

## **CONVENTIONS ACROSS THE SEA.**

### ***– COMPLETION OF THE EDITOR'S TOUR. –***

DEAR WATCH TOWER READERS: –

At Edinburgh was our last stop in Scotland, our next Convention having been arranged for Liverpool, England. On our arrival we were met by six representatives of the local Church, who greeted us warmly in the name of our King, and made us comfortable. After a refreshing sleep, we were ready for the Convention sessions of Saturday and Sunday (May 16, 17) – five well-attended sessions, beginning with 300 and ending with 600, and averaging 400. Of these, probably 80 were friends from cities we did not have the time to visit – some of them coming considerable distances. Our topics were the same as at other points, except that on Sunday afternoon we had a Question and Answer meeting, lasting from 3 to 5. A free luncheon was served between the afternoon and evening sessions on both days, and was enjoyed by about 150. It is our hope that some good was accomplished by this Convention also; that some who came from curiosity were deeply interested; that some already established were encouraged to "press on"; that some partially convinced were helped to full conviction respecting the great divine plan and the grand privilege of participating in it – now, in sufferings and reproaches, and hereafter in glorious services in the Kingdom; and that some of those already clear in the truth were encouraged and more firmly established, and incited more than ever to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us [in some, one weakness; and in others, another]," and to "run with patience the race that is set before us in the gospel." If kind words and fervent wishes and earnest hand-shakes speak of love and zeal, then surely we had abundant testimony of the devotion of the Liverpool Church. The next morning thirty gathered at the depot, leaving other concerns in order to bid us a final adieu and to urge that we come again before long. Again, as we parted, the song-prayer was lifted heavenward – "God be with you till we meet again!"

Our next appointment was Birmingham, where we arrived about noon, and were met and welcomed at the depot by representatives of the local Church. We could stay but the one day here; but had two sessions – 3 to 5 and 7 to 9. At the afternoon session we spoke of the oneness of the Church, the body of Christ, and the terms of our relationship to our Head; and saw that in no sense are we gathered to men or organizations, but to the Lord himself. "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." About 20 WATCH TOWER readers from outside cities attended. After a free luncheon, in which 55 participated, came the evening session – more particularly for the public – the topic being, "The Oath-bound Covenant." Next morning we bade final farewells and resumed our journey.

Manchester was our next appointment. We reached there by noon and at 2.30 p.m. began another happy Convention, in the usual Salford meeting room. The attendance (about 125) represented the deeply interested of that vicinity and of neighboring towns. The closest attention was given us while we endeavored to stir up the pure minds of all, by pointing out the oneness of the Church as the members of Christ's body, and that we must all be "beheaded" – must all lose our own headship and self-will, in order that we may be acceptable as *members* of Christ's body, over which he is the only Lord and Head, and his will the only law or control. A free luncheon was then [R3213 : page 196] served – participated in most joyously by about 100. Then came our public meeting in the Town Hall, 6.30 to 8.45. Here a very intelligent audience of about 500 gave close attention for nearly three times as long as is their custom. We trust that some received the lesson of "The Oath-bound Covenant" into good and honest hearts, and that thus started, they will begin to read and to study the literature, without which there is little hope for full development under the blessings and privileges of the Lord's people in this "harvest" time.

The next day we had three sessions. At 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. we addressed the Church on the necessity for putting on the whole armor of

God, that we may be able to stand in this evil day. We pictured the race-course, called attention to its various degrees of progress in the fulfilling of the law of the New Creation – namely, Love. Our evening session at 6.30 was again a public one in the "Pendleton Town Hall." Again we had the intelligent audience of the previous night, and again they gave closest attention till 8.40, when we were obliged to close with prayer, without taking time for a closing hymn, and to hasten to our train, connecting with the steamer for Dublin, Ireland. But the audience was loth to leave even then, and, while we put on our wraps to leave, stood singing: **page 196**

"God be with you till we meet again!  
By his counsels guide, uphold you;  
With his sheep securely fold you;  
God be with you till we meet again!

