

The Toronto Congress.

A YEAR ago, our international calendar showed ninety-eight peoples among whom Baptist churches may be found. Last June fifty-three of these answered at the roll-call in Canada. We really wonder if any other Christian communion, outside the Roman Catholic, could show such an œcumenical assembly. It was interesting that on the Sunday, the Romanists in Toronto were holding a great demonstration, when thousands of men were marching. Meanwhile scores of churches, by no means of our communion alone, heard Baptists preaching. The contrast was significant; those were drilled and marched to order, these proclaimed the Word of God.

Toronto itself, like Adelaide, is a city of churches; it is served by the two greatest railroads in the world, and may be approached by excellent highways as also across a calm lake. Small wonder, then, that the attendance far surpassed London, Philadelphia, Stockholm, and that about 7,000 registered, besides many who came for a day, or even for a special session. Fortunately the Exhibition Park abounds in buildings, so that one could be devoted to meals, one be spared for business, one for hospitality, rest and social purposes, with the great Transportation Hall for meetings, supplemented on occasion by two others, on which were conferred for the nonce the names of John Clifford, and Robert Stuart MacArthur. In the intervals, there was the spacious park, sloping down to the lake; and only on one day did a thunderstorm debar from enjoying its delights.

Most careful preparation had been made in every way; it was said that 1,095 voluntary helpers had been at work, and the results showed their zeal and the skill of their leaders. It can be no light task to find accommodation for thousands, yet the misfits or difficulties were amazingly few, and seemed all cleared up within one day.

The Baptists of Toronto have had grave local troubles which have gained much sympathy for MacMaster university in many parts. It evidently surprised many Torontonians to hear that the man who was so prominent in their midst, carried no weight in wider circles, and was unknown even by name to most. The whole of the Congress meetings were undisturbed by any breath of difference, so that the presiding officer was able to congratulate the delegates on the remarkable harmony and unanimity, after seven days of crowded gatherings.

entangling alliances and stay unincorporated; this has produced two groups of coloured Baptists, of which the smaller may number a million. While the question of incorporation divides them, and inspiration causes another line of division among the whites, and strict communion is a preventive of communion in Britain, we cannot wonder at Dean Swift with his Big-endians and Little-endians, or be surprised that the Chinese tell us they are not impressed by the questions that have produced 140 separate groups of missionaries in their country, and they are determined to start for themselves free from any such rents and seams.

One group was absent, and to any thoughtful person its absence would raise awkward questions—the North American Indians, represented at Stockholm by David Paddlety. From the earliest days Baptists have recognised their obligation to the aborigines, Roger Williams having issued a key to the language which enabled the earliest of British missionary societies to publish a New Testament. That society still works among the Indians of Canada, while the Baptists of the United States maintain many establishments, notably at Bacone College, Oklahoma. It is singular, therefore, that no Indian Baptist was introduced to the Congress, and possibly none was even present. A humorous shock came within two days, for there was a Declaration of Independence by the Six Nations, on the ground that the treaties between the English and their forefathers had been repeatedly violated, while advantage had been taken of their ignorance to buy valuable rights for trifles: the Nations therefore called for the withdrawal of the N.W. Mounted Police, that they might be absolutely free within their own territories. A newspaper comment that this manifesto represented only the pagan element in the Nations, shows clearly that after three hundred years, Baptists have not overtaken their duty to evangelise the peoples whom they crowd out of their lands. In 1905 there was surprised comment from Americans that the official map of the world showed large patches of America predominantly pagan—not New York, Chicago, &c.,—but whole enclaves in the Middle West; the answer that this was copied from standard American atlases hardly satisfied them. But here we have fresh evidence that even in North America, and far more in South, there are nations barely scratched by Christian enterprise.

A similar map of the world adorned the Hall of Friendship, on which twinkling lights showed where Baptists were to be found. This was but one conspicuous item in a wilderness of exhibits, to which, alas, there was no official guide. Brief lectures at missionary exhibitions are now such a usual feature, that their absence was somewhat to be regretted. But the enterprise of the

great Publishing Boards, both north and south, and Canadian, revealed to many Englishmen how much we have to learn in the way of fostering and issuing denominational literature. A board needs to have very large powers, to meet frequently, to have members who know and love their business, and to command a working capital. We have two capital book-shops in Holborn, but not very much more. Even our Polish brethren, with such recent history, seem to be level with us in many respects.

