

Alvin Raffel - Welcome Address

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Appendix O, top and obey. The convention theme park fellowship, which the brethren had entered into last night and even this morning prior to this service, is a barometer. It's certainly a good barometer because everyone is happy to be here, and so the welcoming address for this convention will be given by Brother Alvin Raffle, elder of the Dayton Ecclesia. It's my privilege to introduce to you Brother Alvin Raffle of Dayton.

Good morning, dear brethren.

Indeed, a great honor and a privilege to welcome you to this convention in the name of our dear heavenly Father, who hath begotten us by his word of truth, and also in the name of our dear Lord and Savior, who is the author and finisher of our faith.

I'm sure we all. We are all very grateful to the Lord for being able to attend this convention and to receive the many blessings that are in store for us this week. Let us also remember in our prayers those dear friends who wanted to be here, but for some reason or other were not able to attend, and perhaps a special word of welcome is appropriate at this time to those who may be here for the first time, and also to those who are to symbolize their consecration at this convention. For them, this convention will become an ebolisier.

For here the Lord hath helped us. So, a special word of welcome to them then. We want to express our gratitude to the committee for their efforts and labor of love in planning this convention and especially for the fine program, and our thanks also to all the dear brethren who will serve from the platform or otherwise. I'm sure we cannot fully appreciate and realize how much effort and sacrifice has gone into the preparation for this week's spiritual menu.

For the services of all these dear brethren, we thank our Heavenly Father who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Today we hear so much about a balanced diet with vitamins for proper nutrition. In welcoming you here, I can assure you of a balanced diet full of spiritual vitamins, even spiritually high potency vitamins for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In other words, we are not going to hear about one subject only to the exclusion of all others. No.

Our heart is fully strong and as you have noticed by the program, it guarantees you a balanced spiritual diet comprising all nutritional need for the new creature in Christ Jesus. We know it is easy to overeat at a good cook table, but the question is, can we ever overeat at the Lord's spiritual table? If we ever feel stuffed after eating at his table and experience a kind of spiritual indigestion perhaps it is because we have something more to empty of self to make room for the spiritual. A convention such as this can help us overcome many conditions such as this. It can help enable us to sing more fervently from the heart.

The last verse of hymn 224 Lord, thy love at last has conquered none of self and all of thee. When we do this, we are bringing we are being filled with the Spirit, as Paul says in Ephesians 5:18 brethren of one heart and mind feel welcome at these conventions because here we have our faith in the faith made stronger, our hope in the hope made brighter, and our love in his love made greater. All feel welcome here who believe in good sound doctrine, especially when we are living in those days Paul writes about in 2 Timothy 4. 3 for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. The reason sound doctrine will be heard here is because the lack of it has plagued the Church in

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one form or another from its very beginning.

You remember Paul asked the church at Galatia, o foolish Galatians, whom hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth? So to obey the truth we need psalm doctrine, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

And this is one of the purposes of this convention, to do just that, to be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Another cause for gratitude at this convention is that in Christ all distinctions cease. Who you are, what you were, where you are, from the car you drive, the house you live in, the clothes you wear, all of this makes no difference at all here, and why is this so? Our Lord tells us, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.

Then too, in Galatians 3:28, Paul tells us, we are all one in Christ Jesus. So then, from all walks of life you are cordially and lovingly welcome in him, our dear Lord and Master. Here we experience that freedom that is only found in Christ. Here we will exchange experiences and mourns and edifying fellowship, not only as we renew old friends of long standing, but also as we meet new ones in Christ in such good fellowship, both with God and the brethren. Someone has referred to these conventions as pumping stations, and this is true in that we are given a great big spiritual lift.

One reason among others, is that we are in session six full days and evening.

Just a word about the comparative ease with which most of us came to this convention. I believe it is safe to say that all of us came by some modern means of transportation. No one walked or rode an animal, or suffered the fatigue of traveling by old primitive methods. Our transportation is a great contrast with the way the apostle Paul, for instance, had to travel to all the churches which were his special care. So Paul suffered both within and without.

When we are suffering some severe trial, it should help us to to again read all the things Paul suffered in the cause of Christ, recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:23, 28 for this week here you may have given up your favorite chair or comfortable bed, and many other conveniences of the home, but that is of no consequence when we realize that our temper needs are amply provided for. We are not to be concerned with what we shall eat, drink, or wear. We just want to keep the order of the importance straight. Our Lord tells us further along in that sixth chapter of Matthew to seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. In this connection we firmly believe with Paul that those things which are seen are temporal, while the things unseen are eternal.

