

The Religious World

The Parliament of Religions

From our Special Correspondent

The projected "Parliament of Religions" in Chicago has become a fact, and a fact so assured that its principles and lessons can never again be eliminated from the Christian consciousness of America. Those who came up to its deliberations in answer to the faith of Dr. Barrows and his helpers have seen thousands of people thronging to the Art Institute, listening to lessons of toleration and brotherly love, and aspiring to the better knowledge of a common Father; no cloud has fallen upon the Congress, save it may be the passing one of the disapproval of the Archbishop of Canterbury—and that, in view of the cordial blessing and approval of Dionysus Latus, Archbishop of Zante, a high dignitary of the Greek Church, the enthusiastic participation of prelates of the Roman branch of the Catholic Church, and the noble addresses of at least one bishop and sundry clergy of the American Episcopal Church, caused but a small obscuration of the sunshine bestowed upon the Parliament by the distinctively "catholic" section of the universal Catholic Church of Christ, here gathered in conference with representatives of those who, under widely alien forms, still worship God according to the highest light of such revelation of himself as he has so far seen fit to give them.

The first days of the Congress were largely occupied in presentations of the various religions represented, and of the most attractive and impressive personalities of those who have come afar from East and from West to set forth their ideas of God and to express their sympathy with the great idea of human brotherhood in relation to this God.

Among the Indians, who, under the general name of Hindus, here represent a variety of religions and sects prevalent among that most religious people, stand prominently Narasima-Chari, Swami Vivakananda, and Dharmapala. The first of these is a high-caste Brahmin; in common with the many others of his race who are seen on the platform of the Congress, he is marked by a fine physique, indicating mental and spiritual refinement; he is a Brahmin of the Brahmins, young and handsome. The same qualities of inherited aristocracy mark Swami Vivakananda, a priest of Brahminism, who is one of the most thoroughly and broadly educated men in Europe wearing the yellow robe of the priest; a magnificent orator, Vivakananda stood on the platform of the Congress and plead eloquently for the ancient religion of India—the Vedic. Dharmapala, a Buddhist priest from Ceylon, has a face marked by deep spirituality; his expositions of the pure and gentle teachings of the prophet whom he represents have been everywhere listened to with respectful attention. While to him Gautama Buddha was the absolutely perfect teacher, he renders deep homage to Jesus the Christ of Christianity. His pure white robes mark him as the teacher. He is here directly representing the Bishop of Ceylon and the orthodox Buddhism of southern India. Miss Jeanne Serabji, Khersedji Laugma, of Bombay (a friend of Ramabai), a converted Parsee, and Chakrararti, of the Theosophical Society, are other noted Indians. A large delegation of Buddhists from Japan came early to the Congress, in Japanese ecclesiastical robes. The Rev. Zitsuzen Ashitsu and Kinza Ringe Hirai, the latter of whom speaks fluent English, excite great interest wherever they go. The Rt. Rev. Reuchi Shibzata is a Shinto Bishop, and an eloquent and earnest exponent of Shintoism; while Pung Kwang Yu, the eminent Chinese diplomat accredited to the Government of the United States, has been received with applause, less, perhaps, as a disciple of Confucius than as the representative of a nation with whom our recent breach of faith is keenly felt, at least by the Christian sentiment of our Nation as represented and expressed from time to time in this Congress.

As links between these representatives of far-away historic and ancient religions, whose beginnings reach back to the dawn of the development of Aryan and Semitic nations, and Christianity, stand the earnest promoters of social reform in India, members of the Brahmo-Somaj, that wonderful movement whereof Phillips Brooks said that it was the most interesting of all movements outside the religion of Christ, inasmuch as it was the first movement of the heathen mind toward Christianity, a movement not induced by Christian influence from without, but, as it seemed, the direct working of the Spirit of God from within the oldest of the great race-religions of the earth toward a fuller knowledge of Himself. Mozoomdar, the author of that wonderful book "The Oriental Christ," has thrillingly told of the growth into theology, morality, and spirituality of the Brahmo-Somaj, the reverence, trust in God and man, and the progressive spirit of this new dispensation of the religions of the East. The Unitarians set

forth a strong claim to fellowship with the Brahmo-Somaj, but there seems an essential difference between the working of the minds of the members toward the fuller light to be found in Jesus the Christ, and the theological position of our liberal religionists with regard to historical Christianity. The young man with Mozoomdar, the reformer of India, is Nagarka, and in his enthusiasm with regard to the abolition of child marriage and of caste, the treatment of child widows, and other abuses of India, he seems fitted to carry on the work of Babu Chaser Chunder Sen and Mozoomdar.

