

WELCOMING ADDRESS

(Saturday, Sept. 28, 1974, Antioch, California by Theodore A. Smith, and given in part at Little Northwest Fellowship Sunday, Bellingham, Wash., Oct. 6, 1974. An Addendum follows with four welcome addresses from the 1909 Convention Report.)

Dear Brethren I feel greatly honored to be the first one on the program to greet you and welcome you to two days of fellowship together and feasting together on the precious Harvest truth. I know the brethren of this ecclesia and I feel confident that the spirit of Christian love has inspired these brethren to prepare for you two days of blessing in spiritual matters. And this agape love has been guided by an intelligent appreciation of what is good for us, and gratitude for all of God's present blessings to us through Christ. Agape love is not a sentimental emotional state of mind or heart, but is guided by intelligent judgment—the spirit of a sound mind and thankfulness. I commend the brethren for endorsing the writings of "That Servant"; and I also commend them for their choice of brethren serving on the program. This reminds me of Phil. 1:9, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." True Christian love is intelligent and guided by proper knowledge. We make use of that which God has provided us for progress in Christian development and activities, and thus we can feel assured that this convention will be profitable to us and redound to God's glory.

We would like to touch upon a few scriptures that we hope will be profitable to us to consider as a start to this convention. Our first one is 2 Cor. 5:14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." This love of Christ for us is something that constrains us, binds us closely together. We are aware of the marvelous thing he did for us, in redeeming us from the sentence of death, and so we are a people that are filled with gratitude toward the one who is worthy of our worship and the giving up of our lives for self and serve him instead.

The Manna comment for September first, expresses the same thought only in a more forceful way. The text commented upon was Acts 9:15, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." The incident was when Paul was blinded and the Lord appeared in a vision to a certain disciple in Damascus, named Ananias—and this disciple was instructed of the Lord to go to Saul, for, the Lord said "Saul of Tarsus prayeth." Ananias was fearful for he had heard of the course of Saul of Tarsus and how the church was suffering from this man's zeal for the Law. But the Lord insisted that Ananias should go to Saul and deliver a message from the Lord. We read the words of the text again, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he [i.e. Saul of Tarsus] is a chosen vessel

unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.” And now the Manna comment: “It is because we see Jesus to be the Father’s choice that we unite ourselves to him: because we see the Father’s character manifested in Him that we leave all to follow Him.” We are particularly struck with the words “It is because we see Jesus to be the Father’s choice that we UNITE OURSELVES TO HIM.” Yes, we are united to Jesus—we have not joined some religious sect or organization, but we are **UNITED TO JESUS PERSONALLY.** “We are,” not merely “I am”, but **WE ARE** united to him. To quote again, “because we see the Father’s character manifested in Him that **WE LEAVE ALL TO FOLLOW HIM.**” I am sure the Pastor used this particular choice of language because he was expressing a reality, a fact—we see Jesus to be the Father’s choice, so we turn away from all earthly leaders, all earthly denominations, all earthly projects and schemes and follow the leading of Jesus, our Redeemer, and play the parts assigned to us in the great Divine drama, Jesus Himself being the chief actor and occupying the center of the stage—the Divine Plan of the Ages.

As we are granted more understanding from study we are astounded at some of the things that are said of those who unite themselves to Jesus. For instance Paul expresses a very powerful and meaningful thought in 2 Cor. 11:2, “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” And Paul said further in Eph. 5:25 to 27, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” And John the Revelator speaks of the Lamb as having a wife: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

There is a reason for every illustration that is used in the Bible, and this relationship of Husband and Wife is something special and precious. There is a very sweet relationship between parents and children—the parent takes pleasure in watching out for the welfare of his children, and he gets great joy out of the confidence that a child shows toward the parent. And the child in turn takes pleasure in looking to the parent for guidance and comfort. While this is all very satisfying to the soul, it does not compare with the relationship between husband and wife. The life of a husband and a wife is completely wrapped up in one another in mutual respect, cooperation and understanding. This is the thought intended for us to grasp concerning the relationship between Christ and ourselves; and this relationship being in the framework of the Divine Plan, it is correspondingly higher, grander and sweeter.

I think an engagement between a man and woman to be married helps us to grasp the closeness that should be felt between Christ and ourselves. The thoughts of both the man and the woman are dominated by the anticipation of their coming marriage. They feel

related to one another more strongly than they have ever felt related to any others in their past lives. This is the intention of the Scriptures concerning our feelings toward Christ. And we are all united in the same feelings as the Bride of Christ, or I should say the espoused virgin of Christ.

