

THROUGH A MONOCLE

YOU may have noticed possibly that a member of the Japanese Commission, which is visiting Canada, who happens to be a Christian, endorses Mr. Preston's contention that missionary work in Japan should be conducted by native preachers. They are at once cheaper and more effective. They understand both the people and the language; while the foreigner must be a genius who gets to understand either in any very short time after his arrival. I presume that the Canadian missionary authorities will say in reply that the seed must be carried from Christian countries, that the Japanese Christian is himself a product of missionary effort—though the truth may be that he caught the fire at college in either Britain or the United States—and that, so long as the Christian nations supply most of the money for missionary work in the Flowery Kingdom, they will keep their hands on the strings and their men in the field. Still it is likely that the bulk of the subscribers will prefer efficiency to everything else, and that, if they once become convinced that the exported missionary costs more and does less than the native product, they will demand a native missionary force, even if the sinews of war continue to come from the outside world.

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MR. S. TAMURA, who is the Japanese Christian in question, dropped a remark in the course of his illuminating interview which made me wish that I had been doing the interviewing that I might have probed his mind on the subject more deeply. Asked whether the Japanese would remain true to the theology of the West, Mr. Tamura said: "I will not discuss your theology as it may present serious problems. But if you will ask me whether the Japanese will, if largely left alone by the West, be true to the teachings of Christ, I will not hesitate to give you an affirmative answer. We Japanese Christians want less theology and more Christianity."

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NOW whatever did Mr. Tamura mean? What is the difference between Christian theology and Christianity? Christian theology includes such beliefs as that in the existence of one God, in the mediation and sacrifice of His "only begotten Son," in the Resurrection of Christ, in the miracles, in the vicarious atonement, in a system of rewards and punishments after death, and so on. These are—some of them—the distinctive features of Christianity. These are the beliefs which mark a Christian off from a Buddhist or a Confucian or a follower of any of the non-Christian ethical systems of which the Western world is full. There are loose thinkers who talk as if "Christianity" were an ethical system itself based upon what they vaguely call the teachings of Christ. But it is nothing of the

sort. Side by side with the Christian churches in Christian lands, there are institutions which teach systems of ethics quite as good as the churches themselves—some people think better and more advanced—but these ethical teachers repudiate any notion that they are Christian. They may share with Christianity the ethical principles which are common to our modern civilisation; but they emphatically do not share with Christianity its theological beliefs.

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NOW I do not suppose that Mr. Tamura meant to say that he was a moral infidel when he asked for more Christianity and less theology. But I would like to know what he did mean. A man may utterly discredit the miraculous side of Christ's life and regard the Bible as the wreckage of a human literature; and yet accept the ethics of the Christian churches to the last syllable and even go beyond many of them in social and economic reform. Such a man may be a good citizen judged by worldly standards, but he is not a Christian. He might as well pretend to be a Mohammedan while rejecting the claims of Mohammed. Still there can be no doubt surely that the bulk of the people who subscribe to the missionary funds intend their money to be used to preach Christ and Him Crucified to the "heathen." Mr. Tamura will pardon the use of the word "heathen." It is purely technical with me, though I fancy there are good dollars going to Japan from people who would not take this view of it.

