

VIEW FROM THE TOWER

ECHOES FROM THE WORLD'S GREAT PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

[The following article, excepting the paragraphs below, is reprinted in Scripture Studies, Vol. IV, chapter vi, which please see.]

The World's Parliament of Religions, recently convened in the city of Chicago, is justly regarded as one of the wonders of this remarkable time in which we live; and while all Christendom, and indeed the whole world, regard it, from their standpoint of observation, as a wonderful achievement for truth and righteousness, the questions in the minds of the Lord's consecrated "little flock" should be, How does it appear in the light of divine prophecy? has it a place in the divine plan of the ages? do the watchmen on the Towers of Zion view it in the same light as do those in the rank and file of the world's religions?

Prof. Henry Drummond, author of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," was on the program for an address on "Christianity and Evolution." He failed to arrive, however, and his paper, which was sent in advance, was read by Dr. Bristol. The following extract from it shows how far Prof. Drummond's faith has departed from the one true foundation laid in the Scriptures. He said:

"The theory of evolution fills a gap at the very beginning of our religion, and if science is satisfied in a general way with its theory of evolution as the method of creation, assent is a cold word with which those whose business it is to know and love the ways of God should welcome it. [This was greeted with loud applause.] As to its harmony with the theory about the book of Genesis [as to its authority], it may be that theology and science have been brought into perfect harmony, but the era of the reconcilers is past. Genesis is not a scientific, but a religious book. Its object was purely religious, the point being, not how certain things were made, which is a question for science, but that God made them. [If that be the only object of the book of Genesis, then why does it attempt more than the simple statement that God made all things? Boasted science comes very far short of common sense, as well as of the divine revelation.—EDITOR.] There

is only one theory of creation in the field, and that is evolution.

"Under the new view the question of revelation is undergoing expansion. The whole order and scheme of nature are seen to be only part of the manifold revelation of God. As to the specific revelations, the Old and New Testaments, *evolution* has already given to the world *what amounts to a new Bible*. [Yea, verily; for it could never harmonize with the old Bible, the divinely inspired Word of Truth.—EDITOR.] The suggestion has been made that sin is probably a relic of the animal caste, the undestroyed residuum of the animal.

. . . . If science can help us in any way to know how sin came into the world, it may help us better to know how to get it out. [Applause.] A better understanding of its genesis and nature may modify, at least, some of the attempts made to get rid of it." ["Professing themselves wise, they became fools"—foolish indeed in discarding the Bible account of the fall of man and the Bible plan of salvation through faith in the precious blood of Christ our Redeemer, who alone has power to eliminate sin and to restore the sinner to the divine image in which he was first created.—EDITOR.]

Several propositions have already been publicly made for another similar world's congress, to convene in the year 1900; and New York, Jerusalem and Benares, India, have been suggested as suitable places. A great "Eucharistic Congress" was held in May under the direction of Roman Catholics, the object of which seemed to be to advance the cause of union between the various branches of the Catholic church, particularly the largest two bodies, the Greek and Roman branches.

Let all the children of light watch and be sober (1 Thes. 5:5, 6); let the soldiers of the cross be valiant for the truth, and receive no other gospel, though it be declared by an angel from heaven (Gal. 1:8); and let them consummate no union with any class save the "little flock" of consecrated and faith-

ful followers of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

NOMINAL CHURCH PECULIARITIES

Canton, Ohio, has some peculiar people. A Congregational Church there, after getting behind financially, decided by a vote—in which the pastor joined—that they would unite with any denomination that would purchase their meeting house. The Methodists were their purchasers—purchasing people and pastor as well as real estate—and now it is a Methodist Episcopal church; and the minister has been installed a M. E.

INTEREST IN GERMANY

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—Thinking it will be of interest to you, and perhaps also to the readers of the WATCH TOWER, to hear some items of interest from Germany, I give here the translation of part of a letter received by Brother Link, who had sent German DAWN, VOLS. I. and II., to some of his friends in Wurttemberg, Germany.

