

EIGHTH WORLD CONGRESS

BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE -- CLEVELAND, OHIO

This Congress is sponsored at irregular intervals by the Baptist World Alliance, a federation of conventions and unions embracing eighteen million Baptists throughout the world. The first Congress was held in London, England in 1905; the second in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1911; the third in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1923; the fourth in Toronto, Canada, in 1928; the fifth in Berlin, Germany, in 1934; the sixth in Atlanta, Georgia in 1939; the seventh in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1947; and the eighth in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1950.

Some fifteen to twenty thousand Baptists from all parts of the United States and fifty-one other countries and dependent territories or provinces assembled for the opening session of the Eighth Congress, Cleveland on Saturday afternoon July 22. At the opening session formal and brief welcoming addresses were delivered by Mayor Burke of Cleveland, Lieutenant Governor Nye of Ohio and Mrs. Paul Stetler, President of the Woman's Council of the Cleveland Baptist Association, Dr. Wade H. McKinney, Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church and Dr. D. R. Sharpe, Executive Secretary of the Cleveland Baptist Association and General Chairman of Arrangements.

In the opening keynote address, Dr. W. L. Jarvis of Sydney, Australia, speaking on the theme "I Am the Light of the World", noted that the Alliance was meeting under black storm clouds but he added that "the peoples of the free nations of the world will not fail if the supreme test comes." He maintained that no group or nation could attain true greatness of character without following Christ in every avenue of life.

Dr. Robert J. McCracken of New York City stated that things had reached a pass where "Nothing in the world can save us now but a change of direction in the spiritual trek of mankind." He added, "The plain fact is that only one thing can save us now and that is a radical regeneration of human nature, a spiritual conversion, a deliberate turning to God and Christ and goodness.

At 5:30 a mammoth street parade, viewed by thousands took place on Euclid Avenue through the Public Square and then to the Stadium. Following a band concert and a roll call of the nations more than one thousand dressed in costumes of forty-eight countries took part, Governor Lausche of Ohio welcomed the Congress. Dr. C. Oscar Johnson, President of the Alliance, then read a letter from President Truman.

The principal address of the evening was delivered by Dr. E. M. Poteat, Pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina, using as his subject "Our Basic Freedom." Preceding his address a musical program was rendered by a choir of one thousand voices accompanied by an one hundred piece band and special numbers were rendered by Roland Hayes, famous Negro Concert tenor.

The preacher at the morning worship service on Sunday in the Public Hall was Dr. Gardner Taylor, a Negro minister of Brooklyn, New York. At the same hour Baptist ministers from all parts of the world were heard in some one hundred twenty-five Cleveland churches of the various denominations. I chose to hear Dr. F. Townley Lord, Pastor of the Bloomsbury Baptist Church, London, Editor of The Baptist Times in London and the newly elected president of the Alliance, at the Old Stone Presbyterian Church on the Public Square.

At the afternoon session Dr. C. Oscar Johnson of St. Louis delivered the presidential address.

On Sunday evening approximately fifteen thousand heard the report on Baptist Youth activities around the world, which was made by Joel Sorensen of Stockholm, Sweden, Youth Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. He said that Baptist young people had reached an unprecedented ability to contribute to the causes of mankind. He also reported on the success Baptist youth have achieved in various nations. As they face the future that life is rough. The prospects from the human point of view are not they bright. Christ is calling young Baptists out of secure places to the dangerous roads of mankind as witnesses of a redemptive life.

Dr. W. O. Lewis, of London, secretary of the Baptist World Alliance with direct supervision over European relief and rehabilitation, gave an address on the "Importance of Europe in the World Picture." He declared that "If Europe is helped to get on its feet, it will not only cease to be a liability, but also will become once more an important asset in world economy." He said "Europe is one area where the battle for full religious liberty is still being fiercely fought." "Upon the whole it would seem there is less religious liberty in Europe than at any time during the last 100 years," he concluded, "And things are getting worse."

Conferences -- Youth, Women's, Laymen's and Ministers.

The Convention Sermon was delivered by Dr. M. E. Aubrey, president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg of Syracuse, New York, former president, of the Northern Baptist Convention, urged the use of a new vocabulary and a restatement of views in terms designed to command the attention of our generation. As one might expect from him, the address was an appeal for the various churches to unite.

