

THE MISSION FIELD

JAPAN

Report comes from Japan that the Buddhist priests of Kyoto have appointed a committee to go to Europe to study Christianity. If the committee report that Christianity is a better religion than Buddhism, the priests declare that they will adopt it. This remarkable step was taken because there were threatenings of serious strife between the followers of the two religions.

REMARKABLE OPENINGS IN JAPAN.—The Rev. Mr. Atkinson, of the Mission of the American Board, at Kobe, Japan, refers to the remarkable openings for Christian labor, and the activity of the heathen priesthood.

"Villages are now opening near all the towns and cities where work is carried on, and the first to hear and follow are the most influential persons in the several places. These village people have even more remarkable receptive capacities than the townspeople. A sermon of an hour's length is deprecated, and the preacher urged to stretch a point, and give them at least a two hours discourse. And when that sermon is ended, the audience is ready for another equally long."

"The heathen priesthood is active everywhere, and is thus making known something of Christianity where otherwise nothing would be heard of it. In every town placards are often up announcing a public discussion of Christianity and Buddhism. The discussion is of course a one-sided one; nevertheless, Christ is preached, even though it be of contention. Besides the public preaching, houses are visited and pledges are obtained to adhere to Buddhism or Shintoism, as the case may be, to resist the incoming of Christianity, and to have no dealings, social or otherwise, with any who may become Christians. At a place in Shikoku, the seat of a most celebrated Shinto shrine, I am told a standing offer of six yen is made by the priests for immediate information of the arrival in the place of Christian workers. This activity is not the natural outcome of strong faith in their own religion and dread of Christianity as an individual and national evil, but is the product of anxious fear lest their livelihood should be seriously limited if Christianity should become the religion of the land."

INDIA.

CONVERSION OF A MOULVIE.—The Church Missionary Intelligencer contains a striking account of the conversion of a Mohammedan moulvie, or doctor, named Abdul Haqq. He was in early life a Brahman of the Brahmins, but about twelve years ago he became interested in the character of Mohammed and so was brought to the belief in one God. After studying the doctrines of Islam he became a Champion of that faith, and was especially noted for the attacks he made upon Christianity. He was a fine orator and spoke in Calcutta every evening, greatly to the delight of his co-religionists. Last year a tract fell into this moulvie's hands which set him on a new train of thought, and after a time the following notice was posted on several of the mosques of Calcutta:—

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"Be it known by the learned among the Islamites, that their servant, Abdul Haqq, a follower of the traditions, wishes to represent to them that he has been coming to Calcutta in the interests of the spread of Mohammedanism for the space of nine years. More especially during this year 1884, has he spread Mohammedanism so much as to have established a mission in opposition to the Padri Sahibs. During this time a Bible fell into my hands from which it became evident to me that Mohammed Sahib had taken from those very books that from which he had composed the Koran. Hereby I therefore publish my conviction that Mohammed is not the prophet of God nor is the Koran the Word of God. If any gentleman can make any apology in defence of Mohammedanism within a week, let him do so, establishing it with proofs from the writings of the Koran; if not, after eight days I will become a Christian. (Signed) ABDUL HAQQ Moulvie of the Mohammedan Community


Some time after this Abdul Haqq connected himself with the congregation of the Church Missionary Society, and gave himself to the study of the Christian faith. He made public renunciation of Mohammedanism on the very spot where he used to preach it. Attempts were made to take his life and his room was set on fire. Desiring baptism, a special service was held for this purpose, at which a sermon was preached by Dr. Baumann, of the Church Missionary Society, while Dr. Thoburn, of the Methodist Mission, participated in the service. The conversion of this man has made a great stir in Calcutta.—Missionary Herald for April.

At an "At Home" given by the members of the Oxford Mission of Calcutta, on a recent Saturday, the Archdeacon of Colombo gave an interesting account of Christian work in Ceylon. It appeared from the Archdeacon's statement that the majority of the Christians there belonged to the Church of England, and that the rest were Roman Catholic; that the European and the native Christians meet together for worship, and that the distinction here observed everywhere between Native and European Churches was unknown in Ceylon. The same minister ministered to both Europeans and Natives, but as all did not know the same language, the ser-

vice was held in English, Tamil and Telugu. This good feature of the Church at Ceylon, however, was more than neutralized by the observance of caste amongst the Native Christians which, we regret to say was tolerated by the European clergy.—Indian Christian Herald.

Missionaries in Japan are beginning to use with effect the argument in favor of Christianity to be drawn from the changed lives and happy deaths of Christians. They do not hesitate to affirm openly that heathen religions have no such power. Many instances are occurring to convince the people of the truth of this statement. One of these—a woman whose home was in the house of the head man of the village—sickened and died early last month, and her death was so serene and happy as to have made quite a profound impression on the community. "How is this," people asked, "that without even naming an idol one can have such a happy death?" literally, such a splendid way of dying. The Buddhist priest of the village was aroused, and protested against the introduction of the "foreign religion," especially into the very house of the head man of the village. The latter replied that he was not a Christian, but that religion which did so much for one in his life, and gives such a promise for the life to come, could not be very bad.—Dr. Gordon.

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