

## New York State Convention of Universalists

*Proceedings of the New York State Convention of Universalists, held in the city of Albany, on the 26th, 27th and 28th of August, 1856.*

The Convention was called to order by Rev. L. C. Browne, and on his motion, Rev. Pitt Morse was appointed Moderator pro tem, and Martin Thatcher, Secretary, pro tem.

The following persons presented credentials and took seats as delegates of the Convention:

<i>Associations</i>	<i>Clerical Delegates</i>	<i>Lay Delegates</i>
<i>Allegany</i>		
<i>Buffalo</i>	E. W. Reynold[s] T. J. Whitcomb	
<i>Black River</i>	Pitt Morse A. A. Thayer	G. Wood B. Thayer
<i>Cayuga</i>	J. M. Austin	
<i>Central</i>		D. Owen Alvin White
<i>Genesee</i>	W. E. Manley	
<i>Hudson River</i>	J. N. Parker S. Jenkins	E. Murdock H. Peacock
<i>Mohawk River</i>	J. D. Hicks B. B. Hallock	Ezra Graves Wm. J. Lewis
<i>New York</i>	T. J. Sawyer B. H. Davis	F. Johnson Thomas Wallace
<i>Niagara</i>	D. C. Tomlinson N. Snell	
<i>Ontario</i>	A. Kelsey	E. T. Grant
<i>Otsego</i>	L. C. Browne C. W. Tomlinson	J. Hyney
<i>Steuben</i>	A. G. Clark L. Payne	P. H. Bitley
<i>St. Lawrence</i>	D. K. Lee H. H. Baker	B.[Barzillai] Hodskin M. Thatcher

United in prayer with Br. L. C. Browne.

Balloting was then had for Moderator and Clerk, which resulted in the selection of Rev. P. Morse, and Marvin Thatcher to those offices, respectively. Rev. C. W. Tomlinson was chosen Assistant Clerk.

On motion of Rev. A. A. Thayer, Brs. L. C. Browne, Pitt Morse and F. Johnson were appointed a committee to advise with the Trustees of the Albany Society in relation to their pecuniary embarrassments.

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On motion, Voted, That the chair appoint a committee of three on Nominations.

The chair appointed as such committee, E. W. Reynolds, E. Graves and A. Kelsey.

Adjourned until 2½ P.M.

2½ P.M.—Convention met pursuant to adjournment. United in prayer with Rev. A. A. Thayer.

Rev. L. C. Browne, from the committee to whom was referred the subject of the *Albany Society*, made the following report, which was accepted and adopted.

### REPORT

The committee to whom was referred the request of the Universalist friends in Albany for the sympathy and counsel of this body in regard to their embarrassments,

Report—That the Universalist Society in Albany are in possession of a good church edifice, erected in 1833 at a cost of \$15,000.

This property is involved to the amount of \$5,500. The Society has struggled for many years to preserve their church property from alienation, and sustain public worship, often under circumstances of great difficulty and discouragement.

Albany is an important position for our cause, both as a centre of travel, and as the capital of the most populous state in the Union; and therefore a distinctive organization should be sustained in this locality.

The time approaches when the church debt must be cancelled or the property sold at great sacrifice, and their worship indefinitely suspended.

If the church debt were paid, there are friends in Albany willing to make up sufficient to continue the support of worship. Individuals in Albany are ready to contribute to the liquidation of this debt \$2500. A neighboring clergyman gives assurance of \$1000, from individuals out of the said city.

Under these circumstances, your committee recommend the following action of this body, in behalf of the Universalist Society in Albany:—

Whereas the cause of Universalism has been planted in past years by the arduous labors of able clergymen, and the generous sacrifices of benevolent lay brethren, in the city of Albany; and whereas the Universalist Society in said city finds itself, at the present time, unable to continue public worship, and clear its church property from pressing liabilities, Therefore,

*Resolved*, That we recommend to the Universalist public to contribute liberally to this object; and that, in addition to the contributions of individuals, public contributions be taken up in all our congregations in this State, for said object, on the second Sunday in October ensuing.

