

European Baptist Reconstruction.

I GLADLY respond to the invitation to contribute an article which may assist my fellow Baptists in their advocacy of and response to the Reconstruction appeal in its continental aspect. So far as the home side is concerned, they are fully informed, since they know the conditions of the land in which they labour, and in the heavy losses to the churches many of them are directly involved. It is otherwise with the continental need; this is known to but few, and by the few only in fragments. Indeed, no complete survey is possible until the war ends and the whole of Europe becomes accessible.

Why a *Baptist* Reconstruction Fund for the Continent? We are, of course, men and Christians before we are Baptists. As citizens and taxpayers we bear our part in the provision made by the Government to meet the needs of our fellow-men in the devastated lands. Our people also give liberal support to voluntary organisations such as the Red Cross, and to united interdenominational or non-denominational efforts; through these a vast amount of admirable work is done. Baptists are, however, a world-communion of Christian people, with a common outlook and common tasks; and, whatever our race or colour, land or language, we are intensely conscious of our oneness in the Lord Jesus Christ. This sacred fellowship creates specific obligations akin to those of members of a family within the larger unities of the municipality, the nation, and the world of nations. To ignore these obligations would imply the unreality of our repeated professions of Christian fraternity, and a repudiation of the intimate relations which have developed especially during the forty years since the Baptist World Alliance came into existence. "We have travelled far," wrote Dr. J. H. Shakespeare at its founding in 1905, "when it has become possible to federate the great Baptist community for common purposes, and as a demonstration of the fact that there is now in existence, and to be reckoned with, a Baptist world consciousness."

It is well to recall in outline the effects of the founding of the Baptist World Alliance. Apart from European Baptist conferences in Berlin (1908) and Stockholm (1913), the fraternity of European Baptists, British and continental, found expression in many ways before the outbreak of the First World War. The World Congress in Philadelphia (1911) also furnished occasion,

through the presence of a substantial body of delegates from Tsarist Russia, for a demonstration of the sympathy of the entire Baptist world evoked by their sufferings. In spite of apparently insuperable obstacles, plans were actually shaped in those early years for the setting up in St. Petersburg (as the city was then called) of a preachers' college. The names of Sir George Macalpine, Dr. Newton Marshall, Dr. Ewing, and the Rev. C. T. Byford, are associated with the labours of Dr. Shakespeare and Dr. Clifford during those years; and I myself, though still in the pastorate, was called upon to undertake journeys to Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary and other lands, in order to assist in solving some of the problems affecting our brethren. We could not accomplish more than a small fraction of what we desired. The funds of the Alliance were extremely limited. It possessed no office, and not a single full-time officer. Dr. Shakespeare, its Eastern Secretary, was primarily Secretary of the British Union, and could devote only odds and ends of time to overseas interests; his American colleagues, who successively served as Western Secretaries, were likewise fully occupied in other directions.

During the First World War the Alliance was practically "in cold storage." We were cut off from the main bodies of continental Baptists; long after the Armistice, and even after the signing of the formal treaties of peace, conditions on the continent were so chaotic that travel was all but impossible. We knew that hunger and cold and disease prevailed through large sections of Europe. It was not until the spring of 1920 that a fairly complete survey could be undertaken, and the results are embodied in a printed report of seventy-two pages by Dr. Charles A. Brooks and myself, who as commissioners of the Baptist World Alliance had together toured the continent—Russia alone, still in the throes of revolution, being closed to us. The report was submitted to the Executive Committee of the Alliance at the conference convened in London in July, 1920, under the chairmanship of Dr. Clifford; and from that conference three results emerged:

1. The raising by the American Baptists of a fund of \$1,000,000 for material relief—food, clothing, medical supplies, etc.—to which Baptists of other lands, including Britain, added many thousands of pounds. (A "short-term" policy.)
2. A plan for linking the stronger bodies of Baptists (American, British, Swedish, Canadian, etc.) with particular countries, in order that in co-operation with the national unions the spiritual work of the Baptists should be furthered. From this long-term policy has resulted the establishment of preachers' training colleges, the provision of literature, the support of evangelists, assistance to philanthropic institutions, and much else. The organisation of the continental Baptists was everywhere strengthened; and active co-operation persisted until interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War.

3. The appointment of myself as a full-time officer to represent the Baptists of the world in giving effect to these decisions, and also expressly authorised to represent them in securing and defending religious liberty—a task of the utmost urgency and importance.