Yours in our Lord,

O. v. ZECH.

The letter follows:

"In our Lord Jesus, dear Brother:—True, our correspondence had rested a good while, but yet the old love continued to smoulder among us; and, where this is the case, the least little breath will ignite it again to full blaze. Our hearts rejoice that the light of the truth, which we for quite a long time enjoyed, has found you, viz., about the great purpose of salvation and plan of God to counteract and to repair the fall of Adam. The author of the noble work, MILLENNIAL DAWN, is a great scribe, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven; and, although we are already familiar with many of the truths he therein treats, we do rejoice none the less because thus we have an additional witness and authority for the grand doctrine of salvation. Some years since [The writer is a brother in his 80th year.] a proposition was made from England, to form a holy alliance. To it all possible sects and parties were invited except those who teach and confess a "restitution of all things." Now there appears, from an Englishman, the clearest evidence for this dear doctrine, yet educed.

Church pastor at Zanesville, O. How evident that principles and doctrines have perished with the masses of Protestants!

Following the example of his Baptist fellow-minister of Long Island City, who gave the use of his church to the Catholics of that city after their own building had been burned, the Rev. Mr. Preyer, of the Knox Presbyterian Church, of Harrison, N. J., has offered the use of his church to the Catholics who are about to organize a church in the town. Father Kernan, the priest, who is in charge of the organization, has declined the offer with thanks, as he had made other arrangements before the offer was made.—*New York Tribune*.

"Dear Brother, we will rejoice together, and thank God for the revelation of the mystery of godliness, which so long was covered like the rose in the bud, but which, as the light of the truth has shone out upon us, has developed into a most beautiful and fragrant rose. We now thank you most heartily for the valuable present [the DAWN]. May the Lord repay you a thousandfold. We remain your debtor in thankful love!

"We heartily participate in the cause of the communion here. In the neighborhood we count eight larger and smaller communions. It is our most agreeable business. Our house is a house of entertainment of brethren; and this brings many a blessed hour, while our neighbors pity us because of the heavy burden of such hospitality.

"Dear Brother, I wish that you could on a Sunday afternoon enter our gathering. How you would rejoice because of the goodly number of truth-loving souls! In the Summer the prepared hall is full; there is a nice organ, at the table sit four in their eightieth year. Now, hearty and thankful greetings from us all. We hope for a blessed meeting again in Paradise: there we shall rejoice together. Yours in brotherly love."

Word from Brother and Sister Bøhmer, in Germany, indicates that they are successful in finding more hearing ears there than we had at first expected. They are also meeting with considerable opposition: we trust that they are learning to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross.

THE GRACE OF LIBERALITY

IV. QUAR., LESSON VII., NOV. 12, 2 COR. 8:1-12.

Golden Text—"He became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich."—2 Cor. 8, 9.

At the council held by the apostles at Jerusalem. A. D. 50, which determined that the Jewish law was not binding upon those converts to Christianity, from among the Gentiles, Paul promised to take up collections among the congregations of the Gentiles for the poor at Jerusalem. He had already taken collections in Macedonia and Greece and Asia Minor; and in the words of this lesson he appeals to the church at Corinth.

There was great need for such a collection: (1) The converts to Christianity were mostly from the poorer classes. (2) The turbulent state of the times had driven many people from the surrounding country into the city of Jerusalem for greater security, and many were thus thrown upon the charity of their fellows. (3) Christians were unpopular, and could expect no outside aid.

The appeal of this lesson was made A. D. 57, about twelve years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Concerning the distress of Jerusalem at that time, Canon Cook says,—“The abnormal condition of the labor market is illustrated by the fact that Agrippa II. was compelled to resort to artificial means, such as paving the streets of Jerusalem with white marble—after having declined a proposal to destroy and rebuild ‘Solomon’s porch’—in order to supply with work and wages 18,000 workmen who had been employed in repairing the temple. Life and property were rendered painfully insecure by the terrible atrocities of the Sicarii, at once assassins and robbers.

