

## The China Baptist Alliance.

SINCE one of the prime movers in the organisation and maintenance of the China Baptist Alliance has recently been tragically removed from the scene of his worthy endeavour in so many spheres, it may be well to think anew both of the career of Dr. Herman C. E. Liu and the organisation which he fostered. It will be recalled that Dr. Liu was the victim of gunmen in the streets of Shanghai on the 7th April, on no other charge than that he, as was said of him, was the "spark-plug of all efforts for the raising of funds and the distribution of them where they could prove of the greatest benefit to the suffering in Shanghai." He has been termed the leading Baptist of China.

Dr. Liu has passed to his reward. Yet we hope the China Baptist Alliance, which was organised in 1930 at his suggestion, will continue in a greater way than ever. With never a very smooth course, indeed often with dire struggles for life itself, the Alliance was inspired by Dr. Liu to undertake a forward movement during the China Baptist Centennial celebrations in 1936. Dr. Liu was also one of the leading influences in the organisation of the Kiangsu (Shanghai) Baptist Convention in 1936, and was president of the convention at the time of his untimely death. He was every whit a leader.

For a number of years, up to 1916, Baptist missionaries from all sections of China met once every three years for what was called the China Baptist Conference. These meetings were held in such centres as Canton, Shanghai and Chefoo. Although great benefit was realised in these meetings in the social contacts and in inspirational addresses, the long distances, the poor facilities for travelling, and the considerable expense connected therewith, made it seem impracticable to continue them after a period of years. The China Baptist Conference was distinctively a movement of the missionary bodies as such and not of the Chinese. At best, missionary personnel is, and should be, temporary, if real progress is to be made. However, we can feel that this united movement among missionaries was at least a preparation for the larger attempt of the Chinese and missionaries working together for closer affiliation of churches all over China.

Let us think of another step toward what has finally taken definite form as a China Baptist Alliance. It was at the close of the meeting of the directors of the China Baptist Publication Society in Shanghai in February 1930 that Dr. Herman C. E. Liu

invited the missionaries and Chinese visitors to a luncheon in one of the hotels of the city, and the question of more closely united action in Baptist affairs in all sections of China was urged by him in an address of welcome. An enthusiastic supporter was Dr. T. C. Bau, of Hang Chow, who has also been a leader in Baptist affairs and Secretary of the Chekiang-Shanghai Baptist Association.

It may not be amiss to add this paragraph of names just here. The resolution for a National Baptist Convention of China was signed by the following: Mary C. Alexander, T. C. Bau, E. S. Burket, R. E. Chambers, Chang Wen-kai, T. C. Chao, Mary Cressy, Mabelle R. Culley, Mary C. Demarest, A. R. Gallimore, W. B. Glass, L. C. Hylbert, W. D. King, Herman C. E. Liu, John W. Lowe, Paul Lyn, W. Eugene Sallee, F. H. Shiu, W. H. Tipton, Z. Y. Tsen, H. P. Wang, Lila F. Watson, J. T. Williams, Y. F. Yeung. Although there are more names of missionaries than Chinese as signatories to the resolution, an editorial in *The New East* at the time insists that "it be clearly understood that a Chinese organisation is contemplated, and that Chinese have taken the initiative." This would be indicated by the fact that the special committee for working toward carrying out the aims of the resolution were: Dr. Liu, always conversant with world affairs; Dr. Bau, who had attended the meetings of the Baptist World Congress in Toronto in 1928; and Mr. Chang Wen-kai, perhaps, up to that time, the foremost Christian journalist in China and editor of the Baptist Magazine, *True Light Review*.

But still another step. It was in August of the same year (1930) that the name of China Baptist Alliance became definitely applied to the efforts for closer unity in Baptist matters in China as a whole, and in a larger sense as related to denominational fraternity the world over. The purpose of the 1930 meeting was stated thus: "To unite the Baptist churches of the whole nation in a common effort to set forward the work of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Again we shall have to admit with regret that too little was done in the way of general co-operation over the country as a whole. The same difficulty of communication due to lack of travelling facilities and difference of language kept the organisation from functioning as it should. Indeed, the history of the China Baptist Alliance is of more or less discouragement and of too much indifference. The untiring efforts of Dr. Liu, Dr. Bau and Dr. C. S. Miao have preserved its life.

It is significant that some of the first passengers on the recently completed Canton-Hankow Railway were delegates from far interior China to the celebrations of the China Baptist

Centennial in Canton, October 13th-18th, 1936. Again it was Dr. Liu who issued the clarion call for renewing the activities of the China Baptist Alliance. As a goal for a five-year programme six objectives were accepted: (1) Doubling the membership in the churches; (2) Preparation of a history of Baptists in China; (3) The maintenance of an all-China Baptist journal; (4) The extension of the work into places where the Gospel has not been preached; (5) The distribution of a million copies of the Gospel of John and other Scripture portions; (6) Co-operation with the Baptist World Alliance in its world programme.

So much for a bit of history. We shall not attempt to take up the role of prophet. Baptists of China—in common with all other Christian bodies—now face perplexities and problems which they have not been called on to meet before, challenging situations that are not without greater opportunities and privileges. Plans are being made for the appointment of delegates to the meetings of the Baptist World Congress in Atlanta, July 22nd-29th, 1939, when the seventy thousand Baptist Church members of China will become a more close and vital part of the great world-brotherhood.

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—whose value Montefiore rightly stresses—but of a visible Church community, and are in danger of putting in its place a disunited, spineless democracy which lacks discipline and even real allegiance to anything higher than self-centred denominational interests. Would that amid the present perplexities we could again see the prophets' vision of God in human history and hear their clarion call "Thus saith the Lord."

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