Of the actual meetings, accounts will have appeared in the *Baptist Times* and other papers, while the Official Report will be available this autumn, so it is needless to speak of most. The Bunyan celebrations enlisted Germans, Americans, Canadians, British, showing the wide-spread appeal; though we should have liked lantern slides of the African illustrations to the *Pilgrim's Progress*. As it was, the only slide depicted the memorial window, designed and executed by Canadian artists at the expense of other Baptists, to be placed in the new MacMaster University about to arise at Hamilton at the west end of the lake.

MacMaster took the opportunity of the Congress to entertain the British-American Fraternal, and then to hold a special Convocation for conferring degrees. For the second function it borrowed the splendid new Yorkminster Baptist church, where W. A. Cameron ministers. The world-wide sweep of the communion was shown in the list of men honoured: J. J. North, first principal of the Baptist college of New Zealand; Frank William Boreham of Australia; Tsih Ching Bau of Shanghai; J. E. Ennals of Johannesburg; F. W. Simoleit of Neuruppin; J. T. Forbes of Glasgow; Thomas Phillips of Bloomsbury; H. C. Mander of Bristol; John Hope of Atlanta; G. W. Truett of Dallas; J. A. Francis of Los Angeles.

There were important visitors from the outside, especially from the City, the Province, the Council of Churches. The Rt. Hon. Newton W. Rowell, K.C., representing the prime minister, adverted to the fact that internal problems were not engrossing our attention, but that great questions like Industrialism, Militarism, Racialism, were receiving attention, both in a combined evening meeting on World Issues, and in separate afternoon sessions for discussion. It was instructive to hear in conversation the awe-struck rapture of negroes from the South, admitted actually to white homes! Then to hear one of their number publicly declaring the disabilities to which they are normally subject, the rising tide of indignation among the yellow brown black and red races, and the danger in which white civilisation would stand of being swept away in world-wide conflagration. The grave pity was, that he was treated like Ezekiel, applauded for his oratory, but not taken seriously.

Each new Congress sees some adjusting of the machinery.

Since the war, there was needed some temporary aid to the nations of Eastern Europe, and to dispense this relief a Commissioner gave much important service; but the need for such activity has come to an end. The experience gained by Dr. Rushbrooke, however, was not to be lost. So the Alliance decided to appoint him as General Secretary for the whole world, with an honorary associate in the person of President Gray of Maine. The problem of co-ordinating with the Executive was met by constituting an Administrative sub-committee which should meet frequently, and report its doings to the Executive for confirmation. The members resident in Britain were chosen for this duty, and they feel most seriously the trust reposed in them. The Executive itself is enlarged by two more vice-presidents, by the ex-president, and by four members chosen not by country, but as representing special aspects of Baptist life, for instance, two women and two young people. Under these circumstances the Administrative Committee will consist of Messrs. Aubrey, Dunning, Grey-Griffith, Laws, Marnham, Rushbrooke, and Whitley; but every member of Executive is entitled to be at any meeting, and thus it will be easy for M. Farelly, Frau Gieselbusch, Direktor Simoleit, to strengthen the Committee for any awkward problem. It is hoped that if the Rumanian Government implements its promises, the need for expensive journeys will be slight, and thus the Budget need provide rather for Regional Conferences by the President, notably in the southern hemisphere.

The guiding thought of the whole Congress was to display Baptist Life in the World's Life. This was well done positively. Another way to estimate its importance would be to imagine a world from which Baptist principles, if not Baptists, were cut out. It is hardly too much to say that from many countries, all vital religion would disappear, and Christianity would be predominantly represented by sacerdotal or bureaucratic machines. The impact on social problems in Europe and America would be vastly enfeebled, leaving ambition and greed to dictate public action. The attack on paganism, Hinduism, Islam would almost have to be suspended at many points. Those who have seen this vision, and there have been hundreds from Britain, some of whom have had their fourth glimpse, will settle down again with a sense of deeper responsibility, to redeem the time and seize the opportunity.

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