

# Conference Address: Ottawa, Illinois

## THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE ADDRESS

J. N. LOUGHBOROUGH.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: Through the kind providence of God, we are again permitted to assemble for our annual Conference. As we meet in this encampment, we are reminded that one more year, with its sorrows and joys, its responsibilities and privileges, its cares and blessings, is in the past. We are one year nearer the close of our earthly pilgrimage; we have one year less of opportunities for leading souls to Christ. We are one year nearer the close of the "conflict of ages" - the conflict between truth and error, light and darkness, Christ and Satan; a conflict which is to close in an eternal uprooting and destruction of evil, and the overthrow of sin. We are one year nearer the consummation of our hope, and the "well done" which is to be pronounced upon the overcomers.

The past year has been marked with unprecedented storms, floods, famine, calamities and disasters by sea and land. Thousands have been swept away by disease. A few of our people in this State have been removed from us by the hand of death. We have reason for devout gratitude to God that the number who have fallen is no greater than it is, and that so many of us are spared in life and health to gather here, and join in praise to God for his mercies, and share his blessings.

In consequence of much rain and the lateness of the season, some of our people in the State have met with disappointment in their temporal calculations. This should not occasion any spirit of complaining, but the rather our hearts should be filled with devout gratitude and praise to God for the blessings we have received and the benefits with which he daily loadeth us.

The last year has been one in which our own nation has made rapid strides in fulfilling its work of uniting Church and State, of which we are warned by the third angel's message, and for which our people have been looking for the last forty-five years. The late decision of the Supreme Court and the action by Congress in adopting

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Sunday as a national sabbath and repudiating the Lord's Sabbath, has stirred the masses, and opened the way for bringing to the front the Sabbath truth - the grand central truth of the message.

While this is true with reference to the situation of affairs in the nation, we have seen advancement in the cause of truth in our own State. This will be seen from the reports of the various branches of the work. In our Conference work we find that one church has been organized in Chicago, which asks admission to the Conference, - the Swedish church, North Side, consisting of forty-three members. Quite a company of believers have accepted the faith here in Ottawa,

where a church should soon be organized. Besides these a goodly number have been added to the South Side Chicago church, and to some of the other companies in the State. There are also many, here and there, through the State, who have accepted the truth from reading the books sold by the canvassers, and from the labors of our ministers and Bible readers.

The figures of our standing, as a Conference, compared with last year, are as follows: In 1891 the membership in the twenty-two organized churches was 840; unorganized and scattered Sabbath-keepers in the State, 150; total, 990. The tithe paid by these for the year amounted to \$10,248.05. In 1892 the membership in twenty-three organized churches is 878; unorganized and scattered, 150; total 1028. These paid a tithe of \$11,155.15. This was an increase over the preceding year of \$907.10 in tithes. Of this amount the tithe for the last quarter of this year was \$2988.04.

In the Sabbath-school Association we note a very encouraging growth. In 1891 the number of Sabbath-schools reported was thirty-nine, with a membership of 1063, who contributed \$542.91 to the foreign mission work. The present number of schools is fifty, with a membership of 1180, an increase of eleven schools and 117 members. The fifty schools contributed \$752.24, this year, for the support of missions, an increase of \$209.33 over the previous year.

The Christmas offering for the foreign missions in 1890 was \$441.34. In 1891, the offering was \$1602.65 an increase of \$1161.31 over the previous year; the increase being more than twice the amount of the offering of the year 1890. The first-day offerings for the year ending June 30, 1892 were \$627.03.

In the canvassing work we note that at the time of our last annual meeting, it was reported that, with an average of fifty canvassers, the sales amounted to \$35,000. It was found afterward that

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this calculation was based upon their orders taken instead of their actual deliveries. For the year ending Aug. 1, 1892, with an average of thirty-five canvassers in the field, the sales of books actually delivered amount to \$28,000, which, considering the wet season, which occasioned much hindrance in the work, and a shortage in fruit and some other crops, which affected the finances of the people, is, correspondingly, really a better showing than the work of the previous year. In addition to the sales by the canvassers, the local sales of the Chicago Tract and Missionary Office have been sufficient to make the total sales of the society for the year a little over \$30,000.

During the last six months of the year the orders from the canvassers have been filled on the C.O.D. (two box) plan, which leaves the standing of the Tract and Missionary Society in a much more healthful condition than in former years.

At the time of our last annual meeting, in the Conference address, I made a report of our findings respecting the mission property in the State. That report reached to May 1, 1891. The debt at that time on the three buildings in Chicago, Springfield, and Bloomington, was shown to be \$36,224. Of this we stated that there was a mortgage of \$2000, bearing interest at 7 per cent, which was due June 13, 1892. This mortgage was paid on time, the money being kindly furnished by our brethren, in part at 5 per cent interest, and in part with money

loaned to us without interest. We also stated that the amount required to meet the annual interest on the debts was about \$1900 per year. You voted, at the last Conference, to raise by donations \$1000 to be used in paying the interest on the mission debt. On this fund there had been paid, up to Aug. 1, 1892, the sum of \$568.88. It was also voted by the Illinois Tract and Missionary Society to pay one fifth of the gross profits of the canvassers' sales into the interest fund. The amount received from that source during the year was \$560; the rent received from the buildings, chapel, and offices for the year, was \$923.10; interest received on outstanding notes amounted to \$68.65; a total of \$2120.63 to be applied on the interest. From May 1, 1891 to Aug. 1, 1892, there was paid out as interest \$1782.11, leaving a balance to the credit of the interest fund at that date of \$338.52. So you see that instead of having to borrow money this year to meet interest, as in the previous year, we can report to you that the interest for the year has been met without any increase of the debt.

