

until eventually he found himself out altogether. In this land there is very little overt persecution, but the Japanese have a very effectual, though quiet, way of bringing all necessary pressure to bear if they want to.

Another source of disappointment is our little school. From the numbers who attended during the year, and who studied the Bible, we were led to hope that at least a few would be led to choose the path of life; but we are sorry to say that now, at the close of this year's work, not one remains who regularly attends the English Bible-class, or who gives us any hope of better things in the future. Of course, in this I am not alone, for I know of more than one who has toiled in this way year after year without being able to gain one convert. The student class seems very hard to reach just now. Of course, any one starting in fresh can get a following, but when he becomes somewhat of an old story, the numbers gradually diminish, and the direct results are very small indeed.

One instance I may mention which seemed to me pivotal in my English Bible-class work. Up to the beginning of March, the attendance was very good indeed, and the interest taken in the study of the truth seemed to be greatly increased, when there happened something in Tokyo which reacted strongly on the minds of all the students in Japan with reference to Christianity, and which, I am sure, had something to do with the manifest change in the attitude of our students toward the religion of Christ. Sometime early in the year the Emperor sent a proclamation to all the schools in Japan, enjoining diligence and high moral character upon both teachers and students. The proclamation was received with every mark of respect and reverence, and the formal reading of it was made as imposing a ceremony as possible, each school taking its own method of doing this. In the Dai Ichi Koto Chiu Gakko, the next in rank to the Imperial University, it was decided by the authorities to perform the ceremony of bowing before the photograph of the Emperor. This, I may say, is a very common ceremony among government officials in Japan; as, for instance, on every anniversary of the birth of the Emperor, the officials of the different Kens assemble at the Government buildings, and, led by the Governor, perform this ceremony. It is not, however, as far as I can learn, a religious ceremony like the worship of ancestors, but simply a token of loyalty and respect. But when this ceremony came to be performed in the Koto Chiu Gakko, a certain teacher in connection with the institution named Uchimura refused to bow with the rest, giving as his reason that as he was a Christian his conscience would not allow him to perform the ceremony. Now, I am not prepared to say whether the stand he took was right or wrong, wise or unwise, simply because I do not know all the facts in the case; all I want to do is to point out the results that followed. Of course, the news spread all over the Empire, and as it spread it naturally grew until it was interpreted into an act of disloyalty against the Emperor, and consequently an indication of the attitude of all Christians toward the throne. Then, too, one of the religious magazines in Toyko, wisely or unwisely, I cannot judge, wrote strongly defending the action of Mr. Uchimura, and consequently came under the sword of the Government Censor, and was forth-

with abolished. Now, to say the least of it, I am sure that this incident has made evangelistic work among the students very difficult for the present, because whenever the subject of religion is broached, this matter is referred to in such a way as to show that it has had a strong influence over the student mind. About a month after this, I had a very full Bible-class one Sunday morning, and right at the beginning the students said they had a couple of questions to ask. The first of these was concerning the words of Christ: "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I am not come to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

The issue was a square one; the time had come to set before them plainly and yet kindly what it would cost them to become Christians, Christ the despised and crucified demanding that they who follow Him should become partakers of His shame in the work of overthrowing the forces of evil, even though it should break the dearest ties on earth. I must confess to a painful sensation when called upon, after having tried to make Christianity attractive by showing the rewards which it offers, to show also the other side; and yet it is Christ's own method, and even we who are His ambassadors must walk in the thorny path He trod while on the earth.

Then came the next question concerning the action of Mr. Uchimura, which, of course, was easier to answer, but which also touched a sore spot when it brought out clearly the impossibility of being a Christian and still joining in ancestor worship. Christianity presents itself to many of them as so utterly opposed to all their family customs and traditions that to accept it means to break up the whole system, and in this respect Christ does send the sword instead of peace. This brings to my mind two other instances that illustrate this point well. For quite a long time after coming here, one of the lower officials of the Koto Chiu Gakko attended our Bible-classes, and from all I could gather I learned that he had been studying Christianity off and on for some time. He said to me one day, "If you will only modify your Christianity you will have plenty of believers. Many of the teachers in the school to which I belong are thinking favorably of Christianity, and yet to become Christians they must refuse to do many things in their official position which, after all, are only matters of form. Now, if you could so modify as to allow these, the way would become very easy." Of course, I replied that as our religion was not a human institution we could not alter it at will; all we could do was to teach the truths committed unto us by God, and leave all results to Him.

The remaining instance will serve to show how other forces are at work on the side of right, and how God uses "the weak things of this world to confound the mighty." A fine young man came to me earnestly inquiring concerning the truth, and in his questions he touched on some of these very points, and in the course of the conversation he told us of an instance that occurred at the marriage of one of his friends. It appears that on such occasions, in some places at