

## The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. DECEMBER 1892

OUR BRETHREN in Halifax intend (the Lord willing) to open their meeting house on the first of January next. It will be remarkable, it is said, for comfort and situation, considering the cost. The brethren deserve great credit for their energy and determination to have a house in which they can worship God according to New Testament teaching and in which the gospel can be preached to all who may attend, as Jesus has sent it to the whole creation. They have struggled hard for this, and we rejoice that they have not labored in vain. Owing to their small number and the extreme difficulty of purchasing ground and building a house in a city they must necessarily be considerably in debt. This debt should be lifted as soon as possible so that the preaching of the gospel might be supported in the city. This the brethren are striving to do, and that with cheering success. Friends outside of the city, considering the importance of having the cause established in the capital, are assisting the good work. Many readers of THE CHRISTIAN have contributed something in the past. We would like to make a general appeal now and ask what will you do, if spared, for this work by next New Year's day? You say, "There are so many calls for money." We know it. But no calls are so worthy of our attention as are His to whom we owe everything. How would you like to begin the new year with earnest prayer, to be and do more for Christ than in any of the past? It would be delightful to see in the February CHRISTIAN, along with an account of the opening of the house, a long list of contributors from abroad. May the Lord bless His cause in that city. These dim eyes may never look upon Halifax, but we expect to say of her, "This man and that man were born there." D. CRAWFORD.

## "THE WORLD PLAN OF THE GOSPEL."

[An address delivered before the South Kentucky Missionary Society at Hopkinsville, Ky., May 25th, 1892.]

There are at the present time eight great religious systems on earth. The Chinese race has two, viz., Confucianism and the doctrine of Lao-Tsee. The Indo-European race has three, viz., Brahminism, Buddhism and the Parsee; and the Semitic has three, viz., Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Of these great systems three only are missionary, viz., Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism. All the rest are anti-missionary, ethnic, local, with no provision for proselyting by evangelization. I now call attention to a most momentous fact, viz., that every anti-missionary religion in the world to-day is either dead or dying. It may still have millions of adherents, but the statement is true nevertheless. Confucianism is at this moment either dead or dying as fast as it can. We may still count millions as being adherents, but the statement is true nevertheless. Brahminism is the oldest religion on earth of which we have any knowledge, and possesses the oldest writings. We can not tell when it originated or with whom. As a system it holds nominal control in India of over 110,000,000 human beings. I say "nominal control," for every one knows that it is disappearing from India just as the lions and tigers and elephants are. What is true of Brahminism is true also of the Parsee. Once it was a most magnificent system of worship. It begins with Zoroaster, who was contemporary with Abraham. In the time of Darius it gave the laws to the Medes and Persians which "alte, ad not." From Magianism it ran on into Magic and now counts less than 100,000 followers in all the world.

Confucianism begins with Confucius, born B. C. 551, the very year that Cyrus ascended the throne of Persia. Confucius died at seventy-three years, leaving one grandson, from whom the multitudes of China have descended. Lao-Tsoo, from whom has come the system bearing his name in China, was for twenty years contemporary with Confucius. These two systems hold nominal sway over 430,000,000 human beings. The thing true of Brahminism and the Parsee is true also of these. Judaism never was and never can be truly missionary. It was never intended to be. It can send out no missionaries, it can make no converts. How can it so long as an alien is not to be trusted until the twenty-fourth generation? The nation lives, must live, but it can by teaching and evangelization make no proselytes.

This brings us to speak of the missionary religions. The oldest is Buddhism. This system originated with Gautama, a Hindoo prince, born B. C. 622, and died aged 79, B. C. 543. The canon of their scriptures was settled B. C. 246, or about 300 years after the death of Gautama, and as soon as that was done missionaries were sent out with this commission, "Go preach the gospel to every creature." This system abolishes caste, forbids bloody sacrifices and religious persecution. The first missionaries went to Cashmere, Cabul, the Greek colonies of Bactria, Alexandria, on the Caucasus, to Burmah and Ceylon. In course of time Buddhism left the place of its birth, and now rules chiefly in Central, Northern, Eastern and Southern Asia. It enrolls as followers about 400,000,000, and is pushing its way among the aboriginal heathenisms of many countries.

