

RELIGION IN AMERICA: A JAPANESE VIEW.

THE *Nation's Friend*, a leading Japanese monthly published at Tokio, has a paper by Professor K. Ukita of the Doshisha College, on "Religion in America," which has been translated for *The New York Independent*. Professor Ukita studied at Yale University for a period of two years, and he gives his opinion as the result of personal observation.

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Mr. Ukita noticed that the lower classes in America do not attend church. This is not a phenomenon of one district only. After noticing the real condition of society, he found that there is a proper cause for this phenomenon. There is a custom in America of restricting the seats in the religious temples; they are sold to certain persons, and, even in the churches with free seats, it is generally the custom to take up collections for the maintenance of the services; and, moreover, it is the custom for ladies to wear fine dresses. Such being the custom, those who have not much money and wear coarse clothes are ashamed to enter the churches. Civilization is progressing, but it shows no mercy to the laborer. The Gospel is preached, but the laborers cannot hear it. Ah! the words, "Blessed are the poor," and "The Gospel is preached to the poor," are no longer true; they are simply recorded in a Bible which is chained to the pulpit. In some extreme cases the Christian Church excludes poor people from coming into the Church. The Gospel of the Saviour has become an almost exclusive possession of the rich and middle classes.

The people by whom the present Church is organized are capitalists and people of the middle class. The day when they meet with people of the lower class is not on the Sabbath when the all-loving and merciful God and Christ are remembered. Although they give money to the Church on Sunday, on the weekdays they do not remember the golden words of Christ; they only know the economical principle that they should buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest market.

It is not proper to say that those outside of the Church are not Christians. There are many people who make the true God and Christ their moral ideal, and yet who do not attend church. Even among the lower class of people whose names are not written on the church-rolls, there are many who hold the same ideal. In one society in New York, when a speaker pronounces the word Church, the audience hiss, but when he speaks the name of Christ they applaud; so that it is clear that the present Church has lost its power to attract men, and especially to attract the heart of the lower classes. But this is not a sign of the decline of Christianity. This fact simply shows that the creed and system hitherto prevailing are antiquated and do not keep pace with the general current of the Nineteenth Century.

If the Christian Church cannot reform its creed and system very radically, it may come to stand in the same position in the coming revolution as it did in the time of the French Revolution. It is true that the Church in America is separated from the State; but, on the other hand, it makes a league with the capitalists, and the rich organize a church by themselves and the poor by themselves. Although there is no difference of Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, and even no difference of race in the Kingdom of Heaven, the present Church in America not only refuses to allow the poor to come in, but it is a fact that the white people and the black are opposing each other. The great future revolution of the world will be not merely religious and political, but also a great social revolution, consisting of economical and race reformation.

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