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The Baptist World Alliance

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The Baptist World Alliance.

ORIGIN : CONSTITUTION : ACHIEVEMENTS
OBJECTS.

I.

FOUNDED IN LONDON, 1905.

IT is surprising that the Baptist World Alliance came into existence so late in our history. There are explanations, of course; our churches throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were comparatively few and poor, subject to manifold disabilities and even at times to persecution. The great period of expansion was yet to come. Nevertheless, as early as the year 1790, as Dr. W. T. Whitley has pointed out, John Rippon had a vision. He started in London a publication called *The Baptist Register*, and he dedicated it "to all the baptised ministers and people" in the various lands of the earth, "in serious expectation that before many years elapse (in imitation of other wise men) a deputation from all these climes will meet, probably in London, to consult the ecclesiastical good of the whole." Nothing came of the suggestion. True, Rippon did forecast the meeting-place of our first World Congress, London, but "before many years" proved too optimistic; the actual interval was 115 years.

Nevertheless, the forgotten idea re-emerged; as the nineteenth century was passing into the twentieth it was "in the air." Dr. R. H. Pitt, of Virginia, editor of the *Religious Herald*, printed an article suggesting a Pan-Baptist Congress; but a few years had still to pass before definite action was taken. In 1904 the late Professor A. T. Robertson, of Louisville, wrote a short article in the *Baptist Argus*, proposing a gathering of Baptists from all parts of the earth. The editor, J. N. Prestridge, a man of immense energy, took up the idea. He sent out marked copies, and wrote letters to all countries. L. A. Crandall, R. H. Pitt and others co-operated in America. The proposal "caught on" overseas; it captured, among others, J. H. Shakespeare and John Clifford in England. The driving force of Prestridge, and the organising powers of Shakespeare, brought about the meeting of the first Baptist World Congress.

That historic assembly was convened in London in July 1905, when twenty-three countries responded to the roll call. I must not linger on that first great world-gathering of Baptists—though I am strongly tempted to do so, for I was present all through, and the memory of the sessions is still vivid. In my mind resound the echoes of a masterly speech in

which Dr. Mullins first revealed to the whole Baptist world his unique powers. John MacNeill, of Canada, was another who stirred the assembly. Both these men were destined to become in later years Presidents of the Alliance. Outstanding missionary leaders and missionaries attended—such as H. C. Mabie, of North America, and Timothy Richard, of China; eminent scholars, such as A. T. Robertson and A. H. Newman; leading public men, among them Mr. Lloyd George. Spurgeon had passed away, but during the Congress a statue was unveiled to his memory. Alexander Maclaren, prince of expositors, was still with us, and acted as president of the Congress. The outstanding fact of that first world assembly was the definite organisation of the Baptist World Alliance. It is not too much to say that the founding of that body is the most significant fact in the history of our Baptist communion during the present century. Its birthday is July 17th, 1905. It may be worth while to quote the preamble of the constitution in its original form:

“Whereas in the providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness in the Lord Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour of the churches of the Baptist order and faith throughout the world, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and co-operation among them, while recognising the independence of each particular church and not assuming the functions of any existing organisation, it is agreed to form a Baptist Alliance, extending over every part of the world.”

The venerable and beloved John Clifford was elected with enthusiasm as first president of the Baptist World Alliance, and no man could have been chosen who more fitly and worthily incorporated the spirit of brotherly love manifested in that truly pentecostal season.

II.

VOLUNTARY AND FRATERNAL THROUGHOUT.

The Alliance sometimes needs to be explained to our own people as well as to those outside our ranks. Many at the beginning displayed concern lest it should threaten or actually impair their liberty in the Gospel. It is well that all Baptists should understand both what the Alliance is not, and what it is. It is not an additional missionary organisation, administering mission funds or appointing missionaries. It is not a legislative body, making regulations that must be obeyed. It has no judicial powers, and cannot hand down decisions to govern churches or any other Baptist bodies. It is not a ruling or authoritative body; its rights of control are entirely confined to its own activities.

So far the negatives: the positives are yet more significant. The Alliance is voluntary and fraternal through and through: its aims are purely moral and spiritual. It is the instrument of all the Baptists of the world for three great purposes: (1) to express and to promote unity and fellowship among them; (2) to secure and defend religious freedom; and (3) to proclaim the great principles of our common faith.

III.

WORLD CONGRESSES: REGIONAL CONGRESSES: WORLD-WIDE VISITATION.

