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VIEWS OF "OUR VERY BEST CONVENTION"

WE HAVE already noted the fact that there is a general disposition to rate each Convention at its conclusion "the very best." But with full allowance for this tendency we believe that we are fully justified in writing down the Convention of September 1-11, 1911, as outstripping all the previous assemblages of the kind held under our Society's auspices. Several matters contributed. The weather was fine, with rains at night but fair in the daytime, except one forenoon, during the eleven days. The accommodations were comfortable and the mountain air invigorating. The assignments of topics to the various days contributed in a measure also, and the fact that there were no outside attractions of any kind assisted us in our desires to forget the world and all else but heavenly things during this little season of withdrawal from the busy cares of life for communion with the Lord and study of His Word. The Auditorium proved to be a very satisfactory one. The speakers could be heard from all parts of the great building, which seats about thirty-six hundred and has standing room for another thousand.

From morning until night, day after day, the Lord's people assembled for praise and study, comparatively few seats being vacant. Rarely were there under three thousand in attendance. On our principal occasion the audience was estimated at four thousand. These, of course, included residents of that vicinity. A conservative [R4887 : page 371] estimate of the friends of the Truth present at the Convention would be three thousand.

Noting the mention made in THE WATCH TOWER of the consecration of children on similar occasions a request was made here. Accordingly two opportunities were afforded, which brought forward about a hundred children consecrated by their parents to the Lord – for sickness or health, for poverty or wealth, for life or death – that God's will might be done in them, toward them, and that the parents might

be blessed with wisdom and grace to instruct them and guide them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Two opportunities for baptism were given, in order that some who could not stay to the end of the Convention might be served as well as others who could not come at its beginning. The total number of adults immersed in symbol of their full consecration to be dead with Christ was one hundred and seventy-eight.

From Monday evening until Friday evening – five evenings – Brother Russell held receptions at "Overlook Inn," or "Bethel," as it was called. About six hundred were invited each evening. This afforded a special opportunity for greetings and fellowship. Each evening Brother Russell gave a brief address. Intermingled with hymns of praise some simple refreshments – ice cream and cake – were supplied and then, as the dear friends filed out, Brother Russell shook hands with each and engaged in a word of greeting. A newspaper report of the first evening's topic will follow. No reports were published of the other evenings so far as we heard.

One of the most interesting features of the Convention was its closing session, when the speakers, to the number of about one hundred, ranged themselves in front of the long platform and a congregation of about four thousand filed past shaking hands with each. More than an hour and a half was consumed thus. Some were joyful, some were tearful. All seemed earnest and determined by the Lord's grace to attain to the Grand Convention promised in the Scriptures – "the General Assembly of the Church of the First-borns." At the conclusion of the handshaking, as each passed out, one of the little celluloid hearts was presented, as is intended to be done at each Convention.

We cannot attempt to give even a resume of the numerous addresses made on this occasion. Perhaps we cannot do better this time than give newspaper reports, which follow: –

BIBLE STUDENTS TEN-DAYS' SESSION IN THE MOUNTAINS

For the past week a most remarkable Bible school has been in session in the top of the Allegheny Mountains, in the well-known Chautauqua grounds. The hotels and cottages have been filled to overflowing, and numbers of cots have been in use. The delegates are from all parts of the world. The enthusiasm is not of the boisterous sort, but manifests itself in earnestness of look and tone, and in the continued large attendances at the meetings. These begin in the morning and continue practically all day with an intermission for noon luncheon. The programmes are pleasantly varied. The large auditorium has splendid acoustic properties. Its capacity is rated at forty-five hundred, including the platform, which seats five hundred men.

Lovers of the Bible cannot fail to be impressed with the earnest fidelity of every speaker to the Holy Scriptures. Higher Criticism finds no place in the programme, neither does the doctrine of Evolution. Both are publicly denounced as contrary to the teachings of the Bible. The Bible is treated not as many books, but as one book. The claim is set forth that it is God's Book because holy **[R4887 : page 372]** men of old spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. It is claimed that this operation of the Holy Spirit in the minds of the writers of the Bible is responsible for the oneness of its testimony.

WHY THE BIBLE SEEMS CONTRADICTIONARY

The claim of the International Bible Students Association is that the reason that Christians are divided into various sects and parties is not that the Bible has contradictory teachings corresponding with the contradictions of the creeds, but because our fathers through the colored spectacles of their creeds in the past but partially understood its teachings. Rightly understood it must be in complete harmony with itself and have but one teaching – one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father over all, and one Lord Jesus Christ, and one

Church of the First-born whose names are written in heaven.
– Hebrews 12:23.

These students seem intent upon finding the harmony in the Bible which all acknowledge should be there, if all the writers of the Bible were inspired by the same Holy Spirit. More than this, unlike any other class of Christian people in the world, these Bible students claim to have found the key of interpretation which makes the entire book harmonious from Genesis to Revelation. Surely no more earnest company of Christian people ever assembled at Mountain Lake Park. Surely none ever assembled to give more careful study to God's Word. Surely none ever seemed more thoroughly rejoiced, more happy in the Lord. And the claim is that this happiness springs from a right understanding of the Bible which has drawn the hearts of believers nearer to God and nearer to each other.

