

New York State Convention

The New York State Convention of Universalists met in annual session at Auburn, Cayuga County, Tuesday, August 26, 1862, and on finding a quorum present, organized by choosing Rev. T. D. [Theodore Dwight] Cook, of Utica, as Moderator, and N. H. Benson, of Troy, Clerk of the session, and Rev. L. L. Briggs, of Mohawk, Assistant Clerk.

United in prayer with the Rev. G. W. [George Washington] Montgomery.

The minutes of the last session were read by the clerk.

On motion the Moderator appointed I. [Isaac] M. Atwood, I. [Isaac] George, and E. [Ely] T. Marsh, a committee on unfinished business; also C. C. Gordon, J. M. Muscott, and A. [Alanson] Kelsey, were made a committee on nominations.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Committee on State of the Church, asked further time. Granted.
2. Committee on Sunday Schools, not ready.—Laid over for the present.
3. Committee on Missionary and Tract Enterprise, asked further time. Granted.
4. Committee on Publication, through G.W. Montgomery, made a full report, (see Doc. A) which was referred to E.G. [Elbridge Gerry] Brooks, E. [Ely] T. Marsh, and C.C. Gordon.
5. Trustees of Harsen Relief fund submitted their report, (see Doc. B) in connection with the report of the Treasurer of said Fund, which was read and referred to A. [Albert] G. Clark, I.B. [Ichabod Blakeslee] Sharp, and G. [Gideon] S. Gowdy.
6. Committee on Complaints and Appeals, laid over for the present.
7. Committee on Act of Incorporation, asked further time. Granted.
8. Committee on Reorganization, asked that a special time be assigned for their report, and on motion the report was made the special order for this evening.

On motion, *Voted*, That the report of the Standing Committee on Sunday Schools, be made the special order of Wednesday afternoon.

On motion, adjourned to 2 o'clock, P.M.

Tuesday, 2 o'clock, P.M.—Council convened pursuant to adjournment, and was called to order by the Moderator. Minutes of previous session read and approved.

The special committee on the report of the Trustees and Treasurer of the Relief Fund, made their report through Rev. A.G. Clark; that they found the same correct, and offered the following resolutions on the recommendations therein contained.

1. *Resolutions*.—That the sum of One Hundred Dollars be donated to Mrs. J.A. Aspinwall of Nunda—one hundred dollars to Mrs. Alice C. Hallock of New York—seventy-five dollars to Mrs. Martha Smith, of Bridgewater—and fifty

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dollars to Mrs. Jerusha Smith of Bloomfield; and that one thousand dollars be added to the Permanent Fund.

The report was, on motion, agreed to, and the committee discharged.

The committee on unfinished business reported no business. Report accepted, and committee discharged.

Under the proposition "Has any one any thing to offer for the good of the denomination and cause," the interest of the *Ambassador*, its circulation, means of collecting arrears, for obtaining new subscriptions, &c., was taken up and discussed by the members generally.

Tuesday evening.—Session convened in the Church, and was called to order by the Moderator. United in prayer with Rev. A.R. Abbott.

Minutes of the afternoon session read and approved. Rev. E.G. Brooks submitted his report on Reorganization (see Dec. C.) On motion, the report was laid on the table.

On motion, the Council adjourned to 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Wednesday morning.—Session convened pursuant to adjournment at 9 o'clock. Called to order by the Moderator, and united in prayer with Rev. E. Fisher.

The roll was called; a quorum present. The minutes of the evening session read and approved.

Rev. E. Fisher offered the following resolution, which was adopted.

Resolved, That to meet the necessity for a uniform role of Fellowship, it is needful that all the members be in the Fellowship of the State Convention, and if the State Convention be charged with the responsibilities of Fellowship, it should also have the power to prescribe the terms and rules thereof, and to enforce the same. On motion,

Voted, That the report of the Committee of 1861, on By-Laws, be read by the Clerk.

Rev. G.W. Montgomery proposed a substitute for the same, which was read; after which the Council took a recess, to hear the Occasional Sermon in the Church. At the conclusion, on motion, adjourned to 2 o'clock P.M.

Wednesday, P.M.—Session convened at 2 o'clock, and was called to order by the Moderator. The minutes of the morning session read and approved.

By a vote of the Council the proposition of Rev. G.W. Montgomery which was under consideration at the time of adjournment, was laid on the table.

Rev. I. George offered the following Resolutions:

Resolved, That in the reorganization of this Convention it is desirable to retain Associational Representations, rather than that of Societies, Churches, and Sabbath Schools.

Resolved, That in such reorganization of the State Convention, it is desirable to secure to each clergyman in fellowship with said Convention, the

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right of a seat in its Council, and to each Association a number of lay delegates equal at least to the number of Clergymen within its limits.

During the discussion of the above resolutions, the Council voted to attend a special meeting appointed up stairs to hear the Report of the Standing Committee on Sunday Schools, which was read by the Clerk, and on motion was accepted, ordered filed, and printed with the minutes; after which the Council took seats below and proceeded to the discussion of I. George's resolutions, which were adopted.

The substitute of Rev. G.W. Montgomery for the Committee's Report of By-Laws was taken from the table and discussed, pending which the Council adjourned to 7 o'clock.

Wednesday evening—Session convened at 7 o'clock pursuant to adjournment, and was called to order by the Moderator.

The minutes of the afternoon session were read and approved.

The subject under consideration at the time of adjournment was taken up, and discussed, and laid on the table.

Rev. I.M. Atwood offered the following Resolution:—

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed to submit resolutions on the state of our Country; which was adopted, and Rev. I.M. Atwood, A.R. Abbott and J.T. [John Temple] Goodrich were made the Committee called for by the resolution.

A motion was made to take up for consideration the By-Laws reported by the Committee of 1861, pending which a communication from Revs. E.G. Brooks, E. Fisher and G.W. Montgomery was received, read, and proposition therein contained agreed to.

The Council proceeded to the consideration of the same, pending which, the Council adjourned to 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Thursday morning—The Session convened at 9 o'clock pursuant to adjournment, and was called to order by the Moderator. The minutes of the evening session read and approved.

Rev. E. Fisher submitted the following Resolution:—

Resolved, That this Council in behalf of the New York State Convention of Universalists, now and heretofore known as such, do hereby transfer all our and their property, assets, rights, privileges and immunities of every kind to the New York State Convention of Universalists as constituted under an act of incorporation, passed April 12, 1862, and to their associates and successors as this day constituted by their vote, it being understood that they also assume all debts, liabilities, and obligations of the first named body; and we hereby direct all our Agents, Clerks, and Committees to transfer as soon as may be, to the last named body or its Treasurer or Executive Committee, all property of whatever description now in their hands.

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This resolution was adopted unanimously. After reading and approving the minutes, united in prayer with Rec. J.M. [James Minton] Pullman. After which the Council adjourned *sine die*.

T.D. COOK, Moderator

N.H. BENSON, Clerk

Meeting of Corporators

Met in the vestry of the Universalist Church in Auburn, on Wednesday, August 28, 1862, at 8 o'clock A.M. E.G. Brooks, Moderator; L.C. [Lewis Cresaba] Browne, clerk.

Act of Incorporation read, and adjourned till Thursday morning at 8 o'clock.

Thursday morning.—Came to order at 8½ o'clock A.M. Rev. E. Fisher, Moderator.

Voted, That our Associates be Members of the Council of the New York State Convention of Universalists, now and heretofore known as such, and that our and their Successors be the Members of each successive Council of the New York State Convention of Universalists from year to year, in their official capacity.

Resolved, That the Constitution of the New York State Convention of Universalists as now organized, be our constitution for the time being, with the exception of the 8th Article.

Voted, That the Rules of Order of the New York State Convention be our Rules of Order until others are adopted.

On motion, proceeded to the election of officers of the Convention as an incorporate body—Rev. J.M. [John Mather] Austin and E.T. Marsh, acting as tellers. The result of the election was as follows:

Rev. E. Fisher was made Moderator; N.H. Benson, Clerk of the session; Rev. J.W. [James Wilson] Bailey, Standing Clerk; C.G. Briggs, Treasurer, and L.L. Briggs, Assistant Clerk.

Rev. E.G. Brooks offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That article 4 of the Constitution be amended so to read as follows:—

1. The officers of the Convention shall consist of a Moderator, Sessional clerk, Standing Clerk, Treasurer and an Executive Committee of five, who shall have charge of the business of the Convention, each to be elected by ballot.

2. The Moderator (who shall be elected immediately after the first roll of members is made,) shall preside over the meetings of the session, preserve order and facilitate the accomplishment of the business of the Convention.

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3. The Sessional Clerk, (who shall be chosen immediately after the first roll of members is made,) shall keep a full and faithful record of the proceedings of the Convention, and prepare for the Standing Clerk a fair copy of the same, for insertion in the Record Book. He shall prepare for publication whatever portion of the minutes the Convention shall order be published, but shall not make the Standing Clerk dependent on any printed account for his copy for the Book of Records. He shall transmit to the Recording Secretary of the United States Convention of Universalists, a certified copy of the list of delegates from this body to that.

4. The Standing Clerk shall faithfully enter the minutes received from the Sessional Clerk into the Book of Records, and certify the accuracy of his copy. It shall be his duty to notify the meetings of the Convention, through the denominational papers. He may be chosen at any meeting of this body, and shall continue in office until a successor be appointed; and in case of his death or resignation, the last Sessional Clerk shall be empowered to obtain the Book of Records, and to perform the duties of his office till the vacancy be supplied.

5. The Treasurer shall give bonds with sureties, to be approved by the Executive Committee, for the faithful performance of his duties. He shall receive and have custody of all monies, securities and other property belonging to the Convention, which he shall keep, and disburse under the direction of the Executive Committee. He shall accurately enter in the books of the Convention an account of its financial transactions, and render a report of the same and of the property of the Convention audited by a committee appointed for that purpose, to the Council at its Annual Session.

On motion, proceeded to the election of the Executive Committee which resulted as follows:—Rev. T.D. Cook, Charles Bemis, George A. Moore, N. [Norman] Van Nostrand and Rev. G.W. Montgomery.

