

"Sabbath, Dec. 30, in Battle Creek"

TO the church in Battle Creek, Sabbath, Dec. 30, was a day long to be remembered. In the forenoon brother L. McCoy read to a crowded Tabernacle the reading from sister White, on pages 32-36 of the printed Readings for the week of prayer; and the Spirit of God witnessed to it, in solemn impressions. In the afternoon at three o'clock the Tabernacle was crowded again, and "The Call From Destitute Fields," by sister White, with an unpublished testimony on entire consecration, the proper use of our time and means, and the nearness of the end, etc., was read, and the good impressions of the Spirit of God in the forenoon exercises were only deepened and carried forward to a triumphant victory over the power of the enemy in this place.

At the close of the reading, hymn 908, "The Chariot," was read, and sung with solemn spirit by the entire congregation, each line of the hymn bearing a solemn sense that doubtless it never bore before to those present. After this, a call was made for only those who knew that there was not a living connection between them and the Saviour, only those who knew they were not saved, nearly three hundred came forward in penitence and tears, sixty-six of whom were moving thus for the first time.

When these had come forward, a season of prayer was held. In prayer the Spirit of God led out in special supplication, that God in mercy would spare this people a little longer; that he would in pity forgive their slighting of his rich blessings; and again bestow the gift of his Holy Spirit, and give one more opportunity to his people here, to manifest faithfulness before he should be compelled in righteousness to visit with the rod. O, it seemed as though the very soul was drawn out after God, and it could not let him go till he had blessed. In mercy the Lord heard, and even while the prayer was being offered, he answered; the tide turned, the power of the enemy was rebuked and broken; and the rich, tender blessing descended in power of the Spirit of God; and with it came the assurance that God was entreated for his people, that he had restored them to their place of power, and would work once more for them. The prayer was turned to thanksgiving for the blessing and goodness of the Lord. The victory was complete.

After the season of prayer, the congregation was divided, and those who had come forward were taken into the vestries, and the rest of the congregation, filling the auditorium and the galleries, remained for social worship. Just here, however, the meeting took a peculiar, though most blessed turn. The unpublished testimony read had insisted on entire separation from the world and worldliness, from pride and outward adorning, and that there should be plainness of dress, and especially a "tearing off" of gold, etc., instead of wearing it on the body, "as the heathen do." When the reading had ended, and while the call for the unsaved was being made, one came to the pulpit and handed up a magnificent gold watch, with a note running thus: "For fear that my dead husband's watch may stand between me and the blessing of God, I give it for the work in Wellington, New Zealand, or wherever else it can be used in the wide 'harvest-field.'" At the beginning of the social meeting, another gold watch was sent up to the leader of the meeting. This token was followed at once, the note handed up with the first watch was read, and then a call was made to know who would obey the call of the Lord and "tear off" the gold, and strip themselves of such ornaments. There was no urging, yet from that moment there was a steady move, one after another, for more than an hour, bringing up gold watches, gold chains, gold rings, gold bracelets, gold sleeve-buttons, diamond studs and pins; costly furs and plumes; money in cash and drafts; and gifts of houses and lots; amounting in all, at a fair estimate, to over six thousand dollars. There were fifty-five watches alone, and all gold but one, and of the handsomest, too.

As the people put away that which had kept the blessing of God from them, the rich blessings of the Lord flowed in as naturally and easily as air into a vacuum, and hearts were filled with it, and spoke forth praise to God from joyful lips. There were so many who wanted to praise and testify to the goodness of the Lord, and there was such perfect liberty in the meeting, that brethren had to go into all parts of the audience to lead small divisions. Yet all was done in such perfect order that there was not a single loud or excited tone heard during the whole service. O, it was blessed to be there. The Lord had again "visited and redeemed his people." More than seventy gave in their names for baptism, sixty-six of whom are those who made their first step at this meeting.

And now it remains for the people of Battle Creek to cherish this blessing and Spirit as the sacred, precious thing that it is; to make the presence and blessing of God the first and most desirable of all things at all times and in all places; to heed the solemn counsel of the Lord as to how to use it, and not only retain it, but receive endless gifts more in addition. Let each soul do this, and all will be well. And may the Lord save the people from slighting or abusing it, for then it will be lost again; and O, if that is done, the danger is that it may be lost forever. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A. T. J.