

St. Saviour's) was built the great majority of our meetings in Nagano were held in the rooms of the dispensary, and in future also, services for heathen will probably be in the same place.

Frequent local conferences are held to receive reports of the out-stations, to consider the different obstacles in the way of the Gospel and discuss the best means of overcoming them, and securing the attention and hearts of the people. Twice a year a general conference of all workers in the Mission is held, chiefly with the same object, but also for the comfort and instruction of the different members, especially the isolated ones who work at out-stations. And in each summer we have a two days' Retreat or a Quiet day, or both.

The Mission has now, by God's mercy, become a great power for good in Central Japan. But just how much influence we possess, what will be the result of the seed we are sowing, we have no certain means of ascertaining. The warning cannot be too often repeated that we cannot judge of the success of missions by the present number of baptisms. Although there have been about two hundred baptized in connection with the Mission and the name of each one is recorded, with his age, place of birth, date and place of baptism and confirmation, the number of names has never once been counted. The reason is that we are working not for a few baptisms, but for the conversion of the whole Japanese race. If the baptisms were our only object we should be discouraged indeed, for they do not keep pace with the natural increase of the population. We might have had many more baptisms had we allowed it without proper teaching and trial. No children are allowed baptism unless both parents are Christians. And adults are first received as catechumens, and only after months, or even years of teaching and testing do they receive baptism, and a great many who publicly become catechumens never advance so far, their faith does not become so strong as to allow us to admit them to baptism. But even with such care, there have been many mistakes. The faith of some is weak and cannot withstand the opposition and great temptations which all converts must encounter. But the conversion of the Japanese, their instruction in the truths of Christianity, their gradual drawing near, as a people to the Light, is becoming more and more hopeful. The Western civilization which they have adopted, is essentially a Christian civilization, and in the degree in which the Japanese take to themselves not only the outward form, but the spirit of that civilization, must they become at heart Christians. Sunday, especially in the cities and towns, has become a day distinct from the other six, a day on which all schools, courts of law, public offices, banks, and certain departments in the

post-office and railways are closed, and on which (it is as yet only a holiday, not a holy-day) special feasts and celebrations take place. More and more are the people of Japan looking at moral questions through Christian spectacles, and the Christian ideas of God, of truthfulness, of vice, and of sin, are gradually taking the place of the old heathen confusion on these points. This is the success after which we are striving. And the general turning of public opinion in Japan concerning these things, which are of such vital importance to her present and eternal welfare, has in recent time been so great that we look to the future with bright hopes.

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THE UTILITY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

WHEN one is in doubt as to the utility of Christian missions, and seriously asks himself the question, "Do missions pay? Am I justified in contributing to the cause? Is it my duty to do so?" he is invited to weigh seriously the following fact: The London newspapers announced recently a contribution to the Mansion House Indian Famine Fund of £844 from Fiji. Sixty years ago, when the present Queen of England ascended the throne, the entire Fiji group was inhabited by pagan cannibals. Its heathen darkness was unbroken by any ray of Christian religion or civilization. To-day the entire group is under the benign influence of Christianity, and cannibalism has given place to humanitarianism. Look at the picture—a savage, brutal, ignorant people, given to the vilest and lowest crimes, converted, civilized, and inspired with the best and highest principles of morality. To what force or combination of forces can such a change be attributed? What has produced this marvellous change?

Certain would-be philosophers claim that there is always a natural cause for all such phenomena: the survival of the fittest, the stream of tendency, the law of evolution, natural selection, and such like. If such phenomenal changes in the social, political and moral life of these Fiji islanders are the result of purely natural causes, how is it that these changes never appeared until the missionary of the Cross broke in upon the gross darkness of that region and flooded it with the light of Christian truth? Prior to the coming of the missionary the condition of the Fiji was well known; from that moral chaos of degradation no good thing could ever possibly be evolved; left to themselves, no evolution such as is witnessed on those islands to-day ever could have