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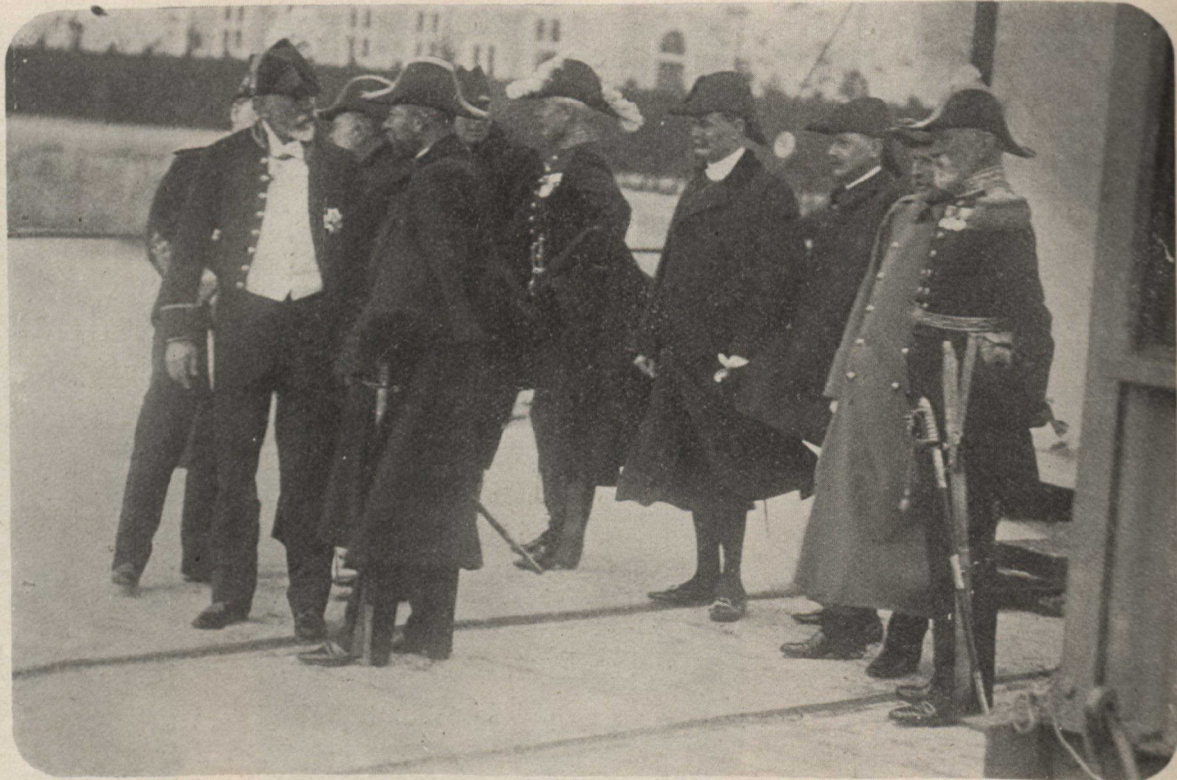
AND it is really on behalf of the missionary subscriber that I am penning these lines. I do not want him to be done out of his money under false pretences. If Christian missionaries in Japan and elsewhere are only going to tell the "heathen" about the best way to cure measles and the latest discoveries of science, if they are only going to preach a system of modern ethics which Robert Ingersoll and Charles Bradlaugh shared with General Booth and the Archbishop of Canterbury, if they are only going to sprinkle these countries with free schools where an aspiring native may learn English and get enough rice to live on, then I think this should be explained to Mr. Jonas Homespun who has all he can do to wrest a living out of his farm and give his own children a start in college. He might not be willing to "cough up" for these purposes, good as they are. Just now he is firmly under the impression that the "heathen" are being told the Old, Old Story—that all these other things are but sugar-coating to the pill—but that the essence of the contract is to tell them that Christ died to save them, and that, if they do not accept Him, they will infallibly be damned. Now, assuming that all missionaries, native and foreign, are preaching along these lines, what did Mr. Tamura mean by wanting less theology? Does he think that he can get Christian money without Christian theology? Does he imagine that Christians feel under an imperative obligation to go out into the uttermost parts of the world to preach any other Christ but the Risen Redeemer?

THE MONOCLE MAN.

WITH THE BIG MEN IN THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE



Sir Hiram Maxim examining Shilling Aeroplane Models at the Engineering Exhibition. Sir Hiram invented a steam aeroplane 20 years ago.



H.R.H. the Prince of Wales opening the New Admiralty Harbour at Dover which encloses 700 acres of water.

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