

The Canadian Independent

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TORONTO, JUNE 30, 1881

NOTICE!

Subscribers will take notice that all payments for the INDEPENDENT, whether for arrears or for current volume, must in future be made to Mr. W. Revell, Box 248, Toronto P. O.

We would call the attention of our readers to their labels. All whose subscriptions expired Jan., '81, or earlier, are now due another year. Will they please remit.

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be BRIEF; our space is limited, and we dislike to cut down.

THE INTERNATIONAL S. S. CONVENTION

The Third International Sunday-School Convention took place last week in Toronto, and whether we have regard to the attendance of delegates and visitors, the interest manifested by the citizens, as evinced by the very large gatherings at all the meetings, or the perfection of the arrangements and harmony of the whole, it was the most successful yet. We cannot give the history of these Conventions, more than to note that they grew out of the National Conventions held by the workers in the States. The growing identity of the work in Canada, the frequent visits of the best American S. S. men to take part in our Conventions and Institutes, together with the attendance of our workers at their gatherings, prepared the way for the acceptance of a resolution in 1872, that the next of these Conventions be "International;" accordingly the first International Convention was held at Baltimore, in 1875; and the second at Atlanta, in 1878. At that Convention, the Canadian delegates (notably Dr. Potts, whose absence this year has been a source of much regret) made such a marked impression upon the meetings, and so much good feeling was aroused on both sides, that the invitation to hold

THE 1881 MEETING IN TORONTO, was accepted most enthusiastically. And so in the rapid course of years it came to pass that Toronto has been honoured by the reception of a portion of that noble band of men and women that constitute the great army of S. S. workers. A mere list of delegates would say little, but we may note a few of the more prominent names: Governor Colquitt, of Georgia; Dr. Vincent, B. F. Jacobs and his brother; Dr. Meredith, of Boston; Mr. Clarke, the Editor of the *S. S. Times*; Mr. Hazard, the Editor of the *National S. S. Teacher*; Father Chidlaw, Rev. F. H. Marling, Rev. Mr. Schaffner, Mr. W. Reynolds, of Peoria, with one delegate only from England, but one who well represented and well sustained the honour of the mother country.—Mr. Belsey, of Rochester.

It would be impossible to give in the limited space at our command, even a summary of

THE THREE DAYS' MEETINGS:

but we may note a few things about them. That they were *enthusiastic* will go for the saying; there was no lack of warmth and fire, strange indeed would it have been otherwise, looking at the past, and looking at the circumstances under which they met quoting from the speech of Dr. Dochester:

"First, there was the progress of Sunday-schools during the last 100 years. In the British Isles in the year 1810 there were 300,000 scholars, 1830, 1,019,696, and in 1880 this number had increased to 4,615,453. In the United States and Canada there were in 1830 570,000 Sunday-school scholars, the figures for 1880 being 6,949,454. Including 100,000 in the rest of the world there was a grand total of 12,680,267 Sunday-school scholars in 1880."

A grand fact this, dead indeed must the man be whose soul would not be kindled on hearing it; and now, with the removal of prejudice, more knowledge, better appliances, and we trust a consecrated army of workers, what may not be expected?

Further, they were *practical*. While not entirely absent, we suppose *that* is impossible, there was far less than we have heard at such meetings of mutual admiration, of spread-eagles, and whatever is the kindred appellation on this side of the line, and an ignoring of other agencies for the same blessed result. The speeches were largely practical, went straight home to the questions, What do we want to do? and what is the best way to do it? As a result we are sure that all the workers present will return to their work with more practical ideas in, we trust, more fully consecrated minds.

They were marked by *increasing interest* from the first hour of the opening. We were surprised to see so many visitors filling the spacious gallery of the Horticultural Gardens, Pavilion at the first session of the Convention, and the interest grew hour by hour. The first evening, hundreds, some who were outside said from three to four thousand, went away unable to obtain admission. The second night the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, holding two thousand, was opened for an overflow, and numbers we are told passed from one place to the other unable to get into either. On the third night the Sherbourne St. Methodist Church was opened in addition, and while the audiences in the other two places were undiminished, a large number gathered there. The interest resembled more what we know about the Moody and Sankey meetings than anything in later times.

They were marked by a *spirit of devotion* and reliance upon God. Throughout there was an evidently felt as expressed, consciousness that without the help of God all would be in vain. The prayers offered were pointed and earnest, the reference to this fact were frequent, while the chairman, Mr S. H. Blake, strove to impress it again and again, on the mind of all present.

And now, *in bono*? What will the result be? Will it all pass away like a brilliant display of fireworks, and only leave rocket-sticks and burnt cases behind? We trust not. We think not; on the contrary, we verily believe that these delegates

will return to their respective spheres of labour with a new consecration and a fresh devotion, and that in circles hundreds, thousands it may be, of miles away, the influence of these meetings will be felt, and that by the blessing of God upon them fresh harvests of full-eared corn will be gathered to His glory.

