

Messenger and Visitor

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THE LONDON CONGRESS.

We do not know whether or not the Baptist World Congress recently held in London fully realized the expectations of those who were most active in its promotion. It is possible—though we express no opinion upon the matter—that the immediate impression was not all that had been hoped for. There can be no doubt, we suppose, that the impression upon the world at large, and the Baptist world in particular, would have been greater if the Congress had met in some American city where its proceedings would have been largely reported in the daily papers and sent broadcast over the land. As our correspondent, Mr. Colpitts, has told the readers of the Messenger and Visitor, such a Congress attracts very little attention from the newspapers of London, and consequently the world outside the readers of religious newspapers, has heard very little indeed about the doings of the great Baptist Assembly, and the reports which denominational papers could publish are necessarily limited.

We are inclined to believe, however, that the Congress has quite fully justified the wisdom of those who promoted it, and that its permanent influence upon the denomination and upon the world will be large in comparison with its immediate impression. There are several important things which it seems fair to conclude the London Congress will have done. It will have emphasized in a large way the great religious principles for which Baptists have stood in the past and for which they still are standing and proposed to stand; it will have done something to promote a mutual knowledge and a sense of fellowship among the Baptists of all lands; it will have tended to discourage narrowness and prejudice where these exist and to promote catholicity of feeling, thought and effort throughout the great Baptist brotherhood. And incidentally this gathering of the representatives of our churches from many lands will have done something to impress certain persons and bodies, slow of apprehension in such matters, with the fact that the Baptists are no longer a small and feeble people, but a vast host marching in the van of the evangelical army and representing a mighty spiritual force for world evangelization, for religious liberty, for Christian education and for all that makes for the uplifting and permanent good of humanity.

At the opening session of the Congress, Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, Secretary of the Baptist Union and the man on whom more than any other had rested the labor and responsibility involved in making the necessary arrangements for the Congress, said that the delegates present represented six millions of Baptists, and if those were reckoned who attended Baptist churches and Sunday Schools and that vast number called "Baptists at heart" or sometimes "Baptists of the Dispersion," they must number twenty millions throughout the world. Judge Willis, President of the Baptist Union, in extending an official welcome to the assembled delegates, said—They had not invited them for any scenic display, nor by numbers to claim a momentary triumph over any other Christian community, but they had assembled for high moral purposes, and chiefly to recognize the grace of God exhibited in each other. He spoke of the oneness of spiritual life in Baptist churches, and urged the importance of union in sympathy and work, even though external union was not possible. Freedom to think and act according to conscience, he said, had exalted and blessed the nation, and they must maintain allegiance to Christ at all costs. In this connection the Judge spoke of the attitude of English Baptists toward the Education Act which he characterized as the most afflictive action of the legislature that the Baptist churches had ever known. The number and the moral energy of Baptist churches in England, Judge Willis said, were greater now than they had ever been before, and the leaders in the churches to-day, he held, were not a whit behind the greatest of their prede-

cessors, and were men of competent ability and gracious lives.

The remainder of that first session was devoted to a Roll Call in which some delegate responded in a short speech on behalf of each of the countries represented in the Congress. It was a long session, as Mr. Colpitts had told us, and the fact that few of the speakers could be plainly heard in many parts of the hall detracted much from the interest of the occasion. But when a report of the proceedings comes to be published in full, as we suppose will be done, the report of that Roll Call meeting should make interesting reading. The delegates from Europe appear to have been heard from in the alphabetical order of the countries represented. Austria-Hungary, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden were represented. It is well known that Europe for the most part has shown little hospitality to Baptists, and their numbers are small in nearly all the countries of the Continent. Austria-Hungary, for instance, has only 500 Baptists in a population of twenty-five million Slavonians. In Denmark there are 4,000 Baptist Church members. Italy reports only 1,400, the Netherlands 1,500 and Norway 3,000. Sweden with its 40,000 Baptist communicants is the only European country in which our denomination can be said to form a considerable part of the population. Russia has 26,000 Christians whose faith and baptism are said to be the same as Baptists', but of course the proportion to the total population is very small. There were voices heard also on behalf of the Baptists in China, in Japan in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, the Congo country, Mexico, the West Indies and Brazil. The larger Baptist populations in America were of course also heard from. Dr. Laws represented the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States with its membership of two millions. Dr. Morris, a colored delegate, spoke on behalf of the more than two million colored Baptists. Dr. L. A. Crandall spoke for the Northern Baptists and Mr. D. E. Thompson spoke for those of Canada.

Dr. Clifford responded on behalf of the Baptists of the United Kingdom. He referred to the evidence which the Congress afforded of the place which Christ occupied in Baptist thought and speech. If there was one thing that was pressed upon him with greater strength than another, it was the love they had for one another. They felt that there was one common heart throb, the love of Christ constrained them. Another thing was their absolute fidelity to conviction. There was no note of surrender. The sufferings in Russia and other parts reminded them of the seventeenth century, and yet they showed the same pluck, strength and devotion to Christ. There was also the same note of social liberty which Roger Williams exhibited when he laid the foundations of liberty in Rhode Island. Soul liberty, he claimed, led to political liberty. The Russians would have it yet. It was the infeasible right of men. They had not heard the note of despair, they were going forward, they would be more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

CONCERNING INTERCESSORY PRAYER

The Rev. R. J. Campbell conducts in the 'British Weekly' a correspondence column which doubtless is read by many persons of religious and inquiring minds with much interest, even though the reader may not always feel able to accept Mr. Campbell's opinions. In a recent number of the 'Weekly' Mr. Campbell states and replies to some difficulties of a correspondent on the subject of intercessory prayer. This correspondent can see good reason why God's bounty should wait for a man's prayer on his own account, for such prayer is simply a mode of the moral choice necessary for the fashioning of true character, but in what sense, he asks, can this be true of a man's prayer for his fellow man. Does not the exercise of intercessory prayer imply that God is less willing to grant than we are to pray? Can either God or man ignore or prevail against the will of the person prayed for? The questioner recently called upon a sick person, and finding him unconscious, came away feeling that it was useless to pray without the knowledge and co-operation of the person prayed for. Was he wrong?

