

in a far slower degree, throughout Japan. Even here in Nagano, this holy city and stronghold of Buddhism, those who would unhesitatingly tell you that if you are in search of a religion Christianity is much the best are many. But at the same time they would probably add that they themselves do not feel the necessity for any religion, or at present to embrace Christianity would conflict with their business interests.

Perhaps, however, some of the readers of this magazine would like to know why, even with the force we have, Christianity does not make greater progress. Let me give a short summary of the chief obstacles to missions here. Some of these are peculiar to Japan, but most of them are found in every field.

(1) Beyond all doubt or comparison, the greatest obstruction to, and weakness of, Christianity among the heathen are *Christian divisions*. Let me speak plainly of this terrible evil, for I think if each of the missionary societies in America and Europe could get even a superficial glimpse of its effects they would at once either withdraw their missionaries from this Babel, or take steps looking towards the amalgamation of all Christian work in, at least, heathen lands. We can cheerfully hear all opposition from the heathen—we expected it before we came—but this other greatest evil, imported from lands that call themselves Christian, aye, and imported ostensibly for the sake of Christianity, and in the name of Christianity, is so discouraging that one sometimes feels like throwing up the whole work and going back home to tell those who keep these divisions alive that they had better cease sending the Gospel to the heathen until such time as they can agree among themselves, even in a general way, as to what that Gospel shall be.

Under the present system, or rather under utter want of system and co-operation, there is such a waste of men, money, opportunity, and talent as should make every Christian blush. In Tokyo alone there are at least fourteen different denominations, each striving to augment its own members, and caring little as to whether it weakens or hinders the others. I have made myself pretty well acquainted with the statistics of Japanese Christianity, and at the present time I know of no Japanese town of 18,000 inhabitants or upwards which is not represented by a missionary, a pastor, or a catechist from each of three churches, and many have more. There is one town in Simano of less than three thousand population which has two rival catechists, both Protestants; while, again, there are towns of five, six, and seven thousand population which have none at all.

Those catechists who are surrounded by more than twenty converts, young and old, are

quite rare, and the exclusiveness with which each of these little companies holds to itself, and has no intercourse with the other, would convey a sense of the comical, if it were not so terribly serious. It goes without saying that proselytizing from other communions is more or less carried on. It would not be human nature if it were not, when the standing of each of these catechists largely depends on the glowing report he sends in to headquarters.

And what a spectacle this is to place before the heathen in the name of, and as a representation of, the Christ and His Church!

It is quite natural that that heathen who gives a thought to Christianity should say to himself: "Well, if these Christians, who have made a life-long study of Christianity, do not know what it is, as evidenced by their want of agreement in regard to almost every doctrine put forth, how shall I, who know nothing about it, be able to understand it? They had better first agree among themselves as to what this Gospel of Jesus Christ is, and then come and tell me the result." No greater object lesson on the strength of unity and the weakness of division could be had than the Jesuit missions of three hundred years ago in this same Japan—first, a united front, when converts flowed into the church by hundreds of thousands; then came divisions, followed by destruction.

I will not venture to say, as I have heard some others, that had we had no divisions Japan to-day would be a Christian nation; but I certainly think that we should have been now the greatest power in the land, and the complete enlistment of the Japanese nation under the banner of the cross would have been a question of only a few more years. One-tenth of the present force of men and money, united under one able leader, would probably be more effective than this heterogeneous, go-as-you-please band.

If divisions at home are considered too radical to hope for cure at present, is it impossible that there should exist some missionary alliance, or some mutual agreement, as to allotment of each others' fields of work, so as in some degree to keep these deplorable dissensions out of the mission field? The man who successfully institutes such an alliance, or agreement, would, if judged by probable results, be more worthy of renown than a Martyn, a Carey, a Judson, or a Livingstone.

(2) A second obstacle to missions is the lives of foreigners in the ports. Many of them are bad. It may be that the heat of the climate brings with it greater temptations, or that the multitude of temptations on every side render him more liable to fall, or that being suddenly thrown into a position of comparative affluence, where money commands so much, where servants are so cheap, and where the foreigner is