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L. C. BROWNE  
P. MORSE  
F. JOHNSON

Rev. E. W. Reynolds, from the committee on Nominations, made a report, which, after discussion, was on motion laid upon the table.

Adjourned until 8 o'clock Wednesday morning.

*Wednesday morning, Aug. 27th.*

The Convention met pursuant to adjournment.

United in prayer with Rev. J. M. Austin.

The Twelfth annual report of the New York Universalist Relief Fund, was presented by Rev. T. J. Sawyer, and on his motion was accepted and referred to a committee consisting of T. J. Sawyer, J. D. Hicks, and T. Wallace.

*Twelfth 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 Albany, Albany County, on Tuesday, August 26, 1856.*

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

The first is the personal application of Rev. Samuel A. Skeeles [Skeele], of Cowlesville, N.Y., and a member of the Buffalo Association. Br. Skeeles has been an annual recipient of the benefit of the fund; the Trustees would therefore recommend that one hundred dollars be paid to his order—fifty dollars in the month of October, 1856, and fifty dollars in the month of April, 1857.

The second is an informal application of the widow of Rev. W. Hyatt, "supposed to have been a member of the Cayuga Association." The Trustees requested further information, but were not able to obtain the evidence necessary for their favorable action.

The Trustees would suggest to the Convention the propriety of applying to the Legislature of the State of New York, for an Act of Incorporation; believing that thereby the inconvenience attending a change in the investment of the fund—when absolutely necessary—would be obviated.

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

The Treasurer's report further shows a most gratifying increase of the *Permanent Fund* from the receipt of a legacy of Three Thousand dollars, from the widow and executors of the estate of John Blyer, late of the city of New York.

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In recording this noble bequest of our late brother and departed friend, together with his other generous benefactions to the Institutions of the Universalist denomination, we indulge the hope, that his example will incite others to similar acts of Christian philanthropy to the sick and disabled of the living, and to the destitute and helpless survivors of the dead.

Respectfully submitted by order of the Board,

JACOB HARSEN, President

*The New York Universalist Relief Fund in ac't with Abner Chichester, Treasurer, 1855.*

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

On motion of Rev. T. J. Sawyer, the report of the Committee on Nominations was taken from the table, and the Convention adopted it as follows:—

Committee on Nominations reported,

Place of adjournment—Canton

Preacher of Occasional Sermon—Rev. E. W. Reynolds

Agent for Paper and Book Establishment—Q. McAdam.

Delegates to the United States Convention—*Clerical*—J. T. Goodrich, P. Morse, W. S. Balch, T. J. Sawyer, A. Kelsey, E. W. Reynolds, N. Snell. *Lay*—A. C. Moore, L. A. Reynolds, G. Wood, H. G. Lake, John Shattuck, J. Barber, E. Graves, E. [Ezra] S. Barnum, Hamilton Coleman, J. M. Chrysler, Ansel McKinstry, N. Van Nostrand, S. N. Sherman and A. G. Perry.

### STANDING COMMITTEES

Sunday Schools—H. R. Nye, W. N. Barber, C. G. Gordon, George Roberts.

Reforms—N. Snell, D. C. Tomlinson, R. H. Pullman.

Education—L. C. Browne, D. K. Lee, M. Thatcher.

Missionary Enterprise—J. M. Austin, A. Kelsey, D. P. Livermore.

Adjourned until 2 P.M.

2 o'clock P.M.—The Convention met pursuant to adjournment.

United in prayer with Rev. J. N. Parker.

On motion of Rev. T. J. Sawyer, a Committee of three was appointed to represent the interests of the Convention in the meeting of Stockholders of the Paper and Book Establishment, consisting of Brs. J. N. Parker, F. Johnson and A. Kelsey.

Q. McAdam, agent of the Universalist Book and Paper Establishment, submitted the following report, which was accepted and ordered published with the proceedings of this Convention.

### REPORT

To the New York State Convention of Universalists, assembled in Annual Session at the city of Albany, N.Y.

