

TORONTO AND WASHINGTON CONVENTIONS

NEARLY ONE THOUSAND of those of "like precious faith" assembled in Convention at the National Exhibition Park, Toronto, Ont., Canada, beginning Sunday, June 30. The weather was ideal for such an occasion, and the spirit of the friends indicated their joy in the Lord, their oneness of purpose and implicit faith in the great Creator of the Universe. Those in attendance were mostly from Canada, although quite a number were present from the United States.

Horticultural Hall proved to be a splendid Convention auditorium, having a capacity of about fifteen hundred. The friends were quite comfortably lodged in the vicinity of the Park, and a substantial luncheon was provided each noon, affording at the same time an excellent opportunity for sociability and Christian fellowship. The Exhibition Park is located on the lake front with a magnificent view of the water, and is artistically laid out with winding paths, fountain sprays and flower beds.

With such beautiful surroundings praise to the Almighty filled every heart from the very first, and the opening day of services was appropriately designated "Praise Day." The speakers of the day magnified the name of the Lord and forcefully depicted the Divine program. "Hope Day," "Kingdom Day" and "Fruitage Day" each in turn proved equally interesting and helpful to the assembled Bible Students as they had further word pictures painted before their mental vision illustrating God's wonderful provision for all mankind, and the special favors in reservation for the members of "the Church of the First-Born."

At one of these sessions a resolution was unanimously adopted expressing the sense of the Convention "that we do not find the Bible to teach the doctrine of a literal hell fire, or place of fire and brimstone, for the punishment of the wicked, but that secular history of the

formation of the creeds of the Middle Ages reveals the fact that for various reasons, either wisely or unwisely, the doctrine of punishment in hell fire was added to the Gospel as taught by Jesus and the twelve Apostles. We, therefore, now unreservedly repudiate as thoroughly unscriptural the teaching of a place, state or condition of a literal lake of fire and brimstone for the punishment of the wicked, and further, that we believe from many personal testimonials that the vast majority of ministers of all Protestant denominations have privately repudiated the 'hell fire' theory, but have, for supposedly good reasons, hesitated to inform their congregations; and further, that we believe, on this account thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, are being driven into skepticism or infidelity. We appeal to every minister in the Dominion of Canada to publish in his local newspaper, over his own signature, a statement declaring whether or not he believes the Bible [R5077 : page 245] to teach the doctrine of a literal lake of fire and brimstone, and ask every editor to invite the ministers of his constituency to avail themselves of his columns for their statement."

On Thursday, "Fruition Day," Brother Russell arrived in the afternoon and found the Convention at its height; and on Friday, "Harvester's Day," the enthusiasm and zeal seemed, if anything, to excel any former occasion. We trust that many of the Harvesters were encouraged to renewed activity in the Lord's service for the ensuing year, and, too, that others may have received an incentive to enter into some department of the grand Harvest work. The prevailing sentiment seemed to be expressed in the words of our Master during that other great Harvest period eighteen centuries ago – "The Harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." – Matt. 9:37,38.

Saturday was designated "Spirit Begetting Day." At the conclusion of the morning praise and testimony service Brother Russell addressed the Convention on "Baptism – Its Import and Its Symbol." This was followed [R5077 : page 246] by an immersion

service at the lake, where 97 adults symbolized their full consecration unto death. The Convention proper, according to program, concluded an Saturday afternoon with a Love Feast. The elders of the Toronto Class, all the Pilgrim brethren present, and Brother Russell, enjoyed the blessed privilege of a personal hand-shake with each and all in attendance. The singing of appropriate farewell hymns and the breaking of bread made the scene most impressive, never to be forgotten.

Although not on the program, on Sunday morning a large number of the friends gathered again at Horticultural Hall for a praise and testimony service and an address by one of the Canadian brethren, followed by a Berean lesson. In the afternoon the public of Toronto were addressed by Brother Russell in the Royal Alexandra Theatre on the subject, "Beyond the Grave." The meeting was well advertised, and although this is a large auditorium, and the day was extremely warm, the place was crowded to its capacity and, according to various estimates, five hundred to one thousand were turned away from the doors unable to gain admittance. The witness to the Truth, God's character and plan thus given, we trust, may serve to awaken the interest of some who heard for the first time. Closest attention was given and at the conclusion many were the warm greetings and expressions of joy, hope and pleasure respecting the "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people."

AT WASHINGTON CITY

While the concluding sessions were being held at Toronto, Ontario, Bible Students from thirty-six different States were entering the Capitol City of the United States by the gateway of its magnificent Union Station, previously mentioned in the columns of this journal on account of the appropriate inscriptions of Biblical texts so precious to the hearts of our readers, to be found above the archway entrances, viz., "Thou hast put all things under His feet"; "The Truth shall make you free"; "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," etc.

Via special trains, special cars, electric lines and automobiles the friends continued to pour in until by Saturday evening, the day before the Convention opened, the city was fairly filled with Bible Students, who were assigned to over six hundred different homes, private boarding houses and hotels. This distribution of the visiting Students, we believe, afforded an excellent opportunity for witnessing to the Truth before many families and persons who might not otherwise have been reached. So far as we have heard all were quite comfortably located.

