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THREE GRAND CONVENTIONS

THIS year's arrangement of having our Conventions early and in three central locations at the same time seems to have had the Lord's blessing. The Asbury Park, N.J., Convention was a convenient one for the friends residing in the East. Columbus, Ohio, was best of all as respects auditorium; but Clinton, Iowa, excelled in several respects. In each case our Association were the guests of the city by invitation of the local government. In each case the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION was shown to appreciative thousands. In each case the attendance aggregated two thousand, some coming at the beginning of the Convention and remaining a few days, and others coming toward the close, and some remaining the entire time.

We had many evidences of the Lord's favor and blessing. The total number attending was thus six thousand; the total number of baptisms three hundred and fifty-six; the total number of States represented thirty-six, besides four Canadian Provinces and one from Fiji Islands, and British representatives. Best of all, the Lord was with us by His Holy Spirit, which was manifested in the faces, the words, the conduct – not only of the Convention, but also of the audience. It was good to be there. As usual, the dear friends at the various Conventions declared these the very best ever.

No doubt personal growth in grace and in knowledge [R5502 : page 218] and the Spirit of the Lord has much to do with this greater appreciation of our opportunities as they are coming to us year by year and day by day. To the impure nothing is pure. To the discontented nothing is happifying. To those who have come into personal relationship with the Lord and who are resting in His promises there is a blessing, a refreshment, a strength, an encouragement, every time the precious things are touched,

handled, mentioned. We thank God as we notice the various manifestations of growth in grace amongst His People. "What manner of persons ought we to be," in view of our glorious relationship, our grand hopes, our precious fellowship with the Lord and with His brethren!

Only one thing did the Editor fear in respect to the influences mentioned and the able addresses of the speakers. He fears that the dear friends in several instances were over-stimulated by too positive assurance that the present year will witness the "change" of the Church, establishment of the Kingdom, etc. With all due respect for the opinions of the brethren, we believe that the present is a time for great soberness of mind, avoidance of speculation and waiting for whatever the Lord may be pleased to bring to pass. We greatly fear that some of the dear friends will experience sharp disappointments, if some of the confident statements made on the Convention platform miscarry. At no time has the Editor ever spoken or written as positively as some of these dear brethren are speaking now. In the books, "STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES," as well as in THE WATCH TOWER, we have set forth the chronology, not as infallible, but nevertheless declared our confidence in it. However, we have always encouraged the friends to examine for themselves, to use their own judgment. To assist them in this we have given in detail the references, etc. In recent numbers of THE WATCH TOWER we have plainly stated that fulfilments of the prophecies, although marked and manifest, are not as far developed for the time as we had expected.

The Editor at all three of these Conventions took occasion to reiterate the views already presented in THE WATCH TOWER:

(1) That the chronology and prophecies interwoven with it still seem as strong as ever – still seem to teach that Gentile Times will end next October.

(2) He pointed out, however, that the ending of the Gentile Times might not usher in the great Time of Trouble so quickly as has been expected. He pointed out that the lease expiring might not mean an instantaneous dispossession, but, possibly, might mean a gradual dispossession, or perhaps a sharp notice to quit, followed by eviction a little later on.

(3) He reminded the Conventioneers of his utterance in a recent number of THE WATCH TOWER, to the effect that it is possible that the Gentile Times might close without world-wide trouble immediately, and that the Church might be completed with some of the members this side the veil participating for a little season in the "judgments written."

(4) He especially sought to impress upon all that our consecration was unto death, and that if the Lord permits us to continue here awhile longer than we expected, our love and loyalty should be manifest in our joyful submission to His arrangements; and furthermore, that if the privileges and blessings of the present year be continued, our cup of joy will run over every way.

A beautiful spirit seemed to pervade the Conventions, reminding us of the Scripture which declares, "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body." That one Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God – the spirit of love and loyalty to Him, to His Word, to our brethren – the spirit of sympathy, love, helpfulness, which would do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the Household of Faith. Invitations for a September Convention were received from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Mountain Lake Park, Md., and Saratoga Springs, N.Y., but nothing has yet been determined in respect to any of them.

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