Committee on Nominations submitted their report which was adopted as follows:—

Committee on Sunday Schools—Revs. G.T. Flanders, M. [Moses] Ballou and A.R. Abbott.

Committee on State of the Church—Revs. H. Blanchard, T.D. Cook and C.W. [Charles Welden] Tomlinson.

Committee on Missionary and Tract Enterprise—Revs. R.H. [Royal Henry] Pullman, A.A. Thayer and L.L. Briggs.

Committee on Reforms—Revs. A. [Asa] Saxe, S.R. [Samuel Roland] Ward, and R. [Richmond] Fiske, jr.

Committee on Education—Revs. J.S. [John Stebbins] Lee, M. Goodrich and E. Fisher.

Committee on Complaints and Appeals—Revs. D. [Dolphus] Skinner, L.C. Browne, and E.T. Marsh.

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Delegates to the United States Convention—Revs. A.R. Abbott, E.G. Brooks, N. [Nelson] Snell, J.T. Goodrich, E.M. Whitney, *clerical*; N.H. Benson, P.P. Demarest, L. Gurnsey, H. Blackman, D.H. Higby, R. Simmons, L.H. Bigelow, C. [Charles] Danolds, J.M. Chrysler, S. Murdock.

Preacher of Occasional Sermon—Rev. J.H. [Jonas Hazard] Hartzell, of Buffalo.

The Moderator on taking his seat called the Convention to order. J.M. Muscott submitted the following resolution, which was adopted.

Resolved, That this body accept and adopt as its own, the Act of Incorporation passed [during] the last session of the Legislature of this State, April 12, 1862, entitled An Act to Incorporate the New York State Convention of Universalists, and that all the debts, credits and effects, and all the property of every name and kind, legal or equitable, belonging to and owned by the body heretofore known as the New York State Convention of Universalists, be and the same is hereby received and accepted by the corporate body named in said Act, for the purpose therein specified.

The Moderator read the legal qualifications of the Sessional and Standing Clerks of the State Convention of Universalists of the State of New York, which were ordered on file.

Committee on Resolutions on the State of the Country, submitted the following resolutions, signed by Revs. A.R. Abbott and I.M. Atwood, which were adopted:—

Resolved, That we humbly recognized in the present deplorable condition of our country, the righteous retribution of Divine Providence for our National infidelity to the great principles of human freedom upon which the government was founded. And,

Whereas, The present rebellion is an attempt on the part of the Rebels to extend and perpetuate that infidelity which the founders of the Republic regarded as transitory and evanescent, therefore

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Council, the only guaranty for the permanent peace to the country is the removal of the cause of the Rebellion.

Resolved, That we invoke the Government, pledge ourselves and exhort our brethren, to adopt all constitutional, loyal and patriotic measure to remove that cause.

Rev. J.T. Goodrich submitted the following Minority Report, which was agreed to and ordered printed with the minutes:—

Whereas, The present Rebellion in any aspect in which it can be viewed, is utterly without justification, and whereas, it is an attempt on the part of those engaged in it to overthrow the best government that men have ever instituted and to establish upon its ruins one that is subversive of some of the first principles upon which it is based, and in its atrocity it is without parallel in human history, therefore,

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Resolved, That it is the imperative duty of every loyal citizen, regardless of the cost of life or treasure, to sustain the "powers that be," in all constitutional or necessary measures to bring it to a speedy termination, and to mete out to the leaders who instigated it, the punishment they so richly merit. On motion,

Voted, That the delegates to the United States Convention have power to appoint substitutes and fill vacancies.

Rev. J.M. Austin offered the following resolution, which was adopted:—

Resolved, That the Executive Committee be hereby authorized to collect by due course of law, the debts due this Convention, in such cases as they may deem advisable.

On motion, adjourned to 2 o'clock P.M.

Thursday, P.M.—Session convened pursuant to adjournment, at 2 o'clock. Called to order by the Moderator. The minutes of the morning session read and approved.

E.T. Marsh offered the following resolution, which was adopted:—

Resolved, That all By-Laws submitted to this Convention and Resolutions relating to the same, be referred to Revs. E.G. Brooks, E. Fisher and G.W. Montgomery, as a committee to digest and report a code of By-Laws and Rules of Order to the next annual session of this body.

J.M. Muscott offered the following resolution, which was adopted.

Resolved, That Rev. J.H. Harter, the agent of the *Ambassador* at Auburn, or other such person as may fill that place, or any person whom he may nominate for that purpose, be, and he is hereby authorized to appear in any court of law, to prosecute or defend any suit at law, in which the New York State Convention of Universalists may hereafter be a party. This resolution to be in force, until otherwise ordered by the Executive Committee of said corporation.

Committee on Missionary and Tract Enterprise submitted their Report, which was accepted, and ordered printed with the minutes.

Committee to whom was referred the Report of Publication Committee, submitted their Report, which was read and referred to the Executive Committee, without expressing assent or dissent to the contents of the report.

Rev. J.M. Pullman offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the Executive Committee be instructed to collect the Amounts due the Ambassador Establishment at their discretion, by due process of law.

Rev. A.R. Abbott offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the draft of By-Laws presented to this Council by Rev. G.W. Montgomery, and also the defence of the report of the Committee of

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last year, submitted by Rev. E.G. Brooks, be published in the *Ambassador*, as part of the records of this Council.

Rev. J.T. Goodrich offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this Council be tendered to Rev. D.C. Tomlinson for the excellent Occasional Sermon delivered before this body, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication in the *Christian Ambassador*.

Rev. E.G. Brooks offered the following resolution which was adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to the good people of Auburn for their kind hospitality during the session.

On motion, the Executive Committee were directed to procure a corporate Seal for this Convention.

On motion, the Executive Committee were directed to pay Rev. E.G. Brooks' bill, \$6.75.

On motion, the thanks of this Convention were tendered to its officers for their faithfulness in the discharge of their official duties.

On motion, the Clerk of the Session was directed to prepare the Minutes of the Convention for publication in the *Christian Ambassador*.

The Minutes read and approved.

United in prayer with the Moderator. After which, on motion, adjourned to the 4th Tuesday in August, 1863, at such place as the Standing Clerk may appoint.

E. FISHER, Moderator

N.H. BENSON, Clerk

DELEGATES PRESENT.

ASSOCIATION.	CLERICAL.	LAY.
Allegany,	I.B. Sharp	W. Wilson
	F.M. [Francis Milton] Alvord	
Buffalo,	G. [Gideon] S. Gowdy	G.A. Moore
	E. [Eleazer] Hathaway	
Black River,	R.H. Pullman	J.M. Muscott
Central,	T.D. Cook	Jas. Lombard
	A. [Albert] G. Clark	T. Brainard
Cayuga,	J.M. Austin	
	A.A. Thayer	
Chenango,	D. [Daniel] Ballou	
Chautauqua,	I. [Isaac] George	L. Harrington
	R. L. Rexford	
Genesee,	C.C. Gordon	H.A. Olmsted
Hudson River,	J.M. Pullman	H.S. Cooper
	J.N. Parker	N.H. Benson

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New York,	E.G. Brooks A.R. Abbott	
Niagara,	A. [Alanson] Kelsey N. [Nelson] Snell	
Mohawk,	L.L. Briggs	J.J. Wheeler E.T. Marsh
Otsego,	H.H. Baker L.C. Browne	A.D. Browne
Ontario,	G.W. Montgomery I.M. [Isaac Morgan] Atwood	R. Simmons E.S. Preston
Steuben,	E.M. Whitney D.C. O'Daniels	G.F. Fisher
St. Lawrence,	E. Fisher J.T. Goodrich	A. Farmer

Sermons were preached by D.C. Tomlinson (Occasional), A.R. Abbott, L.C. Browne and D. Skinner.

The Session was one of interest, and the attendance equal to a reasonable expectation. The important feature, was the acceptance of the Act of Incorporation, and an organization in accordance with its provisions. The attendance on the public services of the occasion was large; and considering that the notes of preparation for war were heard on every side, a lively interest in our cause was felt among citizens and strangers. The hospitality of the Auburn Society, though largely [greatly] taxed, was far beyond the necessities of all present.

N. H. B.

Troy, Sept. 2, 1862.

Reports of Committees.

(A.)

REPORT OF PUBLICATION COMMITTEE.

The Committee who have in charge the publication of the *Ambassador*, submit the following REPORT.

The financial transactions and condition of the Ambassador Establishment, from Jan. 1, 1861, to Jan. 1, 1862, are exhibited in the annexed condensed account drawn from the Reports to the Committee by the Business Agents, Brs. Harter and Lyon.

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RECEIPTS.

Auburn Office, Cash on hand, Jan. 1, 1861,	\$ 228.11	
" From Subscribers	9,403.54	
" " Advertising	268.27	
" " Incidentals	78.00	
" " Loan	2,287.48	
		12,265.40
N.Y. Office, Cash on hand, Jan. 1, 1861,	\$99.38	
" From Subscribers	2,551.12	
" " Advertising	190.72	
		2,841.22
		\$15,106.62

DISBURSEMENTS.

Auburn Office,	Printing Paper	\$3,324.00
"	Type and Press Work	2,869.65
"	Loan of 1860	528.00
"	" " 1861	950.00
"	J.M. Austin, bal. of salary, 1860	482.09
"	" " on salary, 1861	658.24
"	J.H. Harter, bal. of salary, 1860	296.08
"	" " on salary, 1861	950.00
"	Folding and Mailing	150.00
"	Traveling Agents, Remington and Bowen on salaries for 1860 and 1861	761.85
"	Collected and retained by Agents	12.53
"	Incidentals	262.27
"	Stamps and Postage	109.38
"	Premiums and Commissions	223.22
"	Bal. of rent, 1860	37.50
"	" " 1861	75.00
"	Contributors	39.43
"	Publishing Committee	12.41
"	297 copies of Constitution and By-Laws	15.50
N. Y. Office,	Postage and exchange on uncurrent money	17.44
"	Commissions	61.50
"	Express	68.50
"	Envelope Paper	54.25
"	Carriers	266.95
"	Contributors	39.43
"	Publishing Committee	14.00
"	Salary, H. Lyon	600.00
"		\$14,422.51

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	" Cash on hand, to balance	684.11
		\$15,106.62
	ASSETS	
Due from	Subscribers	\$5,354.04
"	Advertising	112.00
"	Paper on hand	213.00
"	Furniture	100.00
	Agents	12.53
	Cash on hand	684.11
		6,475.68
	LIABILITIES.	
Due	J.M. Austin on salary	441.76
"	Advance paying subscribers	1,521.48
	Surplus,	\$4,954.20

From this statement it appears that the sum of \$5,478.57, was still in the hands of subscribers and agents, on the first day of January, 1862. How much of this sum has been paid since that date, can not be ascertained at present.