"God be with you till we meet again!  
'Neath his wings protecting hide you;  
Daily manna still provide you;  
God be with you till we meet again!

"God be with you till we meet again!  
When life's perils thick surround you  
Put his arms unfailing round you;  
God be with you till we meet again!"

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Before the train started, fully sixty of the friends had gathered around our "carriage" door. For the third and fourth (and, by some of them, for the sixth) time, our hand was clasped in a fervent good-bye, and the hymn-prayer went up from all our hearts, as with bared heads we unitedly sang:

"Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love."

Dublin was reached in due course – May 21st. Our first meeting was a public one the same evening, 8 to 9.40, in Rotunda Hall. Our audiences were very attentive, though less enthusiastic than those of England and Scotland – owing, no doubt, to the fact that "present truth" is newer there, has been less studied and is less clearly comprehended. Our first topic was "The Oath-bound Promise," and it is our hope that some of the dear people who listened so intently may be awakened to the necessity of studying the divine plan as set forth in MILLENNIAL DAWN. Some so resolved, and made the start the same evening, as we happen to know.

Friday's meetings were held in the same place from 4 to 6 and 8 to 10. Some interest was awakened, but how much or how deep, who can say? We are hopeful, however, of the future work here – especially if the city can be systematically colporteured. We hope that two or three of the brethren will see their privilege and undertake the work. We know of no service open to so many of the Lord's people and offering such abundant return of sheaves, as well as of joy to the reapers.

Saturday morning started us for Belfast, where an evening meeting with an interested group of fifteen was enjoyed. Our hearts burned with love for the Lord and for the brethren, as we called to mind that "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his Covenant." (Psa. 25:19.) We noted also the words, "None of the wicked shall understand," remarking the impossibility of interesting such in present truth; and that any once sanctified and blest are sure to lose their interest in the deep things of God if they "return to their wallowing in the mire" of sin. We called attention to the fact that murderers and criminals in general profess faith in the eternal torment doctrine, and have mostly been trained to it from infancy, while we who know the Lord and his plan of mercy and love are constrained, not to license sin, but, reversely, to copy the divine character.

Sunday's public meetings in Belfast were from 3 to 5 and from 7 to 9.15. The interest, indicated by the close attention given for lengthy sessions, was excellent. Here we parted company with Brothers Hemery

(the London representative, who joined our party at Glasgow) and Henninges, who returned to London, via Liverpool, where the latter met Sister H. on her arrival from America. The Editor took ship next morning for Glasgow, bidding good-bye on the wharf to six very earnest brethren who assured us of their full consecration to the Lord and the truth, and their intention to serve it henceforth with renewed energy. They urged us to return, as the Lord's providence might lead, and wished us to remember them to those of like precious faith in America. Our duties required but a brief stay in Glasgow, and we took the night train for London, *en route* for Germany, etc.

At London we parted company with Brother Hemery and were joined by Sister Henninges from the U.S.A. She brought us the kind greetings of the Buffalo and the New York City Churches, which were greatly appreciated. **[R3214 : page 197]**

About 65 of the London friends had gathered at the railway station to bid us a final *adieu* – too many to gain admission to the train platform, so we bade them "Good-bye" in the station, where we joined them in the well-known verse:

"Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above!"

The scene was one long to be remembered, for our hearts felt the meaning of every word we uttered. In answer to queries we again promised to return whenever the Lord's providences seem so to direct.

A rail journey to the sea, a night on the boat and then seven hours by rail, brought us to Elberfeld, Germany – already decided upon as the most appropriate location for the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society's branch for Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, etc. We made this selection because of the character of the population –

religious and independent. Our contact with the people has seemed to confirm this.

Our first attention was given to searching for suitable apartments. We obtained from a renting agency the addresses of eight places, and on going to the first of these we felt that the Lord's providence had directed us to it; and after looking at the others we felt convinced of this, and rented it. It has a large room, suitable for meetings, with three smaller rooms connected, suitable for light housekeeping, one of which can be made into one with the large room (by opening four large doors) should this ever become necessary. It would thus accommodate 150 persons. There is also a basement for the storage of tons of tracts, DAWNS, etc. The location is fine – near the post-office and railway station, and with an electric car service to every part of the city. And, an important item, the rent is cheap.