Other speakers were: Dr. W. R. White, President of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, who discussed, "The Light of Education"; Professor Ernest A. Payne of Oxford, England, who talked on "Baptism in Present Day Theology," and Dr. R. G. Lee of Memphis who spoke on "Every Baptist a Missionary."

The pageant was written by Dr. Sharpe and entitled, "Light of Liberty." A cast of over 1,000 presented it, assisted by a choir of 500 voices.

"THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS"

"And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts." Haggai 2:7.

Here is a reference to the second advent of our Lord. Surely the world is racing on to the awful hour when the wrath of God will be manifested and He "will shake all nations." "The Desire of all nations" is none other than the Lord Jesus in His return into the world to overthrow the kingdoms of the world and to establish His own among men. No greater satisfaction can come to the heart than to know that with the return of the Lord Jesus the world's problems will be solved.

There is also a more personal and limited application to this text, as it touches the individual believer who finds complete satisfaction when the Lord Jesus comes into his heart. As Christians we are not to be satisfied with our spiritual attainments for we are called upon the "Press toward the mark," nor are we to be satisfied with our knowledge for there must be the longing to know the "deep things of God." Surely none of us can be satisfied with our spiritual growth, especially when we measure ourselves along side

the Lord Jesus as He lived upon the earth and moved among men. Beside Him we are but spiritual pigmies. We are not to be satisfied with ourselves, but we are to be perfectly satisfied with our Saviour. The Lord Jesus Christ can and does satisfy completely. As Dr. W. H. Griffith-Thomas said, "He satisfied the past with forgiveness, the present with grace and the future with glory." The Lord Jesus Christ completely and perfectly satisfies:

1. Our Desire to Know God.

The soul of every one of us needs God and it cannot be satisfied apart from Him. Just as the lungs need air, the flowers need the sunshine, the branch needs the vine, and the baby needs the mother, so the soul needs God. The true way to know God is to become acquainted with Jesus Christ.

2. Our Hungry Hearts.

Jesus saw the hungry multitude and had compassion upon it for they had followed Him for three days and had gone without food. He fed them with bread and then with truth. When He fed them with heavenly manna their spiritual hunger was satisfied. "But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." To the child of God the Lord Jesus is wonderfully real and precious.

3. Our Longing for Assurance.

Every Christian craves assurance in his soul. Some think because they have not had the same experience to which others refer that they are not saved. They lack assurance because they are looking at the experience of another rather than depending upon the Word of God. We can depend upon Jesus for He abundantly satisfied. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." With a promise like that, what right has any child of God to worry about His salvation and hope of heaven? Our case is in His hands and He will never fail.

4. Our Yearning for Victory.

Many have realized that if they could only get rid of their ugly tempers, their nasty dispositions, their jealous spirits and their habitual objections, life would take on a different hue for them. No Christian need live under such depressing clouds nor suffer daily defeat. Victory through the living Christ is assured to each one who desires it.

Moment by moment our Lord satisfies. In Him there is the promise of complete victory over those carnal experiences which make us miserable and rob us of the joy of the Lord in our hearts. Any effort to live independently of Christ is futile. Although we are saved from the penalty of sin we need Him to save us from the power of sin and this He has promised to do. Self-reliance is the curse of every Christian life. Christ-reliance is that which has been ordained of God for our blessing. "But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." To be satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, is the secret of victory in the life, and of power in service. God the Father is completely satisfied with His beloved Son. God's goal for us is that we shall be perfectly satisfied with our Saviour and Lord, with what He is to us and with what He is doing for us.

5. Our Understanding of the Future.

David said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." The Christian has a beautiful outlook. Irrespective of the trials and troubles of this life he is steadily moving on to the consummation of God's purposes for him. Resurrection is the divinely appointed goal for every redeemed child of God.

Rossini, a rare genius, had the best the world could give, yet was unsatisfied and possessed an empty heart because he had no fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and was without the blessed hope. His is but an empty name today unknown but to a very few. Isaac Watts had little of this world's honors yet he rejoiced and sang, being an heir of immortality, and his songs have brought joy to millions of souls. Contrast the melancholy feeling of Rossini, who had everything this world could give him, with the joyful experience of Isaac Watts, whose sorrows were great when he wrote:

"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets,
Or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,
To fairer worlds on high,
To fairer worlds on high."