Charity at that time was not a public affair, as it is at present in civilized countries, where county or parish homes and other aids for the indigent are liberally supported by a general tax, and supplied regardless of religious professions. Nevertheless, we are to remember that the forty years’ day of wrath upon the Jewish nation, which began with our Lord’s ministry, A. D. 30, and ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, was a pattern or type of the present day of wrath upon nominal “Christendom,” which, having begun with the year A. D. 1875, will end with the beginning of A. D. 1915. And while there are better provisions now for the poor, we may reasonably expect that coming disturbances of society

may disarrange these systematic charities, and that there will be opportunities for doing good unto all men—especially toward the household of faith. At all events, there will always be opportunities for those who may desire, and who have this world’s goods, to spend it for spiritual food for the famishing ones fleeing out of Babylon. Babylon spends millions annually upon her own literature and institutions, and “knows not that she is wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Rev. 3:17) And God’s children in her need help from those whose eyes have been anointed with the eye-salve of present truth. It is not our financial help that they need, but our spiritual help; and yet financial ability is necessary to the holding forth of the Word of life. Let each one possessing the gift of wealth exercise it according to his judgment of the Master’s will—in “doing good unto all men [temporarily or spiritually, especially spiritually] as he has opportunity, especially to the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:10

The Apostle’s experience proved to him the truth of the saying, “The liberal soul shall be made fat” (Prov. 11:25). He had noted the fact that those individuals and congregations which exercised themselves most in this grace of liberality (under the guidance of reason and justice, of course) were the most blessed in spiritual health and wealth. He, therefore, longed to see all Christians appreciating and using this grace.

The congregation of the Lord at Corinth, while, in many respects, highly favored with instruction and knowledge, had not made the proper progress in spiritual development, and hence was greatly in danger of losing the truths received but never properly put into practice. (1 Cor. 1:4-6, 11-13, 3:1-3) They, too, had evidently been appealed to with reference to contributions for the poor of the congregation at Jerusalem: but, seemingly, they had not responded.—or, at least not according to their means. Paul now, therefore, while patiently correcting their errors, deflections and stumblings, suggests to them that the exercise of the grace of benevolence is an important factor in spiritual life. In proof of this he points them to the congregations of Macedonia, which, although themselves sorely pressed by a great trial and by deep poverty (no doubt results of the famine which occurred in the reign of the

Emperor Claudius), had been *very liberal* in their donations to the yet poorer ones at Jerusalem. The giving, says Paul, did not stop with the money, but extended even to the giving of themselves in any way to serve the cause of God, and thus it brought them great spiritual blessings.—Verse 5.

In view of this spiritual blessing upon the Macedonian Christians, the Apostle urged upon Titus the importance of bringing the subject to the careful notice of the troubled and distracted Christians at Corinth, believing that if they would begin to *practice* the spirit of Christianity—love, benevolence—they would speedily receive a blessing, and come to see more clearly the doctrines of Christ, which, because of failure to practice, they were in danger of losing.

Benevolence, unselfishness, the Apostle suggests, is a test or proof of the sincerity of our love. If any one claim to have died to the carnal mind of selfishness, and to have been begotten to the new mind of love, the opportunities for the exercise of benevolence will prove it—or to what extent the new mind is *ruling* in us and *conquering* the old. (Verse 8) As an illustration of the true spirit of love in unselfish benevolence, the Apostle cites the perfect example of our Lord Jesus.—Verse 9.

VERSES 10, 11 show that they were dilatory about doing what they had purposed. And then (verse 12), lest some who had a proper, benevolent will in the matter might feel that their gifts were too insignificant, this noble teacher as-

ures them (in harmony with our Lord's teachings—Mark 12:42-44) that God accepts our hearts, our wills; and if our gifts to his service be actually small, they are accepted in proportion to what we have—in proportion to what the gifts cost us in the way of self-denials.

