

ULTIMATE RELIGION.

REV. MR. DIXON'S THIRD SERMON ON WORLD'S FAIR PROPHECIES.

How the Great and Unique Gathering Emphasized the Glory of Christianity, Strengthening of Faith Incident to the Religious Parliament.

NEW YORK, Nov. 19.—The series of sermons on the "Prophecies of the World's Fair" was continued in Association hall this morning by the Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr. The subject for today was "The Religion of the Future, From the Point of View of the World's Parliament of Religions."

He maintained that this great and unique gathering has emphasized the glory of Christianity. He declared that the ultimate religion of man which we begin to see dimly outlining itself will recognize the wider revelation of God to all peoples and races, as did Paul; that the test of its orthodoxy can only be the measure of the character of its disciples; that bigotry and ignorance must yield to charity and light; that true civilization and "The Kingdom of God" are one and the same in their development, and that the missionary efforts of Christianity will be readjusted to the apostolic ideal of a more sympathetic recognition of the truths of other systems. The text chosen was:

We are also his offspring.—Acts xvii, 28. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Galatians v, 14.

THE RELIGIOUS PARLIAMENT.

The world's parliament of religions held during the great exposition in Chicago, it seems to me, marks an epoch in the age history of humanity.

To the earnest evangelical enthusiast this meeting most naturally excited the deepest feelings of antagonism. It was a question of temperament and thought habit. Yet many who opposed the idea have been forced to confess that the results did not justify their alarm. A few of our best men of deep spirituality, tinged unconsciously with Greek mysticism and eastern dream, still persist in their protest. This thought was graphically expressed recently in a letter on the subject to the editor of a religious weekly. The writer said, "I do not believe that in many centuries such a dishonor has been inflicted upon the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as by this deliberate attempt to bring it into adulterous intimacy with the pagan religions of the world."

But after all is not this a most superficial view of a great event?

What has Christianity to fear from contact of its noblest representatives with the priests and prophets of all other religions? Can we believe that the apostle Paul would have declined to enter such an arena of warfare from fear of contamination? Was that the sort of religion practiced by the great apostle to the gentile world? Hardly.

The worst that can be said about this parliament is that it was spectacular. It was of course a show. So was all the fair. But was it a worthy show? Shows have their deep lessons for man. A show may be heavy with the wisdom of ages and eloquent in its prophecy of the future. This show, it must be granted, was something new under the sun. It marks distinctly a period in the whole history of the world. The like was never seen before. Hence its tremendous import. It was a show, yes! And what a show!

THE ONE GOSPEL.

What a contrast with the past when we greeted each other with curses and carried on our arguments with sword and spear, shot and shell! Really it is not worth while to hold such an exhibition of human progress? Does it not mean much for the future of the race? And now that this gathering is in the past and become a matter of history does it not begin to appear already that Christianity is to be the gainer by this interchange of ideas?

By contrast Christianity shines in this gathering with unique brilliancy. No other religion has spoken a word to compare with the glory of the two thoughts in the texts quoted. No one has told us news that can compare with the majestic thought of a universal human brotherhood—an overshadowing fatherhood of God. The only religion that has told us to love our neighbor as ourselves is the religion of Jesus Christ! How poor is the sum total of all else! Should it not thrill the soul of Christendom to stand thus face to face with the assembled world and feel the throbbing of such a thought? For this reason no Christian ever asks the question, is life worth living? The world that gropes in the twilight of smaller revelations may ponder the problem of nihilism, but the Christian replies:

Is life worth living? Yes, so long as there is wrong to right. Will of the weak against the strong. Or tyranny to fight; Long as there lingers gloom to chase, Or streaming tear to dry, One kindred woe, one sorrowing face That smiles as we draw nigh, Long as a tale of anguish swells The heart and lids grow wet, And at the sound of Christmas bells We pardon and forget; So, O Faith with Freedom reigns, At whose Hope survives, And whose Charity remains, And whose love lives; While there is one unrodden track For intellect or will, And men are free to think and act, Life is worth living still.

Will not our own faith be strengthened and emboldened by this meeting? Does not the bare fact of such a gathering point to the ultimate coming of a broader, truer faith—a faith which every Christian knows will be dominated by Jesus Christ? It seems to me that this parliament was potent in the development of the religion of the future.

DEITY OF THE CHURCH.