It remains to allude to one other presentment of a great religion, namely, the explanation of the tenets of Mohammedanism given by Mohammed Alexander Webb, of New York City. Mr. Webb, as an American advocating the claims of Islam, did not stand before the Congress in as favorable a light nor so insure the sympathies of the audience as did any of the able men who stood up simply to tell what their race-religions had done for them and for the nations whose light they had been, and how, all along the line, their fathers had been feeling after God if haply they might find him. An American who had become a Mussulman and returned to convert Americans to Mohammedanism did not have at the start the sympathy of an American Christian audience; and his attempt to defend polygamy was received with hisses, the only distinct mark of disapprobation shown by the audience during the sessions thus far. But it must be allowed that Mr. Webb made a very fair showing for his faith, gave a glowing picture of the simple, fervent faith in God of a true follower of the Prophet, of the moral condition of society under his teachings, and the high degree of civilization the Moors had once attained. He also corrected many impressions which he claimed were false as to the warlike nature of the faith, its sensuality and degradation of women, claiming that it gave to woman a high position, and that such social vices as drunkenness and prostitution and marital infelicities were impossible in it. A notable figure and event of these early days of the Congress has been the Archbishop Dionysus Latus, of Zante, Greece, who, in his rich pontifical robes, attended by his archdeacons, delivered a superb historical address on the ancient Grecian influence over the world and the position of the Greek Church as the historical pioneer and Church of the fathers. The original Catholic Church of Christ it seemed historically to be by his showing; and as, at the close of his noble address, he bestowed its blessing upon the Congress, saying: "I embrace as my brothers in Jesus Christ, as my brothers in the divinely inspired Gospel, all men, for we have a common Creator and common Father—God—and a universal Saviour—Christ," and led the vast assembly in a prayer for blessings upon the united peoples of the world and the United States, it seemed as if the Parliament had received an apostolic benediction by the hand of this magnificent white-haired prelate, direct historical representative of the first Church of Christ.

It is not our purpose to distinguish the many men who have spoken here. Amid so many foreign religions pressing from without, the impulse is in no wise to accentuate lines of Christian division. Yet we must note a fine address by Bishop Dudley, of Kentucky, because it bravely sounded a note of reunion along the lines of historic thought heretofore set forth by the American Episcopal Church. Other utterances have been as liberal—and have been wisely liberal—because in them the speakers have in no wise yielded the grounds of their own personal convictions. Before taking up certain bearings of subjects connected with this Parliament, which we must do in a later letter, let us note the general trend of subjects as they have been treated by speakers at the Congress. Up to this writing the subjects have been rather of a speculative and abstract order. The great idea of God—Theism—was treated by the Hindu, the Jew, the Buddhist, and the Christian; the correlative idea of human brotherhood, by the Greek, the Japanese, the Chinaman, the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, and men of other Protestant faiths; the essential connection of religion and humanity, by such men as Lyman Abbott, Edward Everett Hale, Joseph Cook, Cardinal Gibbons, Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, Prince Serge Wolkonsky, a Russian Prince, and the Rev. H. Peirira Mendes. The influence of comparative and dead religions was ably set forth in one session; while the Scriptures, Jewish and Hebrew, were upheld by Professor D. G. Lyon, the Rev. Chas. H. Briggs, D.D., the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Seton, Rabbi Gottheil, the Rev. Theodore Munger, Professor J. Estlin Carpenter, and others. The Historic Christ and the Incarnation were fruitful themes for many papers. The Relation of Philosophy to Religion, with Max Müller, Dr. Haeckel, of London, and Professors Pratt, Dwight, and Landis as writers or speakers; and Christian Evangelization, with a paper on "Christianity Verified by Human Experience," from Professor Kosaki, of Japan, with an address by the Rev. B. F. Mills on "Christ the Saviour of the World," were notable features of the close of the first week's session.

