

CONCLUDING REMARKS

(Concluding Remarks by the Pastor, Asbury Park, Tuesday, July 7, 8 P.M., 1914
Convention Report, starting on page 265)

I am glad to be with you again, dear friends. Since I was with you last, I visited two other conventions, the one at Columbus, Ohio, and the other at Clinton, Iowa. They were very blessed occasions. The Lord's spirit was very markedly manifest amongst the brothers and sisters there, you will be glad to know. I brought them a similar message from you here; that the Lord was blessing you, and that you were greatly enjoying yourselves. I am sure that was the truth.

Now we have come to the close of our meetings, and our hearts and minds, no doubt, are filled with the thought as to whether there will ever be another convention; such a general gathering of the Lord's people in this particular way. We have before our minds, I am sure, the Apostle's statement respecting the general assembly of the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven. This is a general assembly in one sense of the word, dear friends, yet it is not very general either, because we are not able to gather from all parts of the world. Neither are the Lord's people sufficiently well acquainted with each other, though they have much in common. We have no doubt whatever that the general assembly of the first-born will include the true saints of every nation and denomination. We have no doubt that many will be included in that company who are not well acquainted in the present life, because as the Scriptures declare, "The Lord knoweth His own."

We are not able to know each other at the present time. The great adversary has sought to separate the people of God by misrepresentation. And not only to separate them from the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, and from the Bible, but also to misrepresent them to each other. For this reason the Lord's people have not understood each other; they are not well acquainted with one another. But when the glorious change shall come; that resurrection change which will give us the new body, the Apostle says, "We will know, even as we are known." There will be no barriers between, no misunderstandings, no false doctrines to separate into sectarian divisions. All will be one in Christ Jesus.

The particular thought I would like to have you take with you as you go to your homes is that expressed by the Apostle when he says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." There is only the one body of Christ. It is true we have the Presbyterian Christian body; we have the Methodist Christian body; we have the Lutheran Christian body; we have the Disciple Christian body, and the Roman Catholic Christian body, but all of these various divisions of God's people, according to the Bible are the result of ignorance, superstition and false doctrines which have divided the Lord's sheep into different parties and companies, more or less in opposition to one another, in doctrine if

not otherwise. In proportion as we have overcome these errors, as the eyes of our understanding have been opened; or as suggested by the Apostle, in proportion as we are able to see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths, and come to know the love of God, in that proportion all of these errors which now blind and confuse, begin to pass away. The darkness of the past which so befogged us, and gave us so much trouble in every way, is gradually passing away. The new dispensation is at hand; the light of the new order of things, the light of the Lord's presence is scattering the darkness. We all rejoice in the fact that all darkness will flee away; that the great sunlight of Divine truth will flood the whole earth, as the Bible foretold. These things have been written thousands of years, yet never fulfilled, but now they are on the eve of fulfillment. The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams, with restitution in his beams, blessing all the families of the earth. That will be glorious, my brothers and sisters, when God's power is exercised to heal and bless the world of mankind.

But you say, Bro. Russell, they will not all see these conditions. Yes, they will, We have the positive assurance. It is written, "All the blind eyes shall be opened and the deaf ears shall be unstopped." But, you say, if the blindness came once it may come again; there is no assurance. Yes, there is, my dear brethren. I remind you, again the Bible tells us who has been causing this blindness; who has been blinding our eyes and stopping our ears to the true message of God's Word. It was Satan. As St. Paul says, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not." Everybody who does not believe God's wonderful, beautiful truth is blinded by Satan. It is not Bro. Russell who says this. It is Bro. Paul, a better authority by far; an inspired authority. The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the glorious light of God's goodness as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, should shine into your hearts. Satan has not wanted the goodness of God to shine into our hearts. He did not want us to see how the love of the Heavenly Father was exercised toward His human creatures, and that He had such a good plan for us. Why not? Because love begets love. If we once come to see how much God loved the world and His people especially, it begets love in return. As the Apostle says, "Not that we first loved God, but He first loved us." It was a responsive love that came into your heart and mine. You cannot have responsive love except in proportion as you come to understand the love of God in its lengths and breadths and heights and depths.

We are thankful to God that our eyes have been opened, and some others are seeing more than they once did of God's love for the children of men. We are seeing more than we have before what wonderful blessing He has for the church; that we shall be His associates in blessing all the families of the earth during the reign of Christ.

Will not this great one who deceived us, and blinded us, and divided us into sects and parties; the great prince of this world; the god of this world, Satan—will he not do this again? No, my dear friends, for the Bible assures us. Jesus assures us himself in His last

great message to the church that Satan shall be bound; that the old serpent shall be bound for a thousand years, that he may deceive the nations no more. He has been leading us astray through his deceptions. The Apostle Paul says, "We are not ignorant of his devices." We are finding out more and more that the great difficulty with the world has been the delusions of Satan. Not only has he deceived the heathen, but also those in civilized lands. He has misinterpreted the Bible, and got us estranged from God and His precious promises, seeking thus to drive us from God and more and more into the ways of sin. Thank God for the blessings that are coming to us. These blessings have come in proportion as we have received the Spirit of God, the holy Spirit, the spirit of Truth, the spirit of a sound mind, as the Apostle calls it.

Stop there just a moment, my dear brother. What special blessings have you had since coming to an understanding of God and a better understanding of the Bible? Can you not recognize in yourself growth in grace and knowledge and in various fruits of the Spirit? Whatever you had to begin with you have more of it; more meekness, more gentleness, more patience in suffering, more of brotherly kindness and love. All of these are the fruitage of the holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter says, "If these things be in you and abound they make you that you shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." That is it. That is the one spirit into which you are baptized, for we were all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body.

