GIBBONS AND TALMAGE.

Chats With Two Great Divines on Live Religious Matters.

Cardinal Gibbons Hopes for a Universal Catholicism—He Answers the Question Are Catholic Priests Hypocrites? And Tells Why They Should Do Better Work Than Protestant Preachers—He Discusses the Sunday Question and Other Matters—Dr. Talmage Predicts a Universal Christianity—Gives the Results of His Travels Among the Missionaries of the World and Discusses Free Thought at Home—Pills Wanted Rather Than Philosophy—Christianity in the Kitchens and Catholic Liberalism, Etc.—The Story of Cardinal Gibbons and the Smallpox Patient.

Special Correspondence of the NEWS.
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GIVE YOU TO day interviews which I have just had with two of the greatest leaders of religious thought in the United States. I refer to his eminence, James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, and the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage of Washington. Cardinal Gibbons is the broadest and the biggest man in the Catholic Church. Dr. Talmage is the broadest and one of the greatest of the Protestants. My interview with Cardinal Gibbons took place in the cardinal's house at Baltimore. This is a big gray-stone building of many rooms, situated in the heart of the city, just back of the cathedral. Passing up wide stone steps to the front door, you press an electric button. The door opens and you are confronted by a negro boy of a gingerbread hue, who takes your card, puts it on a silver platter and carries it into the cardinal. In the meantime he directs you to one of the audience parlors and you wait your turn. Cardinal Gibbons is the head of the Catholic church in the United States. He has many callers, and his reception days brings crowds almost equal to those of the President at the White House. My meeting was by appointment, and after a few moments I heard the swish of the skirts which announced the approach of the cardinal. He was dressed in a gown of dark cloth embroidered with red, which fell from his neck to his feet. A skull cap of bright red covered the crown of his head, and upon his wedding finger, the third finger of the left hand, he wore the great sapphire ring, which is one of the emblems of his clerical rank. He offered me his hand and led me to a seat near the window. As he talked I had a good chance to observe his features. Cardinal Gibbons has a very strong face. His forehead is high and narrow, reminding you somewhat of some of the pictures of Napoleon Bonaparte taken during his boyhood. His eyes are blue and lively, his nose large and straight, and his mouth strong, but gentle. He is slender, rather than portly, and his form is the personification of nervous activity. He is now sixty-one years old, but he does not look to be more than fifty. He is a man of ideas and is full of plain, practical common sense. He is a patriotic American, and no one can talk with him without being impressed by the humanity and brotherly love which shines out in his features. Our talk was more of a chat than a set interview, and I give it much as it occurred.

A UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

My first question was as to whether his eminence thought there would ever be a universal religion.

He replied: "I hope so, but when it will come I cannot say. The world is becoming more Christianlike every day, and we are, I hope, gradually nearing the time when there will be a universal Christianity."

I here asked whether he thought that this universal religion would be the Catholic religion. He replied with the same answer, "I hope so," and his response to my questions gave me some reasons of the wonderful growth of the Catholic religion. Said he: "Of course, I believe the Catholic religion to be the best of all religions. It is adapted to all the needs of mankind and man. It is fitted for the elevation of his soul, for the guidance of his conduct, and for the satisfaction of all his spiritual wants. It is fitted for the poor as well as the rich. We welcome the poor, I think, more than do other churches, and there is no difference in the treatment of them in the church. They kneel at the same confessional, and, as far as possible, they are on the same footing in the church. I do not mean to say that there is not much good in the Protestant religion, but I think that nearly every other church is lacking in some particular. The Catholic Church is complete. It has the good elements of all others, and it is lacking in nothing. There are some of the reasons of its permanency and constant growth."

Upon my saying that there were some differences even among Catholics as to their belief, the cardinal went on:

"I do not know that there should not be differences of belief as to religious matters. Of course, the main principles of Christianity are the same, but as long as men have different minds there will be different theories as to the details, as to the lines of policy in the management of churches, and as to interpretation of certain parts of the Scripture.

ARE CATHOLIC PRIESTS HYPOCRITES?

The conversation here turned to the great strides lately made by the Catholic Church in America, and as to the account of work done by the priests, whereupon I asked:

"Your eminence, there is one question I would like to put to you—not for information, for I think on that ground the question would be both a foolish and insulting one, but on the ground that many illiberal Protestants believe otherwise. The question is: Are well-educated Catholics honest? Are your priests honest in their acceptance of all the truths of your church? Do you people believe what you preach?"