I would like to urge now at the very start of this convention that in all our fellowship and rejoicing in the truth, that we connect this up with the love that Christ has for us—personal love, and that we feel personally united to him as the very center of our affection; and that we will regard our pleasure together as a foretaste of the delights and bliss of our future together with Christ on the Divine plane of being.

I think I am safe in saying that as we grow in Christian experience, we recognize the Truth as a personal thing from our Heavenly Father and from our Redeemer. It is revealing to us the love of the Father and the Son for us and how we can have a part in the Divine Plan. The words of Jesus found in John 18:20-26 are very touching, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Supposing someone that you thought a great deal of and admired would say to you, “I want you to be with me and share my special position in life; I think the world of you and want you to be my companion in all that I do.” What would you think? You would be so deeply touched that you would be in awe and filled with gratitude and your whole life would be taken up with your friend.

All through the Gospel age our Lord has been with the members of his prospective bride, guiding, leading, protecting and molding the character. Guardian angels have been employed to see to it that everything is done for the spiritual welfare of ourselves as the espoused virgin.

The Truth we have today is provided for our nourishment and encouragement in this difficult time—the harvest of the Gospel age, the testing time. “Behold I stand at the door and knock.” “Behold the bridegroom,”—our Bridegroom. The Lord wants us to have correct knowledge concerning our Heavenly Father’s purposes. For instance, we

have a detailed explanation of the “Manner of Our Lord’s Return.” Why? Because in his personal love for us he wants us to be free of all false notions concerning himself at his second advent. He wants us to know that he will be invisible to the natural eyesight, but will be manifest to us in the precious revelation of the signs by which we will know that he is invisibly present. HE WANTS US TO KNOW THESE THINGS FOR HE LOVES US! He reveals his invisible presence to us by the precious truth concerning all the details of the Divine Plan because we have parts to play in that Plan, and WE NEED TO KNOW.

And we are taken into his confidence in making clear to us the understanding of the prophecies which are stated in symbolic language—stated in symbolic language for the very reason of keeping these things hidden from outsiders—these things are for his espoused virgin. Outsiders are filled with fear as they see the dangerous conditions in the world; but we are filled with joy because these things mean that the old order is being broken down getting ready for the new order, the Kingdom. Our Lord loves us and wants us to know the true state of affairs.

Again we take note of the special care the Lord has exercised toward us in the selection of a “wise and faithful” Pastor to instruct and guide his espoused virgin through this difficult period here in the end of the age—the harvest of the Gospel Age. Our Lord loves us and wants to protect us from all the deceptions of the Adversary and the misuse of the increase of knowledge in our day. He desires that we be intelligent followers of the Lamb; and so he has used this faithful Pastor to instruct us from the scriptures in all the details of the Divine Plan and all the delightful philosophy in connection with the details of the divine plan.

We would be safe in saying that this faithful Pastor was on a par with the Apostle Paul in his spirit of loyalty to our Lord. He was deeply spiritual and could instruct us in the fine points of the development of the spirit of the Lord—in the development of all the graces of the spirit. Our Lord has a deep personal love for us and he carefully supervises our instruction and gives us the necessary experiences to test us and refine us. The dross must be burned away that the gold may develop and be prepared for the “glory, honor and immortality” on the divine plane of being.

The Lord honors us in making us ambassadors of Himself and the Heavenly Father. We have entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation. This is expressed so clearly by Paul in 2 Cor. 5:18-20: “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

He also gives us the honor of being witnesses of the Truth in the world, and, like our Lord, we are to comfort others. This is beautifully stated in Isa. 61:1-3, and we gain from these prophetic words the substance of our ministry: “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

