

any arguments based on his facts or any inferences drawn from them.

### A Revised Parliament of Religions.

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We have learned with a sense of sadness and anxiety that a second Parliament of Religions is being projected, to meet in 1900, in connection with the World's Fair in the city of Paris. I use the editorial "We," because I believe there are others who share my sentiments. We believe that the projectors of the Parliament of Religions of 1893 were Christian men of a high order, and that their motives are not to be impugned. And yet in planning for a second similar gathering it does seem as the experience ought to teach them certain lessons.

While from a great many points of view the Parliament of Religions of 1893 was undoubtedly most interesting and wonderful, from the view-point of the interests of the foreign mission cause, we believe it was an unfortunate mistake.

What we principally object to is the manner in which the non-Christian religions were presented. The picturesque, fascinating orators who championed their cause, unmindful of accuracy in statement, presented a roseate view of their religions, which, like Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," was very good poetry, but not true to the facts.

No opportunity being given to correct these impressions, or to answer the attacks that were made upon our missionaries, we believe that the net result of the Parliament was to discredit the work of foreign missions in the minds of a large part of the reading public, who have never taken the pains to inform themselves upon the life and religions of Oriental lands; for if these non-Christian religions are as fair as they were painted, missionary work in such lands must be gratuitous.

Who can tell to what extent this imparted impression was responsible for the virulence of the attacks made by a large part of the secular press of England and America against foreign missions last summer, upon the occasion of the cowardly missionary massacre in China.

Nor has the impression conveyed to the English-reading public in heathen lands been any more fortunate, for Rev. Robert P. Wilder, of Student Volunteer fame, has stated in a little book that he has published, entitled "Christian Ser-

vice Among Educated Bengalese," describing the especial work he has been doing among the educated young men of India, that the influence of the Parliament of Religions has been one of the forms of opposition with which he has had to contend; and he mentions cases of young men in an inquiring frame of mind who had been hardened thereby.

On page 40 he tells in the following words of an interesting inquirer: "But still he wavered. In a most solemn interview with him, he told me that his agony of mind had been so great that one night he called out in his sleep to God for help. A student heard his cry, and learned in subsequent conversation that H. was drawn to Christianity. In order to divert his thoughts from Christianity and make him satisfied with Hinduism, this so-called friend handed him a copy of the 'World's Parliament of Religions.' 'This,' said H., 'was God's answer to my cry for help.' He continued, 'I see that the leading men in Europe and America point out truths in Hinduism, and praise our religion. Why should I leave it?' This young man, having grown up a Hindu, and having heard of Hinduism from Hindus, had no special admiration for it. But the expurgated Hinduism of Max Müller and the sugar-coated Hinduism of the Parliament of Religions attracted him. In hundreds of personal interviews with educated Bengalese I have not found one helped by the Parliament of Religions. I have found some who have been distinctly hindered by it."

On page 52 he speaks of some of the hindrances which keep educated young Hindus from becoming Christians: "When Hinduism is left behind, many paths open before the Babu. Theosophy, agnosticism, atheism, and all forms of skepticism open out before him. All these cults come from the West. Before the Babu accepts Christianity he faces Renan, and Rousseau, and Voltaire, and, it may be, Ingersoll, and, worse than these, he is confronted by new Hinduism. What a temptation to turn back from inquiry to one's ancestral faith which receives praise from Max Müller, and which is lauded at the World's Parliament of Religions! . . . Why be baptized and cut off from all that heart holds dear? Why be baptized and risk the loss of life or reason by being drugged? If the Holy Spirit were not in Christianity this religion would make no headway among the educated classes." Such is the testimony of the young man so well known in all the colleges and theological seminaries of America.