, is avouched by Rev. O. B. Clark, of Philips Creek, Allegany Co., N.Y.—Br. Sharp received aid from the fund in 1847. The Board therefore recommended that the sum of one hundred dollars be paid to his order, in two equal instalments, in June and November, 1852.

The Treasurer's report herewith transmitted, shows an unexpected balance of four hundred and ninety-four dollars, thirty-eight cents, inclusive of an uninvested balance of sixty dollars, due the permanent fund. The balance remaining to donation account, with the receipts of interest during the year, will be sufficient to pay the appropriations recommended in this report, and leave an amount in the Treasury sufficient to meet the first payments of the next year.

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The Treasurer reports, and the Board most gratefully acknowledge, the receipt of *One Thousand Dollars*, being the amount of a legacy from Mrs. Magdalene Ritter Halsted, late of the city of New-York.—This sum, with one thousand dollars of the permanent fund, formerly loaned on bond, secured by a mortgage on real estate, and recently repaid to the Treasurer, have been invested in two bonds of the New-York and Erie Rail Road Company, each of one thousand dollars, payable in 1871, with interest at the rate of 7 per cent per annum. From the difficulty of loaning this sum at the present time, on real estate worth double the amount, as described by the terms of the original bequest, the Trustees have made the temporary investment in Rail Road bonds, believing the security undoubted, with a higher rate of interest than could be obtained from a loan on real estate. The Trustees, however, will not delay to loan this amount on a mortgage of real estate, when it can be invested on favorable terms—the present temporary investment will require the sanction of the Convention.

In conclusion, the Board advert with most thankful emotions to the present condition of the permanent fund, which, while it admits of a more enlarged beneficence, also affords an earnest of future and liberal contributions for the relief of the sick and suffering Gospel laborer, the destitute and sorrowing widow, and the helpless orphan.

Respectfully submitted,
By order of the Board,
JACOB HARSEN, Clerk

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

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 26 Jun 1852

Report of Committee on Reforms

Made to the State Convention at its recent session in Hudson, N.Y.

Is the genius of our religion to be discerned in the Reformatory movements of our time? This is a question of so great importance that its consideration would seem to be imperative upon the minds of those who profess a sincere faith in the great doctrine of the Final Resolution.

And if it be important to seek a satisfactory answer to this inquiry it would seem to be well to consider it as often as at least once in each year. And what more fitting time could we have, brethren, to pause and take a careful survey of the whole subject, than the occasion of our annual greeting in fraternal council,

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as representatives to act in reference to the interests of our blessed faith within the limits of the Empire State?

We are glad to remark at the outset that there is not now that squeamish sensitiveness in reference to this subject which once existed in our own denomination to a certain extent, in common with other sects claiming to be Christian, all over the land. We trust we have already outlived that. The time was, when if the minister dared to so far act as the Lord's freeman, and the servant of the Divine Master, and the leader of his flock, as to speak of any of the numerous evils in Christian communities, such as Intemperance, Slavery, War, Hanging, cruel abuse of the prisoner and the like, it would be very coolly hinted to him that he had better be a little more careful how he alluded to such things, or he might soon find himself in trouble; he had better attend to his own business—preach the gospel—and let other matters alone. And these self-wise societies at times would go so far, as not only to take the *subjects* on which their preacher should discourse, but his acts out of the pulpit under their supervision also. Thus they would object to his becoming a member of any institution against which they had a prejudice. That age we believe has already faded in the past. For now it is generally conceded that a minister is entitled to as much freedom of thought, speech and action as other men. He may now be a worthy member of the Masonic Fraternity, or the institution of Odd Fellows, or any of the various Temperance organizations, without being haunted with the fear of creating a division in his society. He may even *talk out* the convictions of his own soul in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn"—concerning any and all abominations, and although there may be many, who do not sympathise with him in all that he may say, yet they cannot but honor and respect one who gives full and free expression to what he believes duty requires.

