

## **A GREAT CONVENTION OF TRUTH PEOPLE**

THE Convention held at Niagara Falls, August 29th to September 5th, stands at the head of the list as respects numbers and enthusiasm. As for spiritual profit and manifestation of the Master's love we cannot imagine how it could have been improved upon – but this was true also of the Indianapolis Convention and others. It seems true of our conventions – as many of the friends write us of the Pilgrim visits – that "The last always seems the best." From start to finish the Convention surely was a season of delightful spiritual fellowship, most favorable to Christian development.

The printed program was carried out, but had to be supplemented because the crowd was too large for the auditorium so kindly provided free by the Natural Food Co. However, we secured the Opera House for Sunday forenoon and afternoon. Its capacity (over 1700) with that of the auditorium (capacity 1000) and a reception room holding several hundred, made us quite comfortable. In consequence two sets of speakers were kept busy serving two audiences. The following speakers gave longer or shorter addresses, and some of them several: Brothers W. M. Hersee, I. Hoskins, R. E. Streeter, J. Harrison, W. E. VanAmburgh, J. F. Rutherford, P. S. L. Johnson, F. W. Williamson, O. L. Sullivan, G. Draper, J. H. Cole, L. W. Jones, T. E. Barker, S. Walker, J. Hutchinson, W. J. Mills, W. E. Page, C. A. Dann, J. G. Kuehn, A. C. Wise, and the Editor of this journal.

The total number in attendance was over two thousand – some of whom were present only for Sunday and Monday. However, at least 1542 were present on Saturday, for that number of heads appear in a photograph taken on that day.

Notwithstanding the larger crowd than we had expected there was no excitement, no confusion. This was doubtless due in part to a very careful preparation for the friends by those who looked out for their comfort, secured lodgings in advance, etc. However, the principal source of the calm and peace and joy so manifest undoubtedly was the "*new mind*," which the Apostle calls "the spirit of a sound mind." Indeed we rejoice that this spirit of love and confidence in divine supervision is growing among the Truth people everywhere. Nothing encourages us more as we witness it at the One-Day as well as the General Conventions. There is of course plenty of room for further growth, but let us appreciate what we already discern and encourage it and be encouraged by it.

### **"THERE IS A RIVER"**

It would be difficult to decide which feature of the Convention was the most interesting and impressive. It was all good; the speakers and subjects were quite distinctly different. It was surely inspiring to the writer to look into the earnest faces of about 600 who were present at a special meeting of Colporteurs and intending Colporteurs. The sunrise prayer meeting at 5.30 a.m., attended by approximately one thousand, was also inspiring. But we believe that the baptism services were the most impressive of all, to many.

No Church edifice in that city had accommodation for our numbers, and so it was decided to use a lagoon or bye-water off the Niagara River for the water immersion, and hold the service on the bank where the hillside formed a natural amphitheatre. An audience of about 1500 gathered at the appointed hour, and after an address explanatory of the true baptism and its water symbol 241 were immersed.

The service was very impressive from every point of view. The preaching reminded one of the Scripture narratives of our

Lord's discourses and those of the apostles, and the baptism in the lagoon reminded one of the account of our Lord going down into the Jordan and coming up out of it. The lagoon or side stream is formed by a small island connected with the mainland by a stone bridge at its upper end. Those desirous of immersion crossed over the bridge, receiving the right hand of fellowship and a word of cheer. On the island were two robing tents, one for the brethren and one for the sisters.

Nature has arranged the spot so that it taught several symbolic lessons in connection with our use of it, as several remarked. Above the island for about 200 feet the side channel, there about 100 feet wide, was separated from the river proper by a row of stones which rise up out of the water; but when the island is reached the channel narrows to about 30 feet in width, and just there, above the bridge, all of the water being unable to enter the narrow channel, some of it turns back through a cut into the river proper.

### **THE SYMBOLIC PICTURE**

If the Niagara river be considered as symbolic of the course of the world, the picture is impressive, for is not the whole world rushing swiftly in mad competition and boisterous glee toward the great time of trouble with which this Gospel Age will be consummated, even as those waters hastened more and more swiftly and madly toward the famous cataract? And did not the narrow and placidly-gliding little lagoon correspond well with the statement of the Prophet – "There is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of our God"? (Psa. 46:4.) The wider intake of water seemed to picture the path of the many "justified" who are "called"; the narrowing of the channel represented the "narrow way" of consecration; the turning aside there of much of the water represented the testing, the sifting **[R4066 : page 294]** of the Gospel invitation to sacrifice and enter the narrow

way. The bridge and those who passed over it represented well the point of decision for God and not for Mammon, and the right-hand of fellowship the encouragements and assistances proffered to all who become disciples in the narrow way of *baptism into Christ's death*.

Those who witnessed from the shore declared the scene most impressive. Before them in the clear, quiet water one after another was buried into Christ's death in symbol, while just beyond them could be seen and heard the wild, rushing, laughing, moaning waters, representing the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together.

### **"BEEN WITH JESUS AND LEARNED OF HIM"**

Major Butler, one of the officials of the Natural Food Co., said this to a representative of our Society:

"I want to tell you, on behalf of the company, that it has afforded us the greatest pleasure to have your convention here. The influence of so many happy people, with smiling faces, evident sincerity, earnestness and zeal for what they believe to be right has been greater than I can express. To see so many people who really believe what they say and practice what they preach has been a revelation to us. I never saw anything like it before. While we have tried to do all that we could for your convenience and comfort and to make your stay here a pleasant and profitable one, you have done more for us than we possibly could have done for you."

The policemen who had charge of the streets in the vicinity of the opera house and the officers of the State reservation where the immersion service was held, were very much impressed by the order maintained, and said they had never seen so large a crowd without the necessity of handling.

Those who entertained our friends spoke in highest terms of them and were anxious that they come again. The janitors of the Auditorium also remarked the quiet orderliness of all, and that no cigar stumps nor tobacco quids nor even banana peels needed to be gathered up. We were glad of this evidence of the love of God, which does good to all and injury to none. "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness?"

The testimony of all, we believe, would be, It was good to be there! Our prayers unite with others, that under the Lord's blessing the privileges and inspirations and encouragements and resolves of the week at Niagara may mean blessings to other thousands than those that were present, and that thus the work of grace may abound more and more to the praise of our Lord and the comfort of his people.

The end is not yet, we trust and believe. The influence from all these conventions (one-day and general) is carried home to those who cannot attend them and both the relating and the hearing of these seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord bring fresh love and joy and zeal.

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