

hundred societies working in the interest of social reform. Some of these are under Buddhist and some under Christian auspices, but their inception is due undoubtedly to Christian suggestion. In short, indications abound that Japan has caught the full force of the present great movement in the West away from dogmatic to practical Christianity. The *Kumiai* (Congregational) pastors and laymen, at their now famous meeting in Nara last October, issued a manifesto which attempted no definition of the personality of Christ, and made no reference to the Bible, but laid the main stress on the fatherhood of God and religious living, especially in the matter of family purity. But the meeting touched a high-water mark of true Christian feeling and devotion.

III. And this leads me to say that the turn of the tide seems to have been reached in matters theological. Destructive criticism and negative preaching are at a discount. Men must have a positive message, even if it be not the whole Gospel which they feel called of God to proclaim. There is, of course, much experimenting still concerning Christian doctrines and Christian deeds. The publication of the *Review of Religious Reviews* by some Christians and the general acceptance of the doctrine of evolution are prominent evidences of an eclectic tendency in religious thought, while the non-observance of the Sabbath, the very wide fellowship of the churches, and the yielding to the materialistic spirit of the times are equally significant signs of the movement along practical lines.

The simple truth is, Christianity as a fad has had its day. As a foreign religion it is no longer welcome. The call is for a Japanese Christianity; and people at large are beginning to feel that Christianity is adapted to Japan, and may now be considered naturalized and fitted to do its work in the Far East. Christian men of earnest faith and marked personality, who are genuinely interested in annexing New Japan to

the kingdom of heaven, are welcomed everywhere.

Inquirers are on the increase, semi-Nicodemuses who exist by the hundred if not thousand among thoughtful men in the land, are coming out of their retirement. I met one such the other day, a disciple a quarter of a century ago of Thompson and Carruthers, two early Presbyterian missionaries. He told me he still kept his Bible, and read it when he had leisure.

There have been more additions to the churches the past six months than during the previous year, or perhaps year and a half. Every one, friend and foe alike, has an undefined feeling that Christianity is the only and sure solvent for the mighty problems coming up before Japan. There is almost a revivalistic spirit in several cities.

We are disappointed in individual Christians and particular churches or institutions. Japanese enthusiasm runs into some lamentable excesses, but what of that? It were better for the pot to boil over sometimes than not to boil at all. The experience of the past five years has been that indifferentism is far more fatal to true progress than hot-headed blundering.

As I view it, the greatest hindrance to the Japanese church of to-day is, not the loose theology of some among her members nor the opposition from unbelievers, but the conduct of what may be termed the outer rim of Christian church-membership. Many of these professed disciples have denied their Lord and His Gospel by flagrant acts of unrighteousness. I can think of six places at this moment where it seems well-nigh impossible for earnest evangelists to get a hearing solely because of the disgraceful conduct of professing Christians. There was nothing askew about their theology, but their lives were frightfully so. I deplore loose thinking on vital themes; but loose living is far more disastrous to the faith of common people. There is, however, a healthy toning up in both the theory and practice of Christian doctrine. A