It was not thus a few years ago. How did the fact that the minister had in some way spoken with favor of a certain organization, (or worse, was known to be a member,) cause the whole neighborhood to be wrought in a ferment? And then again, how, in various denominations, did the introduction of the subjects of Temperance and Slavery, create disturbance and excitement, even to the sundering of churches, and Societies, as well as the closer relationship between Pastor and people, though it had been of long years standing.

We well remember, (for example,) that in a certain neighborhood in New-England, there was a split among the Baptists on Temperance, and the one portion was long spoken of as Temperance or cold-water Baptists, and the other called by the cognomen, Jug-Baptists.

In this fact, that churches and congregations have come to have a more liberal feeling in regard to the views which may be cherished, or to which utterance may be given from the pulpit, on other than doctrinal points—in this very disposition of forbearance, we think we discover the mild and trusting spirit of our beloved faith. *That* demands that falsehood and sin should be met with truth and virtue; that truth and error should have *equal* opportunity to sustain

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themselves. *That* teaches us that in the stern strife, and long contest, truth and the right shall prove mighty, and must ultimately prevail.

Can we not discern signs of the times here, my brethren? We look back with surprise and shame on the apparent efforts once made in some sections, to control the pulpit; and the sickening dread once felt at the hearing of the word "Reform" spoken in the councils of religious Conventions and Associations. We have come to realize that our faith is destined to apply its spirit to the conscience and the heart; and that it will mould the soul of him that has received it in its purity and fullness, so that he shall strive to conform his life—his very acts, to its requirements.

With deep significance, an Apostle has said that—"Faith without works is dead, being alone." When the Harbinger of the Master stood up in the wilderness, and in a clear and sonorous voice, cried in the hearing of the many who came to his baptism—Repent, Reform!—it was seen in the austerity of his demeanor, and in the frugality and simplicity of his food and conduct, as in the coarseness of his garments, that he was sincere in his proclamation. And when men became so imbued with a determination of spirit that they would reform, they began to inquire in regard to their conduct, and so went to him, asking as soldiers, and as publicans, and as humble followers, "What shall we do?" To which John gave them explicit answer.—And not only was he faithful in applying his precepts, and directing how others must live if they would exhibit the fruits of true repentance, but he gave in his own acts, an example worthy of imitation. While he stood there alone, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "make his path straight"—"prepare ye the way of the Lord," it might have been thought by some to have been enough for him to do. The word so startling and significant, so strange and wonderful, might have been well thought to be pregnant with power and energy; and so it was, if it brought forth fruit in accordance with it. But to know of the fruit, one must see it and examine it. So to know of the fullness of the word of the Forerunner, we must judge by his own life—by his own conduct; and when we look into his history, we behold him, such as we might expect to find him. He was true and faithful; he conformed to the demands of duty—to the requirements of his own proclamation. He not only said "Repent ye" to the poorest and most degraded sinners, but he went into the presence of the proud and noble—even before Herod the king. And he rebuked that proud and haughty monarch, with the simple words of truth.—The consequences of that act, doubtless he well foresaw; but he held not back for fear of imprisonment and death; he spoke out with boldness; and to day we read the brief narrative of the life of John the Baptist, with an interest far superior to what we should otherwise have, because of his integrity and boldness; though he was on that account confined in a dungeon, and at last beheaded. Herod trembled at that word Reform, and vainly thought to smother its sound by putting him who was guilty of such audacity, to death. But the word—the spirit of its utterance—would not die—it could not be destroyed. It lived on, and from the lips of the Messiah, and his

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followers, it came peeling from mountain fastnesses and the depth of wildernesses—from the waters of Genessareth and Jordan—from the well of Jacob—from the synagogue and temple; it came with still accumulating force, and fell upon the ear, and touched the consciences of hosts of self-righteous men, and made them tremble and quake, as it thundered out Repent—Reform.