To the question thus stated Mr. Campbell replies: "The rationale of intercessory prayer simply is that the human race is, in a deep and real sense, a solidarity. Every life is a point through which to affect every other; every individual is an expression of the life of the race. No man can attain to the higher life alone; through him, in a sense, the whole race aspires. His solicitude for the good of all increases proportionately with his own moral and spiritual ascent. What is this but to say that the brooding Spirit of God who is the sense of all good in humanity as a whole, finds opportunity through a good man's prayer? Whenever a true, unselfish intercession is offered, it is not only the man, but the Spirit of God who makes intercession. The more the

spirit of intercession reigns in humanity, the greater is the Holy Spirit's opportunity. To pray for a man is to help in releasing the spiritual energy that will save him. In the larger sense it is praying for one's self for 'I am he, I am the race.' Every true prayer is a call upon the Holy Spirit for the benefit of all."

Editorial Notes.

—Another interesting letter for publication in the Messenger and Visitor has been received from Mr. R. J. Colpitts, continuing and finishing his report of the Baptist World Congress, but we regret that it reached us too late to be available for this issue. However, it will not spoil by keeping a week.

One of the attractions announced in connection with the General Conference of Christian Workers which is to be held at Northfield, Mass., between August 4, and 20, is the presence of Charles M. Alexander, the Young American singer who has been conducting revival services with Dr. R. A. Torrey for the last few years in Australia and Great Britain.

A gospel tent campaign now being conducted in various parts of Chicago is reported to be meeting with a gratifying measure of success. Since the tents opened, about six weeks ago, more than fifty thousand persons have attended the meetings. A large number of persons have publicly professed conversion, in one tent over fifty in two weeks and some have already been received into membership in various churches.

Twenty years of Presbyterian missionary in Korea has resulted in the gathering of 232 congregations, with more than twenty thousand adherents and between six and seven thousand on the membership roll. It is stated by those who have had the best opportunities for observation, says the 'Presbyterian,' that the conscience in so-called heathen Korea is more sensitive than in older Christian lands, and that the liberality of Korean Christians would put to shame many who have behind them many years of Christian training.

General Booth of the Salvation Army returned to England at the end of July, from his trip to Australia. He is said to be in excellent health and enthusiastic over the success of his five months tour in the antipodes. The 'General' expresses himself as profoundly impressed with the possibilities of Australia's future. Australia's vital need, he says, is more population and he is prepared to promote his schemes of emigration on a greater scale than ever before. Twenty thousand acres of land in Western Australia have been given him to do with as he pleases.

—Yellow fever in New Orleans continues to make progress, but the spread of the fever during the past week, though considerable, is not so great as might have been anticipated, and the results indicate that the efforts put forth to restrain the disease have been attended with a fair measure of success. Up to Sunday at 6 p. m., the total number of cases reported had reached 553 and the deaths 105. The citizens of New Orleans have requested that the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital service shall take charge of the yellow fever situation in the city, and it is understood that this will immediately be done. There have been three cases of yellow fever in New York and one of these has proved fatal. Quite a number of persons are being held in quarantine in New York as suspected cases. But only two of these are from New Orleans, the remainder are from Panama, where yellow fever is prevalent.

—In addition to the evils which Russia is now suffering arising from foreign war and internal disturbances, it is reported that famine conditions are threatened owing to a very serious failure of the crops in many of the provinces. The central statistical committee reports that the harvest in forty-one of the sixty provinces of European Russia is a complete failure. In Tula, Riazan, Saratoff, Warsaw, and Kurat, failure is interspersed locally with barely sufficient crops. Similar conditions prevail in twelve other provinces, including the great grain-producing districts of Samara, Tamboff, Pinza and the Don Cossack district. In twelve other provinces good and bad crops alternate. Good crops are expected in only six Polish provinces and in Gornio, Kiev, Volynia and Bessarabia. Satisfactory crops are expected in two northern provinces, reports from which have not yet been received, but where good harvests are rare. Considering the optimism which usually characterizes such reports, the public anticipates a very serious famine.

—Rev. J. C. Goodrich, agent of the American Bible Society in the Philippine Islands, has just returned to the United States after an absence of five years, and gives a very encouraging report of the outlook for Christian evangelization in the Islands. During the time he has spent there the circulation of the Bible has reached 410,754 copies, printed in the Malayan dialects and the Spanish, Chinese, English, Japanese, French, German and Russian languages. Urgent requests are continually received for translations into the less widely known languages. The entire edition of 45,000 copies of the Gospels in Cebu was sold before it left the press, and a new edition ordered. New churches are rapidly springing up, and many new buildings being erected by the missionary societies of all the denominations. Many thousands

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