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

That, at the last meeting of the Board of Directors of the Concern, held on 12th December, 1855, the assets of the concern appeared to be:—

In debts due to the concern	7,853.44
In Books, Stationery, Stereotype plates, &c.	4,530.86
In cash on hand	1843.40
Making the total assets	\$14,227.70
Its liabilities at the same time amounted to	1,220.64
Showing the nett <sup>[sic]</sup> assets, or estimated value of the concern to be	13,007.06
The nett assets at the date of the annual meeting in 1854, amounted to	11,373.35
Showing a gain during the last year of	\$1,633.71
The interest of the Convention in the Concern may be shown thus:	
Amount of nett assets 12th Dec., 1855	\$13,007.06
Amount of unredeemed stock	5,211.07
Value of the interest of the Convention	\$7795.49

I am informed by the business agents at Auburn and New York, that scrip to the amount of \$550 has been redeemed since the date of the last meeting of the Board of Directors (December 12, 1855) which leaves the amount of unredeemed stock at this date \$4661.57.

These figures show conclusively that the Book and Paper Establishment has not been an unprofitable one. The denomination have no reason to be dissatisfied with its success, but it is not quite so clear that the Concern has no ground of complaint against the denomination.

It will be observed that the debts due to the Concern on 12th December last amounted to

12th December last amounted to	\$7853.44
While the total amount of unredeemed stock at that time amounted to but	5,211.57
Being less than the amount of debts due, by	\$2641.87

A considerable amount of [? unreadable] unquestionably good and collectible, and, no doubt, has since been liquidated.—But there is no inconsiderable amount due to the Concern, of long standing; accounts quite too venerable to exist between members of a christian denomination, and the organ of their faith. It would be but a small undertaking, for each one indebted to the concern, to balance his account; but what a grand result would be attained by prompt and united action in this respect amongst such of our friends as are now in arrears. The outstanding stock might be at once redeemed, and the entire Paper and Book Concern be the property of the

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convention, having to provide means for no other purpose than for the enlargement and increase of its own prosperity and usefulness.

It has been suggested by some that the assets of the Concern (\$14,227.70) should be at once made to yield in cash the amount necessary for the redemption of the whole of the outstanding stock, and the whole Concern be at once made the property of the Convention.

This suggestion might be carried out in two different ways, first, by those indebted to the Concern immediately squaring their accounts, which they are not only legally but morally bound to do, but which duty on their part can not well be enforced by other means than mere persuasion; and secondly, by the sale of our Book Establishment.

If the first of these methods were practicable, of course there could be but one opinion as to the propriety of its adoption. Whether the other alternative should be adopted calls for some deliberation. Whatever course the Convention may pursue in reference to the extinguishment of the outstanding stock, I venture to suggest for your consideration the propriety of consolidating the business of the Concern, having but once office, one managing agent, and one set of employees. It is believed by many that the adoption of this suggestion would be, in many ways, advantageous to the Concern. There seems to be good reason for supposing that a large book establishment, under the auspices of our denomination in the city of New York could hardly fail of success; and in reference to the Paper Establishment, it seems clear that New York is the place for obtaining at all times the latest news; and without detracting in the least from other localities, it is believed that our paper would there be likely to gather around it a degree of talent certainly equal, if not superior to that available elsewhere. New York would therefore seem to be the place for the location of the consolidated establishment, whether it should [would] be, as now, a paper and book concern, or a paper alone.

Having but one establishment would necessarily ensure a saving of expense, as many of the items of expenditure are now duplicated, owing to the existence of two independent agencies.

Without argument pro or con, the questions are simply presented for your consideration, first, as to the propriety of consolidating, and secondly, as to the location of the establishment if consolidated.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

Q. MCADAM, Agent

*New York, August 20th, 1856*

Adjourned until 8 o'clock to-morrow morning.

*Thursday, 8 o'clock, A.M.*—The Council convened according to adjournment.

United in prayer with Br. L. Payne.

