

[R1202 : page 2]

JAPAN TO BECOME RELIGIOUS.

The enclosed clipping from the *London Times* is interesting, but proves that Japan is becoming Agnostic rather than Christian.

If these Japanese understood that the Christian religion inculcates sacrifice, would they for a moment consider its national adoption? No. The very reverse of the truth seems to have been presented to them in the name of Christ, though in opposition to his words in Matt. 10:33-39.

Your brother in Christ.
W. M. WRIGHT.

THE EXTRACT IS AS FOLLOWS:

The Japan *Weekly Mail*, in a recent issue, summarizes a discussion now being carried on in Japan by eminent publicists respecting the advisability of the people of that country embracing the Christian religion. "A movement supported by some very prominent men is on foot to give an impetus to the spread of Christianity by laying stress on the secondary benefits its acceptance insures." Those connected with the movement say that Christian dogmas are a bitter pill to swallow, but advise that it be swallowed promptly for the sake of the after effects. Mr. Fukuzawa, a well known writer, urges this course, although he says he takes no personal interest whatever in religion and knows nothing of the teaching of Christianity; but he sees that it is the creed of the most highly civilized nations. To him religion is only a garment, to be put on or taken off at pleasure; but he thinks it prudent that Japan should wear the same dress as her neighbors, with whom she desires to stand well. Prof. Toyama of the Imperial University has published a work to support this view. He holds that Chinese ethics must be replaced by Christian ethics,

and that the benefits to be derived from the introduction of Christianity are: first, the improvement of music; second, union of sentiment and feeling, leading to harmonious co-operation; and, third, the furnishing a medium of intercourse between men and women. Mr. Kato, the late president of the Imperial University, who says that religion is not needed for the educated and confesses his dislike for all religions equally, urges the introduction of religious teaching into the government schools, on the ground that the unlearned in Japan have had their faith in old moral standards shaken and that there is now a serious lack of moral sentiment among the masses. Among the replies to this is one by a Mr. Sugiura, who is described as "a diligent student of western philosophy for many years." He speaks of the specially marked lack of religious feeling and sentiment in his countrymen; the Japanese, he says, have no taste for religion whatever, and it is impossible that they should ever become a religious people. The youth of Japan, he argues, being free from the thralldom of creeds and free to act according to reason, are so far in advance of Europeans; and instead of talking about adopting a foreign religion, Japanese should go abroad and preach their religion of reason to foreign countries. Other writers urge the same views. The writer in the Yokohama newspaper says that those who urge the teaching of Christianity represent an influential section of educated Japanese opinion; they are signs of the times. "To Japan, in an emphatically agnostic mood, came western science with all its marvelous revelations and attractions. At the shrine of that science she is worshipping now."