In our Report of 1860, we stated that the subscribers numbered, in the last quarter of that year, about 8000. At the end of 1861, they numbered about 6000—and on the first of July last, about 5,700—making a loss of about 2,300, since the first of January, 1861. The causes of this declension are various. Many persons gave up the *Ambassador*, because its loyalty to the Union and the Government did not suit their semi-secession principles—some, because their attention was completely absorbed by the great events of the times, and had no interest remaining for a religious newspaper—others, because they thought the national taxes would impoverish them—and still others, because of real inability to meet the expense. But whatever may have been the causes, the fact of the declension is plain and evident. There is no good reason, however, why the list of the *Ambassador* should not number ten thousand, even in these times. A real and hearty love for our precious faith, is the only thing lacking. Its existence would accomplish the work.

From the statement already given, it will readily be seen why the Convention has not received a fair income from the *Ambassador*. Delinquent subscribers have unjustly kept the dues belonging to the Convention, and have refused to respond to the faithful appeals of the Editor and Business Agents. The plan was at last adopted, of publishing the names of delinquents, with the announcement that if they did not pay, legal measures would be used. The plan largely increased the receipts, but had no effect

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upon those who have not yet paid. The resort to law has not yet been tried, for the reason that the Committee had no legal authority for so doing. That reason does not now exist, because the Convention has become an incorporate body, and may authorize its Committee to apply the remedy of law. In very many cases it should be done, especially in those where the *Ambassador* has been given up and past dues withheld. Your Committee respectfully call the attention of the Convention to this subject.

At the last session of the Committee, held in Auburn, Sep. 10, 1861, it was resolved to engage Br. J.M. Austin as Editor of the *Ambassador*, for the year 1862, at the salary of \$950—a reduction of \$150 from the previous year. Br. Harter was engaged as Business Agent at Auburn, with the salary of \$1000. He had received, in 1861, a salary of \$950, and the additional sum of \$150 for folding and mailing the *Ambassador*—making \$1100. He now performs both duties for \$1000—a reduction of \$100. Br. [Norman] Van Nostrand was appointed by the Committee to make such arrangements at New York, as he might deem necessary. He accordingly engaged Br. Lyon as Agent at a salary of \$500—a reduction of \$100.

The Committee also resolved, as a matter of necessity, that the quality of the paper to print the *Ambassador* should be reduced, and therefore instructed the Agent to pay \$3 per ream, instead of \$4, as heretofore.

Your Committee decided to dispense with Traveling Agents. We have, therefore, none in the field the present year; nor are we at any expense for contributors. These changes, as the Convention will readily discover, have lessened the expenses quite largely. Whether they have been really lessened by the absence of Traveling Agents, remains a matter of conjecture.

Of the manner in which the Editor has discharged and is discharging his duty, the columns of the *Ambassador* plainly show, and therefore no remarks are needed on this point. Your Committee have no reason to regret their resolve to retain him. The Business Agents possess the full confidence of the Committee, and have faithfully performed the requirements of their office.

A brief statement will give you a view of the prospects of the *Ambassador* for the present year. As has already been stated, the number of subscribers on the first day of July last, was about 5,700. The debt due the Editor on salary for the year 1861, has been paid. A sufficient sum has been received to pay current expenses up to the present time. There is therefore, strong hope, based on the assumption that the subscribers will at least be moderately faithful, that the *Ambassador* will reach the end of the year 1862, free from debt.

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All of which is respectfully submitted,

GEO. W. MONTGOMERY
GEO. A. MOORE
CHARLES G. BRIGGS

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(B)

THE RELIEF FUND

The Eighteenth 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 in Auburn, Cayuga County, N.Y., on Tuesday, August 26, 1862.

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

The first is the application of Rev. D.C. Tomlinson, in behalf of Mrs. J.A. [Frances Maine] Aspinwall, widow of the late Rev. J.A. [Joseph Aikin] Aspinwall, of Nunda, N.Y. The Trustees recommended a donation of one hundred dollars, payable to the order of Mrs. J.A. Aspinwall, fifty dollars in October, 1862, and fifty dollars in April 1863. The same amount was donated to her last year.

The second is the application of Mrs. Alice C. Hallock, in behalf of the Rev. B. [Benjamin] B. Hallock, of New York. The Trustees recommended that the sum of one hundred dollars—same amount as last year—be paid to Mrs. Alice C. Hallock for his relief; fifty dollars in October, 1862, and fifty dollars in April, 1863.

The third was the application of Mrs. Martha Smith, widow of the late Rev. J.J. [T.J.: Thomas Jefferson] Smith, of Bridgewater, Oneida county, N.Y. The Trustees recommended that a donation of seventy-five dollars, payable to her order, be made in October, 1862. The same amount as last year.

The fourth is the application of the Rev. James W. Bailey, of Lima, N.Y., in behalf of Mrs. Jerusha Smith, widow of the late Rev. Elijah Smith of North Bloomfield, Ontario county, N.Y. The trustees recommended that a donation of fifty dollars—same as last year—be paid to her order in October, 1862.

The Treasurer's Report, heretofore appended, shows a balance in his hands of thirteen hundred and thirty one dollars and forty-one cents. The Trustees ask authority from the Convention to invest one thousand dollars of said balance to be added to the Permanent Fund.

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

New York, August 23, 1862

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

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

The publication of the Reports will be continued next week.

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 13 Sep 1862

Reports of Committees

The following Reports were submitted to the State Convention of Universalists, at its late session in Auburn, and ordered published in connection with the minutes of the Convention.

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(C)

Report on Re-Organization.

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To the New York State Convention of Universalists, in session at Auburn, Aug., 1862:—

At the last session of your body, the following Preamble and Resolutions were adopted:—

Whereas, This Convention is well convinced of its need of a thorough re-organization on a more effective basis, that it may the better secure the great ends of denominational existence, and make itself a power in the land, for the upbuilding the cause of truth and righteousness; be it therefore,

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed on Re-organization, with power, and whose business it shall be,

1. To propose a new Constitution, together with suitable Rules of Order, and to publish the same in our denominational papers by the first of March next.

2. That they with 14 associates, to be named by this Convention, become incorporated by an act of the State Legislature, with the name and title of the "*New York State Convention of Universalists.*"

3. To submit such action as may be taken, to the next session of this body.

And be it further

Resolved, That if at the next session of this body, the By-Laws and Constitution reported by said committee, shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote, the said committee, thus incorporated with the name and title above named, shall take the place of the present existing State Convention.

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The undersigned, with Br. N. Crary, were appointed this Committee on Re-organization, and having attended to the several important duties assigned them, submit the following

REPORT.

Our first business was to take the necessary steps for the incorporation of the convention. To this end, through the *New York Tribune*, the *Albany Atlas and Argus*, the State paper, and the *Ambassador*, we gave the legally required notice of our intention to apply for an Act of Incorporation, and herewith present the Bill of Expenses thus incurred. We then, kindly aided by Robert A. Adams, Esq., of New York City, prepared a draft of the bill we desired, copied substantially from the Act incorporating the Massachusetts Universalist Convention. This was given in charge of Alexander McLeod, Esq., Member of the Assembly from New York City, and in due time was passed and approved. We herewith present the Act, duly certified. The corporators, it will be perceived, are those designated by the Convention for that purpose, except that the name of Br. J.R. Sage is omitted. The chairman was furnished with no official notice of the work of the Committee, and therefor with no official list of the corporators. Copying from the *Ambassador* the names first designated, as arranged in a column, he did not observe that Br. Sage's name was subsequently added by a special vote, until the draft had passed out of his hands. He afterwards requested that Br. Sage's name should be inserted, but for some reason, it was not done. With this exception, the Bill, it is believed, is in accordance with the instructions of the Convention.

As soon as we saw that there was a reasonable prospect of the passage of the Act of Incorporation, we turned our attention to the preparation of the new Constitution and Rules of Order, which we were instructed to propose. Adopting the By-Laws and Rules of Order of the Massachusetts Universalist Convention as a basis, after a good deal of deliberation and correspondence, with a view to adapt our recommendations in the best possible manner to the large territory of our State and the most effective organization of the Convention, we agreed upon a draft, which, according to our instructions, was published in the *Ambassador* of March 15th, 1862. We herewith present it as published.

Having thus procured the Act of Incorporation, and submitted the draft of "a new Constitution, together with suitable Rules of Order," in obedience to instructions, your Committee might here close their Report, feeling that they had performed all the work assigned them. Various objections have been urged against the By-Laws we have proposed, however, and it will doubtless, on this account, be further expected that we pay some attention to these objections. Under ordinary circumstances, your Committee would take great pleasure in such further labor. As it is, we present our Report to

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a body, a majority of the members of which are believed to be expressly or virtually under instructions to vote against its most important features. Your Committee may be excused for saying that this is not a state of things particularly exhilarating to those called to conduct an argument, and also, for expressing their regrets that so many of the Associations have chosen thus to foreclose the subject. But we have allowed ourselves to be encouraged by the assurance that the delegates here are not automatons, but are open to argument, ready and determined, notwithstanding their instructions, to take such action as the principles involved and the evident interests of our cause may require. Moreover we are firm in the conviction that however these provisions may, for the present, be postponed, the necessities of our cause and the ripening sentiment of the people, will ultimately secure their adoption in this State as elsewhere; and so, hoping not to speak in vain even to the members of the Council, and desiring, in the anticipation of the publication of our Report, to speak through the Convention to the people, we proceed to say some of the many things which might be said in defence and justification of the By-Laws as we have recommended them.