At the Religious Parliament recently held in Chicago the greatest evidence of *spiritual* development among converts in heathen lands came from Japan. We hope to publish extracts from the report there given, by a Japanese convert, showing the status of Christianity in Japan. In this connection we merely notice his report that the *average* donations for the support of Christianity, by native Japanese converts, was \$6.72 each in 1882; \$2.15 each in 1888, and \$1.95 each in 1892. What an excellent showing this is for people coming out of heathenism;—people, too, who have never yet heard the real good tidings, but merely the human perversion! What might be expected of such earnest souls if once the eyes of their understandings were opened to behold the full light of the Gospel of Christ. We notice, however, a steady decline in the past ten years, indicating, possibly, a loss of zeal and first love; and so also the report declares that a lethargy and spiritual decline is at present spreading over the Christians of Japan.

"The liberal soul shall be made fat"—spiritually. Do not our individual experiences as New Creatures in Christ corroborate this?

IMITATION OF CHRIST

IV. QUAR., LESSON VIII., NOV. 19, EPH. 4:20-32.

Golden Text.—"And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."—Eph. 4:32.

If the relationship of this lesson to the preceding portion of the Apostle's letter be observed, it will be seen to be at utter variance with what is now popularly considered broad and liberal Christianity—the Christianity which makes little or no distinction between the church and the world, which calls all men brethren, and has large charity for every heathen religion and every apostasy from Christianity, if only the worshipers be sincere; that is, if they have succeeded in deceiving themselves, and are earnestly going about deceiving others.

Let the student carefully observe the Apostle's teaching: (1) That God has pre-destinated the selection of a chosen few, on certain conditions, that he might train and afterward exalt them for a special purpose. (Chap. 1:5) (2) That that purpose is, ultimately, in his own appointed time, to lift up and bless the remainder of humanity through this trained, exalted and empowered few. (Eph. 1:10; 3:10) (3) That he declares the rest of the world to be "children of wrath," as we also were until brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ. (Chap. 2:3, 13) (4) That now we are no longer strangers and foreigners [like the rest of the world, who are not recognized as sons of God, and who, therefore, should not be recognized as our "brethren"—since we are no longer in Adam, but now in Christ] but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.—Chap. 2:19.

In chapter fourth the Apostle exhorts all of this class—the world, but the saints, the few who have come into

Christ—to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (verse 3), and to grow up as one harmonious body into the likeness of Christ, all recognizing the one Lord, holding the one faith of divine revelation through the apostles and prophets, and accepting no other though it be preached by an angel from heaven; and being baptized with the same baptism of complete subjection to the will of Christ.—Verses 4-13.

And this whole compact body of Christ, thus apart from the world and its spirit, is to be separate from the world and not in affiliation or alliance with it. Since they have received the spirit of Christ, they must not walk, as other Gentiles walk.—Verses 16-19.

VERSES 20-24. Such have not so learned Christ as to observe no difference between themselves and the world. They have put off the old man, the old sinful dispositions inherited from Adam, which constituted their former selves, and have put on the new man: they have become new creatures in Christ Jesus, the second Adam, created in righteousness and true holiness.

VERSES 25-32 are worthy of the careful pondering of all such new creatures in Christ; for, though renewed in the spirit of their mind, they still have "to keep the body under," to "crucify the flesh" and to "war a good warfare," "against the world, the flesh and the devil," that they may grow up into Christ, and finally be received into the full privileges of worthy sons of God. Though these verses need little comment, they need much careful pondering in the spirit of humility and prayer.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

IV. QUAR., LESSON IX., NOV. 26, COL. 3:12-25.

Golden Text.—"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."—Psa. 101:2.