"In other words," replied Cardinal Gibbons, "you want me to answer the question as to whether Catholic priests are not as a rule hypocrites. The question is, as you say, a silly one. Look at it! What is there in the life of a priest to make it the choice of a hypocrite. The man who would devote himself to it has to give up the most of the things which the world holds dear. I will not mention all of them, but I will take only one. For instance, that of personal chastity. The priest can never marry. When he decides to enter the ministry he must give up the hope of wife, child ren and home, and must devote himself soul and body, to the church. This, in many cases, would prevent men from becoming priests. The life of the priesthood is not an easy one. It is one of hardship and subordination. The priest is subject to be sent, at the will of his superiors, anywhere, at any time. He may be ordered to the wildest countries of the world, and he must go. His whole life is given up to the serving of his people, and it is his duty to visit the poor houses, and to minister to the sick there, even at the risk of his life."

A STORY OF CARDINAL GIBBONS.

As Cardinal Gibbons said this, my mind went back over his career and I remembered an incident in it which shows that he believes what he says and that in the past he has had the courage of his convictions. It was long before he had any hope of being a cardinal. I was when he was a humble priest in a small country parish near Baltimore Soulpax had broken out in his village and all of his parishioners who were able had fled from the town. One poor old negro who had the disease lay at the point of death. He had been deserted by his friends and family, who had left him to neither food nor medicine. The young priest heard of the case and hastening to the dying negro's side he remained with him until the last. Then the question came as to his burial. There was no one who would raise a hand at the risk of his life to aid in carrying the corpse to the grave. Father Gibbons was left alone with the dead. It did not take him long to make up his mind. He determined to be undertaker as well as minister, and so having obtained a coffin he placed the body in it, and in some way or other dragged it to the grave. He put it in the ground, performed the last rites of the church over it and buried it, and then went on with his work among the sick.

WHY CATHOLIC PRIESTS SHOULD DO MORE THAN PROTESTANT PREACHERS.

As I thought of this, I realized that this man's ideal of a Christian life was higher than that of many other religious men I have known. I wondered if there were many of his kind in the church, and I asked him if he thought that Catholic priests were really of more value in their work in the church than Protestant preachers.

"That I cannot answer," replied the cardinal, "I do not want to criticise any man. I will only say I think they ought to be. They have, in the first place, their whole time to devote to their work. Suppose I, for instance, had a wife and family. I could not accomplish as much as I do now. My income, I suppose, is what would not be considered small, but had I wife and family I could not give as much to charity as I do now, nor would I be free to go at all times where the necessities of my business call me. Or, perhaps I can better illustrate it to you by supposing a case of two newspaper men. Both have started on their journalistic careers. They are evenly prepared as to intellectual ability and education. Each has his own place to make in his profession. Suppose me to have no money, I am going to get married and have a good time. I am going to do what I can, but I will enjoy all the good things of life as I go along, and modeling my career on the basis he begins his newspaper work. His family and social life take up a great part of his time and his energies. The other man decides to have no mistress but his profession. It is his only aim, his only thought. Which in the end will do the best work.

"Then, again, speaking of Catholic priests," the cardinal continued, "I wonder if you realize how long it takes them to prepare themselves for their work. It requires twelve years of hard study for the best of masters before they are deemed worthy to have charge of a church. The boy who feels that he is called by the Lord to the priesthood, having already received a large part of his common school education, has at the age of fifteen to go into a college and to remain there for six years, during the ordinary branches, the sciences, etc., in connection with his religious work, and at the end of this time he has six years more of theological training. He is associated with the best minds of the church, and these twelve years are, as a rule, those of the hardest kind of study and work."

THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

The conversation here turned to the Sunday question, and I asked the cardinal as to whether he was in favor of the European or the Puritan Sunday. He replied that he was in favor of Sunday observance, but that his ideal Sunday was not the Puritan, nor was it the European Sunday. Said he: "I like the closing of the shops and all kinds of business on Sunday, and I think it is a blessing for Baltimore and for all of our cities that this is compulsory. I think all kinds of work should be stopped on that day. I hope we shall never have the European Sunday in America. Sunday should be a day of religious rest, but it also should be a day of innocent recreation. I do not think it wrong for a man to go out riding with his family on Sunday afternoons, nor to take a walk in the fields. I think that it should be a day of cheerfulness without disruption of religious enjoyment without sadness or melancholy. The Puritan Sunday goes too far, and the ideal Sunday is one golden mean."