THANK GOD FOR THE LIGHT

"Ah!" says one, "Our hearts are glad because we see that the Bible's teaching, rightly understood, is that God is love and that God's dealings with the world are not ended but really only beginning. We now see what we were blinded to for a long time, namely, that the work of this Gospel Age is the selection of the 'Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven.' (Heb. 12:23.) We now see that these are to be the Bride of Christ, associated with Him in His glorious Kingdom for which we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come.' We now see that Messiah's Kingdom is to be established in power and great glory amongst men, and that its work will be to bless and uplift humanity.

"Once misled by the creeds of the Dark Ages, we supposed that all the heathen must be in torture because we knew that these were not qualified as saints for the presence of God and His eternal glory. How we wondered at this! We wondered how our great Creator could be either just or loving and yet bring into existence a race of beings under such conditions and for such an end. Now we see that we were deluded

and that in so believing we were believing men and not God – mistaken men, however good. We once believed, too, that all our neighbors, friends, relatives who were not of the saintly class – not fit for heaven, and so dying, would be consigned to eternal torture. Ah! how our hearts rebelled against such a decision, but we thought that if our great Creator had so determined, it must be right, and continued to believe it. Now we see, as the Scriptures declare, that this fear was not of God, 'but taught by the precepts of men.'"

CAUSE FOR CHEERFULNESS

"Can you wonder that we are cheerful, happy in the Lord," says Pastor Russell, "rejoicing that we can now see our God and the teachings of the Bible in a new light – a light consistent with consecrated reasoning faculties? Can you wonder that we are happy to find that the Church is to get even greater blessings than it ever dreamed of – to be with the Lord Jesus, the Redeemer, as His Bride in a great work of blessing, reclaiming and saving mankind from sin and death? Can you wonder that we are happy in realizing that the heathen millions who never had an opportunity for testing and trial, which God declares is secured for every member of Adam's race through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, are to be granted a trial?"

"Can you wonder that we feel greatly relieved to know that many noble men and women, friends and neighbors, of all denominations, not saintly and not followers in the footsteps of Jesus, and not therefore to be accounted worthy of a share in His Kingdom as members of His Bride Class, are nevertheless to have a glorious provision in God's due time? We are glad that while we may hope for heavenly, spiritual blessings beyond the veil, the hope of the world is in restitution to all that was lost by sin and redeemed by the Cross. We are glad to think that in God's due time Adam and every member of his race will have full opportunity of coming back to harmony with God and to full human perfection and to everlasting life in an earthly Eden. We are glad to understand God's Word to teach that the Second Death will be

like the first except that it will be everlasting – none will be redeemed from it, none will be resurrected from it. But we are glad that none but the wilfully wicked, the incorrigible, will be consigned to that obliteration, annihilation. Of such St. Peter tells us that they will perish 'like natural brute beasts.'"

WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BE?

"Will it be long before these matters become general?" was asked.

"No, the glorious consummation is near, according to our understanding of the Bible," replied Pastor Russell. "A revised statement of the Bible chronology shows that six thousand years have just passed, and that we are thirty-seven years in the seventh thousand. This seventh thousand, we understand, is the Messianic period, in which Satan is to be bound and all the works of darkness to be overthrown. During this period Messiah shall reign, establishing truth and righteousness and blessing the whole world with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Indeed, we believe that the inventions of the past forty years stand closely related to this New Dispensation upon which we are entering. Furthermore, our own better understanding of God's Word we attribute, not to superior wisdom on our part, but to the **[R4888 : page 372]** fact that God's due time has come for parting the veil and showing us 'things to come.'"

THE WORK IS GOD'S

"Is it your expectation that your Association will be used of God in bringing about this Messianic epoch – in converting the world?" was the next query.

"Our Association is indeed glad to do what it can to scatter the darkness and to reveal the light now due. It does indeed hope for some blessing upon its efforts, especially among the more religious, the consecrated Christian people of all denominations. But it is far from our expectation that we could accomplish the overthrow of Satan and

his intrenched system which now holds sway in the world. We do not by this cast any reflection upon the many good men and good women associated with the powers that be – the ruling powers, the political powers, financial powers, social powers. Doubtless these, like ourselves, are doing all in their power to forward the [R4888 : page 373] cause of truth and righteousness, each along his own lines and according to his own light.

"This work has been in progress for centuries, but we feel sure cannot effect the grand results foretold in the Bible. For their accomplishment it is necessary that our Lord Jesus, the invisible, glorious King of kings and Lord of lords, shall assume His great power and begin His reign of a thousand years of triumph over sin and death. Nor is it our expectation that His Kingdom will be inaugurated in a peaceful manner, nor that the world will even know what is the matter with its affairs. The Bible teaches us that we are on the verge of the most terrible time of trouble which the world has ever known. The only consolation we have in connection with this matter is the Divine promise that behind that awful cloud of human (rather an insane) fury, there is a silver lining. The storm will level poor humanity in the dust, but thereby, incidentally, it will act as a plowshare to prepare humanity for the blessing of Messiah's reign of righteousness, peace, justice, truth."