First—That the church must enlarge its faith to accept the whole revelation of the word of God. It is not the large faith that asserts as a principle

that the whole word of God is contained in the canons of Scriptures we call the Bible. The apostles held a grander conception of God and his revelation. Paul declared that God had spoken to all peoples—he declared that without knowledge of the Hebrew revelation of law the people of the earth were a law unto themselves. We must grow to this larger faith. This gathering of the ends of the earth in the name of the one God has re-emphasized this truth. We have learned anew the old, old truth that God has not left himself without a witness among all people.

The Roman Catholic and the Protestant meet on this platform and learn that when they really know one another nine-tenths of the body of their creeds are identical. We see the beginning—a true catholicism in spirit if not in form.

For the first time we really meet the true representatives of the millions of China, Japan, India, the far east and the far north. We find that to each of these people God has spoken a word. We find nothing there that is worth having that is not contained in Christianity, but we do find much that is from God, and we rejoice and take courage. We grasp with greater firmness the faith that the fullness of his word in Christ they will yet receive. The faith of the future must have this world consciousness of God's presence and truth.

We must not in the future confound strange faces and strange costumes and strange tongues with the devil and his angels.

It is too small a notion of God. It is too big a conception of the devil. Such a confusion must become more and more impossible in the faith of the new generation.

Second—That the only test of the orthodoxy of the religion of the future will be the measure of the character of its disciples.

There is only one conceivable condition under which Christianity might tremble to enter into discussion and comparison with other religions—if the character of its disciples were inferior. Before this supreme test the Christianity of Jesus Christ today stands matchless. We know its authority must be supreme because the type of man it produces is the highest of which man has yet shown himself capable.

The creeds of the world are all undergoing the searching investigation of the electric light of this scientific age. Many traditions are being swept away as fiction pure and simple. Any creed that cannot stand this search ought to perish. I do not want a religion that is not true. If I am wrong, the sooner I know it the better—the better for me; the better for all concerned. True orthodoxy is loyalty to the truth. The creed that survives the shock of the iconoclasm of the twentieth century will be one that can meet and that will be ever ready to meet with calmest assurance the assault of hosts arrayed against it, and that courts the most searching analysis of science and philosophy. It cannot be called Roman or Protestant, orthodox or heterodox, old school or new school; it must be vital—its logic must be the logic of life. We are told that in Pennsylvania there is a religious body of Germans who take an eager share in the world's work. But it is customary among them for a man to give up money making at middle age.

To this end he lives abstemiously and lays by every penny, accustoming his children to dress plainly and to live without meat or dainties. At 50 he usually hands over his office or shop to his sons and gives the rest of his life to missionary or charitable work for the bettering of his kind.

A CHRISTIAN DEFINED.

Do you ask the question, Are these people Christians? Perhaps they have no organic connection with any historic church, Roman or Protestant. But this really has nothing to do with the question. They are Christians if they live Christ's life—it does not matter what they call themselves or what we may chose to call them. All religions are true which produce Christlike men and women. It is blasphemy to call any religion false that does produce such disciples. It is blasphemy to call any religion Christian which fails to produce Christlike men and women. Only here will we find the supreme test of the true religion. This is to be the only measure of the orthodoxy of the future. Sectarianism is fast dying, even in its own homes. People more and more are ceasing to care about the abstractions over which our fathers fought unending wars. In the great centers of our life sectarianism in Christianity is already downed. This is because the test of life is coming now to be the only test of creed. We have come to believe you—to know that a man's life is his creed.

To know the religion of a people at its true worth and meaning find their life—you need go no further. There is nothing more to be said. As a matter of fact the Midway plaisance at the fair was the most interesting parliament of religions ever assembled. In so far as the exhibits there made reflected the actual life of different peoples, they gave us the only reliable statement of their creeds. We may put on our best clothes among strangers and juggle with words—the life tells the real story. The Turkish establishment, so far as it is really representative, is an exposition of the Koran, the Chinese of Confucius and so on to the end of the catalogue, with the White City itself, which stands as the expression of Christian progress and attainment. A Chinaman sent the following letter some time ago to the editor of a New York newspaper:

I saw that the board of foreign missions is raising \$1,000,000 to convert the heathens of China, India and other unfortunate and neglected children of God. I am one of those belated heathens to which they wish to convert, but heathens as I am I feel as if I have Christian charity enough left to plead for a certain portion of New York city. Let me suggest to the board that they leave half of China's share for the Fourth ward in New York and the other half to that part of Harlem bounded

by Tenth avenue, First avenue and Ninetieth and One Hundred and Twenty-fifth streets. This is a territory almost as large as the county of Poi Loy, in which is situated Tong Cho, China, where the bulk of the money is to be sent—a county where there was not a drunkard or a murderer for 300 years.