This review of the external and internal aspects of the great

Parliament of Religions is necessary to a full understanding of the objects and lessons which this great gathering together of the old and the new, the East and the West, aims to accomplish; and so far, at least, amid the material progress which so marvelously has stamped itself upon Chicago's great Exposition, the Parliament of Religions has, under its gorgeous Eastern robes and its sober Western black, asserted the supremacy of the spiritual nature of man and of the truth of his universal brotherhood, found in his universal sonship to God above all evidences of his mental and material achievements. The Parliament turns now to the discussion of the social problems which press so heavily upon the attention of the religious world.

The denominational congresses have, during the Parliament, met in smaller halls of the Institute buildings. While the main interest of the Congress has centered in Columbus Hall, where the Parliament of Religions for eight or nine hours daily listened to brilliant and forceful words from the acutest intellects and most magnetic speakers of the world, yet, as Mr. Bonney, the President of all the Congresses, has repeatedly said, the great success the World's Parliament has gained was possible only upon the basis of these denominational efforts. The Jewish Church Congress, the Lutheran, the Evangelical Lutheran, the Congregational, the Universalist, the Disciples of Christ, the New Jerusalem Church, the United Brethren, the Reformed Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Unitarian, the Seventh-Day Baptist, and the Friends' Congresses have all taken place. The Roman Catholic Church held a successful and enthusiastic congress, with representations from all its great benevolent and spiritual societies, its Young Men's Guilds, its Young Women's Societies, and throughout the days of meeting it has kept an open court where all inquiries regarding its faith have been answered. Among the general societies that have held congresses subsidiary to the Parliament, perhaps the sessions of the Theosophical Society have created the greatest public interest, while the Free Religious Association, with Colonel Higginson as its leader, attracted special audiences, and the meetings of the Christian Scientists have been largely attended. The Evangelical Association of North America is holding its sessions as we go to press.



The Evangelical Alliance

We published last week the general programme of the Evangelical Alliance Conferences to be held in Chicago October 8-15. We give our readers below the principal features of the programme of Section Conferences, which will be quite as important as the general Conferences. These Section Conferences will constitute a school of instruction in practical and successful methods of Christian work. Instruction will be given by experts, who will not present theories, but speak out of their own experience in their special lines of work:

Evangelistic.—Christian Work in the Factory Town, the Rev. Percy S. Grant, rector of the Church of the Ascension, New York; Christian Work in the Lumber Camp, Mr. A. Terry, Chippewa Falls, Wis., and the Rev. W. G. Puddefoot; How to Reach the Non-Church-Going Element of Our Foreign Population, the Rev. E. A. Adams and Professor Jernberg, of Chicago, and others; How to Reach Non-Church-Going Workingmen, the Rev. W. S. Rainsford, D.D., New York, and Professor C. R. Henderson, D.D., University of Chicago; House-to-House Visitation, Mrs. Capron, Moody's Institute, Chicago; Athletics in Reaching Young Men, Professor Stagg, University of Chicago, and Professor Henry Drummond, Glasgow; Object Talks and Stereopticon Sermons, the Rev. C. H. Tyndall, New York City Mission; The Evening Congregation, the Rev. John C. Faville, Appleton, Wis.; Open-Air Services, the Rev. E. H. Byington, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Tent Work, Mr. F. Schiverea, Chicago; Denominational City Missions, the Rev. J. C. Armstrong, Chicago; Deaconesses, Mrs. Lucy Rider Meyer, Chicago.

Reformatory.—The Churches and the Suppression of Vice, Mr. Anthony Comstock, New York; Organized Charities, the Rev. H. G. Hoadley, Waterbury, Conn.; Political Reforms, Professor John R. Commons, Indiana University; Tenement-House Reform, the Rev. W. T. Elsing, New York, and others; Criminal Administration, Major McClaghry, Chicago; Substitutes for the Saloon, Professor John R. Commons, Indiana University.

Educational.—The Churches and the Kindergarten; University Extension, Professor Nathaniel Butler, University of Chicago; Chautauqua Circles, Dr. W. A. Duncan, Chautauqua Assembly; Popular Lectures, Major James B. Pond, New York; Manual Training, Mr. E. W. Blatchford, Chicago.

