

cious) circumstances, we ought immediately to give information. If any (by us) concealed fact is disclosed, you may order whatever (punishment you wish for our) crime." *The third is by the head-man of the street:* "Having made examinations into the sect of all the above persons, and having caused the temple seal to be affixed, I present this. If there is one who errs from the above meaning, you ought to order (punishment for) the crime to us."

Thus each individual is compelled to sign a paper once a year, declaring that he or she is not a Christian, and also specifying the sect of Buddhists to which he belongs. Should a person become a Christian, it must necessarily be known to government, for all true Christians must refuse to sign such a paper. But lest one should falsely sign it, every five heads of families are made spies on, and somewhat responsible for, all the members of the five families. Then, too, they have to get the Buddhist priest to affix his seal, thereby making the certificate of the class most interested in preventing the spread of Christianity, necessary to settle the soundness of the faith of each person in the community. Should the priest have his suspicions of any one who inclines to Christianity, he will have only to withhold his seal, and this would lead to a strict inquiry into the conduct of the suspected person. At present, though these forms are all observed, and these declarations are made, the heads of houses do not examine into the religious belief of their neighbours. And there is, probably, sufficient public opinion against giving information to government, to deter most persons from incurring the odium which attaches to an informer; unless he was prompted by revenge, or a love of filthy lucre, in some base fellow, sunk too low for public opinion to reach, should induce him.

#### ANOTHER METHOD.

Another most effectual method which has been adopted for the suppression of Christianity, is the appeal they make to the cupidity of men. They offer large rewards to all who inform of those who become Christians. On the "statute boards," in front of the Governor's residence, the tariff of prices paid for the discovery of Christians is still publicly made known. Formerly the money was also placed there, to be the more tempting inducement to passers-by, to hunt out believers in this proscribed sect. To one who should inform on a Christian of the sect called Batoron, was offered five hundred pieces of silver, in value about five hundred and sixty Mexican dollars. For one of the sect called Iruman, three hundred pieces of silver was given. For a person who had been a Christian, but had renounced his faith, and become Buddhist, three hundred pieces. For one who had lived with a Christian, one hundred pieces. For the discovery of a member of any sect, other than the two mentioned above, was given one hundred pieces. A check, however, on false accusations, is found in the treatment of the accuser. He is kept in custody till the charge is substantiated. If the accusation proves false, he is punished.

#### PREPARATORY WORK.

By what is said above, of having no strictly missionary work to report, I do not wish to convey the idea that missionaries in Japan are idle, or have nothing to do. There is a preparatory work, the acquisition of the language, and preparation of books, which must be done, and which will tax all the energies, time, and talents of the most gifted and most studious for many years. Nor would I give the impression that we are discouraged by the difficulties which meet us.

For one, I may be permitted to say, that they are neither so many nor so great as I anticipated before coming here. But if they were a hundred-fold more and greater than they are, we have no right to be discouraged, so long as we have the Bible in our hands, and can there learn that the heathen have been given to the Son of God for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and that to his Church the promise has been made, that "the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee." Instead of being cast down, we can only thank God for what he has already done for us, and take courage, believing that for the future he will do for us, and for his Church, "far more abundantly than we can ask or think."

#### DISSENT ON THE WANE IN ENGLAND.

Those who can read the signs of the times see plainly enough that dissent is on the wane. There is scarce a sect in England which has so much as held its ground during this last twenty years—due allowances being made for the increase of our population. Though reason and instinct are commonly contradistinguished, it is not without good reason that the "instinct" of the nonconformists pronounced so emphatically against the application of the religious test at the recent census. The lethargy of the Church means the success of Dissent. The life and energy of the Church always and every where induce the decline of dissent. Our Church has, on the whole, worked hard this last two decades. Hence the "denominations" are some of them dwindling into insignificance; some settling on their lees into Rationalism and Socinianism; some threatening to break up from intestine strife; all of them are energetic only when political or quasi-political purposes are to be served. It is a very noteworthy symptom, too, that the dissenting bodies are assimilating themselves in externals to the Church as much as they can contrive to do. What means the introduction of organs, and of the Church's Canticles, into so many meeting houses? What the highly ecclesiastical structure and fittings of the new meeting houses themselves? One might guess what the grim Puritans, to whom so many of these communities owe their origin, would have said to these "steeple-houses" which in our large towns rise with ambitious rivalry as close to the churches as it is practicable to place them. One must say that the extempore prayers and long-winded preachings in which our Methodist and Baptist fellow-citizens delight are sadly out of place in these mediæval edifices. One might almost dream that the stone out of the wall will cry out, and the beam out of the timber answer it, when the echoes of their carved work are awakened up by the Boanerges of the Conventicle. What is really wanted for such purposes is a plain building, well fitted for the purposes of a religious lecture, where as many persons as possible may sit in decent comfort. Symbolism is but a dumb hypocrisy when clustered round a spot where no special Divine Presence is enshrined; ecclesiastical arrangements are ridiculous where there is no priest and no liturgy; ornamentation is but a meretricious and distracting delight of the eyes when lavished on a place where people simply meet together occasionally to listen to another person speaking. But it is not for us to object to the policy which the dissenting leaders have lately adopted in these matters. For it is not likely to win any permanent success. On the contrary, it will tend to leave their people with ecclesiastical tastes and ideas, and these once formed will never find satisfaction in the counterfeit ecclesiasticism of nonconformity.

The point, however, which we want to press just now is this, that the present assuredly is no time to surrender any characteristic in the Church's doctrine or ritual, when the conventicle, in order to keep its hold on the multitude, is fain to bedizen itself with the semblance of the Church. —Guardian.

CLERICAL SORE THROAT.—The Rev. G. W. Weldon, in writing to the *Record* on "Clerical sore throat," observes that birds always look up when they sing; that barristers, actors, and public speakers, generally do the same when they speak; and that the judge and jury, and the audience at theatres, are above those who address them, instead of below, as is so often the case in churches; from all which he justly infers that, as we have suggested, the placing of the clergy (and their books and manuscripts) so that they have to bend their necks and look down (often from a considerable height) upon their congregations, is a great mistake, and a fertile source of "Clerical sore throat." We have recommended a radical alteration in the size, shape, and placing of desks, pulpits, and books, but Mr. Weldon makes the following suggestion:—

"Having suffered myself, I can speak feelingly on the subject; and after trying many remedies, without success, I at last regained my former strength of voice by adopting the following plan:—I learned the prayers by heart. This enables a clergyman to speak without stooping, while it certainly adds to the solemnity of the prayer. The next step was to preach without the manuscript, or at least to know the sermon so well that it is not necessary to read with the head downwards. The preacher thus can address himself to the audience with perfect ease to himself, owing to the unrestricted action of the vocal organs. In my own case relief was very soon given to the congested vessels, and gradually they became quite restored, and for some years they have continued so, whereas before this plan was adopted one sermon a day produced hoarseness."

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