Here is the report of a Chinese who has just come in from Harlem with a broken head, split nose and a torn and tattered coat because he dared to walk upon their streets. If the board is unable to find a missionary who is brave enough to live in Harlem, let it put up the cash right here, and I will risk my life to change Harlem's savagery to humanity.

When I think that a Chinaman is not good enough to live on the same land for only a short while with a Christian, may he even forfeit the privilege of becoming a citizen because his skin is neither white nor black and his civilization is peculiar—I can't understand why the board is willing to pay an enormous price to try to get these yellow-skinned men by the million to go to heaven.

WONG CHUN FOH.

There is food for thought in this challenge of the Chinaman. If these things can be justly charged to Christianity, then was to the cause! It has failed in the supreme test of life! There is no other test.

BIGOTRY AND CIVILIZATION.

Third—That bigotry must yield to charity. This parliament seems to make the beginning of a serious and honest study of comparative religion as the foundation of the largest faith. The outcome of such study is always the decline of bigotry and narrowness with the decline of ignorance.

The decline of bigotry inevitably leads to the decline of the spirit of faction and division. Such study must lead us directly to a unity of association and action. The aspiration for vital union in Christendom has thus been quickened as never before. This quickening must continue as this study continues and the great essentials are insisted upon rather than minor differences exaggerated.

Fourth—That true civilization and "the Kingdom of God" must be seen to be one and the same thing in their advance and development.

The foreigner objects to Christianity because of certain vices he sees dominant in the manhood of nominal Christian nations. Our answer is: "These men are not Christians; they have not the spirit of Christ; they have not been born anew with his spirit; they must not be taken as examples. The social vices of which you complain are the very powers Christianity is daily combatting." In one sense the answer is to the point. In another it is not.

We have certainly in the past failed to make the same allowance in passing judgment upon the civilization of those who hold strange religions. We have charged every national vice to the heathen's god and priest and temple. We must not in fairness quail before a similar method of reasoning.

The fact is, this is the test of life again. Do what we may, juggle with arguments as we may, Christian or heathen can not escape the logic of the accusation. In one sense Christianity is responsible fully and wholly for the product known as Christian civilization. Civilization is the material incarnation of the faiths of a people. True civilization is the growing universal "Kingdom of God" of which Jesus constantly taught, which he came into the world to establish. In proportion as it is false, Christianity has failed in its mission. The distinction of the sacred and the secular must perish. The logic of the heathens is unanswerable. All things are sacred. The sphere of Christianity is the sphere of the conscience. What does not touch conscience is outside the domain of the moral world. Every power that remains untouched and unbound in our midst is a standing accusation and challenge to life, to Christianity. An infamous act by the government of a Christian nation must be charged to the Christian's account—the government is his. If it is not Christianized, so much the worse for his Christianity. If we permit a social regime which manufactures drunkards and prostitutes and murderers, it is a poor excuse to lay it all to natural depravity and charge up to the poor heathen's religion every sin of his ancestor and of all his living collateral relations. If our civilization is anti-Christian, let us see to it that we have here the challenge to mortal combat that we must settle before we demand the faith of other worlds.

AN INCIDENT.

I read the other day of two little bootblacks who were bosom friends—Jim and Andy. A good angel directed a ticket of the Fresh Air fund to Jim during the hot summer days. He was delighted at the prospect of a vacation, of fruit and fields and fun. But he grieved because of Andy. They hatched a plan for Andy to take the ticket and be Jim for a week in the country and then say he was the wrong boy and after this he could go, and they would both get the outing. Andy objected to going first, and it was arranged finally for Jim to lead in the scheme. The writer says that the farmer and his wife, with whom Jim went to spend his holidays, made him heartily welcome and told him they would do all they could to help him enjoy himself, but he must promise not to say any bad words nor tell a single wrong story.

Jim was staggered. What chance would there be now for poor Andy? The thought of his chum's disappointment worried him, and all the more when every day of country life and country fare brought him some new delight. It seemed quite too bad that his partner could have none of it.

The quiet habits and simple piety of the farmer's family, and their kind way with him were a revelation to Jim—a revelation of himself as well as of other things. Moral sense awoke in the untought street boy.

The thought came to him that if he could not tell a lie for Andy he might tell the truth. All his new surroundings encouraged the idea, and after some hesitation he spoke of his little partner in the city and confessed the scheme that had been agreed upon between them.

