

## CONTRIBUTED.

### CENTRALIZATION IN MISSION WORK IN JAPAN.

DUNLOP, (1887), now Missionary in Nagano, Japan, in a letter that appeared in the *JOURNAL* of November 4th, spoke highly of Dr. Eby's Central Institute for various kinds of mission work on a large scale, in Tokyo, and of the success of his methods, in spite of the scanty support that he had received. As Dr. Eby explained his plans, when he visited Queen's some years ago, it will be interesting to recall them and to note how he has fared since, notwithstanding the abundance of cold water, that many from whom better things were expected, have contributed.

Nine or ten years ago, everyone was looking for the immediate evangelization of Japan. The people, long shut out from the rest of the world, and accustomed to believe that there was nothing worth knowing outside of their own country, had recoiled to the opposite extreme. Western science, methods, apparatus, tools, literature, education, and religion, with western teachers as well, became the rage. Anyone who offered to teach English could get classes and naturally the schools that missionaries opened drew crowds, because only nominal fees, if any, were asked. It looked as if a nation was to be born in a day. Leaders of Japanese thought, though not Christians themselves, actually proposed that Christianity should be declared throughout the Empire, to place themselves on a par with western nations, or because they believed that Shintoism and Buddhism were dead, and that there was a power about Christianity that might be obtained by the short cut of national profession.

But nations are not born in a day. At any rate, they do not grow up in a day, nor exchange an old for a new religion, as they can exchange their clothes or the equipment of their army and navy. From various causes, a reaction in favor of Japanese customs, dress, and even religion set in four or five years ago, and during all this time the missionary cause, instead of advancing by leaps and bounds, has been stationary or has had only a normal increase, to the great disappointment of the makers of predictions.

Before the reaction commenced, Dr. Eby told the churches plainly that their methods were old-fashioned and inadequate to the occasion. No pretence was made of adapting means to the end proposed. Each of a dozen churches sent its two or three missionaries to Japan, with the general instruction to do the best they could, and to sink or swim. Not one in a score of these had the slightest acquaintance with the long and splendid history of the country or with the national instincts, aims and thought, its heroes, its art or its literature.

Missionaries opened schools and preaching places where the openings seemed most promising, gathered in the scholars who came with eagerness, made converts and established native churches, and "pegged away" in an earnest but through-other, unsystematic, wasteful fashion. As long as there was immediate success no one ventured to criticise, but reaction was sure to come. To a proud and patriotic people, the ignorance displayed of the nature of the problem that had to be solved was irritating.

In 1884, Dr. Eby published a pamphlet on "The Immediate Evangelization of Japan," in which he pointed out that the needs of the people, the wide door open, and the centralization of all higher education in Tokyo called for a union of the Christian forces, and an adequate presentation of Christian thought and work, including healing, teaching, social influences, art and missionary activities of all kinds, in the most effective and attractive manner. He had given, in 1883, a course of public lectures on Modern Apologetics, in a large hall in Tokyo to the educated youth of the Capital, as an instalment of one of the forms of work contemplated by him, and the interest that these lectures excited was proof that there was soil for the right kind of seed. His first thought was for a great union Christian institute in which the best talent and varied energies of all the churches would find a place. But the churches thought this a devout imagination, and he then proposed a smaller centre in which all the Methodist missions would unite. This also he found to be impossible. United States and Canadian Methodists could not co-operate, and the final shape that his plans had to take was a centre under the control of his own church. He obtained permission to create this, if he could raise the money—a free hand being allowed him as regards style of work and methods. Five years ago, he secured an excellent site, put up a tabernacle for apologetical and evangelistic work, and gathered round him a little staff of workers who looked to him as bishop, and who have now been at work with him for two or three years. In giving an account, to the annual meeting of the Tokyo Conference in 1893, of the measure of success that has attended his and their labors, he recalled to their minds his attitude nine years previously and what had taken place since. He said.

"We were then on the rising edge of the wave of enthusiasm and Christian progress which culminated four years ago. We are now, I think, at the bottom of the trough of the re-action. Every one, every church, is looking around trying to account for the stagnation. We are looking at everyone but ourselves to seek the reason for this re-action, and forgetting where a good bit of the trouble really rests. I am glad that my experiment should have been started in the time of this re-action, for it has shown, more forcibly than a time of prosperity could