

# The Missionary Review of the World

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## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

### THE SITUATION IN ASIA

"Crisis is the key-word" as to the situation in Asia, says Rev. Charles W. Briggs, of Iloilo, "and crisis fraught with most tremendous possibilities for either death or life, depending upon the way the crisis shall turn."

Confucianism and Buddhism and Shintoism have in their day exercised tremendous moral restraint over the Chinese and Japanese millions—hundreds of millions. The growing skepticism destroys all this moral restraint. The people are left without character, without ideals, without motives that will preserve them from ruin and extinction. The doom of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism has already come. The question is, are China's 400,000,000 souls to have ethics, or to have salvation? The same is true in Japan. Shintoism there, like Confucianism in China, has endowed the people with some self-control, reverence for heroes and heroism, loyalty to the emperor and to parents, and has inculcated self-sacrifice till it is one of the commonest virtues. But contact with the West is rapidly overthrowing all this; the people are becoming unpatriotic, lawless, selfish, materialistic, and are without hope, except as Christ can be incarnated in their midst as their ethical teacher, and eventually become their divine Savior.

In magnificent Buddhist and Confucian temples the grass is growing up, the idols are tumbling to decay. Missionaries are frequently offered these cast-off temples as school and preaching-places; the old religion has gone. What will the evil spirit find, after being cast out and wandering in desert places? If he find the place empty, nothing is more certain than his early return with seven other devils worse than himself. These others are already entering into all the Orient. What a demand for obedience to the great commission!

### JAPAN AND CHRISTIANITY

"Japan's attitude of receptiveness toward the Christian faith makes it a strategic time and one to be grasped," says Rev. J. L. Dearing. Count Okuma said recently: "Japan is athirst for moral and religious guidance. The vital thing is to give her the right food. Tho not a Christian, I have received great help from Christianity." Such sentiments are pregnant with meaning. The extent to which Christianity already influences Japan is seen in the remark of Sir Ernest Sato, for many years the British ambassador in Tokyo, who recently said, "In Japan, Christianity is now recognized as a very great moral motive in the national life." Hon. S. Shimada, M.P., recently remarked: "Japan's progress and development are largely due to

# THE DECAY OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS LIFE IN NEW YORK

BY REV. LOUIS MEYER, NEW YORK CITY

At the first annual convention of the Jewish Community (Kehillah) of New York, the Executive Committee gave a report which seems to us a very important document. It deals at length with Jewish religious education in the greatest Jewish city of the world. Rabbi J. L. Magnes, D.D., chairman of the Executive Committee, says in his report: "We find thousands of Jewish children, over two-thirds of all the Jewish children of school age, without any Jewish education at all, and of the remaining one-third, all too many have only a superficial smattering of a Jewish training, or are forced to attend the Jewish school under conditions such as often defy description. Many hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent yearly for Jewish education, but the results are hardly commensurate with the money or the energy or the love expended."

The report of the Committee on Jewish Religious Education is a most remarkable document, for it enables us to get a picture of the Jewish educational situation in New York. The chairman of the committee was Dr. M. M. Kaplan, but the investigation was made under the supervision of Dr. B. Cronson, principal of one of the public schools, who employed a special investigator in each of the ten districts into which the whole territory of Greater New York was divided. The number of Jewish children of school age in 1909 was found to be 170,000, which seems a very low number. Six different agencies afford Jewish education to these children, viz., Talmud Torah schools, institutional schools, congregational schools, Sunday-schools, Chedorim, and private tutors. Talmud Torah

schools are established for the purpose of giving Jewish instruction to children, mainly to boys, in congested districts, and are attended mostly by the children of the poor. The teachers are either immigrants, who have a limited use of the English language at best, or young men trying to earn money for a college course. Their salaries are from \$25 to \$40 a month, rarely exceeding the latter figure. The teaching is very poor. The lower classes are overcrowded, but the upper classes only meagerly attended, so that there is no need found for graduation. There are twenty-four of them in the city. Institution schools are those which belong to orphan asylums or to institutions which do social work. The former are well equipped, and render most effective service. The latter are still better equipped, and are largely attended; chiefly, however, by girls, because they do not have the sympathy of the orthodox masses. There are seventeen of them.

Congregational schools are connected with orthodox congregations, are under the supervision of the rabbi, but the work is superficial, the attendance is irregular, the discipline is not very good, and the upper classes are empty. Their total number is forty-two.

Sunday-schools are attended almost exclusively by the children of the congregation with which they are connected, tho there are a few "mission-schools" for the children of the poor. A vague kind of curriculum is followed, the attendance is good, and teaching is fair. There are twenty-nine of these Jewish Sunday-schools in New York.

A cheder is a Jewish "school conducted by one, two, or three men, for

the sole purpose of eking out some kind of a livelihood which they failed to obtain by any other means. It meets in a room or two, in the basement or upper floor of some old, dilapidated building. The cheder is usually filthy, the light dim, and the air stuffy. The long table or the rickety desks have seen a better day." It is attended mainly by boys. Its instruction seldom goes beyond the reading of the prayer-book and the teaching of a few blessings and is carried on in Yiddish. It knows no order and has no curriculum. There are, however, some modern cheders, where the teachers use modern pedagogic methods and accomplish good results. The number of chedorim in New York is 468.

Thus, the total number of agencies for Jewish religious instruction in New York, exclusive of private tutors, which agency is not amenable to investigation, was 580 in 1909. They were attended by 41,404 pupils, or 24.35 per cent of the estimated number of Jewish children of school age. Of these 41,404, however, 30,573 were boys and 10,831 were girls, so that, taking the number of Jewish boys in New York equal to that of girls, almost 36 per cent of the Jewish boys of school age in New York received religious instruction, but only 12.74

per cent of the girls. A most deplorable state of affairs, indeed.

In Manhattan, where the large bulk of the Jewish population is located, 21,184 boys and 7,434 girls attended the 322 religious agencies, while the 227 agencies in Brooklyn were attended by 8,250 boys and 2,870 girls. According to the report, the most crowded places in Manhattan are from Monroe Street up to East Ninth Street, and from East Ninety-ninth Street up to East 118th Street. In Brooklyn the most crowded places are Brownsville, beginning with East New York Avenue; and East New York, beginning with Pitkin Avenue, stretching to the end of the inhabited streets. In Williamsburg, the central point is about Graham Avenue and Cook Street.

The decay of Jewish religious education pointed out by this Jewish committee is not limited to New York. It is found in every large American city. It is found in London, where, it is stated, only 15,000 out of 40,000 Jewish children are receiving Jewish religious instruction. It is found in Germany; and it is beginning to appear in Austria, in Hungary, and also in Russia. Thus, it is high time for Christians to step in and do some constructive work among these Jewish children by preaching the gospel.

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### MISSIONARY NUGGETS

Weighed in the balances of love is our life found wanting?—G. SHERWOOD EDDY.

Jesus Christ is going to win in this campaign. The only question is, shall you and I be crowned victors with Him in the final conquest of the world?—J. CAMPBELL WHITE.

I have long ceased to pray "Lord Jesus, have compassion on a lost world." I remember the day and the hour when I seemed to hear the Lord rebuking me for making such a prayer. He seemed to say to me: "I have had compassion; now it is time for you to have compassion."—A. J. GORDON.