No argument is here required to enforce our need, denominationally, of a more systematic and efficient organization. Our appointment as a Committee on Re-organization, under the instructions given us, is evidence that this need has been felt. The single question now before us is, how is this organization to be best attained? Shall we make the Convention a *State* Convention, in fact as well as in name, vested with sovereign powers and centering in itself the entire control of all our ecclesiastical and denominational concerns—so securing unity, vigor and efficiency? Or, shall we build up the form of a State organization, christening it with a pretentious name, but denying it any substantial powers, and making it therefore, simply a body without a soul, hopelessly inefficient for the ends of unity and order—securing only, under no matter what new rules, a continuance of our present loose and chaotic methods? This is the issue now before us. It is with reference to this issue that we have adopted or framed the By-Laws we have reported; and this is, we respectfully submit, the only issue that can be raised in discussing the question of what is to be done with them. We call particular attention to this fact, and to the fact that with the exception of the first, to which we shall refer, all the objections that have been made to our recommendations are *objections*—not simply against these recommendations, but *in principle, against any efficient and unitary organization*.

Various objections have been made to the By-Laws on minor points. "The machinery of the new Constitution" has been said to be "complex in some of its provisions," and "difficult of reduction to practical action." We know

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whereof we affirm, however, and as we shall by and by claim for its provisions in respect to fellowship, &c, so, in respect to all that it proposes, while we have no idea that it is perfect, we claim signal simplicity for it as a working system, confidently inviting the test of experiment. Fault has been found that under the rules as we have offered them, no provision has been made for defence, and that the disciplinary power of the Convention may be exercised arbitrarily and on *ex parte* testimony. But this objection lies no more against these rules than against all existing rules on this subject. No general code goes into all the details of practice under it. It is, of course, understood that the Committee, in the exercise of their power of Discipline, shall proceed according to the recognized rules of fair and impartial dealing, and it is to be taken for granted that any Committee the Convention would elect would certainly do so. Objection has been made to the rule that no minister moving into the State shall be installed until after he has been duly fellowshipped by the Committee or the Council. Societies, it has been said, are the best judges of their own wants, and should not be interfered with. That is, the Convention having prescribed certain rules with respect to fellowship, designating the way in which one may become a minister in good standing among us, should allow Societies and Installing Councils to do as they please, without any regard to the appointed methods! Why, then, have we any rules? This only illustrates the loose ideas prevalent among us in respect to this subject, and entertained even by those who tell us they admit "the need of strict discipline and stringent rules of fellowship"? To install a man is to give him a positive and virtual fellowship as a minister; and few of us of any considerable experience, have failed to see cases of serious difficulty and complication, in consequence of the installation of ministers before they had been duly and regularly fellowshipped. It is to avoid such results that your Committee have recommended this rule, and we are confident that it only needs that the reasons for it be considered, in order that it be seen to be as just as it is necessary.

But, turning from these minor objections, we come to those of main importance. These have been made:

1. Against the system of representation we propose.
2. Against vesting in the Convention the sole power of Fellowship, Ordination, and Discipline.
3. Against the provision, (Art. III, Sect. 2) disfellowshipping a minister settling over a Society, or a Society employing a minister not in fellowship with it.
4. Against the rule summoning the membership to account.
 1. In reference to the first point, we are free to say we do not regard the particular system of representation upon which the Convention shall be constituted as a matter so vital as the question of its powers. Our brethren

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in Illinois have substantially adopted the Massachusetts By-Laws, with some omissions, on the principle of Associational representation. We think that, in this particular, they make a mistake, but if those on whose verdict a decision is to be made in this State are irrevocably committed to this policy, we are ready to say, rather than that the Convention shall fail in this attempt at re-organization, let the present system be retained and we are prepared, if so the Convention determine, to submit a modification of the By-Laws to this effect.

At the same time, we cannot but express our very decided preference for the plan we have recommended, and our settled conviction that a serious mistake will be made if it is not adopted. Many things are to be said in its favor; but its chief merit is that *it popularizes the Convention*. We are all believers in the democratic doctrine that all power resides in the people, and that the more directly the popular will is expressed, and the nearer, therefore, all organizations of power can be brought to the people, the better. Of course, our Convention must be a representative body. Our Societies, or churches and Sabbath Schools cannot assemble in "mass meeting" for business purposes; but the nearer the Convention comes to the people, and the more directly they can express themselves through it, the more perfectly will the democratic principle be honored by it in its Constitution; the more lively because the more immediate will be the people's concern in it; the greater their sense of responsibility with respect to it; and the better, in every way, will it serve the welfare of our cause. The present system of constituting the Council removes it from the people. It gives an Association, with two ministers and half-a-dozen Societies, equal representation with one of the largest constituencies, and so, through a combination of the representatives of the smaller Associations, makes it possible for a very small minority of ministers and societies to overrule the majority and control the action of the Convention. It gives us a small instead of a large body, and without any improper combination, puts the whole ecclesiastical power of the State into the hands of a few, instead of retaining it where it belongs, in the body of the people. In no actual sense, indeed, under the existing system, is the Convention a popular body at all. The people have no voice in determining who shall be its members, or what shall be its measures. It is in no way, a matter of their direct concern. It opens the way for cliques and combinations. It invites management, wire-pulling, packing. It makes it possible for any man of leading position, by personal visitation, or through his sympathizers or instruments, to control the Associations and their nominating committees, and thus year after year, to fill up the Convention with delegates of his own choice and to defeat or carry measures without regard to the real sentiment of the people.

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We submit that these are grave objections to the present system. In our judgment they are fatal objections. Nor are we aware of any principle on which this system can be defended, or of any thing in our methods of representative government analogous to it. It is as if the several counties in a State—instead of being content to be merged as now in the unity and sovereignty of the commonwealth, should each insist that they have separate and independent sovereignty, and claim the right to constitute the State Legislature of delegates of their appointment, and talk alarmingly about “centralization” and “the French system,” and “despotism,” and “the destruction of liberty,” by way of justification. Suppose it were seriously proposed to the people of this State that the present unity and democratic methods of its government should be broken up, and that this doctrine of county sovereignty should take its place—it being understood that each county should have its own independent Council for legislative purposes, and that to this Council the inhabitants of each county should surrender their prerogative of electing their representatives in the State Legislature, surrendering also with this prerogative, all their right and power directly to control the membership or measures of the Legislature, and it being further understood that every county should have an equal voice in affairs, without regard to size or population—how many of the members of this Convention, or how large a proportion of the voters of the State would give their ballots for the change? And yet, this system, that not one in ten thousand of our citizens would vote for in our civil organization, is precisely the system upon which our ecclesiastical affairs are now organized, and for which special merit is claimed on the ground of simplicity, order, unity and “representative” propriety! It has the merit of being “representative,” it must be confessed; but it is so representative as to ignore the unity of State interests and powers; to sectionalize the people into clans, and to take from them in their primary capacity the power of saying by whom they will be represented and what their representatives shall do. We must say that we much prefer to see our ecclesiastical as far as possible conformed to our civil methods; nor can we fail to observe that it seems to us a strange misuse of terms to talk of “centralization” in any objectionable sense in connection with an effort to broaden the membership of the Convention, and to place its control directly in the hands of all the churches. Now the Convention is constituted of an equal number of lay and clerical delegates, and on account of the non-attendance of lay delegates, is usually entirely in the control of ministers. Under [obliterated] every Sunday School will be entitled to a delegate, and the lay representation will, almost certainly, be largely in the majority. This fact is noted—not because we have any fears of rivalry between the ministry and the laity, or any sympathy with those who would foster a jealousy among the latter of ministerial influence, but to show that

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the Convention, if constituted as we recommend, can never be a "priestly hierarchy," as some are disposed to allege.

But it is said that the plan we propose is "unwise," because it will make the Convention too large, a "cumbersome" and "unwieldy body," and one brother, not content with figuring up a membership of 500, in his first onslaught against our Report, startles us with the statement, as he returns to the attack, that "by and by, if our cause prospers as we hope it will," we shall have, if this plan is adopted, a Convention of 2800 members! This is a frightful risk, it must be confessed, or possibly our plan may involve it; but would it not be a refreshing sight, just for once to see a Universalist Convention too large? Wouldn't it be worth while to run even so dreadful a risk for the sake of seeing it? Now the Convention is always too small. Look at the Council to which we submit this Report. The Standing Clerk of the Convention published a list of Societies in this State, in Sept. 1860, making the whole number 174; and the *Register* for this year gives us 122 preachers; and yet we have here, as the membership of this Council, but 10 lay delegates, representing all these Societies, Churches and Sunday Schools, and but 22 clerical delegates, representing the 122 ministers who ought to be here! And this is the way it has always been and always will be, under our present system.

Outside the immediate neighborhood of the place of meeting, only the few of the ministers and the people appointed as delegates feel that they have any concern in attending the Convention; and so, year after year, a mere handful gets together to do all the denominational business of the State, instead of the hundreds whose council [counsel] and action we should have. It is high time we had a different state of things. We want to do away with this feeling among our Societies and ministers, that the Convention is no business of theirs. That our Convention may be a living and efficient body, it must enlist the sympathy and zeal of the whole State, and every Society and Sabbath School and minister must feel that he or it has a direct and personal concern in it. It is altogether improbable that we should get anything like such a number together at present, at least—but could it be effected, what an inspiring thing it would be to see a Convention of 400 live Universalists gathered from various parts of the State, to take counsel together, to catch the fire of each other's faith and zeal, to hear the reports of the Churches and to legislate for the general welfare! Who can estimate the influence of such a meeting, or tell how it would verify and strengthen us? And shall it be deemed an objection to a plan for constituting our Convention that it renders such a meeting and its quickening power possible? Massachusetts under the awakening influence of her new Convention, approached such a meeting at its last session—a meeting such as the State never saw before in numbers, life and religious

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power. Shall we be frightened lest, providing for such a meeting every year, we shall have more than we know what to do with? Let us not be afraid to try the experiment; and if the body be found too large and cumbrous, it can easily be depleted and brought into manageable dimensions.

