

FOUR GREAT CONVENTIONS

We believe that the result stamps approval on the method adopted this year of having a number of Conventions, instead of one or two. We have already reported General Conventions at *Pertle Springs, Missouri; Hot Springs, Arkansas; Los Angeles, California*, and *San Francisco, California*. They were all large enough to be good, deeply interesting, spiritual, profitable. The four we are now reporting, being more favorably located as respects population and railroad facilities, had larger attendance, yet were not too large for comfort, and afforded abundant opportunities for social entertainment and spiritual fellowship.

MADISON, WISCONSIN, JUNE 29-JULY 6

The Madison Convention seemed to be greatly enjoyed by all in attendance – about 1,400. We have never had a Convention more comfortably situated than was this. Madison itself is a beautiful little city, surrounded by small lakes. The Convention grounds being just across one of these lakes from the city, were in every way ideal. Little gasoline launches conveyed the Conventioneers to and from the grounds, which were supplied with a fine auditorium, well adapted for Convention purposes. The auditorium is owned by the city, and was placed at our disposal, gratis, when the invitation to hold the Convention at Madison was given.

Following the custom of the last few years, we avoided evening meetings. The full day was spent in Convention, with merely an adjournment for luncheon, which was supplied nearby at moderate price. There were about six addresses daily, during the Convention – eight days. The public doubtless wondered at the enthusiasm of the friends – as they always do – not knowing, generally, what it means to have a real *live religion*; one which has for its center and

inspiration "exceeding great and precious promises," from an exceedingly wise, all-powerful, just and loving God.

Brother W. E. Van Amburgh served as chairman during the entire eight days' Convention. The Conventioneers surely had a grand, though quiet season of spiritual refreshment. There were no side attractions or disturbances. Every day was a quiet, joyful, happy Sabbath, and there was surely a "feast of fat things." The evenings were spent in the city with the parties with whom the friends were lodged. Some were invited to go out with their hosts for a boat ride on the lake; some took automobile rides; others went to give Chart Talks and explain the Divine Plan. Still others of the friends visited with each other, renewing former acquaintances and cementing new friendships.

We heard some very complimentary remarks passed in respect to the Conventioneers. The owner of the gasoline launches was heard to say that there never had been such a Convention there before. Some of those who entertained the friends, meeting the sisters who had engaged the rooms, thanked them for sending such nice people, and said they had appreciated them much. Surely this was only as it should have been. As the Apostle Peter questioned, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and Godliness?"

If those who have a true knowledge of God and who have consecrated their lives to the service of righteousness, [R5289 : page 238] and to opposition of iniquity do not manifest the fruits of the Spirit – meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love – then where, pray, should we expect to find these graces exemplified?

Those who attended the Madison Convention unanimously declared it to be the "best ever!" Yet this is the same general sentiment attaching to our Conventions. The *last* always seems to be the *best*. And why should it not really be so? If the Lord's people are

growing in grace, knowledge and love daily, as we trust is the case, then each Convention should be a little better than its predecessor.

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, JULY 13-20

Brother J. F. Rutherford served as chairman during the eight delightful days of this Convention. The list of speakers was excellent, numbering in all about forty. Several dear friends were heard to remark that this was the "sweetest" Convention they had ever attended, in that everything passed off so quietly, comfortably, happily. Our comfortable meeting place undoubtedly contributed greatly to the charm of this Convention. The city of Springfield invited the Conventioneers to be their guests, and placed at the disposal of our Association for the period of their sojourn their elegant new Auditorium, just finished. It is handsomely decorated in white and gold, is spacious and the acoustics are good.

Our Convention attendance averaged about 2,000, the Sunday service running the attendance up to 2,400 or 3,000. The Convention proper, without the public, numbered about 1,800. The majority of the Bethel family attended this Convention and were the guests of the Springfield Class of I.B.S.A. Thus being left free, the *Bethelites* had all the better opportunity for rendering service to others. But, indeed, this spirit of service seemed to pervade all the dear friends in attendance. Each seemed on the lookout to see in what manner he or she could serve others and make them more happy or more comfortable. As a result, all were happy. A sweet spirit of peace and order prevailed, which reminds us very much of the Great Convention which we are all hoping soon to attend.

Although the Convention Hall is in the very center of the city, it is so roomy and of such excellent construction that it was pleasantly cool and was in every way a delightful place for a Convention. The people of this city treated us very cordially, although not very many of them attended our meetings, of course; nor did we expect them so to do. These Conventions are particularly

intended to give opportunity for Bible Students to become specially acquainted with each other, with their Bibles and with its great and glorious Plan of salvation, which more and more appeals to their hearts, and assists them in making their calling and election sure.

