

Chyprath

BUDDHISM

1
CONTAINED WITH

CHRISTIANITY.

Revised Edition of the "Buddha Christ"

of May 21, 1885.

Colombo

E. M. & J. FERGUSON

1889.

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B U D D H I S M

CONTRASTED WITH CHRISTIANITY.

[Being the concluding lecture in Sir Monier Monier-Williams's new book.]

In the previous Lectures I have incidentally contrasted the principal doctrines of Buddhism with those of Christianity.

It will be my aim in this concluding Lecture to draw attention more directly and more in detail to the main points of divergence between two systems, which in their moral teaching have so many points of contact, that a superficial study of either is apt to lead to very confused ideas in regard to their comparative excellence and their resemblance to each other.

And first of all I must remind those who heard my earlier Lectures of the grand fundamental distinction which they were intended to establish—namely, that Christianity is a religion, whereas Buddhism, at least in its earliest and truest form, is no religion at all, but a mere system of morality and philosophy founded on a pessimistic theory of life.

*truth
a moral
philosophy*

Here however, it may be objected that, before we exclude Buddhism from all title to be called a religion, we ought to define what we mean by the term 'religion.'

Of course, it will be generally acknowledged that mere morality need not imply religion, though—taking the converse—it is most undeniably true that religion must of necessity imply morality.

Unquestionably there have been great philosophers in ancient times who have lived strictly moral lives

without acknowledging any religious creed at all. Many excellent men, too, exist among us in the present day, who resent being called irreligious, and yet hold no definite religious doctrines, and decline to accept any system which commits them to absolute belief in anything except an eternal Energy or Force.

Clearly the definition of the word 'religion' is beset with difficulties, and its etymology is too uncertain to help us in explaining it.* We shall, however, be justified if we affirm that every system claiming to be a religion in the proper sense of the word must postulate the eternal existence of one living and true God of infinite power, wisdom, and love, the Creator, Designer, and Preserver of all things visible and invisible.

It must also take for granted the immortality of man's soul or spirit, and the reality of a future state and of an unseen world. It must also postulate in man an innate sense of dependence on a personal God—a sense of reverence and love for Him, springing from a belief in His justice, holiness, wisdom, power, and love, and intensified by a deep consciousness of weakness, and a yearning to be delivered from the presence, tyranny, and penalty of sin.

Then starting from these assumptions, it must satisfy four requisites

First, it must reveal the Creator in His nature and attributes to His creature, man.

Secondly, it must reveal man to himself. It must impart to him a knowledge of his own nature and history—what he is; why he was created; whither he is tending; and whether he is at present in a state of decadence downwards from a higher condition, or of development upwards from a lower.

Thirdly, it must reveal some method by which the finite creature may communicate with the infinite Creator—some plan by which he may gain access to Him and become united with Him, and be saved by Him from the consequences of his own sinful acts.

Fourthly, such a system must prove its title to be called a religion by its regenerating effect on man's nature; by its influence on his thoughts, desires, passions, and feelings; by its power of subduing all his

* Cicero (*De natura deorum*) derives *religion* from *relego*, and explains it as a diligent practice of prayer and worship. Others have derived it from *religō*, and hold that it means 'binding to God.'

evil tendencies; by its ability to transform his character and assimilate him to the God it reveals.

It is clear, then that tried by such a criterion as this, early Buddhism could not claim to be a religion. It failed to satisfy these conditions. It refused to admit the existence of a personal Creator, or of man's dependence on a higher Power. It denied any eternal soul or Ego in man. It acknowledged no external, supernatural revelation. It had no priesthood—no real clergy; no prayer; no real worship. It had no true idea of sin, or of the need of pardon (p. 124), and it condemned man to suffer the consequences of his own sinful acts without hope of help from any Saviour or Redeemer, and indeed from any being but himself.

