

The Religious Parliament Extension

CHARLES CARROLL BONNEY, LL.D., *President*

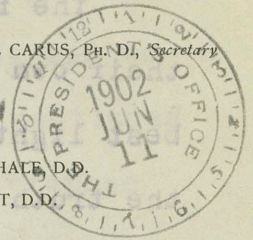
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Members to act separately in their respective localities, and to co-operate by correspondence. Additions will be made from time to time.

JOHN HENRY BARROWS, D. D., *Vice-President*

Chicago, June 9, 1902. 190

President William R. Harper,

Chicago.

Dear Friends:—

The importance of the Religious Parliament which took place at Chicago in 1893 will not wear away in time, but will rather increase in the coming centuries. It is an event so unique that a repetition cannot be expected soon. At Chicago the conditions were favorable for holding it: The principle of liberty that animates the constitution of the United States, allowing everyone the right of his convictions, the hospitable spirit of the City of Chicago, the enthusiasm there for world-wide ideals, the brotherly spirit with which men of all races, climes, and religions were welcomed, the eagerness to become better acquainted with foreign peoples and their aspirations, the good-nature with which antagonists humored one another,—all this was unparalleled in the history of the world.

The success of the Religious Parliament was no accident. It actually took place because the plan of its execution was not Utopian. The idea of the Religious Parliament is not, as has been stated again and again, to proclaim a new religion, nor to antagonise nor abolish any one of the old religions, but simply to establish a friendly relation among all the religions of the world, which would enable their representatives to become better acquainted with one another, to understand one another,

and to appreciate the good that the several religions have to offer.

The rule for speakers at the Religious Parliament was to explain their own religion, to show the grounds for their faith and set it in the best light possible, to point out all the good that is in it, and state the truth as they saw it. This was done without either casting reflections upon the faiths of others, or denouncing their beliefs as superstitions. The aim was not to tear down but to build up.

The maxim of the Religious Parliament holds good still. By becoming acquainted with one another and appreciating the good each one has to contribute to the common stock of spiritual gifts, we trust that the spirit of truth will have the best opportunity to let the truth become known, and in this way the propaganda that every religion can make for itself will be a propaganda which can in no way incur any hostility, a propaganda of love and good will in which zeal for the truth does not imply fanaticism, where every one is welcome to explain his own views, and all are patient to listen, and ready to accept the truth, whatever it may be.

If, under such conditions, one religion should gain more adherents than others it will be due to the intrinsic qualities of its truth and ideals, not to a display of power, be it the superiority of the civilisation by which it may be backed, or the overwhelming number of its adherents. If, on the other hand, religions should be modified and transformed under the influence of a mutual exchange of thought, we may be sure that it will be a change for the better; it will be a growth and not a decay; it will be a broadening and an increase; it will be a gain and not a loss.

The principles of the Religious Parliament are merely a practical application of the Golden Rule and a realisation of the religion of love in the domain of religion; and we believe them not only to be just and salutary and wise, they afford also greater and more extended facilities for missionary work on a higher plane and can only help to contrib-

ute to the spread of the truth, whatever it may be.

The Committee of the Religious Parliament Extension of Chicago deem it advisable not to lose the vantage-ground that has been gained, and to keep together those elements which are inspired with the hope of continued friendly international and interreligious relations. And so we propose to keep on file the names of all those who are glad that the Religious Parliament took place in Chicago, who would help to extend its beneficial influence, and who look upon it as the seed-time for a future harvest that is developing slowly, but with certainty, in the hearts of mankind. We propose to keep on file the names of the religious leaders who constitute at present the consulting members of the Religious Parliament Extension, and we desire to keep the list complete, and correct it from time to time.

We take pleasure in sending you the report of the First Anniversary Celebration of the Parliament of Religions, including a summary statement of the replies to the original announcement received from the several governments of the world and from religious leaders. At the same time we call your attention to the propositions of Rev. George T. Candlin, which we recommend as a basis of union, and upon which we cordially invite your views. We also request you to do us the favor, to suggest the names of persons whom you deem suitable for active membership or for honorary membership of the Religious Parliament Extension.

Please have the kindness to acknowledge the receipt of the report, and this letter to the address of the secretary, as given below.

Awaiting the favor of your response, and saluting you in the name of the Parliament of Religions, I have the honor to be

Very faithfully yours,

Paul Cairns

Secretary of the Religious Parliament Extension.

Postoffice Drawer F, Chicago.

APPROVAL:

We heartily approve the foregoing letter of Dr. Carus, Secretary of the Religious Parliament Extension, and cordially solicit a compliance with his requests.

At the approach of the close of the first decade since the Parliament of Religions, we feel more and more assured that this august assembly will continue to prove an active force promoting the unity and peace of mankind; and will finally realize in full measure the inspiring prophecies that marked its close.

Fraternally yours,

C. C. Bonney LL.D.

President of the Religious Parliament Extension.

John Henry Bonney D.D.

Vice President of the Religious Parliament Extension.

The Religious Parliament Extension

BASIS OF UNION

PROPOSED BY REV. GEORGE T. CANDLIN, CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY AT TIEN-TSIN, CHINA

The Members of the Religious Parliament Extension covenant with each other as follows:

1. Personally never to speak slightly of the religious faith of one another. This does not debar the kindly and reverential discussion of differences which exist, nor the frank utterance of individual belief.
2. Officially to promote by all means in our power, by oral teaching and through the press, and by whatever opportunity God may give us, a spirit of brotherly regard and honest respect for the beliefs of others.
3. To discourage among the various peoples all such practices and ceremonies as, not constituting an essential part of their faith, are inimical to its purity and are the strongest barriers to friendly relations.
4. To promote all such measures as will advance reform, progress and enlightenment, political liberty, and social improvement among the people of our own faith and nationality.
5. To regard it as a part of our holiest work on earth to enlist all men of ability and influence with whom we are brought into contact in the same noble cause.