Such a union of Baptists is not only in principle true to the spirit of the New Testament; it is effective in practice.

First of all, it has promoted *a series of world congresses*. Perhaps it is through these that it is most widely known in all lands. Great assemblies may easily be overvalued. We might even have too many, and they might involve an enormous machinery for wasting material resources, time, and energy. (I am disposed to regard the multiplication of conferences as a characteristic evil of our time.) But when the question was definitely raised a few years ago in respect of our World Congress, the general judgement of Baptists in every continent was decisive. They stood by the idea of a Congress every five years, and declared that experience has shown that the interval is precisely right—neither too long nor too short. The testimony to the inspirational value of these gatherings is overwhelming. The list may be given here: London, 1905; Philadelphia, 1911¹; then an interruption owing to the War; Stockholm, 1923—a joyous and thankful meeting after the long interval; Toronto, 1928; Berlin, 1934.¹

These World Congresses are not merely occasions for the election of officers and committees and the delivery of speeches. They have furnished opportunities for a remarkable and intimate drawing together of Baptists from all parts of the world. Links of personal friendship now unite our people around the globe. I resist the temptation to enlarge upon the events of the four World Congresses which followed that of London. Philadelphia initiated a fund for the establishment of a Russian Training College for evangelists and preachers—a project which, though not yet carried out, has never been dropped. At Stockholm a large number of Baptists from Soviet Russia were permitted to attend. A few were also present at Toronto, but before the close of 1928 the Soviet policy of repression was applied in full vigour. The meeting at Berlin was preceded by a period of

¹ For special reasons each of these two congresses had to be postponed a year.

hesitation and even controversy. The resolution to hold the Fifth World Congress in that city had been taken in 1928, but doubts were expressed as to whether the Nazi Government, which had seized power in 1933, would permit genuine freedom of speech. Official assurances were obtained on this point, and the Congress (the largest assembly of Baptists ever known in the Eastern Hemisphere) was held without interference. Indeed, it is not too much to claim that the whole world was astonished at the liberty of speech permitted and exercised. Resolutions on such issues as the relations of Church and State, nationalism, racialism, and world peace, though fully understood to be opposed to the policy of the German Government, were adopted and published, and the circulation of these produced a deep impression upon the public mind, both within and without Germany. Several months after its close the German political authorities paid an unwilling tribute to the influence of the Congress by suppressing the further circulation of its reports! Unquestionably, our ecumenical assemblies have proved of high value not only as occasions of fellowship and inspiration, but of Baptist and Christian propaganda.

In addition to World Congresses, which however large the actual attendance cannot directly touch the masses of our people, the Alliance has organised other conferences through which a more intimate fellowship has been developed than is possible in a general assembly. Before the War, European "Continental Congresses" met in Germany (1908) and in Sweden (1913). After the War I offered a suggestion, based upon my experience as an officer of these continental gatherings, that much more effective work could be accomplished through a number of "Regional Conferences," held in leading continental cities and attended by delegates from a limited number of countries closely connected with one another. The suggestion was endorsed by the Executive Committee, and three series of such "Regional Conferences" have justified its decision. The first series took place in September and October, 1926, when Dr. Mullins was president; the second in August-October, 1930, during the presidency of Dr. MacNeill; and the third in July-August, 1937, when Dr. George W. Truett undertook a presidential tour. Each of these seasons of visitation has furnished opportunity for many thousands of Baptists in several great cities to be brought directly under the influence of the Alliance. Not only has the sense of a world-fellowship been deepened, but strong ties of friendship have been formed between the Baptists of related lands, e.g., the Latin-speaking countries of south-western Europe, the Scandinavian lands, and the south-eastern countries, where national and political antagonism is strong, but has been overcome

by the sense of fellowship in the Gospel. I count it among the highest privileges of my life to have been associated with the eminent men who have served as presidents in this systematic visitation of the European churches. It is impossible to exaggerate the strengthening and inspiring effects of their contact with the "rank and file" of the churches.