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On motion of Rev. J. N. Parker, it was

*Resolved*, That no member of the Council shall speak upon any subject more than twice nor more than ten minutes each time, until all others who wish shall have spoken, unless special permission be given for that purpose.

On motion of Rev. W. E. Manley, it was

*Resolved*, That a committee of one be appointed to enquire into the funds of the Paper and Book Establishment, with relation to the portion of the stock redeemed in favor of the *State Convention*.

The chair appointed Hon. Ezra Graves of Herkimer, said committee.

The committee appointed to consider the report of the Trustees of the "Harsen Relief Fund," submitted the following report, which was adopted.

### REPORT

The committee to whom were referred the Report of the Trustees of the Universalist Relief Fund, beg leave respectfully to report,

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Trustees, we advise that the Convention appropriate the sum of one hundred dollars to Samuel A. Skeele[s] of Cowlesville, N.Y.

Your committee also advise that a committee be appointed to confer with the Trustees, and use their efforts to secure from the Legislature a charter for the Relief Fund.

Your committee further recommend that the Convention instruct the Trustees to invest not more than one thousand dollars now in the hands of the Treasurer, in such manner as they shall deem advisable, and add the same to the Fund.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

THOMAS J. SAWYER  
WILLIAM WALLACE  
J. D. HICKS  
Committee

Bro. Geo. E. Baker of Albany was appointed [to] the committee, recommended by the adoption of the above report.

On motion of Br. W. E. Manley, it was

*Resolved*, That this Council recognizes rev. L. C. Brown[e] as the agent of the New York State Convention, to obtain subscriptions and collect funds for the Clinton Liberal Institute; and we would impress upon the Universalists of this State the urgent necessity of raising funds immediately to liquidate the debt of that Institution.

On motion of Br. H. R. Nye,

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to Br. D. K. Lee for his excellent Occasional Sermon, and that he be requested to furnish a copy thereof for publication in the *Christian Ambassador*.

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Br. H. R. Nye, in behalf of the committee on Sabbath Schools, submitted a report which was adopted and ordered published with the proceedings of this Convention.\*

Rev. E. W. Reynolds, in behalf of the Committee of Reforms, submitted a report, which was adopted by the Convention and ordered it published.†

*Voted*, That M. Thatcher prepare the minutes of the Convention for publication in the *Christian Ambassador*.

*Voted*, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to the Society and friends in Albany, for their kindness and hospitality in providing for the delegates and friends from abroad.

On motion, adjourned to meet in Canton, St. Lawrence Co., on the 4th Tuesday in August, 1857.

Closed by prayer with Br. N. Snell.

PITT MORSE,  
Moderator.

MARTIN THATCHER, Clerk  
C. W. TOMLINSON, Assistant Clerk

*Clergymen Present.*—T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Sawyer, Wm. S. Balch, H. R. Nye, B. H. Davis, J. M. [John Mather] Austin, Pitt Morse, J. [John] D. Hicks, J. T. [John Temple] Goodrich, E. W. [Elhanan Winchester] Reynolds, Wm. E. Manley, A. [Albert] G. Clark, A. [Alanson] Kelsey, C. C. Gordon, J. N. Parker, A. A. Thayer, L. C. [Lewis Cresaba] Browne, S. [Samuel] Jenkins, N. [Nelson] Snell, D. C. [DeWitt Clinton] Tomlinson, C. [Charles] W. Tomlinson, H. H. Baker, B. [Bernard] Peters, H. [Henry] Lyon, D. K. [Day Kellogg] Lee, Wm. H. Waggoner, Geo. W. Skinner, F. B. [Francis Benson] Peck, L. Payne, A. D. Mayo, S. [Shaler] G. Hillier, B. [Benjamin] B. Hallock, Wm. McNeil, Ezra Sprague, J. Bishop, S. Farrington, Vermont.

\*This Report has not been placed in my hands, and consequently will not be published as directed.

†This report is in the same position as Br. Nye's.

*Christian Ambassador*, Auburn NY, Sat. 20 Sep 1856

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