So our brethren in Maine and New Hampshire have thought. Their Conventions were formerly composed of delegates from the Associations. Experience has shown them "a more excellent way," and now they are constituted of delegates directly from the people. In our judgment, we cannot do better than to follow their example.

2. The next and more serious objection to the By-Laws we have proposed has been made against vesting in the Convention the sole power of Fellowship, Ordination and Discipline. This has been the chief point of attack—and we propose to make it the chief point of defence.

It has been charged that we "ignore," "override," and "virtually abolish" the Associations. The plan we have recommended has been pronounced "unjust," "tyrannous and oppressive," and all sorts of changes have been rung on the terrible word "centralization." Allowing the dust that has thus been raised to settle, what are the facts? Simply these: Among the powers now exercised by the Associations in this State, is the power of Fellowship, Ordination and Discipline. In consequence of the exercise of this power by so many different bodies, often on different principles and in different interests, much looseness has resulted here as elsewhere, and sometimes conflict and discord. Not only have different standards of qualification for the ministry been adopted, so that fellowship could be had in some Associations on much lower terms than in others, but instances have been known in which an applicant, residing in the limits of one Association and refused Fellowship there, has been fellowshipped by a sister body, and then has come into the council of the body that refused him a letter, claiming recognition on the ground that he was a minister in full fellowship and good standing! Such irregularities are inevitable under our present system, as experience every where has proved. Hence, for a long time, a growing sense of the need of some uniform system; and two years ago the Ontario Association passed a Resolution, asking the State Convention to take some decided action in this direction. Thereupon, the Convention appointed a Committee to report a plan for this purpose; that Committee, taking decided ground in favor of the movement, deemed it inexpedient to undertake to amend the Constitution in this simple respect when, in their judgment, a thorough re-organization was demanded. They so reported last year, in the Resolutions given at the introduction of this Report, recommending the appointment of a Committee on Re-organization, with instructions. Those instructions, thus virtually if not specifically given in respect to this matter of Fellowship, &c., we have undertaken to carry out. Hence the much-

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assaulted provision of the By-Laws—a provision we may be allowed to say, that we should have felt compelled to incorporate into them, in deference to the action thus decidedly taken in its favor, even if we had ourselves doubted its propriety.

But we do not doubt its propriety. On the contrary, we are convinced that it is essential as a condition of anything like order or efficiency in this most important department of our affairs. The necessity of some remedy for the irregularities occurring under the present arrangement is so palpable, indeed, that it is conceded even by those who most violently oppose [obliterated] that there is need of greater uniformity and strictness in matters of Fellowship and discipline in our State," says our brother of the *Ambassador*. "I cheerfully admit the truth of all that" has been said "of the need of strict discipline and of stringent rules of fellowship in our denomination," says another. And almost every Resolution passed by the Associations against our Draft is preceded or followed by a declaration to the same effect. But how, if the method we propose be rejected, are this "greater uniformity and strictness" to be secured? While thus declaring themselves as much opposed to looseness and as much in favor of unity and strictness as anybody, who, of all who have set themselves against our recommendation, have so much as hinted, or find it in their power to hint any other practicable way of attaining the ends confessed to be so necessary—save only those who have urged that the Convention shall act upon the very principle deemed so objectionable in the plan we propose? Some of the Resolutions passed have been curiosities in their way, because so strenuously insisting on the ends we propose and as strenuously protesting against the only efficient way of reaching them. The Allegany Association furnishes the most notable example in this respect, perhaps, though illustrating, in an extreme form, the spirit of several others. It said—

"Resolved, That while we are in favor of a thorough re-organization of our State Convention, and of a uniform rule of Fellowship and Discipline throughout the State, we cannot approve of any change in our denominational policy, which shall seriously infringe upon the present prerogatives of our Associations."

That is, we are in favor of a *radical* change, but insist that everything shall remain *essentially* as now! We trust we shall not be deemed disrespectful for saying that we should have been much aided in the discharge of our duties, if the brethren of the Allegany Association, or any other brethren who have taken substantially the same position, would have shown us how to work out this novel problem.

Considering the purposes for which a denomination exists, and the necessity of uniformity in the laws of its fellowship and the methods of its discipline, it would, doubtless, be the system most favorable to [??ity] and

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efficiency if the body representing the whole denomination of the country could be clothed with the authority of legislation on these points, and the several State Conventions could be pledged harmoniously and in good faith to administer the rules thus prescribed. But organized into states as civil communities, our ecclesiastical organizations naturally cast themselves in the same mould, with the same assertion of State sovereignty and the same regard for State lines. Ecclesiastically as well as politically, the nation is constituted of the several independent States; and the *principle* upon which our recommendation is based is that, as to the Legislature of each of our Commonwealths, representing the people of that Commonwealth, belongs the sole power of making laws within the lines of its state sovereignty, so to the Convention of each State, as the body representing the denomination in that State, belongs the sole right of dealing with this subject of Fellowship, Ordination and Discipline within the lines of its jurisdiction. The only other ground that can be legitimately argued is that to the Societies or Churches, in their individual capacity, belongs the prerogative of making, each for itself, whatever rules in this respect it may choose. This is the ground of an extreme Congregationalism or Independency. But this fails to recognize the organic unity and common liabilities and mutual obligations of churches "of the same faith and order," and admits of no authoritative provision to secure uniformity and harmony of action. Save in rare exceptional instances, therefore, there is no sympathy among us with this theory of church government, and no disposition to adopt it. There remains for us, then, only the plan we propose. If any regard be had to *principles*, none other is legitimately possible, and especially is there no foundation for the claim of an Association to exercise this power of Fellowship, &c, and no warrant for this practice. It has grown up, and been tolerated, and got itself to some extent established, like a good many other questionable practices, in the looseness of our immature methods; but as a matter of *principle*, it is wholly irregular and indefensible. All power in this respect belongs either to the people in their primary assemblies, or to the denomination of a State as a whole; and it is a piece of pure assumption, for which no system of ecclesiastical polity can afford ground or justification for little knots of ministers and churches, more or less in number, surrendering the doctrine of congregational independency, to band together here and there and undertake to exercise jurisdiction in this matter, still claiming to be loyal members of a State denominational brotherhood. If we are associated as a brotherhood, yielding the independency of our primary assemblies for the advantages of organization and co-operation, then to no factions of that brotherhood, by whatever names they may be called, but to the body as a whole belongs the right of prescribing the conditions of membership and the rules of discipline. There is no middle ground between an extreme

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Congregationalism and its isolation and the unification of a State denominationalism; and there is no warrant for the constitution of Associations with the powers now exercised by the Associations of this State except upon the ground that there is no ecclesiastical State sovereignty and no obligation to observe the conditions of denominational unity, and that any two or three ministers or churches can, at any time, set up for themselves and make such rules as to fellowship and discipline as they please.

The fruits, already referred to, of this assumption of power by the Associations, are the sufficient demonstration of the radical wrong of the system. Such thistles don't grow from good sound roots. And these fruits of conflict and irregularity are inseparable from every system that denies to the Convention the sovereign control of this subject, thus unmistakably pointing to the action required. Hence the fact just now intimated, that nobody, objecting to our proposition to invest the Convention with sovereignty in the premises, has ventured to suggest a better way. The only attempt to offer a substitute for our recommendation has been on the part of some of the Associations, who have voted that the Convention ordain certain rules, to which all the Associations shall be bound to conform. But where does the Convention get the right thus to prescribe rules for the Associations? "*This is centralization!*" Or what means has the Convention to enforce its authority and to secure an observance of its rules? Is it not seen at once that if the Convention has power to make rules binding on the Associations, than the Associations have no original or rightful authority in the case [obliterated] time properly take the whole thing into tis own hands? This is what the plan we have recommended proposes that the Convention do—not, as it might, and as we have been charged with intending, without the consent of the Associations, but by their concurrence, and we submit that, if the ends confessed to be essential are to be effectually attained in the [?] way this is [obliterated] be adopted. For the Convention to prescribe rules for the Associations would be, at the best, a roundabout way of accomplishing what it could more simply and directly do of itself and by officers of its own appointment. However, to undertake this plan would only be to make laws which, in not a few cases, would be a mere dead letter and [would] furnish new occasions for difficulty. There is a self-asserting individualism and an impatience of authority among us which would be sure to find expression in the refusal of some Associations to abide by the rules ordained. In such cases, the Convention, as already hinted, has no means of enforcing its decrees except by excluding the Associations from fellowship. But this is an extreme step, to which strenuous objections would be sure to be made by somebody and which the Convention would be slow to take, and could take, in any case, probably, only by a majority vote. So the way would be opened, not only for factious and irregular proceedings on the part

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of Associations, but for wearying discussions and unfortunate differences in the Convention, leaving us, in the end, in a worse condition than now. Far better, on every account we are sure, it is that the Convention should take the whole matter into its own control, where it rightfully belongs, and make and execute its own laws throughout the State.

The Resolution of the Black River Association expresses the opinion that it is "more consistent with the spirit of our denomination and the ultimate efficiency of our ministry, to have these powers retained by the several Associations." We have already shown that the Associations exercise these powers only by assumption, and that, therefore, they can insist on retaining them only by insisting that they will continue to exercise a power to which they have no right. As to "the efficiency of our ministry," "ultimate" or otherwise, experience has most emphatically attested that this plan of Associational fellowship is *not* "most consistent" with it. Why this universal confession of "the need of greater uniformity and strictness" if it be so? Why have we already seen the irregularities and abuses growing out of this plan compelling its abandonment in several of our States, and compelling the general demand for some system remedying these evils here in our own State? At least some of the Associations, opposing our draft, have earnestly recommended that the Convention assert these powers, and legislate a uniform system obligatory on the Associations; why such action if it is better for "the efficiency of our ministry" that these powers be retained as law? And as to "the spirit of our denomination," we submit that, because we have been somewhat given to looseness and an extreme individualism that has sometimes run into lawlessness and an impatience of rules, while we have been in the process of formation as a sect, and even though there be some such leaven lingering among us now, it is hardly just to infer that "the spirit of our denomination" is a spirit of looseness and chaotic methods. Our denomination is wedded to democratic ideas, no doubt, and it would be impossible to induce it to adopt an ecclesiasticism inconsistent with such ideas, but it is wedded no less to law and order, and as years teach wisdom, will settle, we are sure, in this as in every other respect, into that system of law most conducive to its unity and efficiency. Already this is the decided tendency of opinion and of action among us. In Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Illinois and doubtless in other States, the Convention has sole control. As Association in Vermont recently declined any longer to give fellowship, relinquishing the power to the Convention and retaining only the privilege of recommending candidates.