The late Bishop of Calcutta once said to me, that being in an outlying part of his diocese, where Buddhism prevailed, he asked an apparently pious Buddhist, whom he happened to observe praying in a temple, what he had just been praying for? He replied, 'I have been praying for nothing.' 'But,' urged the Bishop, 'to whom have you been praying?' The man answered, 'I have been praying to nobody.' 'What!' said the astonished Bishop, 'praying for nothing to nobody?' And no doubt this anecdote gives an accurate idea of the so-called prayer of a true Buddhist. This man had not really been praying for anything. He had been merely making use of some form of words to which an efficacy, like that of sowing fruitful seed in a field, was supposed to belong. He had not been praying in any Christian sense.

Here, however, an objector might remind me that according to my own showing, various developments of Buddhism modified and even contradicted the original creed, and that what has been here said about prayer, is only strictly applicable to early Buddhism as originally taught in the most ancient texts.

I grant this—I grant that expressions of reverence for the Buddha, the Law, and the Monkhood, developed into expressions of wants and needs, and that these expressions, gradually led on to the offering of actual prayers to deified Buddhas and Bodhi-sattvas.

I admit that we ought to judge of Buddhism as a whole. We ought to give full consideration to its later developments, and the gradual sliding of its atheism and agnosticism into theism and polytheism. We are bound to acknowledge that Buddhism, as it extended to other countries, did acquire the character of a

** This lecturer is ignorant on Buddhism
he has not seen the Buddhist's*

theistic religious system, which, though false, had in it some points of contact with Christianity.

Nevertheless, admitting all this, and taking into account all that can be said in favour of Buddhism as a religious system, it will be easy to show how impossible it is to bridge over the yawning chasm which separates it from the true religion.

It is, indeed, one of the strange phenomena of the present day, that even educated people who call themselves Christians, are apt to fall into raptures over the precepts of Buddhism,* attracted by the bright gems which its admirers delight in culling out of its moral code, and in displaying ostentatiously, while keeping out of sight all its dark spots, all its trivialities and senseless repetitions†; not to speak of all those evidences of deep corruption beneath a whited surface, all those significant precepts and prohibitions in its

* Here is an extract from a book called 'The Mystery of the Ages,' published in 1887 :—'Buddhism is the Christianity of the East, and, as such, even in better conservation than is Christianity, the Buddhism of the West.'

† As instances of the trivialities I give the following from the Culla-vagga (Sacred Books of the East, vol. xx. v, 31, p. 146 ; v, 9. 5, p. 87):—

'Now at that time the Bhikkhus hung up their bowls on pins in the walls, or on hooks. The pins or hooks falling down, the bowls were broken. They told this matter to the Blessed One. "You are not, O Bhikkhus, to hang your bowls up. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of a dukkata" (offence). Now at that time the Bhikkhus put their bowls down on a bed, or a chair; and sitting down thoughtlessly they upset them, and the bowls were broken. They told this matter to the Blessed One. "You are not, O Bhikkhus, to put your bowls on a bed, or on a chair. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of a dukkata" (offence.) Now at that time the Bhikkhus kept their bowls on their laps; and rising up thoughtlessly they upset them, and the bowls were broken. They told this matter to the Blessed One. "You are not, O Bhikkhus, to keep your bowls on your laps. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of a dukkata" (offence). Now at that time the Bhikkhus put their bowls down on a sunshade; and the sunshade being lifted up by a whirlwind, the bowls rolled over and were broken. They told this matter to the Bles-