And there is another important fact that we would like to touch upon at the very start of this convention. We would like to bring to your attention for your careful consideration that Christian love, agape love, is not an indefinite, unpredictable, emotional sentiment, but is based upon and guided by fixed and known principles. Paul gives us a brief outline of these principles in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians. As we note the specific details that Paul writes upon, we can see clearly that the mind must be exercised in the putting into practice of the elements of agape love. For instance, “Love suffereth long, and is kind.” This means that our minds guide our actions in being very patient and kind in every situation. “Love envieth not.” This means that we must use our mental powers in curbing any selfishness on our part, and not envy the possessions or prosperity of others. “Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” We must use our mental powers in curbing the desire to push self forward; and we must use our mental powers to overcome the selfish desire to shine, and put others in the shade, as compared with ourselves. “Love does not behave itself unseemly.” We must use our mental powers to overcome pride and be courteous. We are to remember that everything we have is a gift from God in one way or another; and we must overcome the desire to crow over others. “Love seeketh not her own.” Here again it is necessary to use our mental powers to intelligently curb selfishness in ourselves and be willing to have others prosper and not attempt to grasp possessions or powers for our own benefit, that might have the effect of depriving others of things they are entitled to. “Love is not easily provoked” or as the Diaglott expresses it, “love is not provoked to anger.” Here again our mental powers must be exercised so we intelligently try to develop a good temper. How easy it is for the old mind, the old sentiments to be “roused to anger, to become intensely exasperated, and even worked up into a passion where evil looks, words and sentiments are involved.” We must get away from all weak sentimentality and emotional instability and intelligently put the principles of love into operation in our Christian loves. “Love thinketh no evil” or as the Diaglott expresses it, “Love does not impute evil.” How evident it is that we must use our intelligence and control our sentiments and crush out all tendencies to “impute evil” simply from our imagination.

And so, my loving brethren in Christ, this is my contribution to the start of this convention—three things: first, deep and intense gratitude to our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus for the blessings that have been bestowed upon us; second, a greater awareness of our relationship to a personality in the Truth—Jesus Christ to whom we have been espoused as a chaste virgin by Paul; and third, that our Christian life is not pushed in every direction by unreliable emotions.

ADDENDUM

1. Response by the Pastor at the Seattle convention, Thursday, July 22, 1909. (1909 Convention report beginning on page 53.)
2. Address of welcome by S. D. Senior, St. Joseph, Mo., convention, Thursday, July 29, 1909. (1909 Convention report, start page 102.)
3. Closing remarks of convention by Pastor, Toledo, Ohio, Thursday, Aug., 5, 1909. (1909 Convention report, starting on page 158.)
4. Address of welcome by the Pastor, Saratogo, N. Y., Tuesday, Aug. 31, 1909. (1909 Convention report, starting on page 162.)

ONE

Dear Friends, we have heard from Bro. Acheson a welcome on behalf of the City of Seattle and the Church of Seattle. We have heard from Bro. Baker the welcome you have received on behalf of the friends of the Northwest territory. And I am sure we all feel very grateful, and as I look about and it becomes my part to represent the Society (in one sense of the word I am speaking for you all and for those who are not present)—a large contract in few words.

I want to say I appreciate very highly the effort put forth by the friends of Seattle and nearby places. I feel God has greatly blessed us as we have come to your city and we want to think about the precious things of the glorious plan of our Lord.

Some 89 in number were in the same Special Train coming up from Portland where we had a blessed occasion. Preceding that we were at Oakland, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Houston, New Orleans, Memphis, Piedmont, Washington. And before that we bade good-bye to the friends at Brooklyn, and they sent their greetings to all of you on the way.

What a brotherhood there is amongst those who love the Lord! And how different from any other kind of union or bondage. We all know how the world has appreciated the fact of unions, what endeavor is made to get people in to unions and societies. We all know what grips and passwords and obligations are taken, the one to the other. We are privileged to be members of the most wonderful society the world has ever known anything about. It has its grip indeed, and I get a great many of them and appreciate them very much. I know the grip right away. I only have to be on guard that I do not get too much of it. I am learning to take first catch, near the fingers. Occasionally some brother says, I can't get a proper hold on your hand, Bro. Russell, and I answer, I try to keep you from getting it. If I should get the proper grip on about a thousand and they should press and express all they mean, there would not be much hand left. I presume we all know the grip.

We all know something about the passwords of our society; we have some very precious passwords and some that cannot be counterfeited. All other societies, in trying to get up a society, try to do so without letting others know the password and secrets of the society. But we have a society respecting which nobody can give away its secrets—the Mystery of God, and we can't give it away. It can be understood by those on the inside and they can try to tell it, but only those who have an ear to hear can hear in the appreciative sense. The Apostle gives us this secret when he says, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God ... But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:9, 10, 14). I tell you the Lord was able to get up the best secret society when He sought to do so, and He has done so. I am surprised sometimes that some of the friends are taken in by some people who try to make believe they are brothers of the Lord. No one familiar with the Truth need be deceived. Have that in mind, dear friends.