His good friends heard him with moistened eyes. Two neglected boys had at least been keeping the divine

commandment to love one another and prefer one another. Was not God preparing the way for them to learn the rest?

Love, kindness answered the question by sending for Andy at once. He was provided with a good home in the country not far from the house of the worthy farmer, with whom Jim continued to stay.

How can Christianity flippantly dismiss responsibility for a civilization that produces and leaves to die in the streets and prisons hundreds of thousands of such boys without one honest effort to save them having ever been made?

How can we face Japan with her cleanliness, her fraternal unity of society, without distinctions between rich and poor, with our millions of our suffering paupers? Well may Japan say: "Wait! Do not hurry me. Your sects confuse me. Let me study and find what is the real Christianity of Christ." The religion of the future will shoulder the responsibility for the civilization of which it must be the synonym.

MISSIONARY ADJUSTMENT.

Fifth—That there will be a readjustment of our missionary methods in part.

It is said that the most remarkable and powerful of all the addresses of this congress was from the Rev. George T. Chandler, an English missionary who came 9,000 miles to deliver his message. After correcting such representations of the foreign speakers as might be supposed to reflect on Christian missionaries, and speaking enthusiastically of their devotion, earnestness, enthusiasm and Christly spirit, he yet firmly maintained the necessary revolution of missionary methods. He believed the parliament ought to result in the bringing about of such union between different churches as now exists between members of the same church, and as a step to establishing such relations, between the Christian religions and non-Christian faiths such relations of toleration, mutual respect and love as now exists between Christian church and Christian church. The missionaries of the world are far in advance of the churches at home in sentiment on this question. They realize that the conversion of the world and the union of Christians must go together. The present missionary problem is, "Given a Christendom of religious sects, wrangling about minor points of doctrine, to produce a universal harmony from their united action." No individual church adequately represents, nor can the whole taken indiscriminately adequately represent, until they shall be united in one, what Christianity means. "The Christian workers all around the globe are looking toward this parliament for encouragement in missionary work, and if it does not commit itself unreservedly to the principle that the communication of Christianity is of priceless value to the world it will turn its back on Jesus Christ. We shall never falter in the belief that our religion must be given freely, unreservedly, with royal bounty, to all the sons of men. Yet what we claim for ourselves we concede to others. We say to each of the 10 great religions here represented: 'Live for your religion; work for it; pray for it. We will not hinder you. If you have any religious beliefs of value to us, we want them. The meaning of Christianity on a missionary point of view is infinite desire to give and infinite willingness to receive.'"

Our missionary force on the foreign field have already begun this work of revolutionizing our theology. Every creed of Christendom has felt an irresistible reaction from the world-conscious spirit of our return missionaries and their works. We have modified our creeds accordingly. Our Congregational brethren fought over the Noyes case five years. But it was settled for them by the foreign missionaries on the field. The vote at Worcester was but the ratification of this grand missionary council. This same power, touching daily the religions of the world, will force us slowly but surely into union methods of work and finally into the organic union of which prophetic hearts have dreamed and prayed.

This close brush with the heathen world at Chicago will bring the Christian world to closer shoulder touch. We look into each other's faces, and thrilled by a common love for Christ find that we are really heathen. When we know this once, we can seriously begin the campaign for serving the world.

The religion of the future will surely federate into united action the scattered and hostile forces of Christianity. When this is done, the world is conquered.

A Great Yellow Jacket Nest.

Seven miles northeast of Nacogdoches, near the Logansport road, there is a most wonderful yellow jacket's nest—a wonderful in size, age and locality. These little stinging flies, or whatever they should be called, usually nest in the ground and have one door for entrance and exit. Their nest is built of material like wasp nests, about the size of half a bushel, with several rooms, or apartments, and many cells in which the young ones are raised. They usually occupy a nest but one year.

The nest in question is located upon a pine tree, or rather around the trunk of a pine tree, that is about a foot in diameter, and it is about 18 feet above the ground. The tree appears to pass through the very center of the nest, which is conical in shape, or, as a farmer expressed it, "shaped just like an old fashioned hoopskirt," but much larger, being about five feet high and same in diameter at the base, which is as flat as if it had been sawed off. It appears to be many years old, and is built of the usual material. The yellow jackets may be seen standing at the many holes in the base of the nest, or on the underside. They are not flighty, because they are out of reach of disturbance. The ordinary ground nester is always ready to raise Cain, and woe be to the animal that stands and stamps upon it.—Galveston News.

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