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CONVENTION, JULY 20-27

We have had a Convention in Toronto before. Indeed, the city, so far as respects the attendance of our Canadian brethren, is very centrally located. Favorable railroad rates are always granted. This year's Convention surprised us by its size – about 1,200. We had not expected nearly so many when the appointment was made. Of this number about one-half were from the United States, the friends taking advantage of some of the low priced excursions.

Notwithstanding certain adverse conditions, stirred up by those Scripturally termed "sons of Belial," the Convention was in every way a success. If some of the public had their minds poisoned by slanderous misrepresentations and were thus hindered from availing themselves of the opportunity of sharing the blessed privileges afforded them, others, we are sure, were profited thereby. Some attended this Convention largely because they perceived that an evil spirit of slander and misrepresentation was for some reason endeavoring to do injury to a religious work. Satan and his blinded and misguided servants overdo in their endeavors to injure the Lord's cause. Sometimes the Lord overrules the wrath of man for His own praise and for the forwarding of the Truth. As for instance, in the case of a man who, being told that Pastor Russell was Antichrist, went to see what Antichrist might look like. Hearing the joyful Message of the Gospel, his heart was captured and now he rejoices.

Brother A. I. Ritchie served as the chairman of the Toronto Convention. A strong corps of speakers was provided, and the more than forty addresses at the Convention were up to a high standard,

both for grace and truth, spirituality and power. That "It is good to be here" was surely the sentiment of many hearts; and the season of refreshing undoubtedly provided blessings not only for those in attendance at the Convention, but for other thousands at their homes, upon whom doubtless was poured forth a share of the blessings. The Lord arranges it so that those who give out to others grace and truth received by themselves have an increased supply, even as with the widow's cruse of oil.

ASHEVILLE, N.C., CONVENTION, JULY 20-27

All in attendance at the Asheville Convention will surely agree that the Auditorium so kindly placed by the city at the disposal of the Association furnished a delightful Convention hall. Situated high up in the mountains, Asheville has a delightful climate greatly enjoyed by the visitors, who were estimated at 1,200, the larger attendance at the public meeting being principally made up of people from the city and immediate vicinity. The railroads gave us specially good terms, as gradually they are [R5290 : page 238] learning that our Conventions are quite worth their while – larger than the majority of Conventions and always up to advance statements.

If some of our enemies did seek to poison the minds of the public in advance, the prejudice easily broke down as the hosts became acquainted with their visitors. There is a *power* to the Truth, and it gives the spirit of a sound mind, which surely commends itself to all thinking people. It gives moderation, meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love. These graces of the Spirit are growing, developing, ripening amongst the Lord's people, and proportionately their influence is stronger, deeper, better. We feel sure that the people of Asheville have received a quiet testimony from their visitors which will be helpful to them, just as at the other Convention places. We feel confident, too, that the inhabitants in all these places

would make us very welcome should we desire to return at a future time.

This Convention was a model one in every respect. Brother C. J. Woodworth served as chairman, and a fine corps of speakers gave, approximately, fifty addresses. They were spiritual, Biblical, uplifting. The hearers were certainly refreshed, and undoubtedly carried with them to their homes a blessing to be poured in turn upon those who were not privileged to be in attendance.

As was expected from the first, it was especially a Southern Convention. It gave opportunity for some of the dear friends, who had never before had such a privilege, to attend a Convention. Indeed this was true respecting all of this year's Conventions. On the whole we feel sure that the Father was glorified, that the Savior was honored, and that many of His followers were refreshed, as Bible Students, in grace, knowledge and Truth. **[R5290 : page 239]**

The Editor remarked that at one Convention this year he shook hands with three men the same day, who at one time in their lives had been sadly blinded and were under the control of the Adversary. Now they were all clothed in their right minds – safe and sane, saints, jewels, children of the Highest. Two of them are Church Elders and leaders of Berean Bible Study classes; the third may be one also, but of this we are not positive.

The brief history of these three men shows the transforming power of the Truth. One was a highway robber. The Truth reached him in prison. Another was an Atheist and his wife a Catholic. He kept a liquor saloon in connection with a railroad contractor's gang. The third was also at one time a saloon keeper and his wife was a Catholic. The wives of all three are with them fully in the Truth.

"It may not come to us as we have thought,

The blessed consciousness of sins forgiven;
We may not hear a voice that shall proclaim
Our title clear to the sweet rest of Heaven.

"But like the winter merging into spring,
Or gently as the trees put forth their leaves,
May come to us the impulse of that life
Which God bestows on those sin truly grieves."