The counsel of this chapter is addressed to those who are risen with Christ—not of course actually, but reckoned—to those who are counting themselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Verse 1; Rom. 6:11) When actually risen with Christ, we shall be in his likeness in the fullest sense; but our present reckoned condition is one in which we are seeking mentally and spiritually to appropriate the perfect likeness which by and by we hope to fully realize.

This, of course, necessitates the putting away of sin; the living of clean, pure lives (verse 5); that all our conduct with our fellow-men should be characterized by sincerity and truth (verses 9, 10); that we should exercise a spirit of forbearance and of forgiveness toward the erring (verse 13), covering all the world, and especially the saints, with an abundant mantle of charity (verse 14), and allowing the peace of God to rule our hearts and to sway all our actions.—Verse 15.

Such a condition of heart and mind can only be secured

by letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly (verse 16); by bearing in mind his teachings and endeavoring to apply them in our daily life; and, being filled thus with his spirit, doing all things with an eye single to his glory, out of love and gratitude.

It will also regulate all the affairs of domestic life showing to husbands and wives, parents and children and servants all their respective relationships and duties. (Verses 18-22) See our issue of July.

If we faithfully walk in the path of duty, doing all as unto the Lord, and not unto men, we are assured of an abundant reward from the Anointed Lord, whose we are and whom we serve. (Verse 24) But if, after having been enlightened by the truth, and thus enabled to discern clearly the path of righteousness, we forsake it, and walk not in it, we are also forewarned of a just recompense for such a course, with the assurance that "there is no respect of persons with God."—Verse 25.

Therefore, let all the children of light walk worthy of the grace and knowledge of God through Christ.

GRATEFUL OBEDIENCE

IV. QUAR., LESSON X., DEC. 3, JAMES 1:16-27.

Golden Text—"We love him because he first loved us."—1 John 4:19.

This epistle, unlike all the other apostolic epistles, is addressed to the twelve tribes of Israel scattered abroad.* While to a large extent its teachings are applicable to various times and peoples, it will be specially applicable to converted Hebrews in the present and in the immediate future—in the dawn of the Millennial age, when their blindness is turned away, and when they turn to the Lord as "a kind of first-fruits of his creatures"—not the very first fruits, which is the church, but the first fruits from among the nations of the earth. It also contains many valuable lessons for all beginners in the Christian life, as well as for those to whom it is specially addressed.

VERSE 18 teaches that the agency which will accomplish the turning away of Israel's blindness, and their begetting as new creatures in Christ, will be "the Word of Truth." The great time of trouble will so thoroughly prepare the soil of their hearts, that the truth, then so clearly enunciated, emphasized and illustrated in the risen prophets and ancient worthies, will find such ready acceptance that "a nation [the nation of Israel] shall be born at once" (Isa. 66:8-14), a kind of first fruits of God's creatures, begotten by the Word.

VERSES 19-22 are timely words of counsel to the newly

* See "Questions," Z'97-38; p. 2102 Reprints.

converted then, and are of equal force to all such at any time, either now or in the future. And all the children of God who have not yet outgrown the necessity for such counsel would do well to lay it to heart, and to apply themselves diligently to the building up of a worthy Christian character.

VERSES 22-25 give an apt illustration of a listless disposition, which contents itself with its faith in Christ, but makes no effort to bring the life into conformity with his teachings. There is no blessing in store for such listless hearers—not doers of the Word. The blessing of the Lord is for the earnest and faithful soul who applies his heart unto instruction—"This man shall be blessed in his deed."

VERSE 26 declares that religion *vain* which does not bridle the tongue. O, how many there are whose religion is vain, when judged by this inspired rule—who freely indulge that unruly member to the detriment of others and of their own highest interests, even after they have learned the more excellent way.

VERSE 27 defines pure religion or piety to consist in abstaining from sin and in doing good works. This, of course, is the religion of the natural, justified man, such as those to whom this epistle is addressed; but the religion of the Gospel church goes further and devotes the life to self-sacrifice, even unto death, looking for the reward of joint-heirship with Christ in his divine nature and Kingdom.