

THE SARATOGA CONVENTION

AS WE had expected, quite a number of the dear friends pronounced this last Convention "the best yet!" For our own part they are all so enjoyable that we find it difficult to express a preference. About 1,500 to 1,800 attended; and about 500 more came to Brooklyn only. We cannot recall any previous Convention at which such absolute harmony prevailed. Saratoga is in many respects an ideal city for such a gathering; it is quiet, healthful, has hotel capacity for thousands and a splendid Auditorium. The friends were made comfortable at \$1.25 to \$1.50 per day by special arrangement. Each Convention teaches us something along these lines.

But our special feasting was on the heavenly food and fellowship divine. Thirty dear brethren participated and their topics were timely and well chosen. We trust and believe that no hungry soul went away unfed. Several ministers of various denominations attended continuously and some of them expressed themselves as deeply interested and reading the "SCRIPTURE STUDIES" and determined to prove as true Bereans what they had heard.

Saturday's ride down the Hudson River on the steamboat Hendrick Hudson was a unique experience. Nearly four thousand people were on board; about one-half of them were our Convention people. It seemed the Lord's providence that we should thus use the regular steamer rather than charter a smaller and less palatial craft for our exclusive use. Besides, as we had surmised, the opportunities for presenting the Truth to others were considerable, and the dear friends improved them wisely, we believe.

The river views are grand; but the dear friends were so full of faith-views of the heavenly shore that earthly scenes were quite secondary to the majority. The time was spent in fellowship-talks along Truth lines, and in singing with hearts and lips melodies to our Redeemer and our Father.

The Sunday services at Brooklyn were all held in the Academy of Music, and opened with a Praise and Testimony Meeting at 10 o'clock. It was good to be there, but difficult to describe. The feelings of the friends ran deep as they told of their thankfulness to God for the Truth, and how much it had changed the current of their entire lives. The Vow also was lauded as a blessing from God which had brought more of blessing than words could tell. It had brought them nearer to the Lord than ever before, and had given them a realization of the Lord's nearness and special watch care.

At 11 o'clock Brother Russell spoke on "*The Value of Toil*," as reported in the newspapers. Additionally he made some special reference to the value of service – the value of toil to the Church. He noted that the Lord could get along entirely without our aid, but permitted us to serve and sacrifice for our spiritual development. He noted also the rest of spirit which all laborers in the vineyard should enjoy continually. Luncheon followed, some going to restaurants and some partaking of a free luncheon in side rooms of the Academy of Music.

At the afternoon session a discourse was delivered by Brother Rutherford. His topic was, "Preaching the Kingdom of Heaven." It was ably handled and well received. Following it came another interval for supper – served as at noon.

In the evening after a praise service Brother Russell addressed the assembly on "Baptism and Its Import." On Monday opportunity was granted for symbolic immersion in water, and one

hundred and twenty-two availed themselves of the privilege. The baptistry of the Central Baptist Church was used.

Monday (Labor Day) witnessed a Love Feast from 7:30 a.m. until 11 p.m. at the "Bethel" (the home). Coffee, sandwiches, fruit and cake were served by the sisters to hundreds who inspected the home. The large parlor, in which President Abraham Lincoln in the dark hours of the Civil War interviewed Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and enlisted his co-operation in presenting to the British public the true issues of the war as being *for* or *against* slavery, etc., was an object of much interest. Our study also was a place of great interest to all. We sat at our desk by request and there greeted the Brethren and Sisters as they passed. We took fresh occasion to apologize for our fine quarters; so much better than the Lord and the Apostles enjoyed and so much better than we deserve. We explained afresh what had already been particularized in THE WATCH TOWER (March 1, page 68) concerning the peculiar providences which put us in possession of this fine property at a less cost than very inferior ones were obtainable – at about one-fourth what our large family's car-fare alone would have cost.

At the Brooklyn Tabernacle there were busy scenes all day. Imagine two thousand people passing between the Tabernacle and the Bethel and seeing both from top to bottom. No wonder the residents of the intervening four blocks were amazed! What could so greatly interest those happy-looking people! Ah! "None but his loved ones know." We trust that a favorable impression for the Truth was made upon the people of a large section of Brooklyn, for about 1,700 of our friends were quartered amongst them. Do we always remember, dear friends, that we are living epistles of the Truth, known and read of many who will not read our printed messages? If this thought could be always with us, how careful it would make us be of our words and deeds.

While we were giving the right hand of fellowship to the candidates for immersion at the Baptist Church, Brother Cole was addressing the Colporteurs in Brooklyn Tabernacle. Later, at 11 a.m. and at 3 p.m. and at 8 p.m., we addressed changing audiences in the Tabernacle. Of course, the Sunday services were the best attended (about 2,500, nearly all friends), although no special advertising was done. Some assured us that Monday was the very best day of all and that undoubtedly this Convention far surpassed all others. We believe we also must assent to this latter expression.

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