"Cardinal Gibbons has the broadest ideas as regards capital and labor. He believes in labor organizations, but frowns upon the walking delegate and says that whoever tries to sow discord between the capitalist and the laborer is an enemy to social order. He has many times had great influence with the laboring classes in time of strikes, and has done much to harmonize the differences which exist between them and their employers. He is an enthusiastic American, thoroughly believing in the separation in this country of church and state, and an enthusiastic patriot upon all occasions.

TALMAGE ON WORLD-WIDE CHRISTIANITY

It was at the close of one of Dr. Talmage's lectures on his trip around the world that I chatted with him on religious matters, putting much the same questions as those I asked of Cardinal Gibbons as to a universal religion. Said he: "After all your travels, doctor, do you still believe that the people of the world will some day be altogether Christian?"

"Yes," replied Dr. Talmage, "I have no doubt whatever of that. I believe it because God never launched a failure. The only salvation for this world is the Christian religion. Its acceptance by all people and the carrying out of its principles would form the crowning beauty of this wonderful universe. God built this world. He cannot do otherwise than see it conquered in its perfection and beauty. Sin cannot prevail. The devil cannot triumph. The world is steadily moving on toward the good. It is better every day. Its progress in charity, philanthropy and goodness is unmistakable. We go back 100 years to find suitable philanthropists to use as examples or models in our speeches on charity today. The greatest philanthropists of the world are those who are living now. There are so many of them that no one thinks of them. Schools are founded, great hospitals are built, and churches are established almost every week by charity any one of which would have created a great sensation had it been built 200 years ago. We take it now as a matter of course, and a donation of hundreds of thousands of dollars is hardly worth an Associated Press dispatch."

INFIDELITY ABROAD.

"Speaking of foreign missions, doctor, is it not a fact that the heathens often on leaving their own religions become infidels, and accept no religion?"

"Yes, sometimes," was the reply, "but not as much as is generally supposed. The missionaries are doing a vast deal of good. They are doing wonders in Japan, and they are revolutionizing India. I met with nothing in my travels which impressed me so much as the religions of India. Hindooism and Mohammedanism have for years been hardening the hearts and lives of the people there, and the condition of the women is horrible. I assure you I would rather be a horse, a hog or a cow in America than a woman in India."

FREE THOUGHT AT HOME.

"How about free thought in America? Do you think infidelity is spreading?"

"No, I do not," was the reply. "There are more churches now than ever before. Religion may be gauged just as other things, according to the supply and the demand. If there is not a great demand there will not be a great supply. We have new churches because there are men to fill them, and the size of our churches and their number increase every year. More money is spent on religion now than ever before. The Christian stands higher in the community, and the day has now come when men are not afraid of being called Christians. In some respects the churches have changed. Religion is more liberal, and more a matter of the soul. The fences between the sects are being lowered. Christians are becoming united, and they are working together. The old questions of sect and doctrine are passing away, and we are nearing the condition of a united Christianity. Take the doctrinal sermons. The people will not stand them now as they did in the past. They want matter that will help them, and they don't care as to quibbles about the letter of the law. Preaching doctrinal sermons is like having a physician who, calling upon you when you are sick, instead of giving you something to help you, delivers a lecture on physiology. You tell him at once that you don't care as to the length of your intestines or the location of the bones. What you want is pills rather than philosophy, and you want them quick. The sermon in demand today is that which is helpful to man. Here is a body with the old cut of sin and trouble running across its back and over its head. There is the preacher, the physician who brings the gospel of Christ, the one plaster which will heal the wounds. The question is how to get the plaster on the wounds, and that is all."

CHRISTIANITY IN THE KITCHENS.

"Have you noticed the great change which is going on in Catholicism in the United States, doctor?" I asked.

"Yes," replied Dr. Talmage, "the Catholics are becoming more liberal. I have faith in the honesty of their professions, and I believe that they do as much good perhaps as any other religious sect. I tell you there is more religion in our kitchens than in our parlors, and you will find as much true Christianity among the Catholic servants as among the Protestant mistresses. I have had two Catholic girls in my employ for years, and they have as much faith in their religion as I have in mine."

Frank G. Carpenter

THE DOCTOR'S ADVICE.

W. F., New York.—Please advise a remedy for a cough with pains around the kidneys and sometimes in the stomach; is, previously.

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Dale, S. T.—I am suffering from functional weakness.

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C. F. W.—For faintness, use of Cardium, extract of the heart, three times daily. For constipation, Sarsilla Salts.

E. E. M.—For female weakness, take Ovarine three times daily.

THE DOCTOR.

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