Br. J.O Skinner, Corresponding Secretary of the New Hampshire State Convention, well said in his late Report:—

An encouraging evidence of internal improvement, is the better organization of our Convention, making it to consist of ministers and

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delegates sent up directly from Societies and churches; by which arrangement the Convention becomes more truly a living body, actually representing the people, giving to the laity throughout the State a fuller representation and a more direct voice in our ecclesiastical councils, without the intermediate, cumbrous and ineffective machinery of Associations; which, however useful of conferences of the churches for devotional and spiritual culture, are too loosely organized and composed of too few members to be entrusted with the important matters of fellowship, ordination and discipline.

So "the spirit of our denomination" is now showing itself, and the question for us in New York is simply whether we will harmonize with this growing spirit of orderly organization, or tamper with the subject only still longer to suffer from the irregularities incident to our present system, and to find ourselves by and by, at the eleventh hour, compelled to fall in line with the rest.

But your plan is impracticable, we are told—though *how* or *why* no one has undertaken to say. The sufficient reply to this is that it is no novel invention, that it has already been tried elsewhere, in some States, for several years, and that wherever tried, it has proved itself eminently practicable as well as simple. Why should it not prove as practicable in New York as in Massachusetts, or Maine, or Illinois? One *fact* is worth volumes of speculations or surmises.

But the plan proposed leaves no use for Associations, and will inevitably result in their dissolution, it is alleged. Why here more than elsewhere? Is it simply to exercise this power of fellowship that the Associations of New York exist? Is there no "sweet council" [do the authors mean "counsel"?] for brethren to take together? Are there no measures for local work and christian co-operation to devise? No words for the Sabbath School or the church to be spoken? No occasions for action when "a letter" has been granted, or it has been found that no such letter is granted, and when the Committee of Discipline has reported, or declared that it has no report to make? Seriously, we must think that the talk that has been made about destroying the Associations by simply clothing the Convention with the sole power of Fellowship is very unreasonable and altogether without warrant in the facts of the case; nor can we fail to express our conviction that the use which has been made of the late action of the Boston Association by way of providing itself with business, as if its lack of business was the consequence of its surrender of this power, and furnished [?] the change we recommend, is unjustifiable, if not disingenuous, because fitted to make an altogether false impression upon those not acquainted with the facts. We have both been members of the Boston Association for years, and with two exceptions, we have never known half [obliterated] have been occasional debates as to

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the rules for its administration. Years ago, moreover, before this surrender of power was made, or thought of, this same subject of providing business to give interest and profit to its meetings was before the Association, and given to a Committee as at its last session.

The truth is, Associations have their place and work as yearly local gatherings of the brotherhood, for the interchange of opinion, for the cultivation of acquaintance and sympathy, for deliberation on the condition and needs of our cause in their special fields, and for devising means to further its interests in these fields. For these purposes it is desirable to have Associations. Because of what would be lost in these respects, it would be a matter of regret should an Association die. But no Association will be the less efficient for any of these purposes, or find its legitimate uses or powers in any way impaired, in consequence of the surrender of its assumed power to deal with the subject of fellowship. In every way, it can do as much *as a working body* for the cause of truth within its limits as now; and if there is, any where, an Association that exists—not as a working Christian body, but simply to give a Letter of Fellowship, or to deal with a case of discipline occasionally, it is but a cumberer of the ground—a body without a soul, and the sooner it dies, the better, and God and all good men will say, Amen.

But the plan you propose is a scheme of centralization, we are told, finally; and in this word "*centralization*," it is supposed the worst things that can be said of any organization are summed up.—The Buffalo Association may be allowed to state the case. Objecting to the plan we have reported, it says, "Its effect would be to centralize power, and throw the entire ecclesiastical business of the denomination into the hands of a few. 'Centralization' we believe to be opposed to the best interests of any people, whether in denominational matters or those of State. It leads to despotism—is destructive to liberty. It is the French system, opposed to the American idea of Federalism." All this sounds roundly, and is suggestive of very grievous things. We take it for granted that it, and much else like it, has been said honestly, by those who supposed they knew what they were talking about. But we would be glad to be told what relevancy it has to anything we have recommended. Unquestionably centralization is very bad, particularly the "*French System*," but what *is* centralization? The dictionary says that it is "the act of centralizing." In a bad sense, it is the process by which the people and provinces of a State, or the individual members and primary assemblies of a church, are robbed of all voice in their affairs, by the concentration of power in the irresponsible hands of one man, or of some self-constituted body of men. But will any body pretend, knowing what we really have proposed, that in what we have recommended any thing against which the charge of centralization, in this sense, can be justly made? We propose that the ecclesiastical power of the State be taken from

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the hands of the few and be put into the hands of the whole body of our churches. As we have already shown, we propose to popularize and broaden the Convention, making cliques and improper centralization impossible. Yes, but you recommend that the whole power of fellowship be put into the hands of a few men, it is rejoined. Very true—but these men are to be the servants of the Convention, elected by it every year and responsible to it for the manner in which they discharge their trust. So the whole executive power of this great State is lodged in the hands of one man; is our system of State government therefore an ill-advised centralized system, which ought never to have been adopted? So all large deliberative bodies, charged with administrative business, act through Committees, responsible to them and removable by them—but has any body ever objected to this practice on the ground that “it leads to despotism,” or that “it is the French system, opposed to the American idea of Federalism?”

(Continued next Week)

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 20 Sep 1862

Reports of Committees.

The following Reports were submitted to the State Convention of Universalists, at its late session in Auburn, and ordered published in connection with the minutes of the Convention.

(C)

Report on Re-Organization.

(Concluded)

In the bad sense of the word centralization, there is nothing in the system of Church government we propose, to which it can be applied. What we propose is unification, as opposed to looseness, and a lack of system and unity, and a scattering, and frittering and confusion of powers. We claim this as the great merit of the plan we offer. It simplifies what is now involved and complex. It unifies our whole ecclesiastical system by enacting one code of law for the entire State, so avoiding the distraction of counsels, and the conflict of authority and the irregular proceedings to which we are now subject, and making the Convention, in our ecclesiastical, what the authority of the State is in our civil affairs—the single embodiment of the power of the people. That it must do its work through the hands of “a few

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men," elected as its servants, is inevitable, and offers no objection to the plan, unless the Convention's present system of doing its work be objectionable, and unless it be an objection to a State Government that there must be executive officers to conduct its concerns, and to all associated action that "a few men" must always be chosen to carry out its details.

This unification is the law of nature everywhere, and the one condition of the harmony and effectiveness of its operations, and the method in which God works. It is no less the one essential condition of efficiency in all human association and effort. In proportion as it is lacking, weakness, discord, and sooner or later, disorganization, inevitably ensue. Anywhere, order comes out of chaos, and possible power becomes actual only as the various elements concerned are unified in the acknowledgment and service of some central life. It is for us to say whether, as a denomination, we will recognize this fact, and conform to the condition thus imposed, or whether, talking about and desiring "an efficient organization," we will allow our mistaken prejudices against "centralization" to make such an organization impossible by denying it all efficient powers.

We ask the indulgence of the Council for treating this point of *the powers* of the Convention so much at length. But we regard it as a vital point, that cannot be yielded without a surrender of the whole *ecclesiastical* purpose of this movement towards re-organization. Charged with a defence of the movement, we have desired to do it thoroughly. A brief space will suffice for what else remains to be said.

3. Objection has been made against the provision (Art. III, Sect. 2) disfellowshipping a minister settling over a Society, or a Society employing a minister disfellowshipped or refused fellowship by it. What practical good, it has been asked, can grow out of such a law? Just the practical good that grows out of any provision for an effective discipline. If we have laws, we must have penalties to enforce them; and if we undertake to administer discipline, we must have provisions to make our action respected. Our whole system is a farce if we do not. It is fair to presume that the Convention would not disfellowship, or refuse to fellowship, either a Society or a minister, without good and sufficient cause; but of what avail would its action be, if ministers were still at liberty, unchallenged, to settle over Societies, or if Societies could still, with impunity, call ministers, whom it had formally decided to be unworthy of its membership? One of our great difficulties has been that ministers and Societies have assumed superiority to our public bodies and their decisions, and that unworthy ministers especially, cut off from our fellowship, have been virtually restored to their position by finding Societies in good standing ready to employ them. This provision is the outgrowth of our experience in this respect, and was

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designed to guard against the evils from which we have thus suffered. It was first adopted by the Boston Association, and after having approved itself among the rules of that Association for several years, was, with the rest of its provisions touching this subject, incorporated into the By-Laws of the Massachusetts Convention. It says simply that any minister or Society desiring the fellowship of our Convention, must respect and conform to its action. Who that believes in any rules, or that would not have all rules a dead letter, will fail to confess its necessity and to give it support?

4. Objection has been made, also, to the rule for summoning the membership of the Convention to an annual account. But upon what ground can this objection legitimately stand, except upon the assumption that ministers, Societies, or churches and Sunday Schools in the fellowship of the Convention are not responsible to it? If they are responsible to it, why not call them to an account with respect to their Christian and Denominational fidelity—especially when it is known that there are those open to condemnation in these respects, and that only by some such provision can they be dealt with as they deserve? More than on any other account, our cause is languishing, or only half living, in fields where it might be flourishing, and our denominational work fails to be done in many places where it might be done to good effect, simply because Societies, bearing our name, fail to act up to their ability and obligations, or because ministers are sluggish and indifferent, instead of being awake and at work as their christian vows and denominational obligations require. Should we not have some law under which such Societies and ministers should be held to answer for such infidelity?