He states in 2 Corinthians 4:18 we look not at the things which are seen, but that the things which are not seen for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. We anticipate hearing more about these unseen things at this convention. As conventions go in this world, ours is unique. We are said to get together and have such a good crime on nothing that is true, but only in part nothing yet everything the world does not know nor care about the Lord's second Presence, just as they knew not at his first. We are not meant here to believe in a whole lot of things, but to believe a whole lot in one thing, namely Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

This of course includes everything relating to Him, His Church, and the divine plan of the ages. We will not hear any oath being played from the Bible, but rather the harmony of the Bible with Jesus Christ our ransom as the keynote. We could also say he is the hub around which the harmonious wheel of truth turns. Occasionally one hears or sees something on a new light, and this is their trust. By the way, one wonders if they ever saw the good old light correctly.

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We sing. We love to tell the old old story because it will be our theme in glory. This is another reason why this convention is such a welcome event in our lives. We will hear the old old story presented by each speaker in his own phraseology, but no new life. You may remember Brother Kendall used to say that new life is Satan's old error dressed up in a new suit.

That's all. So now, as in years past, we are met here again to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. Then, as before, we will leave this convention with our hearts and minds filled with those proven good things and more determined than ever to hold them fast.

If it was ever true, it is true here that we are in a world shut in from a world without. For most of us this contrast will be keenly felt after this convention is over. It will only impress upon our minds all the more that we are in the world, but certainly not of it, and this is another blessing that we can be grateful for, that of being called out of Babylon, that confused state of churchianity. Since we are irresistibly drawn here by the magnet of truth, it is well to remember, in looking at our nominal race, relatives, friends and neighbors, not in the truth, that there before the grace of God walk I.

This brings to mind words of hymn number 297 once I was blind, but now I can see Regarding opinions It has been said we carry opinions, but convictions carry us, and along this line of thought Johann Goethe, the 19th century German writer, said, give me the benefit of your convictions, but keep your doubts to yourself. I have enough of them of my own. So it is here we are going to hear our brethren express their convictions about the way, the life, and the truth. This convention will help us to put away still farther from our minds all worldly thoughts, speculations, aims, and arrangements, and instead to fill our hearts and minds all the more with those things pertaining to the Lord and His kingdom, the very things we would be so eager to discuss with him were it possible that he were here in the flesh, those things that will be in order all the more when we meet him face to face.

Nor are we here to see how complicated we can make the truth, but rather to keep it simple in all its purity, as Paul cautions in Second Corinthians 11:3 the dialogue reading But I am afraid, lest as the serpent disturb Eve by his craft, your minds may be corrupted from that simplicity and that pureness which is in the anointed. This reminds us that our Lord used effective speech. Pure and simple simplicity was characterized, is characteristic of our Lord's prayers. Also note the fine examples in Matthew and especially John, and since prayer is such an important thing in our lives, I thought we should consider a few words on these subjects.

We have all prayed for the success and blessing of this convention. We will pray during our stay here, and we will pray after it is over that we profit by the many lessons many lessons brought forth and so we notice the Apostle Paul says something very important regarding a prayer for us as ambassadors for Christ. In 2nd Corinthians 5:20 he says, we pray you in Christ's stead. Now if we could just get the full significance of the thought that you and I are in Christ said now in the world, what a difference it would make in our lives as ambassadors for Christ in this what we could call a foreign land, then we could scarcely think a wrong thought or speak a false word. We could even control our conduct.

If we could thoroughly grasp just that of being in Christ stead, we would see our mistakes more readily and take steps to rectify them more promptly. We see what a wonderful privilege and a great responsibility it is to be chosen in the Lord's stead at this time. Our Lord in Matthew 5:14 confirms this thought, saying, ye are the light of the world. So if letting the light shine that would give given you brings persecution, remember it will mean eventual rejoicing, for great is your reward in heaven, and letting our light shine Paul admonishes us in 2nd Corinthians 6:3 to give no

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offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed in our witnessing to the truth.

We can take a lesson from our Lord, who presented his Father's message with a Thus saith the Lord, he would never have thought of saying, I studied this out all by myself but rather he said the words that I speak unto you. I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me. He doeth the work. This is in John 14:10, and Jesus spoke so carefully and perfectly in giving his message that when they reject.