

Signs of the Times in Japan.

There has been a constant softening towards Christianity on the part of the officials, and to a certain extent, of the people generally, since the outbreak of the war. While the Christian soldier is as patriotic and devoted as the non-Christian, he is far more reliable and trustworthy. The editor of the *Japan Mail* (the leading English paper in Japan) mentioned the fact the other day that he once heard a prominent Japanese statesman asked why he favored the spread of Christianity? His reply was, "The Christian subjects of Japan are conspicuous for orderly conduct and faithful discharge of obligations." The Christian nurses in the hospitals are illustrating this every day. They have been complimented as a body, and their efficiency is attributed by the physicians to Christianity. The result of all this is a friendly attitude toward Christianity. A large hospital is now being started here for the benefit of the military coolies. The projectors of this hospital have sent word to the Christians that they would most gladly welcome Christian instructors. As a result of the work started among the soldiers in the distribution of the Scriptures, permission has been granted for a regular and complete distribution of the Scriptures throughout the entire army and navy of Japan. Every soldier and sailor—including the officers—will have at least a portion of the Bible. Mr. Loomis of the American and Foreign Bible Societies, recently presented a copy of the New Testament to Count Ito, the Minister President of the Imperial Japanese Cabinet, and it was kindly received, and Mr. Loomis was assured by Count Ito that His Majesty, the Emperor, would accept the gift of a Bible. A special one is being prepared for that purpose. The Naval Department has just informed the commanding officer of the naval school (the Annapolis of Japan) that Mr. Loomis is to be allowed to supply all the students and officers of the school with the Scriptures. So it goes. But we are not improperly counting on these things, for the wind may blow from a different direction to-morrow. None of these things have any power in themselves to save a single soul. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." If all the signs were unfavorable to us so far as the government and people are concerned, we would not have a single obligation taken from our shoulders to preach the Gospel to this people, who are desperately wicked, and are lost. It is our purpose not to be moved to undue exultation by favorable signs, nor, on the other hand, to be discouraged by unfavorable ones. Let the enemy of mankind smile or frown, our business—our duty—is plainly marked out before us.—*Rev. J. W. Doughty, Hiroshima, in Church at Home and Abroad.*