Well, it will not be long, dear friends, until our secret society will be dissolved, and then it will be no more. The others are hoping that theirs will never be dissolved, but we are just waiting for the time when our society will be dissolved, because the Lord has written it in advance, “The Mystery of God has been finished which he kept secret from the foundation of the world.” After that, what do you think? Everybody will know about it. Some one asks, Will everybody know who are of the glorified church? Surely they will. We know about the Lord Jesus, that He is of the Church, and just so surely all in the Millennial Age will know who are the members of the Church, who have won the great prize, whom the Lord will declare and reveal to be His joint heirs in the kingdom. There is one Scripture that seems to bear upon this subject. It says, “And in Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her.” (Psalm 87:5) I think that refers to the way it will

be ultimately. The roll call will be there, a very honorable roll call, the Lamb's Book of Life, and I hope our names will be there. I hope they are there now, for you remember the Lord's way of doing is that He writes these names in the Lamb's book of Life at the time we make our consecration, and he lets them stay there so long as you and I abide in His love and in the condition of disciples. This love we want to abide in us and if it is abiding in us, and we in Him then we are His and we will continue to be His. But if not, what then? He says He will blot out their names from the Book of Life. He does not say, however, that all those blotted out of that honorable roll will be blotted out of existence. No, indeed. But you and I desire, and desire earnestly that our names shall not be blotted out at all, but that by the grace of God having been called to this high place of glory, honor and immortality, that we may ultimately be counted worthy to share those things to which we were invited.

I sometimes think how much easier it will be to share those things than to lose them. I sometimes think that the position of the Little Flock will be an easier one in many respects than that of the Great Company. Both will suffer tribulation, "through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom," but there is a difference in the tribulation that will come upon the Little Flock and that of the tribulation class. Not that the tribulation class will have any more severe experiences than that of the Little Flock. How could they? Notice some of the things our Lord Jesus experienced. Will any of the Great Company have any harder experiences? Some of the Apostles were beheaded, and John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. Will any have more severe experiences? What is the difference, then, between the Little Flock and the Great Company who make their robes white in the time of trouble? *We* have a tribulation in which we are enabled to glory, as the Apostle says, "but we glory in tribulation also." You remember how the Apostle Paul and Silas, his companion, were able to sing praises to God in the prison with their backs bleeding. Yes, indeed, and so may you and I learn to glory in tribulation, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts," bringing love, joy, peace and fellowship with the Father, with which there is nothing to be compared. We have the better part. So then all of those who have joined the Lord and undertaken to go the narrow way have counted the cost in advance, that there is to be a narrow way and they are therefore able to rejoice. What is the secret? How could Paul and Silas rejoice? Because the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts. So you and I need to get more love. What next? More love. What after that? More love. You can't get too much. Get it shed abroad. We may have some love at the start. There was nothing but love for God that led us to make our consecration. After that there was a further work to do. We received the Holy Spirit permeating our hearts, influencing every action of our lives, and the words of our lips, and finally influencing all the thoughts of our minds, transforming, renewing, changing from glory to glory. But I must not continue in this strain.

I want, then, to say, finally, that the Society greets all of the Lord's dear people at this Convention and in the name of the Lord Jesus we wish you God-speed in your journey toward the heavenly city. The Society is pleased with every opportunity of rendering you service in any manner whatsoever, and unto the least of the Lord's people; realizing that it is done as unto the great Master himself. The Society is pleased to consider all of your interests so far as it is able to do so, and to supply as best the Lord gives the necessary means and opportunities for your refreshment by sending Pilgrims and the Tower and making every arrangement for your comfort and welfare that we may all feast together at the Heavenly Father's table and rejoice together in the experiences at this present time, and all be built up together in the most holy faith and individually reach the glorious kingdom.

Dear friends, I do not know how to give you a more hearty greeting. My heart says, I love you all. We wish to send the good wishes of Brother Russell and the Society to all who are at home, and as you overflow here may it overflow upon all the dear ones of the household of faith with whom you have to do.

If anything occurs that is not just to your pleasured and it does not go down the right way, just forget to tell them about it, as they will have plenty of troubles of their own, enough of bitterness and sadness in the world apart from other quarters, and it will not need to be from you. Let us see that we have sweetness for all with whom we come in contact.

TWO

We are glad so many of "like precious faith" are privileged to assemble here in this convention, under our dear Lord and Head; to be edified and to receive instruction He may bring forth for our character development, and for our spiritual strength, that we may be able to "stand in this evil day." We hope that you will not think of this convention as someone else's convention, but as your convention, and that "We are not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." (Heb. 10:25) Also call to mind the time in which we are living, that there is another convention assembling—"The full assembly of the Church of the firstborns" (Heb. 12:23), to which, member by member is changed at the moment of their dying. We hope this local convention will be helpful to each of us in making our calling and election sure.

