

few lessons in a year; or that the constant interruptions in tent or cabin make it very difficult to have private personal interviews. But if others can do it we can, and it ought to be as easy for us to make our Indians staunch churchmen, as for others to make them decided members of any other church. The difficulty of reaching our people by direct personal teaching, can be met to a large extent by making a better use of the press; which has been well called the church's lever. Most of our Indians can read and we should give them without stint, bibles, prayer books, and sound doctrinal works in their own language. To encourage them in following the year's course of teaching, we should have a church calendar in handy form, printed in the principal languages and sent out year by year. This might be done at a small cost, and there might well be added a short account of the progress of the work throughout the country during the previous year. Such a publication would do much to remove from the minds of our people an idea which too often gets possession of them: that each reserve is a church in itself, without any real connection with or interest in, any other part of the diocese. I need not dwell further on this subject. Ways and means of strengthening our people will suggest themselves to each worker, and every effort will, I trust, be made to do this. I trust that these conferences may do much to encourage and strengthen us in making our teaching conform more and more to the high standard set before us by the apostles; so that our people may find our instruction all that it ought to be to them. In connection with what has been said about the greater use of the printing press as a missionary agency, I wish to say that we shall be pleased to help as far as possible with our school press. We are now quite able to print fair-sized books in Roman character, and we have on the way from England a font of syllable type which will enable us to print in that character.

SHINANO.

THE MISSION FIELD OF THE CANADIAN CHURCH IN JAPAN.*

IN the last pastoral of the bishop of Japan, issued in Advent of 1892, a clause states that the province of Shinano or Shinsen (both names for the same place) has been assigned as a special mission-field to the Canadian Church. A short description of Shinano cannot but be of interest to Canadian churchmen who have at heart our Lord's command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," etc.

Shinano is an inland province, its boundaries formed by very high mountain ranges, and it is

the largest of the provinces of old Japan. Its population, according to the census of December 31st, 1890, was 1,146,922. Of these not more than 400 are Christians. Among this large population there only four foreign missionaries, and a small number of native catechists. Exactly how many catechists there are, I cannot say, but I have as yet only heard of ten; that is, we have one Christian worker to over 80,000 people, which certainly is not too many, even were these 80,000 all nominal Christians instead of being bigoted, ignorant heathen, each one of whom requires to be dealt with personally and separately.

The largest city in and capital of this large province is Nagano, whose population, according to the census of December 31st, 1887, was 25,698. It is here that the sole representative of the Canadian Church, in her new field, is at present stationed.

Several hundred years ago some wonderful miracles in defence of Buddhism are supposed to have been wrought here, and on their site a large Buddhist temple was subsequently erected. It was to supply the needs of the priests attached to this temple, as well as to accommodate the thousands of pilgrims who yearly flock from all parts of the country to this Ephesus of Japan, that the town of Nagano sprang up. Gradually other smaller temples were built, and this became the holy city of this portion of Japan. Some six years ago the railway passed through, and the station being about a mile from Zenkoji, as the large temple is called, has rapidly drawn towards it much of the business portion of the place, as well as attracting a large population from other towns. It is among these latter that our work finds most encouragement. The old residents are not only hampered by ancestral traditions, but a large proportion of them are in some way under an obligation to one or more of the temples, from which they find it difficult to free themselves. To say nothing of the small army of sorcerers, charm sellers, fortune tellers, prayer sellers, idol makers, and merchants, incense manufacturers, quack-medicine men, innkeepers, etc., etc., who make their living from pilgrims' surplus money, the temples, as a rule, have large estates attached to them, from which their tenants can be ejected at will. But it is only from a secular point of view that these people are under the influence of Buddhism. From the opportunities I have had of judging, with the exception of a few old women, the love of the people of Nagano for Buddhism reaches only to their purse, never to their heart.

The surroundings of Nagano, as indeed almost all Japan, are very picturesque. The city lies on the southern slope of a long hill, which leads up to mountains at the back. Fifteen miles across the valley is another range facing us, and, indeed, looking around, one's first thought is to wonder how the railroad ever got into the

*From a letter sent to the bishop of Niagara by Rev. J. G. Waller.