A yet wider activity of the Alliance, serving similar ends, may here be recorded as a development of recent years. In 1930 the First Latin-American Congress was held at Rio de Janeiro, and in addition to myself as General Secretary, Dr. Truett (who four years later became president) and Dr. T. B. Ray represented the Alliance. Associated with this was a wider tour of South American countries. Three journeys round the world have brought home to the Baptist people, in most remote parts of the earth, the sense of community in faith and service with all their fellow-believers. The first of these was in 1931-2, when Dr. John MacNeill, as president, devoted nearly six months (September-February) to a journey round the globe in the Northern Hemisphere, visiting Japan, China, Burma, India and Palestine, as well as Europe. In 1932 it fell to the writer, as General Secretary, to undertake a journey (June-December) mainly in the Southern Hemisphere, touching South Africa and visiting all the chief cities of Australia and New Zealand, and returning across the Pacific to visit several centres in the United States and Canada. In 1935-6 (November-June) the President and General Secretary, who were accompanied by Mrs. Truett, journeyed round the world visiting countries which had previously been reached by Dr. MacNeill and taking part in centennial celebrations of American missions in India and China. These prolonged tours have not only drawn more closely the links between those who are widely separated by distance and belong to many different races, but the contact of the Alliance with missions founded by Northerners and Southerners of the U.S.A., British, Australian, Canadian and European societies has strengthened, in the indigenous Churches, the consciousness that they are linked not merely with a particular society or country, but with one another in an ecumenical fellowship.

IV.

We pass on to notice two enterprises, in connection with which the Alliance played a significant and important rôle.

THE ALLIANCE AND EUROPEAN RELIEF.

The first, the provision of relief on a wide scale, arose out of the abnormal condition of Europe after the Great War. Intercourse between Baptists of various lands was impossible during hostilities; and for more than a year after November

1918 travel was most difficult, and some countries could scarcely be reached, much less explored. Not until the opening of 1920 was it possible for the state of Europe as a whole (apart from Russia) to be fully examined. The Baptist World Alliance then undertook to invite a representative group of American, British, Canadian, Australian, European and other Baptists—about seventy in all—to meet at London in July, in order to hear the testimony of those who came from continental Europe and to consider the reports of Dr. C. A. Brooks of the U.S.A. and myself regarding the appalling conditions we had discovered—our people without clothing or food, in some countries unable to obtain hymnbooks or even Bibles, their enterprises suspended because of bitter poverty, and suffering in many other ways. That conference in London in 1920 also made history; one who was present called it “the most significant missionary meeting that Baptists have held in modern times.” It initiated a scheme of material relief which operated for three years, and in a few countries longer—the largest united relief effort the denomination ever undertook. Far the greater part of the money came from the United States; but in a lesser degree other countries contributed. That help was the means of saving the lives and health of thousands, and not of Baptists alone. No strict denominational frontier was drawn, and the fund became a practical expression of human brotherhood.² The writer was called from his pastorate to serve as Baptist Commissioner for Europe in administering the fund of a million dollars on behalf of the Mission Boards and Unions through which it was raised.

A CO-OPERATIVE MISSION POLICY FORMULATED.

Still more significant for the coming years were other decisions of the London conference of 1920. These had to do with the spiritual needs of Europe, and their effect has been to link the stronger mission boards of the U.S.A., Canada, Britain, and some other lands, with the needier countries of Europe, marking out fields of co-operation so as to avoid overlapping. The results exceeded all hopes. The struggling communities were heartened and encouraged. It was no surprise to those who understood the changed morale in the poorer lands of the continent that a great increase of membership was reported within a few years—in most lands fifty per cent. or more, whilst in some countries, Rumania being the most conspicuous example, the numerical strength of the Baptist communion multiplied

² The writer can never forget the gratitude of a group of starving and shivering students—Roman Catholics who had never heard of Baptists. Their characteristic expression of surprise and delight was reported to him in the words: “Who are these Baptists to take an interest in such poor God-forsaken devils as we?”

several times over. The scheme of co-operation initiated in London emphasised the need of adequate training for preachers; and since the year 1920, thanks to the aid of American, Canadian, and British Baptists, no fewer than ten new preachers' schools have been set up in as many countries.³

These new relations of co-operation and material assistance are as already noted sustained by the mission boards, but it was the union of these in the Alliance which enabled the conference of 1920 to be summoned. Indeed, the contacts already made by the Alliance before the War counted as a powerful influence in healing the wounds of Europe.

V.

THE DEFENCE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: A CONTINUOUS TASK.