An official of the Association made the following comment upon the proceedings of the Convention: –

A DIVERSIFIED PROGRAM

September 1 was the opening day. General W. P. Hall, U.S.A., gave the opening address, which was quite pithy and to the point, as might have been expected from our famous Philippine warrior. Stripped of his epaulets and honor medals the General looked every inch a preacher. It is said that his Philippine experiences had considerable to do with bringing General Hall into the ranks of Bible Students. His glimpse of heathendom convinced him that the world

needs the Kingdom of God's Son, in power and great glory, to accomplish among men things which no human arm or human tongue can bring to pass.

Hon. J. F. Rutherford was the chairman of the first half of the Convention, September 1-6. Mr. Rutherford made a very interesting address in which he outlined the hopes and objects of the Convention, and congratulated those present on the beauties of the location chosen for the assembly. He expressed hopes that all might be richly blessed of God and carry with them blessings to their various homes.

THANKFUL DAY – SEPTEMBER TWO

The day opened with a praise and testimony meeting, which manifested no backwardness. There were ten to twenty-five nearly always on their feet waiting opportunity to give their testimony to God's grace, to their appreciation of His Word, and to their desire to be close followers in the footsteps of Jesus. Then followed discourses by Brother W. M. Hersee, of Canada; Brother Daniel Toole, of Michigan, and Brother A. M. Saphore, of Pennsylvania.

The afternoon services opened with a praise meeting. The vast audience seemed to sing with the spirit and with the understanding. Then came an address by Brother R. E. Streeter, of Rhode Island; Brother F. F. Cook, of Michigan, and Brother O. L. Sullivan, of Tennessee.

There was great variety, but the theme which pervaded all the addresses and the testimonies was in harmony with the keynote of the day, thankfulness, appreciation of Divine goodness, gratitude. Discontent and everything analogous thereto were reprehended.

HOLINESS DAY – SEPTEMBER THREE

The opening service was one of praise to the King of kings; then followed Brother A. E. Burgess, of Michigan, and Brother J. F. Rutherford, of Missouri.

In the afternoon Brother A. I. Ritchie, of Ontario, and Brother C. T. Russell, of Brooklyn, and Brother I. F. Hoskins, of California, followed each other. The speakers of the day discussed the subject of holiness, what it is and what it is not. It showed that Adam's race is a fallen one, none of them perfect, hence none of them absolutely holy, however well intentioned. They pointed out that the Divine arrangement in Christ provides that those who by faith accept Jesus and make full consecration to Him and strive to walk in His steps – these are reckoned as holy or blameless. Their imperfections may still be manifest, notwithstanding their best endeavors for perfection, but they are covered in the Divine sight, because their imperfections are unwilful and because they are treated as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

A Sunday evening service was held, conducted by Pastor Russell. It was a question meeting, and a number of very interesting questions were discussed and answered, apparently to the satisfaction of the vast audience.

HOPE DAY – SEPTEMBER FOUR

The day opened with an hour's praise and testimony meeting. It was very orderly, dignified and earnest; those who testified seemed full of hope, and, as some expressed themselves, living on the mountain top of faith and hope.

There were two discourses in the forenoon, one by Brother J. D. Wright, of Ohio, the other by Brother P. E. Thompson, of Ohio. Hope was the general theme, though discussed from different standpoints by the two gentlemen – ably in both instances. Hope was shown to have a basis. Many hopes have a poor foundation, because built upon unsatisfactory promises and by unsatisfactory promisers.

The Christians' hope is built upon the promise of God set forth in the Holy Scriptures. So surely as the Bible is the Word of God, these exceeding great and precious promises are unshakable foundations for an exceeding great and precious hope. The Christians' hope was shown

to be a hope of glory, honor and immortality – joint-heirship with the Redeemer in His Kingdom. Theirs is a hope which will endure trials. It will not fail. It has the assurance that all things shall work together for good to God's faithful people, and that if they suffer with Him they shall reign with Him. This hope includes a change of nature from earthly to spiritual and the prospect of reigning with Jesus on the heavenly plane over the affairs of mankind for the purpose of uplifting humanity and the earth from their present condition of imperfection to all that was represented in Eden originally. The unwilling and disobedient are not to be hoped for, however; God has given no promise of eternal life to any except those who will conform their lives to the Divine standards. The wicked will be utterly destroyed after having repudiated Divine favor and opportunity.

The afternoon session was a symposium, participated in by Brother E. Thomson, of Washington City; A. G. Wakefield, of Virginia; F. C. Detweiler, of Pennsylvania, and W. M. Wisdom, of California. The topic was "The Christian's Armor." The helmet, the breastplate, the sword, the sandals and the shield were discussed and their spiritual significance shown. Those who heard doubtless had a fresh impetus toward holy living – keeping the armor bright and in service against the wiles of the flesh and the Adversary.