As Baptist Commissioner for Europe from 1920, with the Eastern Secretaryship added after Dr. Shakespeare's retirement in 1926, and from 1928 as General Secretary, it was my privilege to serve the Baptist World Alliance as a full-time officer for nineteen years until 1939. The presidency of that body is assumed to be an "honorary" post, but the war-time conditions which obliged the Alliance to set up a temporary office in Washington for my American successor in the Secretaryship (Dr. W. O. Lewis) have made it in practice a full-time office and one of grave responsibility.

Quite apart from the personal aspects of this story, it is evident that July, 1920, marked a new development in the work of the Alliance. As this concerns Europe, it has meant an enlarged and deepened sense of fellowship, a widening of interest and knowledge among British Baptists¹—especially in recent years among the young people, the effective defence of religious freedom in many lands, and much more. The prestige of the Alliance and the strengthening of fraternal bonds have advanced together.

Apart, therefore, from general considerations of Christian brotherhood, we have forged definite links which it would be no less than sinful to sever. We are now called upon to re-emphasise our oneness with the continental brethren and to assist them in re-starting their work, which in large measure we ourselves originally made possible. It would be easy to fill an entire issue of this magazine with details to support the appeal for a Fund; and some of these will be circulated during coming weeks for the information of our people. I have written enough to indicate what is at stake.

The situation confronting us differs in one important respect from that following the last war. During the present struggle the Allied Governments have acknowledged responsibility for organising, and where necessary providing, material relief for liberated countries. The hideous results of long and still continuing deprivation of the elementary necessities of life, which Dr. Brooks and I found a year and a half after the Armistice of 1918,

¹ Considerations of space make it impossible to give a list of the many British Baptists associated during this period with the furtherance of European co-operation and fraternal intercourse. It is not invidious to name three: Dr. Gilbert Laws, still, after many years, the chairman of our Continental Committee, and for eleven years (1928-1939) of the Administrative Committee of the Alliance; Dr. J. W. Ewing, who still serves the Baptist Union Continental Committee as honorary organiser; and Dr. T. G. Dunning, who has zealously served on the youth side of our international work.

need not now be anticipated. U.N.R.R.A. (of which our own Ernest Brown is European Chairman) is shaping arrangements to avert these. It follows that we shall be free to use our resources for the restoration of churches and institutions and the renewal of strictly spiritual and philanthropic work. In other words, the continental task closely resembles that which is to be undertaken at home through the larger section of the Fund to be raised. I need not describe at length the conditions we may expect to find on the Continent; it will suffice to quote the words of the report presented to the Baptist Union Council on November 21st last:

"The needs of Continental Baptists will probably be far greater than we can meet, but we anticipate that our brethren in the Baptist World Alliance in other parts of the world will also be ready to help. While we cannot tell exactly what has been going on behind the curtain of war, we know there is great havoc. Of our thirteen seminaries for training ministers on the continent, we know of only one that is now in action. In the past we have taken a large part in maintaining these colleges and ensuring a supply of native leaders for our Baptist communities. Their work clearly must be renewed, if our witness is not to perish. It may be possible and advisable to bring suitable men to this country for training. Certainly the need of literature, including Bibles and hymn-books, will be great. Apart from damaged and destroyed churches, there are Baptist hospitals and homes, and some of them have been seized or destroyed. We know also of Baptist printing and publishing houses that, with their entire machinery, have been seized or destroyed. Ministers in poverty-stricken lands will have to be supported until approximately stable conditions emerge.

"The Baptists of this country must take a worthy part in this work, for many of our brethren have boldly faced oppression and persecution in the past, and in some places (as e.g. Rumania) they have been ruthlessly suppressed. They make an unspoken but undeniable claim on our sympathy and help."

To this statement I add the terms of the Council's decisions, in the form of eight resolutions, all adopted unanimously:

1. That a Reconstruction Fund be opened forthwith for work at home and on the Continent, and that our people be asked to contribute not less than £150,000. It is not desired that gifts should be earmarked for specific objects, but we cannot deny the right to any who may wish to do this. Of the sums not specifically allocated, two-thirds will be devoted to home work and one-third to Continental Reconstruction. Of the latter amount one-tenth will be given to the Joint Committee of the Churches for Christian Reconstruction in Europe (of which our General Secretary is Chairman) for Protestant work, as a token of our interest in, and our desire to help, evangelical Christians of other communions than our own.

