

## GREAT MEETING IN JAPAN.

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The *Dai Shimbokukai* or *Great Fellowship-Meeting*, of the Christians of Japan was held in the city of Kioto, beginning on May 7th, and lasting four days. This was the fourth meeting of the kind that has taken place; the last one having occurred in Tokio two years ago, at the time of the memorable revival. As was to have been expected, this meeting was larger than any of its predecessors, the delegates numbering over seventy, and representing nearly fifty churches, while the number of Christians present unofficially brought the aggregate to near 500.

The meeting was held in a temporary building erected for the purpose on the river-bank. The delegates were provided with tables, on each of which was a little pyramid marked with the corresponding delegate's number, and in all the discussions the delegates referred to each other and were addressed from the chair not by their names but by their numbers. The formality resulting from this was less than might have been expected, and it no doubt added to the dignity and decorum which marked all the proceedings. In this and some other respects the meeting compared very favorably with similar ones seen in America. The delegates were generally men of manifest ability and experience. The addresses, as a rule, were able, and the prayers and exhortations bore witness to a good deal of spiritual life. In many hearts there seemed to be an intense longing for greater spiritual blessings, and if these were not received during the meeting in the fullness hoped for, many felt, at least, the blessing of 'hungering and thirsting after righteousness.' The spirit of union was very marked, and although no missionaries took part in the exercises, those present were very cordially received as advisory members. On Sunday, Christians connected with the Presbyterian, Cumberland Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Methodist Episcopal, Canadian Methodist, Congregational, Episcopal, German Evangelical, and doubtless some other churches, united in celebrating the Lord's supper.

The meeting proper closed on Sunday, May 10th, but the Christians of Kioto took occasion of the presence of so many pastors and preachers to hold *Sekkijokai*, or preaching meetings, on the 11th and 12th. These were held in a large theatre and lasted from two to eleven p. m. each

day, with a short intermission for supper. There were eight or ten sermons daily, only one or two having been preached by Americans. Hearers were admitted by ticket, and nearly 5,000 tickets are said to have been issued during the two days, though not more than 1,200 or 1,500 were present at any one time. The utmost good order prevailed throughout.

Such a meeting as this teaches many lessons. It shows among other things the progress Christianity has already made in Japan. These men are the pastors and teachers of several thousands of Christians. They represent Christian work that is going on in almost every part of the land. Their ability and position is shown by their appearance and by the thousands who flock to hear their sermons. No one could follow them in their prayers and deliberations and see how they embrace the people of the whole land in their purposes of love, without feeling that Christianity has come to stay; that if, by some revolution in the government or in popular feeling, the missionaries should be driven away, the banner of the cross would not be suffered to trail in the dust. Hundreds and thousands would bear it aloft at the hazard of their lives.

Such a meeting is pretty sure to have impressed the Japanese favorably. The one thing which more than all else fills the mind of a citizen of Japan of to-day is the idea of a *representative government*. In this his hopes centre. Through it he expects relief from all the ills that flesh is heir to. Such a person entering this Christian assembly would see representatives from all parts of the land coming together to consult over common interests. He would see them taking their places as equals and deciding all questions by vote. Moreover, he could not fail to notice that the meeting was purely Japanese. Foreigners were present, it is true, and treated with proper respect, but they were, after all, outsiders, with no vote and no voice. Seeing this, he could hardly have failed to say to himself: 'This is what I have been looking for; this is what I like.'

Again, the prospective missionary to Japan would have found this meeting an interesting object-lesson. Looking at these educated gentlemen, with their Japanese, Chinese, and English Bibles and other books in their hands, he would have realized that his work was not among a barbarous people whose language he would have to reduce to writing, whose literature he would help to create. He would have seen, also, that his work