If we have any business in the world, we exist as a denomination, for a positive Christian purpose, and because there is a *denominational work* for us to do. This purpose, therefore—this denominational work—and whatever can help to make us more effective for it, every Society, every church, every Sunday School, and above all, every minister who seeks our fellowship and assumes our name, is solemnly bound to do all in his or its power to promote. It is the sheerest and most unpardonable trifling for any such body, or for any minister, to ask our recognition and fellowship, and then coolly assume the right, if no formal Christian statute is violated, to be utterly indifferent and negligent with reference to our denominational work. The world is wide and nobody is required to solicit our fellowship, or to march under our banner, who does not prefer to do so. And preferring to do this, one can do it honestly only by accepting all the responsibilities and obligations of such a connection—alike those that are specially denominational as well as those, in a more general sense, called christian. In such a case, denominational duties become christian duties. And yet, we have Societies and churches claiming to be known as Universalist, who never

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show the slightest denominational interest, or the slightest sense of denominational obligation. Especially, there is a class of ministers among us who seem utterly oblivious to all that is implied in denominational membership, and who either, with an inflamed idea of independence, seem to think that we are under great obligations to them for patronizing us with their presence and consenting to occupy our pulpits, and that they are at liberty to hold themselves contemptuously aloof from co-operating with our methods, or lazily count it enough not to make themselves liable to discipline for what is called unchristian conduct and to preach in the positions our fellowship has given them and pocket the money, without lifting a finger or speaking a word for denominational work and the various agencies of denominational growth and power; ministers eager to enjoy all the privileges and advantages of denominational association, but making no confession of denominational obligations. We have suffered much on account of this selfish and disloyal individualism on the part of Societies, and especially on the part of ministers. The observation of your Committee is that, as the rule, where ministers feel right and work heartily, willing to lead, the people will soon be willing to do their part. Live ministers make a live people. Ministers consecrated to God, ministers flaming with christian earnestness and denominational zeal, sooner or later, infuse their spirit into their congregations and churches, and kindle them into a flame caught from their own. This is the rule. But dead ministers make a dead people; and with a minister indifferent and negligent as to all denominational appeals, even the most willing people will soon become the same. Even the most consecrated minister, indeed, will find many of his people too slow to respond to his words of highest religious importance; but in respect to all matters of denominational interest, the great mass will take their tone from him; and if the appointed "collections" are not taken up—if Missionary and proselyting agencies get no sympathy and "the denomination" is the object of no loving loyalty and generous remembrance, the fault, in most cases, lies at the minister's door. We need more zeal, more religious and denominational vitality, more earnestness, more "*esprit du corps*," and more of the spirit of work among our Societies and churches; but one of the most imperative conditions to these ends is that we have more of these things among our ministers.

Hence the necessity of some such provision as that we have recommended—guarded as we have guarded it against abuse, that alike ministers and people, conscious that they are to be called to account, may be filled with a becoming sense of responsibility and be quickened to a proper Christian and denominational fidelity. Considerable objection was urged against this rule when it was before the Massachusetts Convention for adoption; but now, we learn, that few, if any, would vote for its repeal. It

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has lived itself into general approval. So it will do, if it be adopted here. The faithful will not fear it. None but the sluggish and unfaithful will dislike it; and such, no matter who they are, or what their position, need to feel the whip of the condemnation it involves. But we will not further protract this Report. Appointed to the unsolicited and undesirable duty of drafting By-Laws for the reorganized Convention, we have felt called upon thus to defend our recommendations. We have intended to notice every objection that we have thought candidly made or worthy of an answer. We now leave our draft and its defence with the Convention. We ask for it a candid and dispassionate consideration in the light of the argument we have submitted. We have no feeling and no personal interest in the matter, except as we are interested in the great cause of truth and Christian redemption, and are anxious to see our new Convention organized upon principles and with rules most favorable to its efficiency as a Christian power. These are times of great interest, inviting us, as a denomination, to a great work, and to a grander destiny than any Church has ever been offered before. Shall we do the work, and fulfill the destiny thus possible to us? The quality of our organizations is to be one element of our reply to this question. The more perfect our instruments, the wider and better our work. In this conviction, we commend to our brethren of the Convention the By-Laws we have proposed, believing that in the hands of wise and earnest men who heartily approve them, and who will make them the instruments of a sound, practical common-sense and a diligent christian zeal, they will prove effective agencies to give unity, purity and order to our Zion, and to make our Incorporated Convention a positive Christian force, widely felt among the means that, blessed of God and in Christ's name, are to enlighten and save the world.

Respectfully submitted,
E.G. BROOKS,
} Com.
EBEN. FISHER.

New York, Aug. 23, 1862

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(D)
REPORT

Of the Committee on Missionary and Tract Enterprise.

We take the ground in the outset, that Christ was the great Missionary from God to man; that the Apostles were missionaries in the secondary sense; and that individual christians, in all ages of the world, are Missionaries in the third degree. This being granted, it follows that individual christians, organized in churches and denominations, must bear the missionary burden of the world. The denomination could not live without

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the churches; neither could churches live without individual members, and it is quite certain, that individual christians depend very much upon churches and denominations to sustain them in amount and vigor of spiritual life. The denomination must look after the great public interests, while individuals attend to church interests at home. Other denominations carry an impure Gospel to heathen nations far away, but our special duty is to carry the pure Gospel to all denominations besides. The interest of on christian, is the interest of all, and the various methods for diffusing the light should be kept in running order, and be made to play like harmonious clock-work machinery.

1. The churches should be kept in active life and vigorous work. Every church is a watch-tower in the community where it stands, and the state of the church denotes the christian character of the people. If the church drags heavily along, like a cumbersome cart, and creaking at every turn of the wheels, you may know the people are at a low stage of spiritual life, and care little for the Sabbath and its holy privileges. But if the church is crowded, and all its interests well sustained, the fact proves the people around to be elevated and refined. The condition of the church shows the religious pulse of the people; so the religious life of the people reflects the power and usefulness of the church. As a single lamp illuminates a large room, so a single efficient church sends its light over a large territory around it. The influence of every living church is felt by many, who seldom if ever attend it, and perhaps by some who go to different parts of the world. God knows how to diffuse the light, and he sometimes does it by scattering the members far and wide. But the seeds of truth, however spread abroad by Gospel birds, shall not fall and die. The same to him, whether the purified soul ascends from the home-bed or the battle-field, on one side the globe or another. Let the church be sustained, then, as a grand missionary power; and that church will sustain, living or dying, the dearest spiritual interests of all her children.

2. Our denominational schools and colleges are a grand missionary power, and should receive the patronage of all our people. There may be cases where want of means will not allow this to be done; but we have no doubt there are many who could do so if they would. There may be good schools nearer by, but that is not enough; we must sustain our own, for nobody else will. The Institute at Clinton, and the College and Theological School at Canton, and our Colleges and Schools east and west, are our own denominational property, and all Universalists should feel a personal pride and responsibility in sustaining them. If we do not, who will? They are great missionary lights; and as such the oil must be supplied, or those lights will go out in darkness and death. But that must never be. Nothing short of

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a deluge more destructive than the first, can ever drown Universalism, or drive it from the world.

3. Denominational Tracts, Papers and Books are an excellent missionary power, and should be scattered abroad like snow-flakes in a winter's storm, and they should be distinctly scriptural, doctrinal and practical in their character. The more scholarship in them the better, but not at the expense of the Gospel's substance. The Gospel [obliterated] be like the body with every bone taken out—it could not stand alone, nor move forward. Some say we have had too much doctrine already; others think we have had too much practical preaching; and still others manage to preach with scarcely a reference to the Scripture at all. But we want the whole duty mingled and blended, and addressed to the earnest and honest heart of man. The Bible is the fountain of light and love on earth; doctrine is the frame-work of the christian system; and practice unfolds the beautiful flowers and fruits of the christian life. They must all go together, making a full-orbed visage, and a well-rounded character, and especially are they needed in all tracts, papers and books designed for the missionary field.

4. We want, and we ought to have very soon, living Heralds of the Gospel, tried and true, traveling to and fro, and up and down, through all the length and breadth of the land. Something is being done to that end, in seven States of the Union, and in six Associations; but it must be confessed, I think, that our work is hardly yet begun. One poor brother has been trying to scatter gospel seed, among his colored brethren, in far Liberia. Our Chaplains in the army are at work too, partly for the Lord, I suppose, and partly for their pay. The sword, in the hands of christian men, is also a missionary instrument—a sort of John the Baptist—baptizing the world in blood, and thus preparing the way of the Lord. But some of our best men should be abroad, turning up the long trodden soil, and scattering the seed of the kingdom, in all the unoccupied cities and villages of our State and our land. Some men can get a hearing almost anywhere; others almost no where; and we should send abroad our best men for the work, not our worst. They should itinerate in circuits, and as fast as they build up congregations that can stand alone, go to other places and do the same. Thus would our cause be advanced with a tenfold speed and power, and thus will the moral wilderness be made to bud and blossom as the rose.

5. But where shall the funds come from? Why, from the Ambassador Establishment, of course, when sustained as it ought to be sustained, and from the liberal pockets of the rich, and the mites of the humble poor. Ah, yes, a large fund should be established at once, and judiciously used, for that very purpose. The time is coming, but it is not yet. One good brother from Lockport, now a sainted Ballou in heaven, has made a noble beginning for the Niagara Association—3,500 dollars—and for all religious purposes

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some 9,000 dollars. The glad earth is thanking a beneficent Heaven daily, for the gift of such men, and they are coming in large numbers, by and by. Let our State organization be prepared to receive them, with a hearty welcome. The earth is the Lord's, and all people, and when the sword has done its bloody missionary work [a reference to the ongoing Civil War], the purse and the heart must follow, and bind up the wound, and complete what is left undone.

