

number of reasons why the connection should be continued, and yet all the five Bishops of Oxford who have had the care of Bucks have found the burden of the diocese in three scattered counties far greater than they could bear, while the relief afforded by the appointment of a Bishop Suffragan of Reading was at best an inadequate stop-gap. The Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Gore, is far too well aware of the actual conditions of the case to be unduly troubled by this appeal, even though it comes from leading men in his diocese, and there is a very general impression in England that the Suffragan system has proved on the whole what the "Guardian" rightly calls "a lamentable failure." The Bishop of Worcester spoke out on the subject not long ago, after thirteen years' experience as a "Curate-Bishop" in South London, and no severer condemnation of the system could have been given. Bishop Gore has replied to the protest with equal frankness in saying that "to adopt the method of Suffragans is to adopt the worst alternative." And this he urges on two grounds: "partly because the system of Suffragans prevents the Diocesan Bishop coming to be known in all the parishes as the real Chief Pastor, or Father in God; partly also, because the office of the Suffragan is in itself an unsatisfactory office." This experience of the Old Country will doubtless be borne in mind in Canada, for even though there is no likelihood of the Suffragan system being introduced into our Church, the English experiences ought to be sufficient to prevent its realization.

Why not the Small Town?

An American paper has been arguing in favour of the small town—the town, or city of from three thousand to ten thousand people, "where men and women live as neighbours," and where the enormous power of great funds for the promotion of mental, social, and moral betterment is lacking. There is no doubt that while there are problems in every place, yet it is in the large cities that the greatest concentration of reformatory agencies is to be found. The writer says that those who are born and reared in a small town and have since gone to large communities always love to go back at Graduation time. Human nature is just as likely to be human nature in small communities as in large ones, and not a few instances can be adduced as to the need of social and moral reformation even in small towns. But there is much to be said for avoiding huge aggregations of population and for developing life in smaller communities. The problem has become acute in England and in the United States, with so many from the country flocking to the large cities, and we in Canada have dangers in the same direction. It behoves all who love their country to do their utmost to cultivate "community consciousness" even in small places, so as to make life worth living to our young people in the smallest locality.

The Advent Hope

The season of Advent has not passed too far away to call attention to a fine sermon by that great Cambridge theologian, Dr. Swete, which was reported in the "Guardian" of December 13. In the course of his remarks Dr. Swete gave expression to the following important statement of what the New Testament view of the Advent really is, and he warned people against abandoning the substance of the primitive hope:—

We abandon the substance, I submit, if we content ourselves with the prospect of a gradual improvement in the conditions of the present order; or if for the final apocalypse of the Great High Priest, we practically substitute the departure of each Christian soul and each successive generation to be with Him. Early Christianity held forth both these great

hopes, the hope of the individual soul and the hope of the whole Church, neither confusing them with one another nor letting either slip. The very epistle in which St. Paul speaks of his own desire to depart and to be with Christ in a disembodied life represents the Saviour as coming from heaven to fashion anew the body of our humiliation. Our departure to the Lord is one thing, and the Lord's Coming to His whole Church is another. Both hopes are to be jealously guarded and retained, unless we would lose some part of the spiritual heritage which the Catholic Church has handed down to us from Apostolic times.

We are grateful for these words, for there is far too great a tendency to identify "a gradual improvement in the present order" with the coming of the Kingdom of God, and an even greater tendency to "substitute the departure of each Christian soul" by death for the coming of the Lord. Both dangers must be strenuously avoided if we would keep true to the New Testament. The Kingdom of God is still future, and cannot possibly be set up until the King Himself comes, while death is not to be identified with the coming of the Lord. The New Testament truth is that death "may" come, while the Lord "will" come.

THE OUTLOOK IN JAPAN*

By the Rev. Prebendary H. E. FOX, M.A.

The moral, social, and religious, not to say political, problems of Japan lie far deeper than a passing visitor can fully penetrate. Four months, however, spent in various places, both town and country, with freedom from ordinary occupations, and with unusual opportunities of observation and of intercourse with people of many classes, Japanese and foreigners, missionaries and others, may allow even an outsider to express, without the assurance of a globe-trotter, some of the impressions which have been left on his mind.

