

MISSIONARY ILLUSTRATIONS.*

THE time has passed for discussing the need of missionary work. It is now generally admitted. The query is how to do it. The army has heard the clear, sharp ring of the trumpet, and is advancing; war has been declared. Are we prepared to join?

Lord Cairns tells a story of a sweep who took an interest in missions and had "invested" twopence-halfpenny. One day, with face washed, he was met by another, who asked where he was going. His reply was, "To the mission. I am a partner in the business, and I am going to see how it is getting on." So it is that people are not interested in mission work unless they have capital in it.

Some people say that Christianity has great questions to settle with science; but the truth of the matter is, that science has to settle with us. It is difficult to know sometimes what science is. A scientist in a recent paper had stated he had made a slight mistake of 75,000 miles, and yet religion is asked to bow to this *grande dame* science. Geologists of to-day look upon those of 40 years ago as pigmies, and 100 years hence the present geologists will be in the same position. Will the lovers of science ever be agreed as to what the points really are that Christianity has to settle with it?

Christianity is that which will yet draw all men together. It contains a bond of union that is wonderfully strong. Men of different languages and nationalities may be drawn close together by it. On one occasion a Hindustanee and Sandwich Islander met face to face. Though ignorant of one another's language they nevertheless wished to exchange civilities. They were both Christians, but did not know it. With a heart full of Christ one cried to the other, "Hallelujah!" to which the other immediately replied, "Amen." And at once a good understanding was established between them. So it is with the world in general. All people and nations will yet unite on the common ground of Christianity, and its sacred language will be a bond of union among them.

A writer has indulged in speculations as to what St. Paul would do should he come on earth now. The people of the great cathedrals would say, "Preach for us, Apostle. Do not go to the little churches." But one thing is certain about the great Apostle. He would not spend his time preaching in pulpits that were filled by other men; he would go where there was work to be done; he would preach where there was no gospel, and would not build on other men's foundations. He would go out to the wide territories and plains of Thibet and Arabia and proclaim Christ, where His name had never before been uttered. This was the true missionary spirit, and it is sorely needed among us to-day.

THE RELIGION OF THE JAPANESE.

ONE hardly knows, when thinking of the Japanese, whether to be most interested in the contrasts, or the correspondences, which are found between them and ourselves. Among the correspondences are to be noticed the similarity of their position, the nearly equal size of the country, the correspondence in number to ourselves (36,000,000), the mixed character of the people—blending together the Eskimo (Aino), Korea, Chinese and Malay races; as we blend Ancient Britons, Picts, Scots, Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans; their Feudal system, their title of Mikado—exactly equivalent to Sublime Porte; and their term Shin-to, which is the literal equivalent of Theo-logy. It is of this last-named we would say a few words. The Shin-to system of the Japanese embodies all that conjectural mythology which filled the minds of the people prior to the introduction among them of Buddhism and Confucianism. It is full of fanciful legends, sun-myths and nature worship—all these somewhat incongruously blended. But there are some peculiar features about this system which give it a unique claim to consideration. In the first place, it is entirely free from idolatry—understanding by that term the use of images in worship. The temples are remarkable for their entire simplicity of structure and finish: nothing but the native wood, unpainted; and no "graven image, or likeness of anything in heaven, or earth, or water"—only a mirror, suggesting the Pythagorean injunction: "Know thyself." True, there are some fluttering strips of white paper, connected with which persons of a symbolical turn of mind imagine a good deal of meaning may be intended; for instance: the name of the material itself, *kami* (paper) is a play on the word *kami* (gods); then, the whiteness suggests purity; the shape—three zig-zags, like forked lightning—might mean *fire* and *trinity*, etc. All very pleasantly fanciful, and a pretty object lesson in symbolism.

But the real and unquestionable value of the system is this—that its foundation idea is Purification. It presupposes a sense of defilement, and expresses a strong desire for cleansing. This is exhibited in an impressive manner by the worshippers as they approach the shrines, many of which are beautifully situated on hill-sides, among groves of trees, and near springs of water, pure and ever flowing. The stream is often led to the close neighborhood of the shrine, and there is caused to keep in perpetual fulness a stone trough, so perfectly cut and adjusted that the water overflows its brim in an even glassy sheet—noiseless and pellucid, "like unto crystal." From this trough the worshipper dips with a bamboo cup enough to pour over his hands and cleanse his mouth.

Who does not see in all this a refreshing contrast to the debasing Buddhist and Brahminic rites, and also something that bears upon the second commandment, and the fountain of cleansing from sin.

*From a speech made by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Baldwin, Bishop of Huron, at the late missionary meeting held in Montreal in connection with the meeting of the Board of Management.