

**A. C. CONVENTION CONVENES
IN SESSION AT BURLINGTON**

(Continued from page one)

Endeavor of the convention. The Burlington Christian church, where the convention is meeting, Rev. G. O. Lankford, pastor, has made elaborate preparations for the convention. Many of the delegates have never before been below the Mason and Dixon line, and the local congregation has made every possible effort in planning for their entertainment and comfort while here, and expects to show them the true meaning of Southern hospitality at its best. The people of the city of Burlington, too, are helping in every way they can to welcome the visitors, and hundreds of automobiles carry the sign, "A. C. C. Delegates—Ride Free." At the church the ladies have prepared and decorated the class rooms and auditorium of the church, placing potted plants and cut flowers in every conceivable nook and corner, and the convention floor is indeed a place of beauty.

Opening Session

At 7:30 Tuesday night the convention was officially called to order by the president, Dr. F. G. Coffin, of Palmer College, Albany, Mo., following a song service led by Rev. J. F. Morgan, Winchester, Va., the convention director of music, in which the convention hymn was sung.

Dr. W. W. Staley, of Suffolk, Va., who last year retired as president of the Southern Christian Convention after many years of service at the head of that body, led the opening devotional exercises. Dr. P. H. Fleming, of the Burlington church, was in charge of the communion service which was the closing item of the first session of the convention.

Convention Sermon

The convention sermon, preached by Dr. Roy C. Helfenstein, of the People's Church of Dover, Del., was the main feature of the initial session, his address coming on the program immediately following the devotional exercises.

Dr. Helfenstein is one of the outstanding ministers of the entire denomination, and the opening message he brought to the convention on "The Leadership of Jesus" was a masterpiece of thought, eloquence and challenge. Vividly and clearly he delivered his somewhat lengthy sermon, which in reality was a powerful oration.

Beginning his subject of "The Leadership of Jesus," he read from Matt. 16:24, and based his message upon the words, "Follow Me." "These two words," he said, "embody the Master's favorite challenge to men. He made this challenge to the young ruler who asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. He made the challenge to Simon and Andrew, and again to Matthew, 'Follow me.' On different occasions He made the challenge as the climax in his requirement for Christian discipleship. 'If any man will serve Me, let him follow Me.'"

Continuing, Dr. Helfenstein declared that "the challenge of Jesus is to men and women in every condition and relationship of life—'Follow Me.' It is the challenge of pardon to all who have sinned; the challenge of light to all who are in darkness; the challenge of divine guidance to all who have lost their way; the challenge of purity to all who would be pure. It is the challenge of strength to all who would be strong; the challenge of faith to all who are in doubt; the challenge of hope to all who are discouraged; the challenge of victory to all who have been defeated in their moral purposes. It is the challenge of love to all who would serve. It is the challenge of the Son of God to the sons and daughters of men.

"In considering the leadership of Jesus there are three main observations that claim our attention—the supremacy of His leadership, the nature of His leadership, and the motives that impel men to follow His leadership.

"Every person is following some leadership—either for good or for ill. Every person ought to have the inspiration of some life far superior to his own as an ideal toward which to strive. The Man of Galilee should be the world's supreme ideal. Other men

have been courageous, but none so courageous as He. Other men have been wise, but none who had so keen an insight into human life as did He. Other men have been true, but none so true as He whose life itself was the very incarnation of truth. Other men have loved goodness, but none have loved goodness with such a passion as He did. Other men have cherished wide human sympathy, but none whose sympathy had such an unlimited range as had our Master's. Christ's sympathy embraces all the ages and all conditions of humanity.

"Christianity rests its care upon 'the love-challenge,' the ethical challenge of Jesus Christ. Those who follow the leadership of Jesus, follow His principles by practicing His spirit. Jesus does not lay down specific rules for every case in question, but He gives great altruistic principles of life which may be applied to every case, and which if applied will solve every personal and social problem that brings confusion and discord to the human family. But the principles by themselves will not avail. They must be applied by man. The principles of Christianity, like the principles of mathematics, are worthless unless applied. The principles of mathematics are absolutely necessary to erect a great bridge or building. But the bridge or building cannot be erected merely by the principles of mathematics as written in a book. Those principles must be applied.

"Following the leadership of Jesus means to follow Him in His devotion to His Heavenly Father and in His love for humanity. It means to follow Him in His prayer life, to follow Him in His loyalty to the Kingdom, in His spirit of sacrifice and service. It means to follow Him in His joy, in His magnanimity, in His sincerity, in His moral courage, in His affections, in His moral attitude, and in His manhood. Following thus the leadership of Jesus makes the Fatherliness of God as real to us as are our earthly parents."