CONSECRATION DAY – SEPTEMBER FIVE

The day opened with a praise and testimony meeting. Again there was no lack of testifiers who testified to the [R4888 : page 374] grace of God, to the blessings of the Truth and to the favors and privileges accorded those persevering in their consecration of heart and life, of time and talent.

Brother J. G. Kuehn, of Ohio, and Brother F. H. Robison, of Indiana, delivered addresses in the forenoon, which were received with earnest attention. The thread of their discourses was in harmony with the topic of the day – Consecration. The vast audience heard with deep interest the real meaning of full consecration of heart and life and

all to God. Various illustrations were given and exhortations to faithfulness on the part of those who have made a covenant with the Lord lest they should draw back or in anywise prove themselves unfaithful to the covenant of sacrifice. In the afternoon Brother G. B. Raymond, of New York, delivered a powerful discourse on the subject of Baptism. He set forth in no uncertain terms the importance of baptism when viewed from its Scriptural standpoint. He showed that it included a full consecration to the Lord. Following the discourse an opportunity for symbolic immersion in water was granted, and 113 took advantage of the opportunity.

HARVESTER'S DAY – SEPTEMBER SIX

The praise and testimony meeting with which this convention day opened was very interesting from the fact that it confined itself to testimonies along the line of the Harvest work, which were given by many who had energetically engaged in the public service. At 10:30 Pastor Russell gave an address on the harvest and its laborers – "the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." He claimed that himself, as well as others, had for years [R4889 : page 374] been in error respecting the Scriptural use of this expression regarding the harvest. He now saw that death is not the harvest mentioned by the great Teacher. He pointed out that there was a harvest time in the close of the Jewish Age, and that similarly the Master taught that the Gospel Age, in which we are living, would close with a harvest work. He showed that the Jewish harvest lasted for forty years, ending in A.D. 70, with a great time of trouble upon the Jewish nation – upon all who failed to be gathered into the garner. He claimed, giving Scriptures apparently in support, that the harvest is the end of this Age and is to be much more important; that instead of being the harvest of one little nation, it is the harvesting of all the Christian effort manifested in all the Christian work of today.

The harvest work is not sectarian; it is the work of the Lord. Just as the work of Jesus and His Apostles did not gather the whole people

of the Jews into the condition of spiritual sons of God, so the harvest of this Age will not gather all the sons of God to heavenly glory, but only those found faithful. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The trouble with which the Jewish harvest ended was pointed out as a prototype of the trouble with which the Gospel Age harvest will terminate. It was even intimated that we are already in the harvest period, and that the separating of the wheat and tares is already in progress.

The diversified means used by our Lord in connection with this harvest work was referred to with appreciation. From what was said one would judge that the International Bible Students Association is carrying on a great work in the aid of Bible students in all parts of the world. The work in America and Great Britain, of course, is the principal work, but mention was also made of the importance of the work in progress amongst the people of India and Africa. It would seem that Bible study from the standpoint which harmonizes the conflicting creeds is appreciated even amongst those Christians who have come out of heathendom.

In the afternoon addresses along the lines of harvest work were delivered by Brother J. H. Cole, of Ohio; Brother I. F. Hoskins, of California, and Brother E. W. Brenneisen, of Texas.

PRAISE DAY – SEPTEMBER SEVEN

The prayers and testimonies and hymns of the opening session were in line with the appointed topic of the day – praise to God from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift. Then followed a discourse by Brother Menta Sturgeon, of Missouri, and another by Brother W. E. Van Amburgh, of Dakota. The praise feature was the dominant note in both discourses, which were heard with deep interest by a full house.

Brother Russell conducted a question meeting for an hour. Many questions were asked which were very interesting, and were apparently handled in a manner satisfactory to the audience.

The afternoon session was a symposium participated in by Brother M. L. Staples, Virginia; Brother (Dr.) A. D. Young, New York; Brother H. E. Hollister, Illinois; Brother J. F. Stephenson, District of Columbia; Brother J. P. McPherson, Ontario; Brother P. D. Pottle, Ohio; Brother Arthur Allen, New Jersey; Brother (Dr.) R. L. Robie, Illinois; Brother Wm. Weber, Maryland; Brother Wm. Mockridge, New York; Brother T. E. Barker, Massachusetts, and others. The topic dealt with the qualities of character which Christians are called upon to put off, and the character qualities they are to put on if they would progress in the Divine favor. Amongst the things to put off were anger, malice, envy, hatred and strife. Amongst the things to put on were meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness and love.

FRUITAGE DAY – SEPTEMBER EIGHT

Another excellent testimony and prayer meeting, with which praise was interspersed, was held. The fruitage of the Spirit was the theme of the day – Christian fruitage. The discourses of the forenoon were by Brother George Draper, of South Dakota, and by Brother A. H. MacMillan, of Nova Scotia. The fruits of the spirit were called to the attention of the audience, and the methods by which they are developed in every Christian heart were discussed. Love was shown to be the sum of all the fruits, while patience was shown to be a necessary element of every fruit.