As we have already seen, this baptism into the one spirit began when we responded to God's call; when we gave up our own will to do God's will and consecrated to Him our all. That was the beginning of the baptism which the Apostle there speaks of. We are baptized into this one spirit; God is the great Spirit; all things are of God, all of the meekness, all of the gentleness is from Him. The high standard of the Church is from Him. All that you and I can hope to do is to cultivate again that glorious character of Love which was lost when Father Adam sinned, and the image and likeness of God which he possessed in the flesh began to go from him. When he came under condemnation, gradually sin grew in its dominion over him. As the Apostle informs us, by the one man sin entered the world, and its dominion passed upon all men. We have had a reign of sin and death. Now we are coming back to the Heavenly Father. He has made provision whereby we can return to His favor. A door has been opened through the work which Christ accomplished for us. By faith we accept the conditions and present ourselves to the Father through the merit of Jesus. By faith we accept God's assurance that we are no longer aliens and strangers, but children brought nigh by the blood of Christ. By faith we realized that if children we are heirs, heirs of God to the great inheritance which He wishes to give us; the great inheritance of the Millennial Kingdom, with all of the associated blessings. Heirs of God and joint in heirship with Jesus Christ, our Lord, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

So when we were baptized into the one spirit, it was the spirit of devotion to God, of coming back to God, instead of being the spirit of rebellion and alienation from God as evinced by Father Adam. It was a turning back again, as accepted in Christ, His Son. "Not my own but saved by Jesus." We give up our own will entirely, saying, "Not my will but Thine be done." This is the spirit we have received from Him. We are to be filled more and more with the holy Spirit, filled with the Spirit of God, with God-likeness. We become thus filled by giving heed to the instruction of God's Word; by giving heed to our Head, as pupils in the school of Christ; learning of Him who is our pattern, our exemplar; by seeking to walk in His footsteps. This baptism is still going on, as we seek to learn and do His will more fully each day, and it will continue unto death. It will take the entire course of our lives, we may say, to complete this baptism into His death. It was as the dear Redeemer neared the hour of His death that He said, "It is finished," and so it will be with you and me. If we are faithful unto death we shall receive the crown of life.

As we go to our homes let us carry this particular thought with us, that we are all immersed by one Spirit into the one body. There are not a number of bodies; there is not a variety of churches (we are not saying that there are not saints in various denominations, but) God has but one church. We were merely mistaken when we thought He had a number of Churches. Nowhere in the Bible is there any other church recognized than this one church, the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The Apostle says "God gave Him to be the Head over the Church which is His Body," and we are members in particular of the body of Christ, which is the Church. So, then, whether saintly, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Lutherans, or Disciples, they are all one in Christ Jesus. That is to say, all saintly ones are one, and all unsaintly ones have neither part nor lot in the matter. The unconsecrated, no matter by what name they are called, are not included. Only those who have been baptized by the one Spirit into Christ have any share in this matter. That does not mean that there is any desire on our part, or on the part of the Almighty to hinder anybody who is in the right attitude of mind. There is but one way, and "straight is the gate and narrow is the way." Any who wish to be His disciples and walk in His footsteps can have no other way, no other path, no other name is given amongst men whereby we can be saved. If we have entered this way let us rejoice in it; and if we have not, let us seek for it. There is no other way to attain the glorious things God has in reservation for the church.

If we have found the way and entered it, we knew in advance that it would be a narrow way. We knew this in advance, because Jesus did not leave us in darkness on the subject. He said that it would be a way in which we would be misunderstood, and men would speak evil of us. If you entered without this knowledge it was because you did not give heed to His Word. He tells us that He considers it a sign of God's favor to us if we are accounted worthy to suffer something for loyalty to the Lord and His Word, His Truth.

So, dearly beloved friends, as we go to our homes let us carry our hearts and bodies as full of the holy Spirit as possible. Let us go to the cities and villages from which we came with the message of God upon our lips. Tell them of the blessings here enjoyed, and so far as possible pour out the blessing received yourself. Thus may the Lord's blessing be shed abroad, far and near, upon His people. Thus may others be brought near to the Lord, and our own hearts be refreshed. If you have noticed it, and I am sure you have, every time you tell the story to others, not for self or vain glory, but with a desire to do good and forward His cause, you get a blessing; a warming of your own heart. This testimony, is not merely to go out through our lips, but by our conduct, by our words; by all that we do we are to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. I am sure you are feeling more and more that it is a marvelous light. We should get the thought also, that in proportion as we are enjoying it more and more, in that proportion we have increased responsibility, because where much is given, much will be required. The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence Him; and He will show them His covenant. He has been showing us His covenant; His secret is with us; we have been granted understanding. As the poet says:

Now I see and hear and know,
More than I hoped for here below;
And every power finds sweet employ
In telling the glad tidings of great joy.

What more can I say than I have said? Seek to be filled with this holy Spirit, and seek to manifest it to others, and remember that is the condition upon which you will grow in grace. And while you are growing in grace inwardly it will influence your outward body. God is not judging us according to the flesh, yet He is expecting to see some evidences in the outward life, in our words and doings. As the Apostle suggests, we are to bring every thought into subjection to the will of Christ. He is looking to see our faithfulness; our loyalty. There is none righteous, no not one. All come short of the glorious standard. But the Lord is expecting you and me to develop holiness of heart, purity as to our intentions, and loyalty of conduct to the extent of our ability, under all circumstances at any cost. May this holy Spirit of the Lord be in our hearts, and may we be sanctified by it. May all the truth we are receiving have a more sanctifying influence in our lives day by day, is my prayer for you and for myself.