Concluding His address, Dr. Helfenstein asked the question, "And what have we done to realize the hopes and prayers of our fathers, and the desire of our Leader, Jesus?" "As a denomination," he declared, "we are stronger today than ever before in our history. Our future was never brighter, if we are satisfied in merely building a stronger denomination. But it was not to this end that we were born, nor for this cause came we into the world. We came to preach a liberal and practical gospel, and to lead the way to Christian union. To be honest with ourselves and with our God, and with the Kingdom, we should either strike out the sixth item in our cardinal principles, that of Christian union, or else make an honest and unbiased effort to practice that principle by seeking union with some denomination that stands ready and waiting to effect such a union with us. We should either attempt union as if we meant it, or else quit talking about it, and put our hands to the task of strengthening our ropes for the sake of a larger and more efficient denominational life."

Wednesday Morning Session

The morning session was given over entirely to the submitting of reports. After the morning meditations conducted by Rev. D. B. Atkinson, of Albany, Mo., Dr. J. F. Burnett, Dayton, Ohio, was first on the program with his report as Convention Secretary.

Dr. Burnett has been secretary for the American Christian Convention for 32 years, and at the conclusion of the filing of his report he made it known to the convention that he would resign. He has been a faithful and efficient official and the securing of a worthy successor will not be an easy task.

Reports were heard from the Secretary of Finance, John G. Myers, Pleasant Hill, Ohio; for Foreign Missions by Rev. W. P. Minton, Dayton, Ohio; for Home Missions by Dr. Omer S. Thomas, Dayton, Ohio; for the Department of Education by Rev. W. G. Sargent, Providence, R. I.; for the Department of Publishing by Judge O. W. Whitlock, Huntington, Ind.; and for the Aged Ministers' Home by Rev. John B. Grove of Sprakers, N. Y.

During the session committees were named on Resolutions, Dr. E. A. Watkins, Ohio, chairman, A. J. Brownell, Dr. L. E. Smith; on publicity with Dean Geo. C. Enders, Defiance, Ohio, as chairman, and for the committee on roll with McD. Howsare, Dayton, Ohio, as chairman.

President's Address

The outstanding feature of the second day's program of the convention was the quadrennial address of the president of the convention, Dr. F. G. Coffin, Albany, Mo., president of Palmer College, who has for eight years been serving his church as head of this convention. He is an eloquent speaker, classed among the best of the country.

Beginning with the purposes and motives of the forefathers who established the church, he sketched in a general way the growth of the denomination to its present strength, and the reasons for this steady growth.

"For over a century and a fourth," said Dr. Coffin, "the Christian church has been broadcasting a message to the world. It is not known how many receiving stations have picked it up and toled it out, nor how many have known its origin, but the message has been the important and effective thing. Our ambition should be to make ours the holiest in motives, the purest in life, the most efficient in service and the greatest in strength. Low aims and high attainments are never found together.

"Hitherto we have attempted to make the principles of our church its selling point. Their worth has justified the most extravagant things we have dared to say of them. They have needed no revision in 130 years of service—a unique ecclesiastical history," continued Dr. Coffin. "In view of these observations, if I were to venture a personal interpretation of our confronting task, it would be first, that to us belongs the task of all other churches and with all other churches to make our divine Lord supreme over all in a Kingdom into which all the earth is to be gathered. This is equivalent to saying also, that we shall effect a common good in humanity throughout the world. To enable us to do these two things about which we are thinking, five processes must be vigorously at work within our body:

"First, a better understanding among ourselves of our purpose and work. A larger volume of forward-looking literature should be created and distributed.

"The second is a closer cohesion of our forces and uniformity in our methods. We lose much of the value of concerted effort, so successfully effected by some other denominations.

"This suggests the third process of transcending value to our plans, namely, more nearly universal co-operation in making the church effective everywhere. Not only do many of us not co-operate, but the desires of some seem to be against co-operation.

"A fourth process ever growing among us should be the courage for larger tasks. Of how much temerity has robbed us we shall never know, but certainly of great things.

"The fifth process should be to thrust ourselves more deeply into the co-operative movements of our day. These have much to offer us, and we have a real contribution to offer them."

For the afternoon session reports of the various departments were submitted, as follows: Departments of Sunday schools and Christian Endeavor; the Commission on the State of the Church; the Superintendent of the Forward Movement, and the Commission on Organization.

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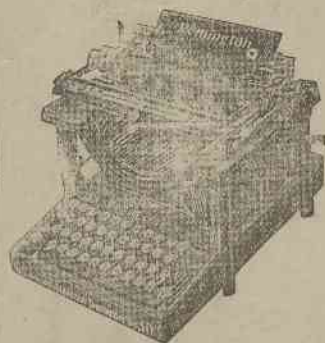
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