

Sixth Baptist World Congress.

WHEN one begins to write about the Sixth Baptist World Congress which is to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America, July 22nd-28th, significant facts too numerous and too varied to crowd into a single article present themselves and all but demand expression. To a man we agree that the Congress was never convened at a time in which there were more and greater problems. Economic uncertainty, social confusion, clashing moral standards, wars and rumours of wars, the crumbling of old foundations both in State and home, international distrust and hatred, the building of armies and navies, professional uplifters of the human race who themselves have not been uplifted by Divine grace, currents and counter-currents of thought in stubborn opposition, increasing taxes and mounting debts, schemes for social security on credit, racketeering in business, broken morale in thousands on doles and relief, create conditions which spread over the face of the earth like a pall of death. Evils are confederates which seem to be highly organised and skilfully directed to promote that which is hurtful and wrong and to put down that which is helpful and right. No artist could paint a picture of this day and use all of the threatening facts without making an exceedingly dark picture. It would cause us to cry: "Is there no balm in Gilead?"

But the people who are called Baptists will not despair, nor concede defeat, nor expect anything but ultimate victory. What could stimulate the human heart more than the fact that twelve million Baptists who know no lord but Christ Jesus will have a representative group of perhaps fifty thousand to meet in Atlanta in July to bear their testimony, to declare their message, and to assert to the world their faith in Paul's declaration, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Christ Jesus"? The distressing condition of the world is not a precursor of utter collapse, but a demonstration of the utter failure of movements, enterprises, institutions and governments which are not built upon this foundation. This is the chaos out of which we may expect God to bring order, and our generation is a tottering house under which we must put the rock foundation.

I would be untrue to the Atlanta Baptists if I did not say that the motive which inspires us to do our best in making plans for the entertainment of the Baptists of the world is to make it possible for them to declare their message, their much-needed message, to their day and generation. We believe that unspeakable good will come to the human race as a result of a world meeting of Baptists which will give to them an opportunity to know one another, to understand one another, to find a common

approach to the problems of life and to generate within their own hearts courage and zeal to join hands around the globe in song, in prayer, and in sermon to tell men of all ranks and races that Christ's Name is the only name in which salvation can be found, and to declare to all believers that Christ must be enthroned in all the areas of life. The Baptists who come to the Atlanta meeting will return to their respective homes with a new vision of their task, with a new appreciation of their faith, and with stronger determination and courage to preach their message. Those from lands where civil authorities are laying heavy hands of persecution upon them will go back renewed in spirit like Elijah of old when they realise that there are many millions who have not bowed their knees to Baal, and those from lands of lethargy and indifference will be inspired by the heroism of their persecuted brethren to renew their zeal as Christ's ambassadors.

It is this conviction that brings the Baptists of Atlanta and their many friends of other Christian affiliations to join hands and hearts in preparing to entertain perhaps the largest group of Christians that ever assembled from the four corners of the earth. They are opening their homes to give hospitality, which means meals and beds throughout the entire Congress to all missionaries and visitors from other lands. They are converting the largest athletic stadium in the city into a meeting place by building a temporary roof over it, by erecting a tremendous platform in the midst of it, and by equipping it with loud-speakers that thousands may assemble for worship under the sound of one man's voice. I wish it were possible to relate in detail how the business houses, the civic groups, the Chamber of Commerce, the schools, the hotels, and other institutions of the city are volunteering to help to make the thousands of visitors comfortable while they are in our fair city; a city which I may justly say is ornate in natural beauty, rich in historic traditions, and known far and wide for its beautiful homes and churches.

It is quite obvious that the makers of the programme of the Congress are keenly sensitive to the challenges and the needs of this hour. Their choice of speakers and of subjects show that their aim is have the most capable men and women to discuss the actual problems we are now facing and to declare the truths upon which we are depending. It will be a great hour when Principal N. J. Nordström, of Sweden, reports for his commission on "What Baptists can do to avert War and promote Peace." Another high hour will be when Principal W. Holms Coats, of Scotland, presents his report on "The Baptist Contribution to Christian Unity." Another great hour will be when Professor W. O. Carver, of Kentucky, U.S.A., reports for another commission on "Findings of the Oxford and Edinburgh Con-

ferences." But these are not all. There will be other messages by equally able men on the Church, religious liberty, problems of race, evangelism and missions, and the great doctrines of our Baptist people. We can say truthfully that for seven days Baptist leaders of the world will come together to discuss their common heritage and their common task under the direction of their common Lord. If Baptists are right in claiming that they have a distinct message which is indispensable to the coming of God's Kingdom upon earth, nothing can be of greater significance than for them to meet together as a body to intensify and deepen their fellowship in the interest of extending their influence and preaching their message.

The most frequently asked question about the Alliance is, "How many do you expect to attend?" This question no one can answer. In the city of Atlanta there are 195 Baptist churches with a total membership of 95,451. In the State of Georgia there are 6,579 churches with a total membership of 1,025,908. It will be possible for tens of thousands of Georgia Baptists to commute back and forth to Atlanta daily to attend the sessions. It is a fact that this next World Congress will be held in what is perhaps the greatest Baptist city of the world and in the largest Baptist convention of the world.

I cannot close without stating two of the greatest joys that the people of Atlanta are anticipating. They are looking forward with unspeakable delight to the privilege of having the Baptists of other lands in their homes as guests. More and more they are saying on every hand that no good can come out of this world meeting of Baptists which will exceed the mutual good that our people and our guests will receive from the friendships which will be established around their table boards. We are also looking forward to the privilege of having the preachers of other lands fill our pulpits on Sunday, July 23rd, not only Baptist pulpits but also the pulpits of other denominations. In addition we are arranging to have representatives of other nations speak to other church groups such as Sunday School classes and assemblies. We join in earnest prayer around the world that God will sanctify this great meeting to the good of humanity and to the glory of His great Name.

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