Mohammedanism begins, of course, with Mohammed, the camel driver and caravan servant, born in Mecca, A. D. 570, and died aged 62, in Medina, June 8th, A. D. 632, and was buried on the spot on which he died. Mohammed began to preach when he was forty years of age, but was persecuted and chased to Medina, July 15th, A. D. 622, which date now marks the beginning of the Mohammedan year. From Medina his work of conquest began. Arabia was conquered during his lifetime. His successors, the Caliphs, conquered Palestine, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Spain, and crossed the Pyrenees swearing that they would stable their horses in St. Peter's Church in Rome. But they were defeated in the battle of Tours by Charles Martel, and the battle which saved Europe put a western limit to the Mohammedan Empire. In the ninth century they conquered Persia, Afghanistan and a part of India. In the eleventh century the Mohammedan Arabs were conquered by the Seljuk Turks, who soon afterwards adopted the religion of those whom they had overthrown. In A. D. 1453 these united peoples crushed out the last remnants of the old Greek civilization at Byzantium and changed the church of St. Sophia into a Mohammedan mosque. From this point they again threatened Germany, and indeed the whole of Europe, for over two hundred years. But they were finally defeated at the gates of Vienna by John Sobieski, King of Poland, and driven across the Danube in A. D. 1683. One of the most wonderful pictures in the Pope's gallery at the Vatican represents Sobieski at the battle of Vienna. "By that defeat," as a learned friend of mine has well said, "the scroll which had been unrolled at Medina began to roll back upon itself." But Mohammedanism still rules in Arabia, Asia Minor, Turkey, Egypt and a part of India, and enrolls as followers 137,000,000 of the human race. These two, then, are the missionary religions of the world with which Christianity has to contend.

Now will either of these ever take this world? Will Buddhism? I have already said that there are some excellent things in that system. It seeks to abolish caste, it forbids bloody sacrifices and religious persecution. These things are good, but

they are so neutralized by other things as to make it absolutely impossible for Buddhism ever to win the world. Buddhism is weak because it has no book, no one book which it can translate and put into the hands of all people, and which all can read, understand and obey. It has a vast literature. What was called a "complete edition" was prepared for Queen Victoria. It contained five thousand volumes, and some of these were twenty times as large as the New Testament. There is a complete edition in Toki which contains 6,771 volumes. Of course no one man ever did read it through, or ever will. The priests say that it is not at all necessary for one so to do. They say that if you will turn the great revolving case in which these books stand, around three times, you will get as much good as if you read every one of them. No doubt this is true. Then Buddhism is weak because of the view which it holds, and must hold, concerning woman. Their view of women is low and beastly beyond expression. They believe in the transmigration of souls. You know that means that after death the souls of men come back and dwell in other bodies. Sometimes that body is a lump of dirt, sometimes a tree, sometimes an animal, sometimes one of the human species. Bro. Smith tells us that Buddhism puts forth some peculiar teaching in connection with this doctrine. The man who does not lie shall be born next time with a sweet voice, white teeth and perfect sense. (If this last item ever be added to certain gentlemen that I know, they will not get accustomed to the change in the limits of one lifetime, I think.) The Ascetic who never eats after twelve o'clock, and never sleeps upon a high bed, has the consolation of knowing that next time he shall not be born a piece of inorganic matter, a disgusting or persecuted animal—a woman or a slave. The next worst thing to be born a woman is being born in some one of the one hundred and thirty-six Buddhist hells, which are located in the centre of the earth, and in which the very least sentence is ten million years. Gautama said that "Any woman under favorable circumstances will do wrong." He said also that "The sins of one woman are more than the sins of 13,000 men." She is called everywhere a temptation, a snare, an unclean thing, and an obstacle to peace and holiness. Woman is never allowed to suppose for a moment that she has a soul, and her only chance for a hereafter at all lies in being born again, and the next time a man. In enumerating his family no Buddhist counts his wife or daughters. The wife on the street must walk at least ten steps behind her husband lest her footsteps pollute his holy shadow. The ideal character in Buddhism is a man in whom are blended the fatherhood of one son, and then a life of celibacy and yellow-robed mendicancy. Woman is unwelcome as a babe, untaught as a child, unloved as a wife, unprotected as a widow, unburied as dead, and denied a heaven or a soul. These things being true it is no wonder that Buddhism has never founded a decent social or political state though it has had ample time in which to do both. These things being true—and true they are—every reflecting person has at hand an answer to the question, "Will Buddhism ever take the world?" I might here, with all propriety, mention the fact that the better class of Buddhist priests have no idea that they can take the world. They speak plainly, emphatically and constantly of a system lately come to Japan before which Buddhism is certainly one day to perish. In 1884 the *Jiji Shimpō*, a Buddhist paper in Tokio, said this: "We regret to say that Buddhism can not hold its ground against Christianity, and that Christianity must one day prevail throughout all Japan. We do not mean that it will do so at once, or even this day, or month, or year. That a whole people should change their faith is by no means an easy affair, and that Christianity should effectually con-