

The provisions under which the delegates were to be appointed and the Convention organized were carefully drawn and admirably adapted to secure a most weighty and representative body. Nearly every religion and sect I had ever heard of—except the Christian—was named and provided for.

Of course I was at once intensely interested to see so rare a body—the first of its kind in the history of the world. But the crowd was so dense I was almost in despair. Fortunately, in our extremity two stout policemen recognized my companion; and, knowing his ambassadorial character, undertook to make a way for us and to bring us into the hall. The struggle was long and severe, but at last our faithful guides succeeded in edging us into an overcrowded balcony to a standing place, from which nearly the whole body of the delegates could be seen. Never can I forget that many-hued and strangely clad assembly. Nearly every delegation had some sacred banner or other symbol by which it might be distinguished.

In the centre of the hall was the yellow silken banner of the Chinese dragon. On the left I saw the crescent of Islam; on the right the streamers of the Grand Llama of Thibet. Not far away was the seven-storied sacred umbrella of Burmah, and beyond it the gaudy feather-work of a dusky delegation from Ashantee. In one corner I even thought I recognized the totem of one of our Indian tribes of Alaska. On the programme there were five questions, each evidently framed with a view to make its discussion and answer contribute towards the common end—the definition of a perfect and universal religion. The first read as follows: “Can there be more than one perfect religion?” The opening of the discussion of this had been assigned to a great Buddhist teacher from Ceylon. The second question, to be opened by a Mohammedan, was: “What kind of an object of worship must a perfect religion present?” The third was assigned to a Taoist, and was thus formulated: “What must a perfect religion demand of and promise to the sincere worshipper?” The fourth, assigned to a Hindu pundit, was the following: “In what relation must the divine object and