In the afternoon there was a symposium on the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It was participated in by Brother A. N. Mann, West Virginia; Brother W. S. McGregor, Massachusetts; Brother C. P. Bridges, Massachusetts; Brother C. F. Fillman, Ohio; Brother M. L. Herr, Pennsylvania; Brother James H. Cole, Ohio; Brother C. J. Woodworth, Pennsylvania; Brother Carl Hammerle, Pennsylvania, and Brother W.

F. Hudgings, Missouri. The subject was well and thoroughly handled, and doubtless all who heard will hereafter better see and understand the relationship between the trials and sufferings and disappointments of the present life, and the fruits of the Spirit which must be developed in preparation for the future life.

SPIRIT-BIRTH DAY – SEPTEMBER NINE

The morning meeting for praise and testimony was left exclusively to those who had participated in the baptism service of Tuesday. They gave some good testimonies. Very evidently they were very sincere and doubtless many of them experienced a great blessing and reward for their faithfulness in standing up for the truth and symbolizing their consecration after the **[R4889 : page 375]** manner prescribed in the Bible and exemplified by our Lord and one Apostle in their own persons, as one present expressed the matter. Brother F. A. Hall, of Indiana, and Brother E. W. Brenneisen, of Texas, were the speakers of the forenoon. They showed clearly the distinction between spirit begetting and spirit birth – that the former takes place at the time of Christian consecration and that the latter will take place at the resurrection of the dead.

In other words, spirit begetting is the start of life as new creatures in Christ. The development of the embryo new creature proceeds during the present life – represented as it were in the chrysalis state. The resurrection will be the birth of the embryo to the full perfection of the new creature, even as the cocoon delivers up the beautiful butterfly whose embryo it held for a time; so human conditions and death will deliver up the new creature, a spirit begotten one perfected.

Paul (I Cor. 15) says of spirit birth, "It is sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; it is sown an animal body, raised a spirit body." This spirit begetting and spirit birth, however, are exclusive matters not intended for all the human family, but only for the elect – "called and chosen and faithful." The world in general is neither to expect a spirit begetting nor a spirit birth. It is shown that

the promise for them is in restoration to human perfection and an earthly Eden. There will be a regeneration to human perfection during the thousand years of Messiah's glorious reign.

This afternoon Pastor Russell is to deliver a discourse on true Baptism and its proper symbol, following which another opportunity for symbolic baptism will be afforded.

KINGDOM DAY – SEPTEMBER TEN

This will be virtually the last of the Convention, though some may remain over for the 11th. The public meetings will be at an end. Today's program includes a testimony meeting, a discourse by Pastor Russell, another by Brother P. S. L. Johnson, and another by Brother B. H. Barton, and at 4 p.m. a farewell address by Pastor Russell to be followed by a love feast. Everyone here is expecting a "feast of fat things" today, and doubtless they will obtain it. Conditions seem favorable, at least.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR ENSUING YEAR

The following officers were elected to serve during the ensuing year: President, Pastor C. T. Russell, of Brooklyn and London; Vice-President, A. I. Ritchie, of Ontario, Canada; Secretary, E. W. Brenneisen, of Texas; Treasurer, W. E. Van Amburgh.

As concerning the work during the coming year, the President, Pastor Russell, said: "We are continuing our work along the present successful and every way advantageous lines. We believe that we are following Divine guidance in our endeavor to make known the true interpretation of God's wonderful Book, which we all in the past so seriously misunderstood and misrepresented. Partially blind eyes everywhere are opening today, and warm Christian hearts are rejoicing to see more clearly than before the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God which passeth all understanding."

"What about your own movements, Pastor Russell?"

"It was understood when I left London in the spring that I would visit them again in the fall; that expectation I must fulfil. With our modern rapid and great conveniences the journey is not a burdensome one. I expect to return about the first of December."

Following this Pastor Russell will go on a world's tour and a committee has been selected to accompany him on his journey.

The persons invited to serve on this committee are Major-General W. P. Hall, U.S.A.; Mr. E. W. V. Kuehn, of Toledo; Mr. J. T. D. Pyles, of Washington, D.C., and Mr. Charles F. Anderson, of Baltimore, Md. Not all of these gentlemen have positively accepted the responsibilities of this service, but it is confidently expected that they will accept. As the Association pays no [R4890 : page 375] salaries, the invitation carries with it the responsibility of all providing for their own expenses.

RECEPTION AT "OVERLOOK INN"

Although Pastor Russell delivered two addresses yesterday, and is on the programme for several future occasions, none of these afford the Bible Students personal fellowship with the beloved President of the Association. Accordingly arrangements were made whereby six hundred can meet the Pastor each evening by special appointments. Last evening witnessed the first of these Receptions at "Overlook Inn."

The six hundred invitations offered for the evening were heartily accepted. It was a happy crowd – not mirthful, not hilarious, not jolly, but happy, restful, peaceful – just such expressions of faith as one would expect to find amongst earnest Bible students who have found the "pearl of great price." These Bible students claim this and more; that they find in the Bible precious promises for the non-elect world –

wholly different from the heavenly prize for which they declare they are striving.

