

completed. They are workers together with God; but His leading has been plain as when He led forth Israel by flame and cloud to its promised home. His servants follow where He shows the way.

The edict forbidding the profession of the religion of Christ was taken down, but sentiment was still almost wholly adverse. Of foreign names the name of Christ was still most hated. When Christ, the Prince of Peace, is made apostle of war; when His cross, the sign of self-sacrifice, is used as symbol of deeds worthy of the Prince of Darkness, small wonder that He is hated. And among the Japanese Christ's name had been blasphemed by His professed apostles. His cross was a stumbling block and an offense. The men of influence did not desire the preaching of His Word.

Fifteen years have passed away, and sentiment has changed. The leading men desire the Christianization of the empire. Statesmen, teachers, editors, men of influence, declare that the doctrine of Christ is indispensable. The government protects and aids the preachers, and the leaders of the opposition are ready to give their influence to the infant church. Most of these men do not accept Christ for themselves—they will not forsake all, take up the cross and follow Him; but for many reasons they unite in desiring the Christianization of Japan. They know that the highest civilization is impossible without religion, and, quick-witted, keen-sighted, in this as in all else, they recognize Christianity as the best religion, as indeed the only possible religion, for the new Japan.

Buddhism is not a possible resource. The educated Japanese of three hundred years ago rejected it for the agnostic Chinese philosophy, and their descendants will not return to its puerile superstitions and its hopeless Nihilism. Even the priests know that their hour has come, and there is no heart in them. The philosophy of Confucius also comes to be understood as unworthy of the new national life. It points forever to the past; it holds to a dead conservatism; it so exalts obedience that women, children, and the lower classes are degraded; its high moral maxims can never influence and control the passions of the multitude. When Japan first became acquainted with the West, our agnostic systems gained great influence. They seemed to meet the educated classes with familiar teaching—they, like the moralists of old Japan, said that ethics without religion would suffice for men of intelligence and brains. But they are less popular to-day. The lessons of Europe are not lost upon these men; they understand the connection of atheism and agnosticism with socialism and anarchy. Against these foes the government desires the stable aid of the church of Christ. The government also strongly desires full recognition from the Western powers, and is convinced that it will more easily attain its ends as a Christian empire. But the liberal opposition also desires the rapid extension of the church, believing this to promote the intelligence, the manliness, and the inde-