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Another point which will be of interest to mention here is this: At the time of the last report we stated that the amount of annual interest was \$1900 per year. As the debt now stands, the annual interest is at the rate of \$1660 per year, or a reduction in the interest to be paid of \$240 per year. This has been accomplished by some of our people letting us have the use of money for a time without interest, or at 5 per cent. With this means we have canceled some of the obligations which were drawing 6 and 7 per cent interest. For all of these favors we thank God.

We should not, in our gladness for past prosperity in this direction, forget that another year's interest must be provided for, and our people will be solicited to renew their pledges to this fund, and others to pledge for the next year who may not have had the opportunity last year.

All will be pleased to learn that there has also been some reduction of the debt. The report on the building fund is as follows: Received during the year in donations, \$1206.62; rent from Review and Herald, \$855 (which is not applied on interest, but for the canceling of the \$3,000 loaned to the building fund without interest), or a total received of \$2061.62. Paid out on real estate in Chicago, \$4.70; in Bloomington, on real estate, \$33.95; on repairs and improvements in Springfield, \$84.42; in Bloomington, \$17.61; in Chicago, \$162.94, - a total of \$303.94, leaving a balance to the credit of the building fund, of \$1758, which, deducted from the \$36,224 (the amount of the debt last year), leaves the present debt \$34,466. In auditing the accounts of the Central Bible School, it was found that the \$2000 worth of furniture which had been donated to the school, quite largely by individuals, had never been taken into the account of the value of property connected with the Association, because it was school property. This would make the real value \$47,000 instead of \$45,000, as previously reported from year to year. We state this here as a matter of record, although it will not be added to the estimate on real estate.

Another item with reference to the Chicago building should be mentioned here. While the carpets, bedding, etc., were constantly wearing out, there was no provision made for replacing them. It was decided by the managers of the Bible

School to place a moderate rent on the rooms occupied by boarders and roomers in the building, in addition to the sums paid for board. Since this plan was adopted, about the first of March, 1892, \$262.43 has been received from that

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source,, \$70.54 of which was paid for furnishing and repairs of roof; \$140 for papering and painting the outside wood-work two coats, - a total expenditure of \$210.54, leaving \$51.89 to be applied toward repairing a damage to the sewer, which must soon be met. From the above source we shall be able to keep up some of these constantly needed repairs. I do not know why rooms in the mission building should be considered of no value, when rooms almost the next door command so much higher rent than is charged for the mission rooms.

As to the working of the Bible School itself, there was quite a heavy indebtedness upon it one year ago, and some outstanding debts to the school. Among other items, there was due for labor over \$400. I am happy to report that there was a good attendance during the last winter's term of the school, and that the money received from this, together with that received from the management of the house up to Aug. 1, 1891, has met the running expenses, and \$340 of past expenses overdrawn.

The price of coal has raised nearly one third since our last term of school. This, with the fact that the three months' term of the school is to be in the coldest period of the year, as well as during the longest evenings, requiring the most gas-light, has led the managers of the school to raise the charge to students from \$3 per week to \$4, to be paid on entering the school.

Those in attendance at the Bible School last winter awakened some interest in the truth by the readings they were able to hold. This has been followed up by the other workers with good results. For most of the year we have had twelve Bible workers employed in the State, and they report forty persons whom they know have accepted and commenced to obey the truth during the year, up to Aug. 1, 1892. This is about as well as can be reported for all the ministerial labor in the State. Dear brethren and sisters, do not fail to bear before the Lord the cases of the Bible workers and canvassers, for, as the Lord views it, the work of introducing the truth, especially in the shape of reading matter, into the homes of the people, is one of the most important features in the cause.

Another financial item which should be mentioned in this connection is our camp-meeting fund. Last year, before the campmeeting, it was found that the fund had been, at some previous time, overdrawn to the amount of \$237.57. Your pledge made to the \$500 camp-meeting fund (your pledges really exceeded that sum) have been so fully paid that the past indebtedness has been canceled,

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and when the workers' meeting began at this Ottawa camp, there was a fund on hand of \$360.80.

During the last year we have added to our lot of tents twenty-eight new ones, at a cost of about \$471. On this there was applied an old tent worth \$45, and tent rents to outside parties, amounting to over \$200 more. This, with the rents you pay this year, in the two camp-meetings, will enable us to reduce the debt to

quite a moderate sum. We do not deem it necessary to call for any donations this year for tents or camp expenses. With the economical management of our superintendent, Brother Hibbin, and his assistants, the funds you have raised will be made to go the longest way.

Now that this Conference year closes, and I yield up to you the trust that you have committed to my hands, I have the consciousness that I have tried to study the best interests of the cause in the State. Having learned the situation, it has been deemed important by the President of the General Conference that I should devote considerable time to other parts of General Conference District No. 3, which has taken me out of the State much of the last six months. You are requested to so arrange the affairs of your Conference (if it is your pleasure to assign to me any official position in the Conference) that I can spend more time, not only in other parts of District No. 3, but still other parts of the United States.

May the Lord guide us in all our deliberations and plans in these eventful and ominous times. May we all, ministers and people, be so *harnessed* for the race and *fitted* for the conflict that we may be enabled, with Heaven's light, to lead more souls to Christ and his truth in the coming year than in any previous years.  
*Ottawa, Ill., Aug. 24, 1892.*