Pastor Russell greeted each guest personally on arrival, then made a brief address, following which some light refreshments were partaken of. Social and religious refreshments were enjoyed, and in good season the gathering dispersed, after joining in a hymn and being led in prayer by the entertainer. Pastor Russell's words of greeting, which we subjoin, were evidently greatly enjoyed by the hearers.

He said: "Dear Christian Brethren, I congratulate you and myself on the Lord's blessings toward us which have permitted us to come together at this beautiful Park in the top of the Mountains for a few days' rest from secular affairs and to engage with each other in Christian fellowship and study of the Father's Word. I am reminded of the Master's words to His Apostles inviting them to just such a little season of rest and refreshment as we are enjoying here. The Apostles had been absent proclaiming the Kingdom at hand. They returned at the time when Herod cruelly beheaded John the Baptist. They were astonished that God would permit such an unjust procedure. They thought of Jesus, the King, whom they proclaimed and whose power had been so abundantly manifest in the casting out of demons and the healing of the sick. They surely wondered why so great a power should remain passive while the beloved forerunner of Jesus was put to ignominious death. If Herod's power could thus be exercised against one of the Prophets, why might he not be able to do similarly against Jesus and His Apostles? Were they trusting in a King whose authority was an empty boast and who was helpless in the presence of opposition?"

"The Great Teacher realized the situation, and when they began telling Him of John and of their teachings and of their wonderful works in His Name, Jesus said unto them, 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while; for there were many coming and

going, and they had no leisure, so much as to eat.' – Mark 6:31. [R4890 : page 376]

"Let us for a moment imagine ourselves as instead of the Apostles, and the Master speaking to us instead of to them. Let us see how much we have in common with them, even after eighteen hundred years have passed. We, like them, have had the pleasure, privilege and responsibility as ambassadors for God, of telling to the ears of the willing that Messiah's Kingdom is at hand. As it was at hand eighteen centuries ago in the sense that it then was offered to the Jews who declined to receive it, so now in the end of this Age, Messiah's Kingdom is at hand in the sense that it is about to be established in power and great glory, because the preliminary work of finding the Bride and the guests for the wedding has about been accomplished.

"As the Apostles were astonished at the beheading of John, so we frequently have been astonished to note to how great an extent Divine providence permits the prosperity of the 'prince of this world' and the 'children of this world' in their opposition to those who are sacrificing their lives for the cause of God, of Truth, of righteousness. Our Great Teacher feels as deep an interest in His followers today as He did eighteen centuries ago, and He has made provision for us financially and otherwise, that we may come together here in this beautiful mountain top away from the world's strife, from business and worldly pleasure. Let us hear again the Master's words and now apply them to ourselves: 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a while.' Here commune with Me and with the Father. Here tell us of what you have done and what you have taught. Here examine carefully to see how correctly, how truthfully, you have presented My message.

"As the coming and going throug hindered Jesus and the Apostles from even taking proper refreshment, so with us. Being so fully engaged in Divine service and even though greatly enjoying it and glad to tell the good Message in season and out of season, sometimes we do not in the busy course of the Lord's service and in making necessary

provisions for our temporal needs have sufficient time for eating the spiritual food, that we may be properly refreshed, strengthened and upbuilt in the 'most holy faith.'

"And now here we are. Already we have had precious fellowship with the Great Teacher and with the brethren. I trust that we are all feeling more than repaid for having come here. I trust that the Message of Divine Grace and Truth which first began to be spoken by our Lord, and which was confirmed unto us by those who heard Him, is now refreshing our hearts as we 'repeat the story o'er and o'er of grace so full and free.' Let our prayers and endeavors continue that our stay may be profitable, strengthening, uplifting, to the intent that we may be the better developed as 'copies of God's dear Son.'

"I am reminded also of another occasion when Jesus took three of the Apostles apart into a mountain top – the Mount of Transfiguration. He was transfigured before them. His face appeared to shine, His garments to be glistening white. And with Him were Moses and Elias, also glorious in their appearance. The sight was too glorious for the Apostles fully to comprehend. In a partial stupor of drowsiness one of them proposed that they should stay always in the mountain top and that a tabernacle be built. But as they came down from the mountain the Great Teacher explained that what the disciples had witnessed was merely a vision. Moses and Elijah had merely appeared to be present, just as in the vision given to St. John – the Apocalypse. Persons were seen and heard in John's vision. So in this also. Every purpose was served just as well as though Moses and Elias had been personally present.

"As for Jesus, He, of course, was personally present, but not glorified, as the vision show Him. He had not yet passed beyond the veil into the heavenly, glorious state. His garments were not white, but merely were made to seem so. His countenance did not really glow like the sun, but merely so appeared. St. Peter, referring to this very *vision*, declares that it was no fanciful fable, even though it

should not be classed as on an equality with Divine revelation made through the prophets. He says, 'We have not followed cunningly-devised fables when we declared unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we were eye-witnesses of His majesty when we were with Him in the Holy Mount and heard the voice from the cloud. But we have a more sure word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn.' – 2 Pet. 1:19.