Why Present

We read in our Heavenly Father's Word of a future class who are saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife *hath made herself ready*." (Rev. 19:7) We hope that this convention will be used of the dear Lord in part in making

each of us ready, and that we may be members of that class of which our dear Lord spoke when He said, “*They that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut.*” (Matt. 25:10)

We are gathered together for a season of refreshment and to be edified and strengthened by the spiritual food, for the battles before us in the narrow way, which leadeth unto life. We are gathered together to encourage one another to *cheerful, patient endurance of all things* the dear Lord may permit to come upon us to develop in us the fruits of the Spirit, the mind of Christ. We are gathered together to become acquainted one with another on this side of the veil, and it is our hope that this acquaintance will never end, but will be continued on the other side of the veil forever, where we will soon be gathered with the other members of “the Little Flock” who have preceded us.

Welcome

We would like to express in words the desire of our hearts, to make you feel a loving Christian welcome, but we are unable to do so to our satisfaction; therefore, I request that you take the intent and purpose of our hearts in this matter, even as our Heavenly Father looks upon the heart and takes the intent and the purpose for the deed.

We bid you WELCOME in the name of Our Dear Heavenly FATHER, who has “begotten us by the word of truth” (James 1:18), and extend unto you His great love, for “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the Sons of God” (by begetting). (1 John 3:1) We bid you *welcome* in the name of our dear Lord Jesus, whom the Father in His love has given to be Head over all things to us, the members of His Body. (Eph. 1:22, 23) “Our elder Brother, who is declaring the Father’s plans and character to us, his brethren” (Heb. 2:12), and to express unto you His *love*, who has died for us, and is now our *advocate* with the Father. “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.” (John 15:9, 10) We bid you *welcome* in the name of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, as a whole, which the dear Lord is using so extensively in spreading *the harvest message*, setting the spiritual food, which attracts the covenanted sacrificing footstep followers of our dear Lord and Chief Reaper, “gathering the wheat into the garner.”

We bid you *welcome* in the name of our beloved Pastor, Bro. Russell, whom the dear Lord is using as His honored and “*faithful servant*” to bring forth out of the storehouse meat in due season for the household of Faith; and we take the liberty to extend to you his Christian love, who is so nobly sacrificing in the service of our Heavenly Father, and our dear Lord, and of the Truth, and laying down *his life in loving service* for us, his brethren, “*for the elect’s sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*” (2 Tim. 2:10) He is setting us an example of “enduring hardness as a good Soldier of the Cross,” he being privileged to go down into these specially trying

times ahead of us as an example for us that we may see his faithfulness under these trials, that we also may be encouraged to be faithful. Even as our dear Brother Paul was used of the dear Lord for an example to the brethren, as it is recorded, “And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing *confident* by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Phil. 1:13, 14), “and whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation (*comfort*) and salvation, which is effectual in the patient *endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer*; and our hope on your account is firm or whether we be comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation, knowing that as you are partakers of the *sufferings*, so also of the comforts.” (2 Cor.1:6, 7) And our hope is that each of us may be “faithful unto death and gain the Crown of Life,” and as our Bro. Paul and our beloved Pastor are our rejoicing now, how we rejoice in their example of cheerful, patient endurance, we will be their rejoicing in the day of our Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 1:14), if we are “not slothful but followers *of them*, who through *faith and patience inherit the promises*, and shew the *same diligence* unto the end.” (Heb. 6:11, 12) As Bro. Paul says, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and *watch those who are thus walking* as you have *us* for a *pattern*.” (Phil. 3:17) “Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, *do* and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Phil. 4:9) And, no doubt, but this love of our dear Pastor in service to us is a sweet smelling savor to our Heavenly Father, who will reward him richly in the near future when he will hear, “well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the *joy of the Lord*.” (Matt. 25:21)

We bid you *welcome* in the name of the St. Joseph Church, of which I have the honor and pleasure to be counted as one of its number. Our hearts are filled with Christian love for each of you, and it is needless to say that many prayers have been offered up in behalf of this convention and that each one attending would receive a blessing from the Lord while here.

We bid you *welcome* in the name of the Business Men’s Association, through whose president, Mr. Fred Neudorff, the dear Lord has permitted the use of this *auditorium* for all the sessions of this convention; we highly appreciate this kindness on their part and to note their generosity and zeal for this, their city, and no doubt, in the near future, when the Golden City will assume authority over earth’s affairs, they will find that our dear Lord is exceedingly generous; that in “the times of restitution of all things,” they will be provided for abundantly far above what they could think or ask.