A supreme service of the Alliance has been its advocacy and defence of religious freedom. This is a continuous task, and covers much more than the special cases to which attention is drawn in the public press. Over a large part of the world there is no religious equality, and even toleration is by no means assured. It is disappointing to recall that whilst on the whole there was a general enlargement of religious freedom in Europe during the years immediately following the War, the last four or five years have witnessed not a few definite setbacks. The tendency of the State to put forward "totalitarian" claims is by no means confined to the two or three outstanding examples which have monopolised the attention of the world. All through its existence our world organisation has stood for the defence of our people's liberty. Apart from the exceptional cases of Rumania and Soviet Russia, to which extended reference will be made in later paragraphs, much has been done. Before the War there were informal approaches to the Czarist Government in the interests of Russian Baptists. From 1920 onwards the writer, as Commissioner for Europe and as General Secretary of the Alliance, has maintained a continuous watch upon conditions which menaced or violated religious liberty, and apart from the U.S.S.R. and Rumania, has had to protest and appeal to Ministers of State in some half-dozen other lands. In most instances there was no need to initiate public agitation. The fact that the Alliance was in existence, and that its representatives voiced the mind of a Christian world-communion, gave moral weight to our plea, and usually brought prompt redress. Three

³ A tentative effort was made in Russia with assistance from the fund initiated at Philadelphia in 1911 to establish a preachers' school in Moscow (1925), but the life of this institution was short. The Soviet authorities brought it to an end by the simple method of arresting and exiling the teachers.

examples may be given. The Baptists of Czechoslovakia were, in the early "twenties," subjected to unequal treatment in certain matters of taxation as compared with Roman Catholics. An interview with President Masaryk led to an immediate change and the abandonment of an attitude which was quite opposed to his spirit and that of his Government. In Hungary, proceedings were taken against an active Baptist preacher; a judge issued an order for his expulsion from the country on the technical ground that he had not acquired Hungarian nationality. I record to the honour of the Hungarian Minister of Cults (who was in fact a Roman Catholic priest) that he at once accepted a protest which in the name of the Alliance I personally made to him, and the order was annulled. It is also worthy of record that in the case of an Italian pastor sentenced to some years' banishment on charges whose real basis was religious prejudice (he had spoken rashly, though not criminally, and had thus given an opportunity to his theological opponents), an appeal to Signor Mussolini through the Italian Minister in London led to the quashing of the sentence within a few days. In general, we may assert that where Baptists are few, poor, and weak, and administrators are inclined to ride roughshod over them, it makes all the difference when Governments realise that the handful of feeble folk represents a fellowship of millions throughout the earth. Nor should it be ignored that when we put forward our historic demand for religious liberty we are not asking advantages for our denomination. It is the proud boast of the present writer that he never addressed to any Minister of State a plea for freedom of conscience without pointing out that Baptists seek for themselves nothing which they do not seek for their fellow-citizens, and value as the God-given right of all men.

RUSSIA: RELIGIOUS LIBERTY EXTINGUISHED.

In this connection a heavy burden rests upon Christian hearts and minds as we think of Russia. In no country had our evangelical message found wider welcome: during and after the War Baptist communities increased rapidly. A corrupt and superstitious Church, linked with the old Czarist tyranny, had long held men in bondage, and the decay and breakdown of that *ancien régime* aroused new hopes. Unhappily these were doomed to disappointment. The Church's failure had made men too ready to turn in indiscriminating hate against all religion. For a time hatred was directed chiefly against the old privileged Church; but as the Communist party, which has a monopoly of political power in Russia, felt itself firm in the saddle, it gave rein to its fierce anti-God prejudice and set about eliminating religious teaching and organisation. We cannot trace in detail

the painful story. Through the last nine years especially there has been exercised a relentless pressure with the object of suffocating every form of faith. No school or class for the religious teaching of children is allowed in the land; no Bible-study class, even for adults, can be formed in any church; the right of propaganda for religion was, in 1929, struck out of the constitution of the U.S.S.R., but the right of propaganda against religion retained; churches and meeting-halls are seized and arbitrarily closed; seminaries for preachers have been made impossible; the preachers themselves are harassed by specially heavy taxes, arbitrary imprisonment, and in other ways, in order to drive them out of the ministry; and for years past the bravest and the most influential of them have languished in exile. No Russian Bibles may be printed or imported. Higher education has been denied to children who have not renounced their parents' faith; and anything like a professional career is closed to those who are loyal to conscience and to God. On the other hand, the State-schools, which alone are permitted to exist, are not neutral in religion; they are forcing-beds and hot-houses of militant atheism. The writer, who has paid six visits to Russia since the Revolution, has in past years discussed these questions face to face with the authorities in Moscow, but in vain. Atheism is practically the State-religion of Russia; and the promulgation of atheism by administrative repression is the State policy.⁴