"Christian experience today runs along the same lines. The more earnest and zealous of the Lord's followers are invited to go up with Him into the Mount of Transfiguration. Our eyes of understanding are opened. We see wonderful things – old things in a new light and new things as they become due to us in our day. Surely the advanced Christian sees his Master resplendent with a new brightness as he comes to closer fellowship with Him and with the Father in the Holy Mount! May this be our blessed experience, dear friends, during this Convention season. Seated with Jesus in the heavenlies, may we appreciate more and more the things of the Kingdom, as in contrast with earthly things.

"It would be foolish for us to think of abandoning the duties of the hour to build tabernacles with a view to remaining in this ecstatic fellowship. No, the vision will be but for a few days, and again we will return to the valley, realizing that what we have enjoyed was but a vision and foregleam of what we shall experience after our resurrection 'change.' May it be with us as it was with St. Peter. As he looked back to the vision in the Holy Mount and was sure that he followed no fable, so may we in coming days look back to present experiences to rejoice in them and to realize that they have brought us into a closer fellowship with our Redeemer in the sufferings of this present time and in hope of the glory that shall follow at His appearing and Kingdom.

"By the way, let us not forget that that transfiguration scene was a picture of the coming Kingdom. The resplendent Jesus represented our Lord in glory, while Moses represented the Law Covenant. Elijah represented the Church of this Gospel Age, which will end her earthly career by being taken to heaven, even as Elijah typically was carried into the heavens. Both branches of the Kingdom, both divisions of the Church, the Jewish and the Christian, stand related to Messiah, the center of the Divine blessing promised for all the families of the earth. **[R4891 : page 376]**

"In concluding, dear Brethren, let me quote you the words of the poet and trust that they will be more than fulfilled in your experiences and mine during this Convention": –

"Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile,
Weary, I know it, of the press and throng;
Wipe from your brow the sweat and dust of toil,
And in My quiet strength again be strong.

"Come, tell Me all that ye have said and done,
Your victories and failures, hopes and fears;
I know how hardly souls are wooed and won;
My choicest wreaths are always wet with tears.

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"Come ye aside from all the world holds dear,
For converse which the world has never known –
Alone with Me, and with My Father here,
With Me and with My Father not alone.

"Then fresh from converse with your Lord return,
And work till daylight softens into even;
The brief hours are not lost in which we learn
More of our Master and His rest in heaven."

WHAT OF THE HARVEST?

THE BIBLE HARVEST NOT A HARVEST OF DEATH – NOR A REVIVAL HARVESTING, BUT A REAPING OF THE FRUITAGE OF THE AGE – "THE HARVEST IS THE END OF THE AGE"

Wednesday was known at the Bible Students Convention at Mount Lake Park as "Harvester's Day." The early morning session was one of praise, prayer and testimony, but only those working in a public or semi-public manner in the Gospel Vineyard were classed as Harvest Workers, and these alone were invited to give testimony. It surely could not be denied that the testimonies were excellent, evidencing great zeal for God, for His Word and for His people.

It was subsequent to this testimony meeting, namely, at 10:30 o'clock, that Pastor Russell stepped upon the platform to deliver an address to Harvest laborers. He spoke for one and one-half hours, and evidently to the pleasement of his hearers. His text was, "The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." – Matthew 9:37,38.

The speaker said in part: "Many of us for long years thought of the Bible references of the harvest, our text included, as applicable to every time. We had not then learned that the Bible must be studied dispensationally, in order to be understood. Now we perceive that the time of our Lord's first advent was the harvest time of the Jewish Age, and that as a harvest it applied to that nation only.

For more than sixteen hundred years the Law Covenant had been in operation between God and Israel. Under it they had been disciplined and schooled, instructed through the Law and by the Prophets. Jesus came, not only to be the Redeemer of mankind in general, but especially to offer Himself as King to the Jews, and to

make them His joint-heirs in His Kingdom. Had there been a sufficient number of Jews in heart-readiness to receive the Gospel Message, according to Divine agreement, the entire Bride Class would have been elected or chosen from that one nation, and not a Gentile would have been invited to participate in the honors of these Spirit-begotten, called in the Scriptures the spiritual Seed of Abraham. (Gal. 3:29.) Nevertheless the Lord foreknew, and had provided for Israel's rejection and the opening of the door to membership in the Bride Class to worthy Gentiles.

"It was at the close of the Jewish Age, at the time, therefore, when that people should have and did have their greatest degree of ripeness and preparation that our Lord presented Himself and began to do the reaping work. He sent forth His disciples as His representatives, two and two, and later He sent 'seventy also.' When these returned our Lord declared to them, 'I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men (the faithful Prophets, etc., of the past) labored and ye are entered into their labors – to gather the fruit of their labors. – John 4:38.