Now, dear friends, as we are here for a few days, and will be more or less associated with the people of this city, and while they are endeavoring to make things as comfortable as possible for us, let each of us, in our association with them, so conduct ourselves that they may truly say, these people have of a truth, “been with Jesus and learned of Him.” (Acts 4:13)

I am sure I express your minds, when I say, *welcome Bro. Russell*, our beloved Pastor; you are laying down your consecrated life for us, and the Truth, in the service of the King of kings. These few words of welcome, uttered in advance of his actual presence among us, we desire to be like the sweet perfume of the incense which preceded the High Priest into the Most Holy, so we express our Christian love and greeting, pouring out our love to him in the one word, *welcome*.

Welcome, dear Pilgrim Brothers, you who are being sent by our dear Lord from place to place, to hold up the hands of our brethren. May the Lord bless and prosper you in laying down your consecrated lives in His service. Welcome, dear Colporteurs, you who are forsaking all and have no certain abiding place, using all your time, strength and life in spreading the harvest message; may the dear Lord prosper this Convention, to each of you, to increased strength and energy in His service, until the hour comes wherein no man can work, and the great harvest work of this Gospel Age will be forever ended, then may you hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord.” Welcome, dear Sharpshooters, Volunteers, and everyone here (individually and collectively), *welcome*; and may this convention be a strength to each of us and increase our love and zeal for His service, that we may have more joy therein and use every opportunity the dear Lord may open for us in His service with an increasing appreciation of the privileges thus granted.

Heart Motto for This Convention

Dear Friends, I would like to recommend as a heart motto of this convention 2 Cor. 13:8, “*We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,*” and I hope, dear friends, that we may ever keep these words before our minds in this evil day.

THREE

After the Question Meetings, Bro. Russell spoke a few words of encouragement to us and then followed the Love Feast, which practically closed the convention, although there was a testimony meeting in the afternoon, and then the public service in the evening.

He spoke in brief as follows: We have been sitting together in heavenly places, remembering that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. “*O how happy are we who in Jesus agree.*” That is exactly the sentiment of our hearts. I hope your hearts are full of the spirit of this convention. I trust that I speak the thought of all when I say that the evidences are, first meekness, and, second, love. If you ever lose the evidences, you lose your share in the truth—that seems to be God’s order. He puts meekness first, then gentleness, patience, etc., and finally love. Love is the sum of them all, but meekness

seems to be the beginning. Our Lord said that He was meek and lowly of heart and that we should take His yoke upon us, and as He was meek and humble, so we must be meek and humble. Again, through the prophet, we read that He was represented as saying, *“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good tidings TO THE MEEK.”* It is only for the meek. *“The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.”* How does it happen that you got into His judgment and guidance when some of your neighbors were not so guided? Because you were meek and lowly of heart. What would happen if you or I should lose that meekness of heart? We would go out of the truth and into the outer darkness of the world and of the nominal church. Not the outer darkness we once thought of, but the outer darkness as compared with the inner light, into which the Lord admitted us. The Apostle speaks of the time before you were illuminated, but now you are illuminated and He has translated you out of darkness and into the kingdom of His Son, because you were meek enough to acknowledge that you were a sinner, and that it was only through the precious blood that you had hope, and that you have nothing to bring, but glad to give your little all to the Lord, and if you continue on, it is because you are meek enough to continue on and not be high minded and self-sufficient.

I said to some yesterday whom I met at the railway station at Milwaukee, you know there is to be another convention, and I hear some of you are thinking of going to Saratoga and Brooklyn; are you coming? Yes, some said, I am going to be there. And I remember one dear sister, for whom it would be impossible for her to be there, she said, “I am going to try with all my might to get to the great convention of the General Assembly of the Church of the Firstborn.” And I said, Sister, whatever earthly conventions you miss, don’t miss that one. None of us can afford to miss that one. If we go to a convention every day and know the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and not allow its spirit to permeate our hearts and lives, we will make shipwreck of our faith.