Social.—The Churches and Neighborhood Guilds; Mothers' Unions, Mrs. Lucy S. Bainbridge, Superintendent of Woman's Branch of the New York City Mission; Domestic Circles, Miss Grace H. Dodge, New York; College Settlements—Men's, Mr. Robert A. Woods, Andover House, Boston; Women's, Miss Jane Addams, Hull House, Chicago; Working-Girls' Clubs, Miss Grace H. Dodge, New York; Boys' Clubs, the Rev. John C. Collins, New Haven, and the Rev. Howard S. Bliss, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Boys' Brigades, Professor Henry Drummond, Glasgow; Fresh-Air Funds, the Rev. Willard Parsons, New York; Outing Clubs, the Rev. William T. Elsing, New York City Mission, and the Rev. Howard S. Bliss, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Holiday Houses, Miss E. A. Buchanan, New York.

Economic.—The Churches and Labor Bureaus; New England Kitchens; Savings Banks and Provident Funds, the Rev. Howard S. Bliss, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Benevolent Pawnbroking.



Nonconformist Marriages

One of the anomalies connected with the Established Church of England is that all its clergymen and curates are officers of the State, while the ablest and most devoted Nonconformists have no such recognition. The brainless son of an Earl who has been put into the Church because his parents did not know what else to do with him, the State regards as one of its officials, while such lofty characters as Dr. Dale and Principal Fairbairn, and such brilliant preachers as Dr. McLaren and Robert Horton, are entirely ignored. This anomaly manifests itself when weddings are to be celebrated. A Church of England minister, being an officer of the State, may perform the ceremony without the presence of any other official, but Nonconformists have no power. Without the presence of a Registrar they are not allowed to perform the marriage ceremony. This injustice has long been recognized. Recently a select committee in Parliament finished its labors and reported to the House. It concluded that the compulsory attendance of a Registrar at Nonconformist marriages is neither necessary nor desirable for the purpose of securing accurate registration, but that, whatever change in the law may be made, every reasonable and necessary precaution should be taken to secure the accurate registration of the marriage immediately after its solemnization. The plan suggested by the committee is essentially the same as that in use in many of our own States, where the ministers are empowered to perform the service, but held responsible for making accurate returns to the State authorities. A very much better plan, we venture to believe, is that which requires all persons contemplating marriage to secure a license from the Government, thus putting upon the officers of the State the responsibility of determining whether they may be lawfully married, and leaving to the ministers of religion the duty of performing the religious ceremony. But whatever plan may be adopted, anything which recognizes the large and useful body of Dissenters as equally entitled to the privileges of the State will be a great step in advance. We regard this movement to secure for Nonconformists the privilege of celebrating marriage to be one more step towards the inevitable disestablishment of the Church, which, in the nature of things, cannot be very far in the future.



Gleanings

—The Christian Endeavor Convention of 1894 will be held in Cleveland, July 11 to 15. Twenty-five diplomas, it is said, will be awarded societies reporting the largest number of pledged proportionate systematic givers in their membership. Twenty-five more will go to the societies forming the largest number of societies during the year, and a banner will be given to the local union that gains the greatest number of societies during the year.

—An indication of the increasing effort toward good church music is the establishment in the Metropolitan College of Music (New York City) of courses in choir-conducting and lectures in the history of church music in Europe and America. Frequent discussion, both in the lecture-room and in the press, will be given by various members of its faculty to the needs of American church music, which, combined with their wide experience, should accomplish some definite results in a line of work upon which prevalent views are usually hazy and often conflicting.

—A canonry at Bristol, England, has been conferred on the Rev. Samuel Barnett, the vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel, in London. Mr. Barnett and his wife have had much to do with philanthropic work in the Whitechapel districts, and the foundation of university settlements there. He was, if not the founder, at least the organizer and manager of Toynbee Hall and its colony, which now have many followers in East London and in several American cities. The University Extension scheme in England also owes much to Mr. Barnett's efforts.

—The annual Convention of Christians at Work, in the United States and Canada, will be held under the auspices of the International Christian Workers' Association this year in Atlanta, Ga., for seven days, November 9-15. These Conventions have now been held for seven years, and are interesting large numbers of earnest Christians throughout the country. Railroads in nearly all parts of the country have granted a reduced rate of a fare and a third, and Atlanta Christian people are preparing to welcome the delegates in their usual hospitable manner. The singing will be under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. George C. Stebbins, the well-known Gospel singers. Under the terms of the invitation, special delegates are appointed by churches, while any Christian can attend as general delegate with the privilege of reduced rates, and in some cases entertainment. Visits for Northern delegates to Washington and to Southern battle-fields, with special trains, have been arranged for.