"The Great Teacher tells us distinctly that while His work was that of reaping, He blended it with a sowing. Seeing that the Jews were not ready for the Kingdom – seeing that eighteen centuries would be required for the calling and developing of the spirit-begotten ones, the Master started the work of seed-sowing for the new dispensation. Then, according to His parable, He left the work in the hands of His servants and 'went into a far country,' even heaven itself. Since then He has been supervising His work and has been represented through the faithful members of His Church, His Bride. He and the Apostles sowed the good seed of the Kingdom, meanwhile gathering the ripe wheat of the Jewish nation into the Kingdom class through the begetting of the Holy Spirit. By and by the harvesting of the Jewish Age ended completely, when all the wheat of that nation were gathered into the Gospel Church of spirit-begotten ones, and then came the

burning of the chaff – the great time of trouble with which the Jewish Age fully ended, A.D. 70.

"Since then the work of seed-sowing, evangelism, etc., amongst the Gentiles has gone on, not without difficulty, however. As our Lord's parable shows, Satan, the Adversary, came in the night, during the 'dark ages,' and oversowed the wheat-field with tare seed. As a result, the field looked very prosperous, although in reality the tares had a choking and disastrous effect on the wheat. Nevertheless, the Lord would not allow the separating of wheat from tares until the full end of the Age, *the harvest*. The Bible intimates that the tares were so numerous and so intertwined with the wheat in their various interests that to have plucked them all up would have brought the disastrous 'time of trouble' too soon; hence the decree that both should grow together until the harvest. *'The harvest is the end of the age.'* – Matthew 13:39.

"Our studies together, dear Brethren, have led the majority of us to conclude that we are now living in the harvest time – in the end of this Age. Oh! how glad we will be if it is true! How glad we are to believe it true! and, we think, on good evidence. If it is true, as we believe, that the forty years' 'harvest' of this Age began in 1874, the implication is that the trials of the Church are nearly at an end – that the faithful will soon be gathered to the heavenly garner. By the glorious 'change' He will cause us to shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father for the scattering of the world's dark night and the ushering in of the new day. Messiah's day is to bring glorious opportunities for earthly blessings to Israel, and to all the families of the earth through Israel. If our hopes be true then they mean a blessing, not for the Church alone, but for the entire groaning creation, which, if willing and obedient under Messiah's reign, will be released from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty appropriate to the children of God. – Romans 8:21.

"As Bible students we have already seen that the Jewish nation as a people were prototypes of spiritual Israel in many particulars – that the period from the death of Jacob to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is the *exact parallel* to the period of the Gospel Church from the death of Jesus to October, 1915, A.D.

"Surely it is not by accident that these two Ages correspond, nor by accident that Israel as a people typified spiritual Israel! Neither will it be by accident if the events of 1915 correspond to the events of A.D. 70. In other words, as the harvest of the Jewish Age ended with a time of trouble, so our Lord's words assure us that this Gospel Age and its *harvest* will end with 'a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.' (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21.) That a crisis is nearing everybody admits. That socialists and anarchists are threatening **[R4891 : page 378]** the very fabric of society nobody will deny. The Bible alone explains the situation and shows us, dear fellow-students, that the work of the present Age is about completed – that the elect members of the Bride of Christ have nearly all been found and made ready. The blessing for the world will be along material lines ushered in by the time of trouble, which will eventuate in anarchy, according to the Scriptures – a general leveling of the human family as the initial step of the reign of the glorious Messiah, whom men will shortly see and recognize with the eyes of their understanding."

Pastor Russell took up the various features of missionary work in home and foreign lands, in which he and associated Bible Students are co-laboring. He referred to the progress in Bible study which is being effected throughout the civilized world and to the more or less successful methods. He urged all to remember that every child of God is an ambassador and representative of the Kingdom and prospectively a member of the "Body" of the glorious Messiah.

Pastor Russell also gave some interesting details respecting the progress of Bible study in Central Africa, in South Africa, in Jamaica, India, etc. He urged that each consecrated child of God should

remember that he is to be, with the Master's direction, a burning and shining light, showing forth the praises of Him who called Him out of darkness into His marvelous light. He urged love for God and for our fellows and the absolute avoidance of all appeals for money. He said our Heavenly Father informs us that He is rich, that all the gold and [R4892 : page 378] silver are His and the cattle upon a thousand hills. "Let us use carefully, frugally, wisely, liberally, what He has so kindly sent, but let us not ask for more, even from Him. And surely we are not authorized to beg in the Name of our rich Heavenly Father! If our work is of Him, He is able to sustain it, and He will do so until it shall be finished. If it is not of the Lord, then the sooner it stops the better we should be pleased."

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In the afternoon, from two to three, was another prayer and testimony meeting along the same lines as the morning meeting. It, also, was a success.

At three p.m. Brother J. H. Cole gave an address to Colporteurs on successful Colporteur methods.

At four Brother I. F. Hoskins gave an address to Colporteurs.

At four-thirty Brother E. W. Brenneisen gave an interesting talk on tract distribution, the distribution of free literature. According to his statement, The International Bible Students Association is engaged in quite an extensive work distributing much free literature in all the prominent languages and on topics calculated to produce healthy growth along lines of Scripture study and righteousness in word and deed.

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