And it has been that same word which has rocked, as with earthquake power, dominions and thrones, where the spirit of iniquity has held controlling influence. It was thus in the time of Luther, in the bosom of that church whose sway had become so vast and powerful. What had the Pope, the Bishop and Clergy to fear from the invective of that humble monk, who stood there warning the church, and preaching, as he scattered the seeds of the Reformation. If they were innocent, his arrows, though dipped in bitterness, would not poison. And yet they feared, they trembled, they persecuted, nevertheless. The change came, and now in many lands the protestant faith has sway.

Reform has, within the last quarter of a century, become a word of every-day utterance. It has been made to apply to men of every form of religious opinion; and to those who have no special creed to which they give assent. Its appeals have been made, and are now being made, to the great mass of the people, irrespective of their national prejudices, their theological preferences, their sectional fancies. The pulpit urges, the press demands, the Lyceum discusses, all subjects and enterprises, that are of a benevolent and philanthropic nature. And [line obliterated] the more prominent reforms, there is a uniform concession that in the abstract, at least, they are good. Thus it would be an anomaly in this region, to find a man who would stand up before the community, and preach for intemperance; who would say that it is perfectly right and proper for a man or woman to drink of alcoholic beverages to intoxication, or that it is no sin for a father or husband to beggar his wife and children for the sake of gratifying his sensual debaucheries. Not a dealer in strong drinks is there who would say this.—Though men may indeed disagree concerning the adoption of measures, for the aid of Temperance, yet in plain words, they will say that they believe the *cause* good, and profess to oppose certain efforts because they believe it will retard its progress, if they are adopted.

When, therefore, we look around us to-day, and ask, how does the spirit of reform stand now in our midst, in comparison with what it was a few years in the past, the answer that comes is far otherwise than disheartening to the hopeful. And when the Universalist asks, whether the genius of his particular religious faith is to be discovered in the philanthropic and reformatory movements of the age, he receives for answer, in every direction, that it is. Ours is a form of faith as broad in its spirit as the universe. It looks out upon every sin-stained man—upon every oppressed fellow-creature—as of the same kinship with all other human intelligences; as alike the creation of the same God, and the children of a common parent. As they are all of one blood, they are brothers of one widespread family. Conceiving of this relationship, and

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feeling the electric chain of a brother's sympathy and love linking each with his fellow, and all with God, the Father, we are brought to have an interest in all—those of nearest kin, and those of a more remote connection.

When, therefore, the Universalist casts a scrutinizing glance into the operations of the community, in behalf of either of the Reforms, he discerns the genius of his faith working there.

It is a matter that needs no lengthy examination of the several reformatory enterprises of our time, to show that at the root—the foundation of each—is the idea of the Fatherhood of God, and the Universal Brotherhood of man, demanding the exercise of a world-wide charity and sympathy, and the ceasing of oppression, vice, and whatever degrades and injures humanity.

The preceding year has borne its witness to the existence of the philanthropic spirit in our own country. The progress of the Hungarian Exile has demonstrated how deep in the common heart is the love for the unfortunate, and the uprising of conscience against oppression. So, too, not to say anything of the attempts to enforce a statute that forbids the breaking of every yoke—the feeding of the hungry, the clothing the naked, and the aiding of those who are ready to perish—not to speak of this exciting thing, we may remark that the almost unprecedented sale of that noble book by Mrs. Stowe [Uncle Tom's Cabin], that is giving the curse of Slavery a most deadly thrust, is an earnest of great encouragement.

So again, we might speak of the very general interest awakened in reference to what is called the Maine Law, in reference to the cause of Temperance. And again, the gradually increasing interest on the subjects of Prison Discipline, Capital Punishment, and Peace, prove to our minds that love—christian, holy, universal love—is becoming deeper and deeper fixed in the soul, and manifesting its blessed spirit, which is the genius of our pure faith, more and more.

All this is speaking to us, as in the words of old—"Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

E. Francis
J. W. Bailey

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 3 Jul 1852

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