Some illusive hopes of a change for the better were aroused in 1936 by the promulgation of a new constitution for Russia. Certain paragraphs seemed to imply a measure of religious freedom, or at least a widened field of activity for religious people. From the first it was evident to those who studied the terms of the Constitution that it offered no guarantees either of democratic self-government or religious liberty; and the sequel has justified their fears. Leaving aside such facts as the policy of terrorism and the "election" at which none but Government supporters could be candidates, we need only note the recent widespread arrests of Orthodox ecclesiastics and of so-called "sectarians" (who would be chiefly Baptists), as well as the intensified activity of the Government-favoured "anti-God" organisation. The aim of the political authorities, to destroy religion, is steadily pursued. Unhappily there is very little expression of Christian feeling on the subject throughout the world. The story has ceased to have "news value" because of its unvarying character; and the mind of the democratic peoples, even including the active members of churches, has become almost indifferent. It appears

⁴Of course many churches—thousands of them in the vast area of Russia—still exist. The Government has not ventured on a "clean sweep," but the purpose and tendency of its policy are as here described.

as if nothing could dispel the mood of almost fatalistic acceptance of appalling conditions. Soviet Russia has made substantial advances on the material side. The overthrow of Czarism was an essential pre-condition of advance. The old Church bears a heavy responsibility for the tragic developments of the post-Revolution years. But when these facts are recognised, the rigid suppression of soul-freedom remains to shock the conscience of the world. One of the resolutions unanimously adopted in Berlin may be cited, with the comment that it describes all too exactly the present situation :—

“This World Congress of Baptists, representing sixty countries, makes its strong protest against the increasingly severe repression of religion in Russia. We express our deep sympathy with all those who are suffering for their faith, and especially with our Baptist brethren, many of whom are in exile or in prison, and we commend them and all others who, at great cost, are standing true to their convictions, to the help of our churches, and to the blessing and deliverance of God.”

RUMANIA : PERSECUTION AND DENIAL OF RIGHTS.

Our World Alliance has also been closely occupied for the past eighteen years with the situation of Baptists in Rumania, and has had on many occasions to exercise its utmost influence on their behalf. The story can here be told but briefly.

For ten years after the War the authorities harassed and oppressed the Baptists, denying them recognition before the law. It was a most difficult and delicate task to negotiate with the Ministers of State, and it involved many a disappointment. Promises of alleviation were again and again broken owing to ecclesiastical pressure upon the Government, until at last the Executive of the Alliance decided to promote in all countries a protest to be submitted, if necessary, to the League of Nations. This projected action brought the first change for the better : the Government realised that such a statement emanating from a world-wide religious fellowship would be disastrous to its credit as a civilised European power in the twentieth Christian century. Persecution in its earlier forms diminished. The Parliament, by the law of 1928, acknowledged the status of Baptists over a large part of the land,⁵ and by the same law gave the Ministry powers to extend this status throughout the whole country by administrative decree. Unfortunately, these powers have not been used, and from 1928 onwards the legal position of Baptists in the larger part of the country has remained undefined. Preju-

⁵ i.e., in the territory transferred from Hungary at the close of the War. (Transylvania and neighbouring provinces.)

diced officials and priests have been able to take advantage of the lack of definition; and the arbitrary closing of churches, the silencing of preachers, disabilities imposed on children of Baptists in public schools, fines and arrests, are among the many forms of annoyance and persecution to which our people have been compelled to submit. In the latter part of 1935, the writer made a strong protest in Bukarest against the overriding in Transylvania of established rights and the delay in granting definite legal security elsewhere. A circular instruction was in consequence issued by the Minister of Cults in October, 1935, a brief quotation from which will serve to indicate the exact position:—

“The Baptists of Transylvania and the neighbouring provinces are, according to the Law of Cults, Art. 53, a legally recognised cult, and are to be treated as such.

“The Baptists of the Old Kingdom, of Bessarabia, and of Bukowina, remain until the final regulation of their order (i.e., assimilation with the Baptists of Transylvania through a special law) under the conditions of Art. 24 of the Law of Cults, 1928, applying to Religious Associations. Since, however, their organisation as a Church, their teaching, and their rites, are the same as those of the Transylvanian Baptists, we would request you to permit them to enjoy the same treatment as the Transylvanian Baptists, pending the unification of the Baptist order by a law of the House and the Senate.”