The opening day's sessions were all held in the Auditorium at the Glen Echo Chautauqua Grounds, and in spite of the extreme heat the place was filled to overflowing. Observing the extraordinary numbers in attendance, which more than taxed the capacity of Glen Echo Park and the electric car facilities, the committee on arrangements concluded that it would be best to transfer the majority of the meetings to Washington City proper. Accordingly, on Monday morning the Washington Academy of Music, a fine auditorium with a seating capacity of about 2,500 persons, was secured, and at 9 o'clock on Tuesday morning the same was packed to its limit, with about 300 on the platform. This necessitated the securing of another auditorium for overflow services, which were arranged for in the beautiful new Masonic Temple, seating about 1,400 people. Besides these two places the G.A.R. Hall was engaged for Book Stall, Colporteur Department, Post Office, Information Bureau and a general meeting place for those who desired to make appointments with one another.

We believe we can see the overruling hand of Providence in having these various auditoriums, as they served to bring before the attention of the public the actual size of the gathering of Bible Students. It was a surprise to many of the Washington residents to know that there were so many people so interested in Bible study as not to give their time to sight-seeing or other attractions of that beautiful city, but on the contrary would pour into each of the

auditoriums at each session, morning, afternoon and evening, notwithstanding the heated weather.

Besides the regular features, as designated on the program, a reception was held in the G.A.R. Hall on Monday evening, attended by six hundred. Another reception, in the nature of a special discourse by Brother Russell, was held on Tuesday evening in the Academy of Music, which was crowded to its capacity. On Wednesday night a most inspiring prayer meeting, attended by fully 2,500 persons, was conducted at the Academy of Music. The testimonies all evidenced remarkable growth in grace and in knowledge of the Lord and a desire to "praise Him for His goodness and wonderful works to the children of men." – Psa. 107:8.

Another feature not on the regular program was the "Christian Workers' Service" on Thursday afternoon at the Glen Echo auditorium, over one thousand being present. The discourse by Brother Russell on the subject of Baptism on Friday morning was listened to with quiet interest, and at its conclusion 167 adults indicated their desire to symbolize their baptism into the Body of Christ by water immersion. After directing a few personal words and extending the right-hand of fellowship to each of the candidates, they were conducted to the bathing pool at the foot of the imposing Washington Monument, where the ceremony was performed with befitting dignity and solemnity.

AT WASHINGTON CITY

While the concluding sessions were being held at Toronto, Ontario, Bible Students from thirty-six different States were entering the Capitol City of the United States by the gateway of its magnificent Union Station, previously mentioned in the columns of this journal on account of the appropriate inscriptions of Biblical texts so precious to the hearts of our readers, to be found above the archway entrances, viz., "Thou hast put all things under His feet"; "The Truth shall make you free"; "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," etc.

Via special trains, special cars, electric lines and automobiles the friends continued to pour in until by Saturday evening, the day before the Convention opened, the city was fairly filled with Bible Students, who were assigned to over six hundred different homes, private boarding houses and hotels. This distribution of the visiting Students, we believe, afforded an excellent opportunity for witnessing to the Truth before many families and persons who might not otherwise have been reached. So far as we have heard all were quite comfortably located.

The opening day's sessions were all held in the Auditorium at the Glen Echo Chautauqua Grounds, and in spite of the extreme heat the place was filled to overflowing. Observing the extraordinary numbers in attendance, which more than taxed the capacity of Glen Echo Park and the electric car facilities, the committee on arrangements concluded that it would be best to transfer the majority of the meetings to Washington City proper. Accordingly, on Monday morning the Washington Academy of Music, a fine auditorium with a seating capacity of about 2,500 persons, was secured, and at 9 o'clock on Tuesday morning the same was packed to its limit, with about 300 on the platform. This necessitated the securing of another auditorium for overflow services, which were arranged for in the beautiful new Masonic Temple, seating about 1,400 people. Besides these two places the G.A.R. Hall was engaged for Book Stall, Colporteur Department, Post Office, Information Bureau and a general meeting place for those who desired to make appointments with one another.

We believe we can see the overruling hand of Providence in having these various auditoriums, as they served to bring before the attention of the public the actual size of the gathering of Bible Students. It was a surprise to many of the Washington residents to know that there were so many people so interested in Bible study as not to give their time to sight-seeing or other attractions of that beautiful city, but on the contrary would pour into each of the

auditoriums at each session, morning, afternoon and evening, notwithstanding the heated weather.

Besides the regular features, as designated on the program, a reception was held in the G.A.R. Hall on Monday evening, attended by six hundred. Another reception, in the nature of a special discourse by Brother Russell, was held on Tuesday evening in the Academy of Music, which was crowded to its capacity. On Wednesday night a most inspiring prayer meeting, attended by fully 2,500 persons, was conducted at the Academy of Music. The testimonies all evidenced remarkable growth in grace and in knowledge of the Lord and a desire to "praise Him for His goodness and wonderful works to the children of men." – Psa. 107:8.

Another feature not on the regular program was the "Christian Workers' Service" on Thursday afternoon at the Glen Echo auditorium, over one thousand being present. The discourse by Brother Russell on the subject of Baptism on Friday morning was listened to with quiet interest, and at its conclusion 167 adults indicated their desire to symbolize their baptism into the Body of Christ by water immersion. After directing a few personal words and extending the right-hand of fellowship to each of the candidates, they were conducted to the bathing pool at the foot of the imposing Washington Monument, where the ceremony was performed with befitting dignity and solemnity.

=====