The next day we met with the dear friends of Barmen-Elberfeld and vicinity. In the afternoon we had a social and question meeting with the deeply interested numbering about 35. In the evening we had a public meeting, attended by about 100, of whom probably one-half were in sympathy with present truth, and the remainder their friends who are inquiring. We spoke on "The Oath-bound Covenant," endeavoring to stimulate the faith of all in that promise, and urging all to lay firm hold of the great promise and to seek earnestly to make their calling and election sure to a membership in the Church, the Body of Christ – the Seed of Abraham that is so soon to engage in the grand work of blessing all the families of the earth, distributing the divine favors legally secured by the sacrifice of God's dear Son, our Lord.

After a night's rest we arose at 5 a.m. and took an early train for Mulhausen (in company with three brethren, also bound for Zurich). We arrived at 5 p.m. and received a hearty greeting at the station. Being thus refreshed in spirit, and subsequently with substantials, we were pleased to address 50 brethren and friends from 8.15 to 10.15 – speaking, as at the previous place, on the Oath-bound Promise, which cannot fail, and which means so much to us, the Church, and also to the world.

At noon on the next day (May 30) we left for Basle, Switzerland, where during three hours between trains we made the personal acquaintance of the brethren there, and sought to encourage them to run the heavenly race with patience. Our arrival at Zurich was late at night, but a dozen of the brethren awaited us at the depot and gave us hearty greetings, which we as heartily reciprocated. Our stay of two days at Zurich was interesting and, we trust, not without profit. We got personally acquainted with 170, previously known only through correspondence, mostly Swiss, but a goodly number from France and Germany, besides two from Hungary and two from Italy.

Our stop at Thun was only a short one, but gave us the acquaintance of still others of the household of faith. Here we parted company with Brother and Sister Henniges, who returned to Elberfeld and the new work there, while we hastened on – stopping at Neuchatel, Switzerland between trains. Here the friends, as per previous arrangement, met us at the depot and escorted us to a nearby park, where we had a twenty-five minutes talk, through two interpreters, on the things pertaining to the Kingdom. Two of the fourteen present were Germans.

By appointment with Bro. Hemery, the Society's British representative, we stopped two days in London – not to meet the Church, but to seek a new location for the Society's London office. The matter is not yet settled, but the splendid prospects for the work in Great Britain appeal to us strongly for a more central location than the one which has served us so well for the past three years. We are looking for the leadings of divine providence in this matter and will report on it later.

Our return journey was by the same splendid steamer in which we went away, – the "New York." The Lord furnished an opportunity for the distribution of tracts and also for a Sunday afternoon service (in the second cabin) – as a result of which we hope for the garnering of at least two grains of "wheat." On board was a polite minister of the Episcopal church, but conversation revealed the fact that, like the one we met when outward bound, he is not a Christian – not a believer **[R3214 : page**

**198]** in the fall and, consequently, not a believer in the *redemption* from the "curse," or condemnation, of the fall – not a believer in the atonement. The evidences multiply that the falling mentioned by the prophet is well advanced: "A thousand shall fall at thy side." Evidently the leaders of Christian sentiment and ceremony have already fallen from the faith.

We were amazed at the lack of interest in religious themes amongst the passengers. An extensive library on board was well patronized for works of fiction, but no one seemed to care for religious matters – especially amongst the upper class. They have lost their fear of eternal torment, and neither have, nor seek, anything to take its place. The rejection of "hell" means to them a rejection of absolute faith in the Bible as God's inspired Word. (What a great injury that unscriptural theory has worked!) They satisfy the cravings of their minds with morality and forms of godliness. We are glad that it is so, rather than the reverse, – that they should be steeped in immorality and ungodly practises. But how we long for ability to open the eyes of their understanding that they might rejoice with us in *the divine "plan of the ages"* and in the love toward God which it inspires! Thank God the powers of darkness will soon be scattered by the glories of the Millennial morning, when many of these fine, noble people will see out of obscurity, and rejoice to avail themselves of the restitution privileges then prevailing!