One of the most striking incidents of the Convention was the appearance on the same platform speaking one after the other, of Rev. W. B. Arnett, of Wilberforce, Ohio, formerly a slave, and Governor Colquitt, of Georgia, formerly a slaveholder, that was on the afternoon of Friday, in the evening at the farewell meeting Mr. Arnett was called again to the platform. We abridge from a newspaper report its very condensed report of the evening speech:

"Rev. W. B. Arnett, of Wilberforce, Ohio, was called to the platform by the President, and on his way up was greeted with a perfect ovation. He then delivered the following address, undoubtedly the most eloquent and one of the most earnest utterances delivered in the Convention. He said—This is one of the occasions of my life when language is inadequate to express the sentiments of my heart. I do not take this as a personal reception but only that in the Providence of God I this moment represent a great principle which is dear to every Christian, and dear to every Sunday-school worker—the broad principle of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. As I came forward to this stand my eye touched your beautiful motto, 'We be brethren.' What does that mean to me to-night? 'We be brethren' in all that appertains to the responsibilities of that brotherhood of man. We are one in origin, equal in responsibility, and we are one in destiny. To you and to me is given the great problem of working out human life, and I, with you, must make the best of this life. Behind me I represent to-night six millions of men, women, and children, who but yesterday were in the night of their bondage, and to-night there yet lingers the mountain-top shadows of the darkness of that bondage; but before me, in this great audience, I see the morning sun of the glorious day of liberty to my race, (Cheers.) and, Sir, revealing to me the duties I owe to myself, my family, my country, and my God. Now, I ask you in God's name, to assist us in the mighty work before us. Six million heads to be trained to think—to know and to see God in nature. Six million hearts to be trained to love God and to love his fellow-man. Six million pairs of hands to be taught to work for humanity, and to help to lift up and save a fallen race (Applause.) Pray that God will give us not merely intellectual power or culture, but the spirit of our Master, that we may do our duty here, and that you and I, having fought the great battle of life, and having conquered, may assist in singing that grand song, 'All hail the power of Jesus' name, Let Angels prostrate fall.'"

There was one drawback, and only one so far as we know, and that one not a drawback to all—it was the coldness of the weather, the thermometer down to the forties in the morning and not rising very high in the shade all day sojourned our Southern visitors, of whom there was a large attendance, more than seventy from the State of Georgia alone. A delegate from South Carolina complained to us very much of the weather, these friends did not expect it and were not prepared.

Some of them had as a result to invest in warmer clothing. But it was a great comfort in the crowded meetings, the heat was quite sufficient there.

Notwithstanding, we think that the great bulk of them will carry away very pleasant remembrances of Toronto. The city, the people, the buildings, the place of meeting, and, above all, the hearty welcome and hospitality they had received were constant themes of talk among them, and which occasionally found utterance on the platform. We are sure that many of them will carry away such a pleasant report of Toronto that other visitors from their localities will find their way here. One of the delegates was so struck with the ruddy, healthy appearance of the people, in contrast, we suppose, to what he was accustomed to see, that he said the people appeared as if they "lived on new wine!"

The selection of Mr. ex-Vice-Chancellor Blake as President was a happy one, he presided over the meetings in an admirable manner on the whole, and though, perhaps, a little inclined to be impatient with the audience at times, he succeeded in making it pleasant for the speakers and for those who did want to hear.

Not the least interesting incident of the meeting was the reading by Dr. Vincent of a letter, never published, from Robert Raikes to a friend, which places that good man on a yet higher pedestal of admiration and reverence from its tone of humility and sincere piety. If we can find space we will publish it this week, if not, next week.

After the Centenary Meetings in London, last year, we had occasion to make some animadversions on Dr. Vincent in consequence of his speech at the Guildhall. We are glad to give unqualified praise to all his utterances at this Convention. His speeches have been terse, compact, full of sound, practical teaching, and, what we would more especially note, free from the disfigurements of nonsense and bad taste, which too often is manifest in them. Humour is one thing, foolery and offensiveness quite distinct. We heard him this time with great pleasure, and would have heard him more frequently.

To whomsoever is due the credit of suggesting the pavilion of the Horticultural Gardens as a place of meeting, the thought was a happy one. The building is the largest in the city, the surroundings are very pleasant, and not a little of the success was due, we apprehend, to the place.

We must not omit to notice the hospitality of Col. Gzowski, at whose invitation the delegates with the ministers and Sunday-school superintendents of the city, assembled to a garden party, on Thursday afternoon. From 700 to 800 were present we believe. We can testify that they looked exceedingly happy, and that the strawberries and ice cream disappeared at a marvellous rate.