

Osaka, Japan.
Sept. 1. 1887.

The Rev. W. H. Belden,

Dear Brother:

Your letter, of July 27th, on behalf of the "A. S. M." reached me a few days since. My associates here, I believe, all received copies of the same and perhaps some of them may write to you in reply.

1. I can assure you that we all heartily endorse the movement which you are endeavoring to set on foot and to carry into effect. You have our sympathies and our prayers. We gladly welcome any news that comes to us of unusual interest among the home churches in our work as missionaries and we desire to do all in our power to ^{aid} our brethren at home in their efforts to awaken and sustain a deeper interest in this work. We earnestly pray that God may send down his richest blessings upon our churches in America & fill them with a longing to make known the Gospel to the millions that are perishing in this and other heathen lands.

2. Many calls come to us for the preaching of the Gospel. This is for us a day of many & great opportunities. In the neighboring country of China our missionaries have to spend much of their time & strength in seeking, or rather in making, opportunities. But it is not so with us in Japan. Open doors are set before us far beyond our power to enter in. I will give a few instances where calls have come to me personally. (1) The town of Odzu (in old feudal

times a Daimyo's town) lies at the extreme western end of the island of Shikoku. The town itself is not large - the population being about 1200, or 1400, only, but the region is a populous one and Ōdzu is the centre of a group of villages all lying within easy reach. Some of the people are of the old military class, but most of them are farmers & tradespeople. A little more than a year ago I received an urgent call to visit the place & preach. A short time before, one of our native helpers had gone to live in the town temporarily on account of ill health. Both the helper & his wife being earnest Christians were not long in making known something of Christianity to those with whom they came in contact. At first the people did not take kindly to the new doctrine and our friends soon met with strong opposition, so much so that they had to quit the town for a time. They moved to another village nearby and there preached Christ "in season & out of season" until they finally gained a hearing; soon many became interested, & some decided to become Christians and asked for baptism. Hence the call which came to me. When I first visited the place in Dec. 1885 I found the greater part of the people still hostile to Christianity but still anxious to see & hear the foreigner. Public preaching services were held which were largely attended, several persons were baptized, after being carefully examined as to their knowledge of Christianity and their motives for embracing it. I made several visits subse-

quently and in Feb. of this year had the pleasure of organizing a church there with about seventy members. Since then urgent & repeated calls for preaching have come from the neighboring towns of Iwajima, Yamatahama & Ichikoko. But these calls have not been met, except to a limited extent, for want of time and strength.

(2) A few days since a letter was put into my hands from a man living in the town of Takamatsu on the same island with Ōdzu but in the north-eastern part. The writer says that he and ten other men, some of them men of education and influence, are anxious to have our Mission begin work in their town. The town is a large one and the whole region wealthy & populous. To this call I could only reply: "We cannot undertake the work because our hands are already more than full."

(3) In the western part of this, the main island, is a large & important town called Nagi. For a year past we have had frequent calls from this place for preaching. In response we have just located a licentiate there. He reports favorably - "preaching services well attended and interest otherwise manifested."

(4) A few miles S. E. of Osaka are the towns of Gore & Gagi. Some of the best people in both places are interested in Christianity and in response to repeated calls from them we began work sometime since but are now in want of a man to station there.

The above are a few of the instances which have come under

my notice & which have called for my attention. There are more of which I could write and many more still which have come within my knowledge, but with which I have had nothing directly to do. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that, in an important sense, all Japan is ready & waiting for the Gospel of Christ. Therever since the day of the apostles has so grand & so inviting a field been thrown open to the Churches in Christian lands. It is true that the motives which at first move many of the people to seek Christianity are mistaken, ^{one} perhaps this is so in the majority of cases, but these mistaken motives are often overruled & directed by Divine grace & power so that the results are good. It is evident to us all that God's Spirit is working, and working mightily, in the hearts of the Japanese. And this is a door especially open to the American Presbyterian Church. The mere fact that a missionary comes from America is so far in his favor. Presbyterian doctrine & Church government have proved to be especially well adapted to the Japanese mind. Presbyterians can now claim a larger number of converts in this country than any other branch of the Christian Church. Now what is our own Church in America doing to meet the call that is going up from Japan? Our Church with her hundreds & thousands of consecrated men and her millions upon millions of wealth has in all only ten ordained missionaries in this country. To us who are on the field this seems to fall very far short of the requirements

of the case. Unless we can be heavily reinforced how can we hold the ground already in our possession, to say nothing of going into possess the whole land thrown open to us? Our Mission in Western Japan has asked the Board for two new men to go to Kanazawa, three for Hiroshima and one for Osaka, besides several lady missionaries. To us this seems a small request, very far from being adequate to the demand. But we are waiting anxiously for a favorable answer. Dr. Mitchell writes from 23 Centre St. that he is making ^{every} effort to get two men for us - but as yet only one has been appointed for our Mission, two others having considered the matter but finally decided not to come. What does this mean? Does it mean that the young men are wanting "consecration"? Does it mean that the great Presbyterian Church is too poor to furnish us with reinforcements? It cannot mean either of these two things - It can only mean that our churches at home are not fully alive to the exigencies of the case. They do not yet, as Paul did, feel themselves to be debtors to all men, they are not awake to the importance of carrying out Christ's command to go into all the world & preach the Gospel to every creature. I earnestly hope that the "N. S. M." may do much toward arousing the churches & creating an interest in the great work of Foreign Missions.

Respectfully & Sincerely Yours,
T. J. Alexander.

P. S. Please to make use of this letter in any way

you think best. If you think there is anything in it worthy
of being made public, please publish it as far and as
wide as you like.

I will see what I can do in the way of sending pictures.
If I succeed in finding any worth sending I shall leave
them in your hands to use, or to dispose of, at your
discretion.

Yours Sincerely,
T. T. A.