What manner of persons we ought to be; He has given us so much loving kindness, so much grace, so much knowledge of His truth—what manner of persons ought we to be! I want to say here, we don’t want to be discouraged. I would not like to leave this convention with the thought in any ones mind that it is such a difficult thing that it is not possible to win the prize. Oh, no, He has given us the necessary assurances that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto him. Have you committed it to Him? Yes. Did you mean it? Did you give Him all your heart, mind, soul and strength? Yes, I did. Well, leave it there and it is all right, don’t take it back, don’t become heady and self-sufficient. Still remember that without Him you cannot do anything. Only as we have our Lord, only then can we have His spirit, and only then can we be brought off more than conquerors. The Great Company must be overcomers also, but if we would ever attain to the divine nature, we must be more than merely overcomers. We must be overcomers in the sense that we joyfully and gladly lay down our lives in sacrifice, not being dragged along, just getting up to the scratch. We must have the Spirit of the

Master, as represented by the prophet: “*Lo, I have come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I have come to do thy will; lo, I delight to do thy will, thy law is written in my heart.*” Is this the very law of our being? Never mind the cost or conditions—I will do anything that will please my Father which is in heaven. Nothing short of that will do, dear friends. It is your heart that He is going to deal with, but at the same time, you must be getting the victory over your natural conditions, not, however, that you can ever get the flesh completely under control, but the new nature must not be satisfied with it. But the Lord is going to look at you as a new creature, to see to what extent you are seeking to do His will in thought, word and action. Some of the kinks of our old nature may never be overcome, but our hearts must remain loyal and true to God, to truth, to the principles of righteousness and love, and to all the brethren, and generous and sympathetic to all the world of mankind. Then we will conquer, and then He will count us as new creatures, and will take us to Himself in the glorious change of the first resurrection.

FOUR

At eleven o’clock Bro. Russell came on the platform and was greeted with the Chautauqua salute, which he returned, while all joined in singing, “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.” He then spoke in part as follows: Dear Friends: It affords me great pleasure to be with you this morning. I deferred my little address on this occasion, learning that some were late, hoping thereby to see the larger number of smiling faces.

I trust, dear friends, that we have all come here, not merely to have a season of outing and refreshment physically, but largely, and specially, that we may have a season of fellowship with the Lord, and with each other, that our hearts may be comforted in the Truth, and that they may be more closely knit together in love for the Lord, and for all who are His. We are glad that by the Divine providence, knowledge of Him and His Plan has reached our ears, and our hearts, which enables us to love, not only those of a certain sect, party or class who believe just alike, but all who believe in the great Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; that Gospel which emanating from the cross of Christ, began at Pentecost to gather a people for the Lord’s name, out of all nations, kindreds and tongues, to be His associates in His kingdom, the kingdom of His Son. We are glad to know that when the due time shall have come when in God’s providence the election of the Church shall have been accomplished, it will not mean that all the remainder of mankind shall be consigned to an eternity of torment, but it will mean that from that kingdom of the elect, the Glorified Christ will go forth blessing to all the families of the earth, opening all the blind eyes, and unstopping all the deaf ears, and causing all to know the Lord from the least to the greatest.

How wonderful, dear friends, is that Gospel. What wonder is it that after our mind had been blinded for so long with false doctrine, misunderstanding our Heavenly Father and His wonderful character, what wonder it is that as we come to see something of the richness of His loving kindness, and the lengths, and breadths, and heights, and depths of His love, what wonder, I say, that this should prove an attraction that our hearts should be drawn to the truth, as the needle of the compass is drawn to the pole, and how all the compasses in the world, so to speak, point to the one hope, and how our hearts, whether in this land or in Europe, Africa or Asia, all the hearts of God's people are pointing toward the truth, and every one of us, I am sure, are desirous of being more and more filled with the Spirit, and have it abounding in us richly, so that it will make us neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord, so that through that knowledge of Him we may be transformed in heart and life, and be changed from glory to glory, as in the image of the Lord.

Dear friends, I congratulate you that there is such a large number of you present this morning under these happy circumstances and conditions, with our hearts full of praise to the Great King, and with a desire to study to more and more appreciate His Word, and to come into the fellowship of His Spirit, one with another, and with our Lord and our Heavenly Father. It is not often I am sure that this City of Conventions has a convention of this kind. It is not often that mankind comes together at their own expense, over broad distances, to commune respecting God and the precious things contained in His Word. There is usually something of political interest to draw them together, or financial matters, and usually their expenses are paid, but we have come at our own expense.

Now, then, dear friends, in order that our time and energy and money shall not be spent in vain, what is necessarily the proper thing? I suggest that the proper thing is that at the very beginning of this Convention we shall turn our hearts within, for the purpose of being drawn toward the Lord and His Word, and with the prayer to Him that we may seek to know His will, and to do it, and as the Apostle expressed it, to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. We have all ascertained that it is one thing to have a knowledge of the truth, but another thing to have its Spirit. Still another thing to have it dwell in our hearts. Still further to have it shed abroad in our hearts, filling all the avenues of our lives and thoughts, and constituting the very mainspring of life. I trust that is the thought and intention of everyone present. We love to think that each one of these conventions is a little better than the one that went before. I like to think that it is so, and think it ought to be so, because as you and I get deeper appreciation of the truth and have its spirit more and more shed abroad in our hearts, we ought to expect that we ought to have that much better fellowship with each other. Let us seek to put away, during the days of this Convention, all worldly thoughts, speculations, ambitions, purposes and arrangements, and let us have our hearts full of thoughts pertaining to the Lord and the Kingdom and the things which He will be pleased to have us blessed with, that our coming together will be for our mutual upbuilding in the most holy faith; because

we are living in the harvest time of this Gospel Age, the most glorious epoch that the world has ever known, in that little period of time, which the Scriptures term, "The Day of Jehovah's Preparation," preparing for the Millennium, the time when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth. The preparations are going on: We have the electric light and all the advantages of our day, such as were never possible or enjoyed before. Many of us have come much longer distances than the Apostle Paul when he went on his journey to Rome, and we have come in a few hours. What a wonderful time in which we are living, and how happy we are to know that God is getting the forces of nature ready for the blessing of all the nations of the earth, with an opportunity of being uplifted through His truth more and more day by day during that blessed period of a thousand years—what blessing that will mean to the world. This glorious prospect is just before us, and it is now due time that we, as members of the Body of Christ, should have a fore-view of these blessings.

I was thinking, dear friends, that it might be well if I should suggest a "keynote" for the Convention, in the form of a special text that might be in all our minds, and that might identify this occasion throughout all the coming days, and that we might carry this text in our thoughts when we go home, that it might be a blessing to others. The text I have to suggest is found in Paul's words, in 1 Tim. 1:3, 4, beginning with the latter part of V. 3: "*Teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers.*" This entire passage, dear friends, would be very profitable to us, but the central thought I would like to impress is found in the words "*THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT IS LOVE OUT OF A PURE HEART, AND OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE, AND OF FAITH UNFEIGNED.*"

What does the Apostle mean by "the end of the commandment?" He means that the purpose, the object of God's law, of all the law that God has given at any time or that He ever will give is to produce this condition of heart and mind, namely, LOVE. Not selfish love, but the highest type of love, that of a good conscience, of a pure heart, and of faith unfeigned. This is the substance of the whole teaching of God, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.*" Love will be ready and glad to lay down its life in God's service, and it will gain more and more control of every thought, word and act. While in the flesh we cannot do everything perfectly, but if love is in our hearts, it will influence us to do the best we can. Thus the Lord has given all His consecrated ones a law, one still more searching than the Golden Rule, and this rule the Lord calls, "A New Commandment." "*A new commandment I give unto you, that you shall love one another as I have loved you.*"

Shall we, then, dear friends, have this as a sort of “keynote” to the Convention, especially that of having love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of love unfeigned? Let us have that thought constantly before us while here, and when we go home, let us give them this same thought that they, too, with us may be made meet or fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, and be granted an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now dear friends, I conclude my little address, thanking you all for your attention, telling you that I wish you all to have a very enjoyable time, and that you are to some extent here at the invitation of the WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY, of which many are members, and that we are ready to do anything, both myself and all at Brooklyn, for any of you at any time. If there is anything that can be done for your comfort during your stay here, the chairman, Bro. MacMillan, and his assistants, will be very happy indeed to render you any assistance possible.

May the Lord bless and enrich all our hearts, for when our hearts are filled with the Spirit of the Lord, we will have joy and blessing in ALL that He may permit to come to us.

Question 70.—Is promiscuous kissing advisable among the sisters in the truth?

Answer.—Well, I might be entrenching upon somebody’s rights if I were to give some law on the subject, but I am not a lawgiver, merely a law interpreter, that is all. Some people might like it, and some sisters might not; so, love in the matter should be the rule and it should lead us to be very careful and considerate, and if I were one of the sisters that liked to be kissed, I should not take offense if they did not. Besides, scientists tell us that kissing is a means of communicating diseases, and therefore not a very wise proceeding. I should think that as a rule a good, hearty handshake would be quite sufficient, but if any like to kiss, I do not know of anything in the Scriptures to hinder, and the law of love is the only thing between the sisters kissing each other, and the brothers kissing the brothers. (1909 Convention Report, page 86.)