

ORIENTAL CHRISTIANITY.

(From The Friends' Review, Philadelphia.)

Many Japanese Christians are becoming very impatient of the introduction by some Western missionaries of sectarian controversies concerning doctrinal formulas and ritual ceremonies. They want to get at the essence of Christianity, without any admixture of human inventions and limitations. Evidence concerning this has been given lately in a letter to the Providence Journal from an American, W. S. Liscumb, who is now in Tokio. He speaks of an agitation of the subject begun not long ago by the publication in a magazine devoted to the interests of Christianity, of articles on "Japanese Christianity," by Yokoi, a prominent native minister. This writer urged that the development of the religion of his country should now be left mainly to its natives; aid, not control, being hereafter the right function of visitors from elsewhere.

Following these articles was an essay written by Kosaki, President of the Doshisha, the leading Christian College in Japan. These are some of his words:

"We must return to the Christianity of the earliest period and endeavor to proclaim its evangelistic, socialistic, and philanthropic principles. In introducing Christianity into this country, one is desirous of obtaining a simple Gospel. What, then, is a simple Gospel? We believe that the so-called simple Gospel is nothing more or less than evangelistic, philanthropic, moral and socialistic Christianity. Such was the teaching of Christ; such was also the principle of His disciples; such, in short, was the distinctive feature of the Christian theology in early ages. The rites and ceremonies of worship, the administrative rules of the Church, and its peculiar theory—these are the obstacles that now lie in the path of our countrymen in accepting Christianity. These things ought not indeed to be considered entirely useless, but they are only the outer garments of Chris-

tianity; garments which differ in different countries and at different periods of time, and need not, consequently, be imported with the Gospels. We sincerely regret that the Christian Church in Japan has been prevented by these garments from manifesting its true and original nature, and we are afraid lest these garments may become a stumbling block to those who have attached too much importance to them. What has thus far been observed, I recommend to the notice of those who are anxious to preach a simple Christianity in Japan."

Such expressions forcibly recall those which were made public a few years ago, by two great leaders of thought in India: Keshub Chunder Sen and P. C. Mozoomdar. The former of these, perhaps the ablest of the Brahmo Somaj reformers, wrote as follows:

"Was not Jesus Christ an Asiatic?" "It seems that the Christ that has come to us is an Englishman, with English manners and customs about him, and with the temper and spirit of an Englishman in him. . . . But why should you Hindus go to England to learn Jesus Christ? Is not Christ's native land nearer to India than England? . . . When we hear of the lily, and the sparrow, and the well, and a hundred other things of Eastern countries, do we not feel we are quite at home in the Holy Land? Why should we, then, travel to a distant country like England, in order to gather truths which are to be found much nearer our homes? Go to the rising sun in the East, not to the setting sun in the West, if you wish to see Christ in the plenitude of his glory and in the fulness and freshness of the primitive dispensation. Why do I speak of Christ in England and Europe as the setting sun? Because there we find apostolical Christianity almost gone; there we find the life of Christ formulated into lifeless forms and antiquated symbols. But if you go to the true Christ in the East and his apostles, you are seized with inspiration. You find