That Japan is passing through great and rapid changes any stranger can see in his first day ashore. In dress and manners, in buildings and conveyances, in the shops where native and foreign goods lie side by side, and signboards where grotesque English competes with the picturesque script borrowed hundreds of years ago from the Chinese, in the ancient temples and moss-grown shrines and groves of giant pines entangled in a network of telephone poles and wires and the motor horn challenging the temple bell, in the train or tramcar rattling through the rice fields where the farmer is ploughing his little patch as his fathers have done for generations, one sees that East and West have met, and how quickly one is assimilating itself to the other. And such are but outward signs of graver transitions, in which, if Japan is gaining much, she is losing not less. The old simplicity of domestic life among the upper classes is disappearing. With the passing of the Shoguns, the feudal system could not, of course, survive. But the spirit of patriotism and something of the chivalry and respect for authority which it produced still in a measure exist. Will they stand the growing pressure of the new order? Will Bushido, that noblest asset of Japanese history and character, hold its own against the democratic drift and all that it brings from America and Europe? And will the changes make for higher moral conditions and

*The author was Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society for several years. The deep interest of the Canadian Church in Japan makes this paper specially valuable. It was contributed to the "Record."

the development of those qualities which alone give strength and stability to a nation?

These are questions which thoughtful Japanese are asking themselves; and it was, doubtless, in consideration of such as these that the Government lately summoned a conference representing Shintoism, Buddhism, and Christianity to discuss the relation between religion and ethics. The inclusion of the followers of Christ, when it is remembered that almost within a generation Christianity was proscribed in the severest terms, and the massacre of Christians at Nagasaki took place, is as notable as any of the other changes that have come over Japan. I have never been able to learn what the conclusions, if any, of the conference were. But it may naturally be asked how far are any of the three religions named, whether combined or separate, in a position to control the increasing forces of unrest, of lawlessness, immorality, and irreligion. Let each be looked at by itself. Shintoism has been declared by the highest authority to be not a religion but rather a patriotic sentiment. It has great traditions and generous instincts. But it has no moral power. It may lead a man to suicide, as in a recent case, about which too much has been said, but it cannot make him a pure man, nor even an honest one, if his inclination runs the other way. Buddhism is equally unable to cope with the new order. If atheism by any stretch of terms can be called a religion, Buddhism is one which prates loftily about goodness but cannot produce it. The esoteric notions which represent Buddhism to some thinkers are as incapable of regenerating a single soul as the countless images, worshipped by the Japanese Buddhist, are of keeping him from a single sin.

What then about Christianity? In the Gospel of Christ there undoubtedly resides a Divine energy which, as it can save the man who believes it, can renovate the nation which receives it. The nation is the aggregate of individuals, and can only be influenced as the Spirit of God deals with each man. The man must hear before he can believe, as St. Paul has reminded us. And those who know Christ are God's appointed medium to communicate the knowledge to others. But here lies the weakness of Christian influences in Japan. The Church has failed both in the extent of her witness and in the character of much of it. The supply of missionaries from the home churches is utterly insufficient. Probably not a quarter of the people (less than that proportion in many districts) have ever heard of the Saviour, fewer still have had the message of His love set fully before them. However good the missionaries and the Japanese clergy and their workers (of those whom I have met I cannot speak too highly), however sincere the converts, the number of all, including Romans and Greeks, is far too small to influence the nation to any appreciable extent. Add to this the divisions among the Reformed Churches. The Anglican has its two wings, and though, in the face of heathendom, friction cannot be tolerated, it is impossible that intelligent Japanese fail to see the difference. In the other Churches a graver cause checks their influence.

Rationalism has spread widely. From Britain as well as from America have come teachers of what St. Paul would have described as "another Gospel which is not another." I saw and heard enough to convince me that the statement made by the late Bishop Honda (than whom few knew his people better) in his report to the Edinburgh Conference (vol. iv. p. 113) was painfully true. In such a ministry as he describes the holy fire burns no longer; the Church is paralysed. When a distinguished missionary can write a book such as "The New Testament of Higher Buddhism," which seeks to minimize the difference between that religion and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus

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