

be handled to the serious disadvantage of Christianity. It has been greatly popularized of late years. It is pressed upon the public mind in many ways. The minister as a leader and guide of public opinion cannot afford to be any longer ignorant of it.

The Parliament of Religions, held a few years ago on this continent, did much to call the attention of the public mind to it. Representatives of all the great faiths of the world appeared on the same platform. The Buddhist, the Shintoist, the Mohammedan, &c., all freely set forth their beliefs, and in some cases pressed them home in a genuine missionary spirit. They did not hesitate to pronounce on the real defects they observed in Christian life, and upon the imagined defects they thought they discovered in Christianity itself. At the time considerable fault was found with those who were responsible for bringing together this motley conference. "Why," it was said, "should they bring their malarias from swamps and jungles and uncork them at the side of the pure atmospheres taken from Colorado and Maine? Health is too precious a thing to be thus ruthlessly imperilled." There is no doubt that Christianity was exceedingly hospitable on that occasion and gave the greatest liberty to her guests. There is no doubt either that much that passed on that platform as Oriental was simply a reflection of Christian truths and of Western philosophy. Two bad results were feared:

1st. That an impression would be created that the Christian religion was simply one in a series of religions.

2nd. That the recognition of these religions would have an injurious effect upon the work of Christian missions.

These fears have been confirmed only to a limited extent. After all it is felt that there was something imposing in the fact and the spectacle presented. It was an object lesson in religion to see all the faiths met to show their harmonies and their divergencies, to set forth their foundations, their triumphs, their influences, to compare their views, as one has aptly put it: "On the mountain height of absolute respect for the religious convictions of each other." There is no doubt