

THE OPENING AT BROOKLYN

THE friends at places where One-Day Conventions are held are pleased if they be reported in the WATCH TOWER, and we would be pleased to report them were it not that there is always such a sameness unavoidably connected with them. Almost without exception it could be said that the dear friends put forth strenuous efforts to bring the public service to the attention of the people, and that they succeed admirably, and that large and intelligent audiences are secured, and in many cases large numbers are unable to gain admittance. This sameness of the reports and our limited space alone hinder these reports. Nevertheless, if assured by many that they are appreciated and desired, we would take up the matter afresh.

The opening of the Brooklyn Tabernacle on January 31st and the subsequent work in that city, we are assured, would be of deep interest to the friends in general, and hence the present report.

The opening day, appointed a month in advance, found us none too well prepared. Our stationary chairs had not yet been placed and many of the finishing touches were lacking. However, we had a very enjoyable day.

The auditorium is on the second floor and has a seating capacity of over 800, but is conveniently arranged so that the curtains can be drawn, shutting off more than one-third of the seats. The Tabernacle is well lighted from the roof, and the side-walls are embellished with some of the gracious promises of our Father's Word in artistic workmanship and soft colors. The prevalent color of the walls, floor, etc., is olive green. The conditions altogether are very restful, and those who arrive before the meetings commence will find excellent food for quiet meditation.

The floor below this, the street floor, is being fitted up for our office purposes, and the basement floor for our stock and shipping departments.

The total number of the friends of the immediate vicinity, New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Newark, etc., in attendance, numbered about 200; probably another 100 or more came from surrounding towns, and 27 from as far away as Boston. All seemed well pleased with the move which the Lord's providence seemed to direct, and pleased, also, with the building chosen and the repairs made.

The eleven o'clock praise and testimony service was participated in by about 350, and was very enjoyable; the testimonies to the Lord's grace, and goodness, and care caused our hearts to overflow with gratitude. The afternoon meeting had been advertised to the public, and the attendance was very good. Close attention was given and we have hoped that some interest was aroused. In the evening we had a Question Meeting, and the character of the questions indicated intelligence and studiousness on the part of the dear friends.

The following Sunday very nearly the same programme was carried out, but with less advertising. The afternoon meeting was not so large. The friends of the New York City congregation, those of Brooklyn and those of Jersey City, all voted their unanimous desire to be parts of the Ecclesia whose home will be at the "Brooklyn Tabernacle," and unanimously elected Brother C. T. Russell Pastor of the same.

The following Sunday, February 14th, Brother Brenneisen spoke in the afternoon, and in the evening conducted a Berean Bible study. The attendance was all that could be expected.

A special arrangement was made to meet the public on February 21st. The Brooklyn Academy of Music was secured for

the afternoon, and the friends of Greater New York and vicinity certainly did manifest great zeal in the advertising of the meeting. The dear friends got out 150,000 copies of the first number of the new paper, "People's Pulpit," on the back of which was an advertisement of the Academy meeting. Window cards were used also, and posters, so that the meeting became widely advertised. The result was better than any of us had dared to anticipate. The house was crowded, seating 2200; approximately 400 stood, and it is estimated that more than 2500 people were turned away, unable to gain admission. To this overflow, however, the ushers distributed a special number of the WATCH TOWER so that we may hope that even they received some blessing. The large audience gave close attention for nearly two hours, and took the literature at the door with considerable manifestation of interest. How many grains of "wheat" were there and how many of these were favorable to influence, the Lord only knows, but we were pleased at the favorable hearing and the interest manifested upon the faces of the audience, which was a very intelligent one.

At the close of the session, Brother Rutherford was announced to speak at "Brooklyn Tabernacle" on the following Sunday afternoon on the "Divine Plan of the Ages" from a Lawyer's standpoint. A large house of earnest hearers greeted him.

Incidentally, we might mention another One-Day Convention recently held in Cleveland, a public service which was very remarkable, in respect to the congregation and the interest shown. The Cleveland friends, very full of zeal, engaged their largest auditorium, "The [R4342 : page 68] Hippodrome," which is one of the largest in the country, with a seating capacity of 4600. How thoroughly and wisely the dear friends exercised themselves in the advertising of that meeting may be judged from the fact that the house was full and many were standing, while

about 600 were turned away by order of the Public Safety Department.

These large attendances must not mislead any of us into supposing that the Truth is becoming popular. Our readers well know that such is not our expectation, although we are expecting that the next two years especially will see wonderful things accomplished in the spread of the Truth. Of course, the majority attending these meetings come from curiosity, but when we remember that we not only do not have the assistance of our Christian friends of the various denominations, but in many instances have their open, and especially their secret, opposition, the lesson is that religious people are doing more thinking for themselves than ever before, and it is in this class that we may hope to find a considerable amount of "wheat," some for the "Little Flock" and more for the "Great Company."

In this connection, we believe that it will be of interest to nearly all of our readers that we mention some of the Lord's providences in connection with the locating of the Bible House family in Brooklyn. The Tabernacle has no living apartments connected with it, and when we sought to rent a suitable building for the housing of our family of more than thirty, we found that we had a difficult problem. We almost needed a hotel. While the Tabernacle is not in an aristocratic neighborhood, the residence district near it is of a good class with fine, large residences. Some of these are for sale, but none for rent. We thought of going a little distance and finding cheaper quarters, and then reflected that the car-fare to and from the office twice daily would amount to \$1800 a year, and besides we would have inconvenience and loss of time.

At an opportune time some friends of the Truth proposed that we purchase such property as would suit our convenience, put it into repair, and that they would furnish the money – we to

hold the title and they to take a mortgage for the amount expended, on which they asked but five per cent. interest, and intimated that some of the interest might find its way into the Tract Fund from time to time. This proposal seemed providential and was gladly accepted as the cheapest and best thing possible. We anticipate that the interest will not amount to more than two-thirds of the car-fare estimate, possibly less.

Thus prepared, we made a fresh examination of the district with a view to purchase, and finally made bids upon three properties suitable to our uses with some alterations. We are sure that we will surprise you when we state that the one of the three which came to us at a bargain price is what is known as "The Old Henry Ward Beecher Home." It certainly seems very remarkable that we should get the old Beecher Bethel and then by accident get his former residence. Considerable repairs are necessary, and are being made, but when completed our large family could scarcely be better fixed for the few remaining years of activity which we expect. The new home we shall call "Bethel," and the new office and auditorium, "The Brooklyn Tabernacle"; these names will supplant the term "Bible House."

Some day we may have a Convention in Brooklyn, when we shall have an opportunity of greeting many of our dear readers at one or both of these new locations. We solicit your prayers on behalf of the work and the workers at these new establishments, that with humility of heart and word and conduct, our enlarged opportunities for service may result in the glory of God and in the blessing of others and our own spiritual development in the fruits and graces of the holy Spirit.

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