

THE ASBURY PARK CONVENTION

FROM various directions the Truth people gathered at Asbury Park, N.J., for a General Convention, to the number of about 1,000 – some staying throughout, and others a shorter period. Florida and Texas on the South, California on the West, Maine on the East and Canada on the North were represented, and many of the intermediate States, though the bulk of the attendance was from New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia. Besides, we were favored with the fellowship of three from Scotland. As you may surmise it was a family reunion, in which each was deeply interested in all others. As usual all faces were glad and bright because of the sunshine of the Truth within. The continuance of the Convention for an entire week under the beautiful and peaceful conditions of this model sea-side resort seemed to be appreciated by all.

According to program, the Convention opened with an address of welcome at 10 a.m. Sunday, July 22, followed by a Praise and Testimony Meeting which all seemed to greatly enjoy. Brother A. E. Williamson preached at 3 p.m., subject, "The Saints Shall Judge the World." Brother M. L. McPhail discoursed at 7.30 p.m. on "Elect and Non-Elect."

On Monday, the 23rd, another Praise and Testimony meeting was enjoyed from 9 to 10.30 a.m., followed by a discourse from Brother John Edgar, subject, "Time, and Its Relation to the Divine Plan." Brother R. E. Streeter discoursed at 7.30 p.m. on "Our Hope and Its Present Effects."

Tuesday, the 24th, opened with a Praise, Prayer and Testimony Meeting at 9 a.m. This was followed by a discourse by Brother Frank Draper on "Some Features of the Tabernacle's

Teaching." At 7.30 p.m. Brother M. L. Herr preached on the subject, "Transformed."

Wednesday's program was a little different. A Sunrise Praise and Testimony service, 5 to 6.30 a.m., reminded the friends in general that we are all awake and on the outlook for the Sun of Righteousness to usher in the great antitypical Sabbath – the Millennium. At 10.45 Brother E. Bundy gave a discourse on "The Chief Corner Stone." Just as he concluded and a song of praise was being sung Brother C. T. Russell arrived and was conducted to the platform. The friends arose *en masse* and gave him their smiles of welcome with the "Chatauqua salute" – the waving of handkerchiefs. Brother Russell greeted the assemblage, assuring them of his joy in meeting them and of his hopes and prayers that the Convention would be a great success and blessing to all. He was assured of the Lord's willingness to bless us all and hence believed that the amount of blessing each would receive would depend very largely on his own attitude of heart – his receptiveness. He remarked that the Convention would cost the company, for railway fares and board, about \$25 each on the average – or about \$25,000 in all. Born with an economical streak he was accustomed to count the cost and compare it with the results. He had been learning of late that it is very difficult to estimate the value of spiritual blessings, and believed it quite possible for each one to get more than his money's worth of favor and spiritual uplift, but it behooved each one to seek for this result in himself as well as to assist others to the highest attainment in spiritual progress. Then the congregation filed past Brother Russell, greeting him and he them with hearty hand-shakes and words of comfort.

Later in the day Brother Russell introduced Brother W. E. Van Amburgh as the Permanent Chairman of the Convention and the speaker of the evening at 7.30 p.m. – subject, "The Honor of the Cross."

Thursday, July 26, opened with a Praise Service and at 10 o'clock was followed by a discourse by Brother Russell on "Baptism and its Import." At 3 p.m. symbolic baptism was administered in the Congregational Church's baptistry – 65 symbolizing their burial and resurrection. At 7.30 p.m. Brother Smith Walker preached on "Making Our Calling and Election Sure."

Friday, the 27th, at 9 a.m. a Praise and Testimony Meeting held until 10.30 when Brother John Edgar delivered an address on "The Lessons Taught in the Great Pyramid." At 7.30 Brother Russell answered a large bunch of written "Questions on Biblical Topics."

July 28th, Saturday, Brother Russell addressed Colporteurs and the friends of that work, showing its importance and how evidently the Lord intended that it should be a feature of the present "Harvest" work, and how great its possibilities of reaching the eyes, ears and hearts of the people. The afternoon continued the subject and gave opportunity for the assignment of territory to many beginners. About 60 Colporteurs were in attendance. We hope for a still larger gathering of Colporteurs at the St. Paul Convention. At 7.30 p.m. Brother M. L. McPhail gave a discourse on "Patience."

When Sunday, July 29, the last day of our Convention Feast, arrived, it found the friends well filled and disposed to say with the Prophet, "My cup runneth over." The 10.30 a.m. discourse by Brother Russell was from the text (Col. 3:1), "If Ye then be Risen with Christ, Seek Those Things which are Above." The 3 p.m. discourse by the same speaker was on the theme, "The Bible Vindicated – To Hell and Back: Who are There. Hope for the Return of Many of Them."

The "Love Feast," the concluding service of the Convention, was an occasion long to be remembered. It was conducted by Brother Van Amburgh. At 7 p.m. Brother Russell gave a few parting words, reminding the dear friends of the General Assembly

or Convention soon to be enjoyed by some and urging each one present to do all in his power to make his own Calling and Election sure. He reminded all that our sufficiency is of God in Christ, who has assured us that the Father himself loveth us and is for us, willing to assist us; that the Lord Jesus has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and assured us that all of life's experiences under his direction can and will be overruled in our favor – if we but obey his commands and abide in his love. He reminded the friends of his words of greeting on his arrival, and his exhortation that each get for himself and for dear ones at home **[R3838 : page 261]** the full value of the cost of the Convention. He had to tell them that many had told him they had been doubly repaid with interest, and that one brother remarked that he alone had gotten spiritual blessings of more value than the \$25,000, the entire cost of the Convention. He had every reason to believe that many of us could not estimate the value of the seasons of spiritual refreshment, and he proposed their continuance until the Lord's providence indicated to the contrary. There was no time for a more formal adieu, so Brother Russell waved his hand to the audience and they theirs to him and he was driven to the train, while the others wound up the Convention with the Love Feast of the program.

We have refrained from comments on the discourses, but we believe that all who heard were blessed and edified. Comments to this effect were general – not only among the friends of the Truth but amongst visitors. None can tell the scope of the blessing resulting from these gatherings, which seem to become more popular every year. May the Lord add his blessing richly, not only to those who attended but also to the many more whose hearts and prayers were with us and who were frequently remembered in our prayers.