As our vessel reached its dock we were greeted by thirteen of the dear friends of the New York Church – first with waving handkerchiefs and hats, and later with fervent hand-clasps. The busiest afternoon of the week was sacrificed to do honor to the cause we represent. The Lord, we are sure, will reward their love. (Heb. 6:10.) One dear brother remarked, "Brother Russell, we remembered you in prayer every day; and I believe it was so with the dear friends everywhere. I am confident that no pilgrimage ever made was accompanied by so many prayers." We answered that we had greatly enjoyed and been encouraged by the thought that at least 20,000 of God's people were thus remembering us almost daily.



As we neared Pittsburg on Sunday morning, two of the brethren boarded our train at an outer station to be first to welcome us home, and later at the depot we were cordially welcomed by a delegation from the Allegheny Church. One of these dear brethren had come all the way from Canada to participate in this greeting. We were escorted to the large sitting-room of the Bible House (Allegheny). Entering, we found the office-workers gathered – each with a red rose on his bosom, emblematic of Christian love. After greetings, a rose was pinned to our coat lapel, too, and then the entire company joined in a hymn of welcome composed for the occasion, after which one of our number rendered our united acknowledgments and thanks to God. The hymn follows – the first verse **page 198** representing the sentiments of the returning one: –

"Home again! Home again!  
From a foreign shore,  
And oh! it fills my soul with joy  
To meet you all once more.  
Here I left the friends so dear,  
To cross the ocean's foam;  
But now I'm once again with those  
Who kindly greet me home."

Welcome home! Welcome home!  
This our happy strain;  
For God in love has overruled,  
And brought thee home again.  
Day by day our earnest prayers  
Were with thee o'er the sea,  
That God would bless his work abroad,  
And gently care for thee.

Happy hearts, happy hearts,  
Join in grateful praise  
To him who guides and guards his own  
Throughout their earthly days.

Cords of love our hearts entwine,  
Sweet love that shall not fail;  
'Twill firmly bind us while on earth,  
And reach beyond the veil.

Happy hearts, happy hearts,  
Join in grateful praise  
To him who leads the happy throng  
To everlasting days.

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Notwithstanding the fact that it rained, and that it was generally expected that we would not arrive until Monday, and a reception had been arranged for Monday night, the Bible House Chapel was full (about 300) for our usual Sunday afternoon service. For this occasion, and for the Monday night reception, many of the dear friends had sent in floral offerings, and the Chapel platform was resplendent as never before with roses and lilies and ferns. At first our "bump" of economy was disposed to chide our dear friends for their generosity, and to say, "Wherefore this waste! The money represented in these flowers might have been better spent in publishing tracts, etc., to assist our poor blinded brethren." But we remembered that it was Judas, and not our Lord, who voiced those sentiments. So we accepted all as done unto him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood (Eph. 4:2), and said not one word to mar the joy of the dear company, who, after our discourse on Isaiah 55:8-11, pressed our hand, assuring us of their joy in welcoming us home. We assured them that, although we had met and become personally interested in many dear brethren and sisters on foreign shores, our heart was proportionately enlarged, so that it meant **[R3214 : page 199]** no diminution of our love for the dear saints in America, and, in an especial sense, the Church at Allegheny.

Monday night's reception brought together a splendid company of the Lord's consecrated children – adorned with the fruits and graces of the holy spirit, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of

God is of great value." (1 Pet. 3:4.) Quite a number came from surrounding cities and towns – and more flowers came, too; "alabaster boxes" of sweet odor to the Lord, because really rendered unto him, and to us merely because he had been pleased to use us as his mouthpiece in proclaiming his great plan of the ages in this his due time for revealing it. It is not possible to describe the pleasures of our fellowship in Christ that evening, and we will not try. But it is safe to say that with all the secret of joy was in the Lord's great plan and in what we can see of its prosperity.

Faithfully, your brother and servant in the Lord,

CHARLES T. RUSSELL.

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