2. That, though the Fund will be opened at once, the time for pressing the appeal on our churches should be immediately after the announcement of an Armistice or the virtual conclusion of hostilities in the West; and that it should then be urged as a Thanksgiving Fund, to be collected as quickly as possible, and that preparation should be made to that end.

3. That the administration of the funds available for work in this country should, subject to the authority of the Council, be in the hands

of the Finance Committee operating through the standing Finance Subcommittee.

4. With regard to the allocation and disbursement of the monies raised for Baptist work on the Continent,

(a) That this be entrusted to a Special Committee consisting of the Officers of the Union and of the Continental Committee, with the British members of the Baptist World Alliance Executive, with power to add; and that the Chairman should be Dr. Rushbrooke;

(b) That the decisions of this Committee as far as they directly concern finance be referred for confirmation to the Finance Committee operating as indicated in the foregoing recommendation.

5. That the distribution in each recipient land be normally entrusted to the Baptist Union of the country, in consultation with the Committee in 4. above or its appointed representative.

6. That the Baptist World Alliance be asked to furnish information regarding the needs of particular countries, with suggestions as to the amounts which should be contributed by British Baptists and others, taking into account (i) the desire that as far as possible Baptists of all contributing countries shall have everywhere some share in the work of rehabilitation, and (ii) the special relations of particular contributing countries with particular recipient lands.

7. That the objects of Baptist Continental Relief shall include (a) aid in supporting pastors, evangelists, deaconesses and other church workers, seminaries and students, pending the stabilising of economic conditions; (b) renewal or repair of churches, seminaries, orphanages, printing works or other buildings, and their equipment; (c) provision of literature; (d) such other forms of assistance as will further the restoration of the spiritual and philanthropic activities of the churches; (e) direct provision of material relief should this be found necessary.

(NOTE.—It is hoped and expected that the action of U.N.R.R.A. will obviate any need for grants under the last of these headings.)

8. That the Finance Committee be empowered to take all necessary steps for carrying these recommendations into effect.

Regarding the resolutions I offer only two comments. In regard to No. 4, which gives power to co-opt additional members, this provision was inserted in response to a suggestion that the officers and others appointed to the Committee being almost entirely senior members of the Council, it would be an advantage to add two or three of the younger men who in coming years must deal with the international relations of Baptists, so that these might familiarise themselves with the present situation and its developments. In regard to No. 6, its point is that we may expect substantial assistance to be rendered in certain countries by American and other Baptists. We should like to ensure that the solidarity of our communion finds expression in a united contribution. In other words, while British Baptists contribute the major portion of assistance in countries with which they have been closely connected, they would gladly include contributions from others; and, while American Baptists contribute the major portion where they have special connections, the British hope to be permitted to offer at least a "token" amount as a symbol of our common interest.

A question often asked is this: "Will the Fund be used for

the benefit of the Baptists in the Soviet Union?" We earnestly hope it will, and certainly have no reason at present for a negative answer. The deep-seated (and, it may be frankly admitted, to some extent justified) suspicion of foreigners, is, we hope, vanishing. At all events, our earnest desire is to assist brethren whose country has been over-run and widely devastated; and we shall count it a high privilege to be permitted to share their burdens.

We may surely anticipate the complete success of the appeal to our people. Success will be doubly certain if the ministers emphasise the reward that attends large-hearted liberality. British churches will gain by giving. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

J. H. RUSHBROOKE.

The Chaplain in the Factory, by C. H. Cleal. (S.C.M. Press Ltd., 2/6.)

This book has an importance far greater than its size may suggest. Mr. Cleal is one of our pioneer "Industrial Chaplains," and he here writes simply but forcefully and frankly of the problems and opportunities which his war-time work has brought him. After a chapter on the unfortunate estrangement between Church and Factory, he describes how the initial contacts of the chaplain may be secured and the personal and pastoral work which soon grows out of them. The special problems connected with Community Centres and Hostels are then discussed. The two closing chapters deal with the relevance of Christianity to industrial questions, the peace-time possibilities of work such as this and the preparation necessary for it. This, as Mr. Cleal says, is "a field which, if not 'foreign,' is increasingly in danger of becoming so." The initiation of overseas evangelism was a costly business and the pioneers had to find their way by trial and error methods. So it will be in this new and very needy field. This book should be widely read and pondered, and Mr. Cleal and his fellow chaplains should be assured of the support of the whole Church in their important missionary enterprise.