Let us never forget, then, that our Missionary field is the world all around us, and not the world far away. When other denominations have done their preparatory work, we must carry that work on to perfection. The children which God has given us, are to be trained for life, and educated for heaven, and the children of the world must be prepared to become citizens of this world, and angels in the life immortal.

Respectfully submitted,
J.J. AUSTIN

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(E)

REPORT ON SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Read before the N.Y. Universalist State Convention, held August 26th, 1862, at Auburn.

The Committee appointed at your last Annual session to make a Report on "The Sunday School Interest," beg your indulgence while they submit the following:—In the absence of the reports in which your attention has been called to this subject on former occasions of this kind, your Committee is at a loss to know what train of thought would be most instructive and profitable. Yet the members of the Committee feel assured, that what they may offer on this subject, though it may not be wholly new to your body and to our denomination, may prove of lasting benefit, if it should be widely read by our own people, and its suggestions carefully heeded.

We venture the remark, that upon no instrumentality does more depend, so far as our denominational growth and existence is concerned, than upon that which the Sunday School furnishes us. *Our very existence—to some extent—depends upon it.* It is gratifying to know that our people everywhere are growing into this conviction. The Sunday School is receiving a larger share of our attention, and slowly, perhaps, but very surely, we are coming up to the true standard. We do not wish to be understood as saying, that we have attained, in any reasonable degree, what it has clearly been our duty to attain. Yet we rejoice in believing that we are growing into a condition to see what we need.

The Sunday School should be regarded as the most important feature of a Society. Those who have the interests of the Society at heart should not neglect its welfare. The Sunday School service should be made, if possible,

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the most interesting service of the day; and the Trustees of the Society should bestow upon the Sunday School the care and attention which its importance so justly demands. Dr. Tyng in his "Forty Years Experience in Sunday Schools" gives us the fruits of his long and practical tuition on this subject. He emphatically declares, that the Sunday School is the most important feature of the Society—that it should be freely and liberally supported by the members; and that the care bestowed upon it, and the money spent in its behalf, will do more to build up the church and to further the object of the gospel, than anything else that can be done. In every Society of which he has had charge, small beginnings have led to encouraging results; and he attributes it chiefly to the fact, that in every instance the vestrymen of his Societies have made the Sunday School the great feature, and have freely spent the money of the Society in behalf of its interests and its success.

To create a like interest in our denomination in behalf of this co-ordinate branch of the church, our parents need awakening, and their attention should in some special manner, be called to this subject. Our preachers throughout the State, should make this one of the leading objects of their ministrations. They should enforce tis truth in every way, and keep it as constantly as possible before the minds of our people. We presume, that in the abstract there [line obliterated] would not cheerfully acknowledge the importance of the S. S. But it is one thing to acknowledge a truth in the abstract, and another and quite a different thing, to give to that truth practical heed. The Sunday School has claims upon all, but very peculiar claims upon parents. We all understand the nature of the human mind. We know, or ought to know, that our children need not only the *intellectual* training which they are expected to receive in our public schools; but they also need the *moral*, or *religious*, training, which it is the object of our Sunday Schools to furnish. Every child is susceptible, and begins very early in life to drink in its education. Thus its mind is directed, and its thoughts and its life are formed. Education signifies, *to lead forth*. When our faculties are led forth in a proper direction, we are educated aright. This implies that when they are not so led, we are educated amiss. Every child, to a great extent, becomes what its education makes it. The child, so the old law has it, is father to the man. The habits of the child, the influences by which it is steadily surrounded, may claim the lawful paternity of the life, habits, and the spirit of the man into which the child is growing. We may not now be able to trace to their origin the individual traits of character of which we are possessed, and by which we are distinguished from other men; but that they have grown up out of the soil of our early circumstances and education, is beyond all possible dispute.

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We have certain natural gifts—inherent traits of character that are “to the manor born”—certain aptitudes or inaptitudes that can never be fully overcome perhaps; but even these may to some extent be modified by the character of our early education. Outside of all idiosyncrasies of character, which may be regarded as natural and to some extent unchangeable, there is a large margin in every child’s disposition that may be variously filled up by the sort of culture to which it is subjected. When we look upon a painting, we know the effect upon the canvas was produced by innumerable touches of the painter’s pencil—some bold, some gentle, some slow, some rapid. The picture is the result of these touches. We cannot trace to their origin the various hues upon the canvas; we see the shades, the beautiful blending of the colors, we know in a general way how the result has been produced, but no single effect can now be traced to the touch that produced it. So with the character of any given man. We may not be able to trace all his peculiarities to their source; but we know that they are the product of the influences to which he has been subjected in his growth from childhood to manhood.

The babe to-day in its mother’s arms, will become what the lessons of its life will make of it. Were two children, known to possess precisely the same native gifts, to be brought up under diverse influences, each would no doubt when the age of manhood as been attained, show the peculiar effect of his training. Were twins to be separated in childhood by fortune or design, and brought up under different circumstances; one for instance on the perlieus of the Five Points, and the other in a well-regulated home, surrounded by kind friends, and in the midst of the best associations and influences; they would no doubt in manhood afford a living illustration of the truth—that education makes more than half the man.

Your Committee is not insensible to the fact that all the religious and moral training a child may need, is not to be found in the Sunday School alone. Even if this, as may sometimes be the case, were all the education of this nature with which the child is blessed, we must not forget there are influences and associations from which the child can not be removed, that may assist, or wholly subvert the influence of the Sabbath School.

1. First and most important among these, is the home education, under the immediate control of which every child must and will live, and live more intimately, and therefore more effectually for good or ill, than under any other. In the very nature of things, nothing can supercede [sic] the excellency of a good or the misfortune of an evil home. No educating influences have such potency as those of the family circle. And nothing can thrust them aside and take their place. The very word, homeless, suggests the dreariest associations, and brings up before the mind pictures of squalor, poverty, crime and degradation. Not only are these influences more potent,

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but they are more constant than any other. In the very nature of things, it must be so. The relations of the child to the members of the family circle, are so intimate that they must ever prove, with now and then a rare exception, the most effective, not only for good but for ill as well, that can be brought to bear upon the child's mind.

This arrangement, whatever evils it may sometimes involve, is the natural one, and should not, can not, in fact, be changed. Who can be expected to feel a greater interest in the welfare of a child than the parent? There is not only every incentive that a prudent foresight can suggest, urging parents to watch over the moral and religious interests of the child; but the sacred ties of consanguinity [sic] consanguinity binds the hearts of parents to children, and furnish the most cogent reasons why a parent should feel the greatest possible degree of interest in the proper education of his child. For fifteen or twenty years of its life the child depends wholly upon its parents for almost everything pertaining to its existence—not only for food, clothing and shelter, but for advice and instruction.

2. Secondly; the influence of associates—of daily and hourly companions, (more or less directly under the control of parents) is more constant, and therefore often quite as potent as those of the Sunday School. The parent has an authority over the child which the officers of the Sunday School cannot assume. They only have the child under their care for a single hour during the week. The parent should have his eye upon the child almost constantly.

The chief influence to train and direct the growth of the child's mind and heart, must come from its home. The Sunday School can only come up to our homes as their helper in this work. And their efficiency, therefore, must depend upon the assistance and sympathy they receive from our homes—especially from our parents. The parent can do something by way of preparing the child's mind to be profited by the Sunday School instruction. He can also lend his immediate personal influence to the Sunday School. The efficiency of our Sunday Schools everywhere depends upon the congregations with which they are connected—and especially upon the parents of the children who attend them.

Parents might clearly see [obliterated] the following facts.

(1) Our homes are not the only sources of the Sunday School's strength, but there the child's mind, as already said, must be prepared to love its school, to desire and to work for its prosperity, and to take an interest in its lessons.

No parent who sends his child to the Sunday School will ever willfully prepare his child to listen with indifference to the lessons of the school; but may he not do so unintentionally? May not his indifference to the church render the child indifferent to the School; and by never making the church

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and the School the subject of earnest and rational conversation at home—by passing the whole thing by as though it were a matter about which he gave himself no concern—may he not make an impression upon the child's mind of a most unfavorable character?

(2) But again: the responsibility of parents is to be seen in the fact, that every school depends for its officers and teachers upon the congregation—and therefore to a great extent upon our parents.

If the Sunday School is an important institution, and is, or even may be made an efficient instrument for good, we cannot shut our eyes to the obligations it imposes. Its neglect, in any way, is a most serious neglect, and the responsibility for it lies at the door of those who have the opportunity, and whose duty it therefore becomes to convert the Sunday School into an instrument of moral power. The Sunday School, if properly managed, can be made one of the most important instruments in the moral vineyard of the Redeemer. It is one of the most important institutions known to the civilization of the 19th century. It is true, it has not become in all instances what it should be, and it will not become what it ought to be, until the members of each church—the earnest and religious souls who belong to it—take hold in earnest and work for its success.

Your Committee will sum up in a few words what they regard as absolutely essential to give efficiency to our Sunday Schools, and to prepare our children to carry forward the denominational work in which their fathers are now engaged.

1. Every Society should take the Sunday School belonging to it under its fostering care. It should be generously supported. Means in some way should be procured to maintain it, and a handsome and an ample sum should be appropriated annually, to defray its necessary expenses.

2. The parents of every Society should be importuned in every just and reasonable way, to give their personal aid to the Sunday School. In every case where it is at all possible, they should enter the school and become teachers or officers. They can do no less, at least, than to visit the school frequently, and give it the encouragement and sympathy of their presence.

It is to be fondly hoped, that our people may yet be awakened to see the importance of this subject. Our life—the faith of the world—depends upon it. More is to be done in this way, than in any other possible way that God opens before us. Our children must be taught to love our faith; to love it above everything else; to live by it, and if need be, to be willing to die for it.

The only way to impart to them this spirit, is to do it through the Sabbath School and the church. Let us protect and support the Sabbath School then, as much as we do our churches, or our ordinary educational establishments.

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All of which is respectfully submitted by your Committee.

B. [Bernard] PETERS

R.H. [Royal Henry] PULLMAN

B.N. [Browning Nichols] WILES

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 27 Sep 1862

Transcribed with notes added in Jan 2014 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY