

WELCOME ADDRESS

(C. A. Wise and response by M. L. Herr, Indianapolis Convention, 1907, page 8.)

Friday, June 14, 1907 10:30 A.M.—Convention opened by singing of hymn No. 87.
Opening Address by Brother C. A. Wise, of the Indianapolis Church.

On the 7th day of February, this year, I received an envelope about like that (exhibiting our blue Tower envelopes); I believe you are all acquainted with that kind of envelopes; you have seen them before. It was from Brother Russell, suggesting the propriety of a convention at Indianapolis about the middle of June. Those of you who know the Indianapolis friends can readily understand how quickly we concurred in the suggestion. Dear friends, our expectations have been great; and as we have anticipated the convention, and the blessings that should be ours in the convention, there has been great joy in our hearts; and as we have corresponded with different friends in various parts of the country, and have learned of their intentions or desires to associate with us during this time, how our hearts have been made glad. We are glad this morning that this day has arrived; we are glad you are here with us at our homes.

It has been a pleasure and a joy, dear friends, for the class at Indianapolis to serve you in the little ways they have been able in the perfecting of the arrangements for the convention; and when you see those wearing white badges you may know they have been in a special way in the last few weeks trying to lay down their lives for you.

I rejoice that I have the privilege of welcoming you here to our homes. I rejoice to have the privilege in this great hall—Tomlinson Hall—of welcoming people such as never before have assembled here. There have been a great many banquets held in this room in times past, but beginning today there is going to be a banquet such as this hall has never before seen. The great King of the Universe has spread the table, the Lord Jesus has come forth and served us; and so we rejoice. All things are ready; all things are ours.

Now, how are our hearts this morning? Let us open wide the doors of our hearts and let the dear Redeemer come in and take full possession of us; He is so ready and so willing to bestow blessings upon us. Now, are we ready, are we willing to receive the blessings? I know we are.

I know of a great many small and some great sacrifices that you have individually made in order that you may make your arrangements to attend this convention, and the Lord is going to honor you in the sacrifices you have made. So this morning what is the condition of our hearts? Are they in condition to receive the blessings and the favors of our dear Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ? Dear friends, I can assure you upon His word that the services of this convention will not be in vain. And I trust also that when

you begin to return to your several homes you will be imbued with the spirit of this convention, so that the friends who are not privileged to attend may feel the influence and catch some of the spirit of these gatherings. I trust it may be said of this convention, as of the last convention, that the last was the best. That is literally true. The last convention you see is always the best, because I think, dear friends, there are reasons why it should be. If we are growing in favor, growing in knowledge, and growing in the graces of our dear Savior, then the last gathering should be the best gathering. I trust this may be true of the convention at Indianapolis; that this may be the best ever.

Now how, or by what means, were we able to bring together such a gathering as we see here? It is by the power of the truth. It is by the power of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is of His favor which He has bestowed upon us. As He says, "Ye are not children of the night, nor of darkness, but ye are the children of light." And so our dear Savior has taken us into his confidence, and He has revealed to us, and is revealing to us, some of the deep things of Himself. Those of you who are privileged to sit at this banquet table for these four days will partake of this deep, strong meat—not the milk but the meat of the Word—that you may grow up into Him. I assure you, dear friends, if your heart is right, and you are sitting at this table the Lord Jesus is serving, he will not serve you with any food that will cause spiritual indigestion, or anything of that kind. No, no; just the reverse. We do not have spiritual indigestion, those of us who sit at the Lord's table. So we rejoice in His Love; we rejoice in His favor; we rejoice in His presence. And O, how sweet it is for brethren to dwell in unity! And how sweet it is to feel the loving arms of our dear Savior around about us in the busy scenes of the day, in our conflict with the world, and how we rejoice as we feel His loving guidance in all things! The all-seeing eye of our Heavenly Father is around about those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. That is the class the Savior is seeking out, and we are assisting Him in this work—assisting all those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice.

I trust the services of this convention may tend to make us strong in the Lord; that we may still find the sacrifice bound unto the horns of the altar, that day by the Lord may bring about such conditions as will cause the burning or consuming of the sacrifice until the whole offering is consumed in His service. Now, none of us could do any great thing. You and I have the great privilege of daily laying down our lives for the brethren in the small things that come to us day by day; and you know those are the hardest things to do—those little things that seem so insignificant to the world, and even we sometimes underestimate them, but they are the things that tend to make us grow; those are the things the Lord wants us to do. He will never entrust us with the great things until we have been faithful in the small things day by day. So let us be faithful in all things.

Now I know how anxious you are to tell something of this grand story of Jesus and His love. I know of this grand story of Jesus and His love. I know for you in these last days,

so I think a long speech from me at this time would be out of place. I have the great pleasure, dear friends, of now introducing to you our dear brother Herr, of Allegheny, who will be permanent chairman of the convention, and who now take charge.

Response by Brother M. L. Herr

Dear Friends: It is with a very great deal of pleasure that I come before you this morning, and listen to the precious words our dear brother has brought to your ears. I am sure that ever since any of us have known of this convention our hearts have been dwelling upon the possibilities of blessing in this first general convention of this year. I am sure that we have each one already received, as we have listened to the words our brother has spoken to us, a very rich blessing from the Lord. As we neared the time when the date was due for the convention to begin, our anticipation grew stronger, and deeper, and in some way the Lord was preparing us for the blessings He had for us; and already we realize that the Master Himself has served us, just as He said He would do; that He would gird Himself and serve us. So He is fulfilling that this morning. The illustration our brother used is taken from the Father's word. We are seated at the table. You remember the words of the Psalmist, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." There never was a time when this was more thoroughly true of us than today. We of the Lord's people are in the midst of foes on every hand, visible and invisible, known and unknown. Never was there a time when so much effort was made to overthrow the faith of the Lord's people, and to divert them from the path of righteousness. We come today to be seated at the Master's table, and to receive from His hands, and we know the food He will give us is not adulterated, nor has it any admixture of error. That which the Master gives is clean, and that which He serves is pure. Therefore we have the double assurance, first, that it comes from the hand of the Master, and, second, that it is that which is proper and suitable for us; and as we wait before the Lord we know we will not be turned away empty.

We appreciate the love of the dear ones of the church at Indianapolis. We appreciate all their services of love. We know it has cost them no little service, but we know it was done in the spirit of love which so characterizes all of the Lord's people, and for this reason we are pleased to partake of their hospitality at the Lord's table this morning, today and all through this appointed time. We are pleased to recognize and acknowledge ourselves as sharers and recipients of their loving ministry toward us and towards the Lord's people in their care for us.

Now, on behalf of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, I bid you all welcome to this, **our convention**—the convention of the Lord's people, the convention in which all who love the Lord and are trusting in the precious atoning blood of Christ are welcome. We fellowship together as members of the family of God; we fellowship together not merely as those who love the Bible, and see some blessed truths in it, for if that were true

the basis of our fellowship might be very much broader than it is, and include many who are not really cleansed by the precious blood. There are many today who look upon the Bible as a book from which they may receive some blessing and some knowledge they get from no other source. We do not fellowship thus. We fellowship as members in Christ, as those who are trusting in the precious blood of Christ; and, unfortunately for them, there are not very many at the present time who are trusting in the precious blood. But it is our privilege in this dark night to be covered by the blood, and as those who are trusting in the atoning blood of Christ we recognize the fellow-members who by one spirit have all been baptized into the one body, soon to be complete in glory, and soon to begin that glorious work which will mean the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Now we all realize the Lord has abundantly poured out His spirit in fulfillment of His promise, and let us remember that we are not receiving from the Lord for ourselves merely, but we receive in order that we may again pour out the blessing. As our brother so beautifully expressed it, as we go from this place we pour it out to those who have not been privileged as we to attend. But while we are here, we are not here merely to receive a blessing; we are not here as empty pitchers merely to be filled, but as those who are being filled give of that which we ourselves have received. And may we each contribute our share of the blessings to each other, and may we each be vessels filled with the Master's spirit, and pour out a blessing to others.

We remember that at previous conventions some of those who were not with us in the knowledge of the precious present truth were brought to it through the spirit manifested by those who were attending the convention. When in Washington, D.C. recently I met several brethren who were brought to the truth during the convention. We may not know how the light shining forth from the vessels filled with the holy spirit may accomplish some blessing here, so we let our light shine, and we pour forth that which we have received, and thus we are as bright and shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom, as the Lord says, we should shine as lights in the world.

May the Lord bless us all, and may we all be in that attitude of heart by which we can receive the rich outpouring that the Master has for us. I quote the words of our dear brother that this undoubtedly can be, and we hope and believe it will be, the best convention ever held. And so we look to the Lord for His blessing. Amen.