

empire. Official orders decreed the organization of the Imperial University at Tokio, with five colleges of law, medicine, engineering, letters and science, and branch institutions in four other cities. The people accepting the new regime are to choose a constituent assembly in 1890.

The calendar of Christian nations has displaced the pagan, and since 1873 A.D. determines all dates. In 1876 the national "fifth day" gave way to the "one day in seven" as a day of rest. The ancient edict against Christians is a dead letter; editors, orators, authors and statesmen openly advocate absolute toleration, and as a measure of political economy advise the acceptance of Christianity as a State religion. Mr. Fukuzawa, who some years ago publicly urged that Christianity be not even tolerated, now with equal vehemence urges the adoption of Christianity by the Japanese; and this not as a religious convert, but on purely economic and political grounds, as the best thing for Japan ethically and socially.

Dr. Gracey says: "Japan is ripe for the Christian religion as no other country is on the globe, and may become Christian by royal decree in a day."

About thirteen years ago the first Protestant Church was formed with sixteen members; now there are 250, with 25,500 members. In five years the number of Protestant missionaries in Japan has increased from 240 to 443. The number of native ministers from fifty to 142; of licentiates and helpers from 160 to 287. But best of all, the church members, in five years, from 1883 to 1888, grew more than fivefold, from 5,000 to 25,514! Buddhist priests are in danger of being driven to work to avoid starvation. The popular faith in Buddhism is about dead, and instead of the vast sums formerly spent on temples, it is estimated that not more than \$150,000 are now expended, and an ex-daimio sent \$500 and a chandelier as a present to the mission church at Sanda at its tenth anniversary.

We were recently favoured with a most eloquent address from a native Japanese, Rev. K. S. Kurahara, a graduate of Auburn Theological Seminary, who gave most startling and vivid views of the marvellous progress of Japan. He mentioned, however, four difficulties needing prompt consideration:

1. The indifference of the upper classes to religion.
2. The hold of Buddhism as an ethical system.
3. The necessity of the alliance of political and governmental matters with the future religion, whatever it shall be.
4. The present activity of sceptical scientists and philosophers in influencing the awakening minds of the people.

Never was such opportunity presented to the Church of Christ; and woe be to us if we come not up to God's help in this juncture.

Japan remarkably illustrates the sudden subsidence of obstacles and barriers. Such a preparation as was there found for the Gospel no other land ever, perhaps, presented to the same extent; and it could not be traced to man, for Japan had been for centuries a hermit nation, shutting herself in and shutting others out. There was every reason why, according to all human expectations, the institutions and character of this exclusive people should have been found, after over two thousand five hundred years, petrified and fossilized into impenetrability and immobility. Yet God had gone before His people, and, in advance of their approach, thrown down gigantic barriers. Here was a people tired of a dual government, an oppressive feudal nobility, and a dead State religion. Revolution had paved the way for political reformation and social regeneration. A nation by temperament aggressive and progressive, divinely prepared for a new order of things, waited for a day dawn. Just at this critical, pivotal era in Japan's history, the foremost of Christian nations' peaceably knocks at her doors and asks entrance. A great republic and a great monarchy, both Protestant and evangelical, approach for trade, and bring the Gospel. This awakened nation finds at once a better model of Government, a higher type of civilization, a loftier plane of education, and a purer form of faith; and with incredible rapidity is taking on the complexion and character of Christian nations. Was not God in this subsidence of obstacles? Was not this another example of the coming of the fullness of His time? He struck while the iron was hot, and only He could know when it was hot.

Yes, God not only chose His own way, but His own time, for opening the doors of Japan. At the very crisis of affairs, when the dual government of seven centuries was overthrown, and the Tycoon and his divided followers surrendered to the Mikado as the sole ruling power, at this providential juncture of affairs, when the various elements of Japanese life were in a state of fusion, ready to be moulded anew, God provided a matrix in which the new Japan should take shape.

Foreign commerce was knocking loudly at the long-shut gates, bringing with it western thought, enterprise and manners. It was not only easy, but natural, to accept the new order of things; and consequently revolutions have taken place, intellectually, socially and religiously, that centuries have not wrought elsewhere, which astonish not only all outside observers, but the Japanese themselves.

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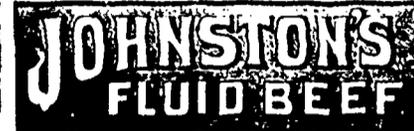
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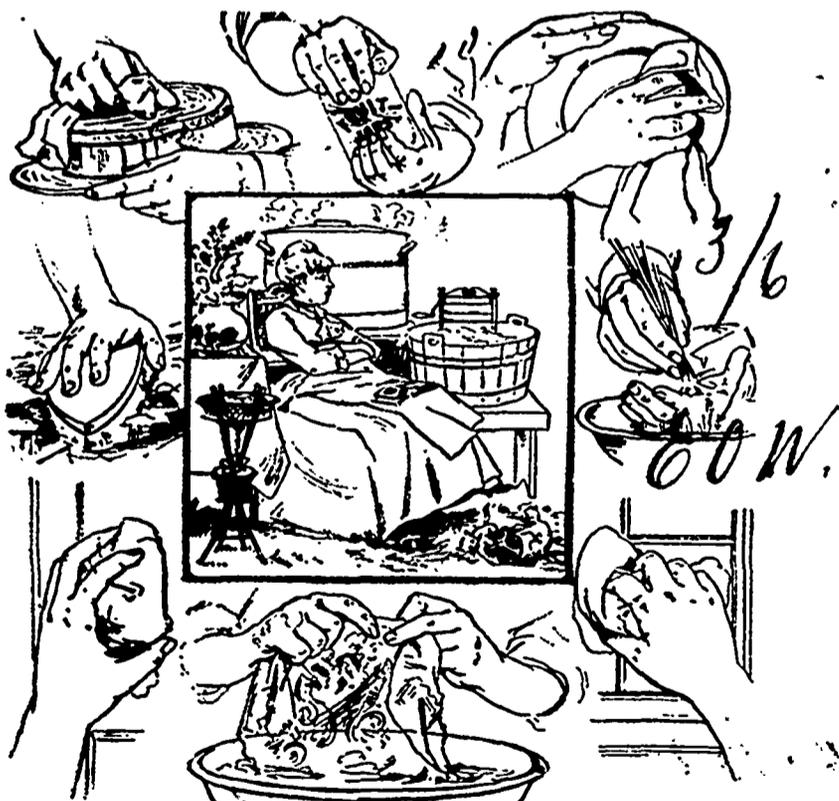
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