ORTHODOX CLERICAL INFLUENCE ANTAGONISTIC TO FREEDOM.

At the time that this circular was issued, the Rumanian Prime Minister pledged himself to the policy of assimilating the legal position everywhere to that in Transylvania. Unhappily, reactionary clerical influences have, during the last two years, secured control in the Department of Cults, with the result that in April, 1937, an administrative decree was issued cancelling all existing registration of Baptist Churches,⁶ and requiring them to apply within three months for re-registration. The conditions of this re-registration were, however, unacceptable in principle and impossible in practice. The intention of the edict was evidently to close all Baptist churches. At the end of six months, i.e., in October, 1937, all that had not registered under the decree were to be dissolved. The Baptist World Alliance formally protested in the name of the entire communion. The Rumanian Baptist Union held a national assembly in Bukarest, and with unfaltering courage announced by unanimous vote its rejection of the decree. Instructions were actually issued to the police throughout the land to close the churches; but protests and

⁶ Some other evangelical bodies were also affected.

appeals from abroad led to the withdrawal of these instructions a few days before the appointed date. The position now (January, 1938) is that, although the decree has not been cancelled, its application is postponed "pending the report of an official commission." The situation has also been complicated by a change of administration in Rumania. The Ministry in power in October, 1937, promised, when postponing the application of the decree, to promote a law in the new Parliament establishing the rights of Baptists on a satisfactory basis. That Ministry, having failed to win the elections, has resigned. The new Government is strongly nationalistic and anti-Semitic, but during its first weeks of office it appears to have taken no action and issued no declarations implying repudiation of its predecessor's pledges. The Alliance has made a formal approach to the new Prime Minister and to the Minister of Cults, citing these pledges and asking that they shall be respected.

All who know the story of Rumania, and above all our brethren in the land, realize that the cause of religious freedom would already have been lost but for the existence and activity of our ecumenical Alliance.

It is almost superfluous to add that the prevalent tendency of States to assert "totalitarian" claims has increased the difficulties and confirmed the need of alert and constant watchfulness on the part of the Alliance. "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

VI.

OFFICERS OF THE ALLIANCE: YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK.

To the minor "routine" services of the Alliance—the collection and publication of statistics, the circulation of information, and so forth—we need not refer in detail. Nor need more than a few words be devoted to its organisation. Its Presidents (John Clifford, 1905-11; R. S. MacArthur, 1911-23; E. Y. Mullins, 1923-28; John MacNeill, 1928-34; and George W. Truett, from 1934) have all been men of distinction, who have justified the confidence of their brethren. Eighteen countries are represented in its Committee. At the outset two honorary secretaries were chosen, one for the Eastern Hemisphere and one for the Western. By 1928 it had become evident that efficiency demanded the whole time of a responsible executive officer, and therefore the writer, who had served as Commissioner for Europe from 1920, and had succeeded J. H. Shakespeare as Eastern Secretary in 1926, was appointed as the first General Secretary of the Alliance. His valued colleague as honorary associate secretary is Dr. Clifton D. Cray, President of Bates College.

An encouraging feature of recent years is the expansion and enlarged importance of the Young People's work. From 1928 the B.W.A. Young People's Committee, of which Dr. T. G. Dunning, of London, is chairman, and Dr. Frank H. Leavell, of Louisville, secretary, has been very effective in multiplying international contacts, especially in Europe; and under its auspices two international Baptist Youth Congresses have assembled, the first in Prague and the second—a remarkably successful gathering—in Zürich. The latter came at the close of the Regional Conferences of 1937, and was attended by the President and General Secretary of the Alliance.

J. H. RUSHBROOKE.

ALFRED UNIVERSITY, in the State of New York, has begun its second hundred years well. There are 278 men and women studying the liberal arts, 331 at ceramics, for which there is a high reputation both in research and in design. Ten are studying theology, for the University belongs to the Seventh-Day Baptists. Yet there are only 25 of that body pursuing other courses, with 50 ordinary Baptists, 54 Episcopalians, 60 Jews, 81 Presbyterians, 111 Roman Catholics, 114 Methodists. Evidently it is to be compared with our Nottingham and Southampton, for 549 of the students are New Yorkers. It is unique in buying for £2,000 a carillon of 35 bells from Belgium, whose tenor was cast in 1674, as a memorial to the president emeritus.

W.T.W.