books of discipline, which indeed no Christian could soil his lips by uttering.*

sed One. "You are not, O Bhikkhus, to put your bowls down on a sunshade. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of a dukka'a." Now at that time the Bhikkhus, when they were holding the bowls in their hands, opened the door. The door springing back, the bowls were broken. They told this matter to the Blessed One. "You are not, O Bhikkhus, to open the door with your bowls in your hands. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of dukkata." Now at that time the Bhikkhus did not use tooth-sticks, and their mouths got a bad odour. They told this matter to the Blessed One. "There are these five disadvantages, O Bhikkhus, in not using tooth-sticks—it is bad for the eyes—the mouth becomes bad-smelling—the passages by which the flavours of the food pass are not pure—bile and phlegm get into the food—and the food does not taste well to him who does not use them. These are the five disadvantages, O Bhikkhus, in not using tooth-sticks." "There are five advantages, O Bhikkhus" (etc., the converse of the last). "I allow you, O Bhikkhus, tooth-sticks." Now at that time the Chabbaggiya Bhikkhus used long tooth-sticks; and even struck the Samaneras with them. They told this matter to the Blessed One. "You are not, O Bhikkhus, to use too long tooth-sticks. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of a dukkata. I allow you, O Bhikkhus, tooth-sticks up to eight finger-breadths in length. And Samaneras are not to be struck with them. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of a dukkata." Now at that time a certain Bhikkhu, when using too short a tooth-stick, got it stuck in his throat. They told this matter to the Blessed One. "You are not, O Bhikkhus, to use too short a tooth-stick. Whosoever does so, shall be guilty of a dukkata. I allow you, O Bhikkhus, tooth-sticks four finger-breadths long at the least."

* Although this Lecture was written and in type before the publication of the Bishop of Colombo's article in the July (1888) number of the 'Nineteenth Century,' I need not say that I wish here, as the Bishop has done, to draw attention to the collection of 'moral horrors' existing in some parts of the Parajika books—the disgusting detail of every conceivable form of revolting vice supposed to be perpetrated or perpetuable by monks.

It has even been asserted that much of the teaching in the Sermon of the Mount, and in other parts of the Gospel narratives, is based on previously current moral teaching, which Buddhism was the first to introduce to the world, 500 years before Christ.* But this is not all. The admirers of Buddhism maintain that the Buddha was not a mere teacher of the truths of morality, but of many other sublime truths. He has been justly called, say they, 'the Light of Asia,' though they condescendingly admit that Christianity as a later development is more adapted to become the religion of the world.

Let us then inquire, for a moment, what claim Gantama Buddha has to this title—'the Light of Asia?'

Now, in the first place those who give him his name forget that his doctrines only spread over Eastern Asia, and that either Confucius, or Zoroaster, or Muhammad might equally be called 'the Light of Asia.'

But was the Buddha, in any true sense, a Light to any part of the world?

It is certainly true that the main idea implied by Buddhism is intellectual enlightenment. Buddhism, before all things, means enlightenment of mind, resulting from intense self-concentration and introspection, from intense abstract meditation, combined with the exercise of a man's own reasoning faculties and intuitions.

Of what nature, then, was the so-called Light of Knowledge that radiated from the Buddha? Was it the knowledge of his own utter weakness, of his original depravity of heart, or of the origin of sin? No; the Buddha's light was in these respects profound darkness. He confessed himself, in regard to such momentous questions, a downright Agnostic. The primary origin of evil—the first evil act—was to him an inexplicable mystery.

Was it, then, a knowledge of the goodness, justice, holiness, and omnipotence of a personal Creator? Was it a knowledge of the Fatherhood of God? No; the

* Dr. Kellogg, in his excellent work, 'the Light of Asia and the Light of the World,' well criticizes Professor Seydel's Buddhist-Christian Harmony, as well as the Professor's views on this point expressed in his work entitled 'Das Evangelium von Jesus in Seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha-Sage und Buddha-Lehre.' Leipzig, 1880.

* *It is not the religion of the world.*

Buddha's light was in these respects also mere and sheer darkness. In these respects, too, he acknowledged himself a thorough Agnostic. He admitted that he knew of no being higher than himself.

What, then, was the light that broke upon the Buddha? What was this enlightenment which has been so much written about and extolled? All that he claimed to have discovered was the origin of suffering and the remedy of suffering. All the light of knowledge to which he attained came to this:—that suffering arises from indulging desires, especially the desire for continuity of life; that suffering is inseparable from life; that all life is suffering; and that suffering is to be got rid of by the suppression of desires, and by the extinction of personal existence.

Here, then, is the first great contrast. When the Buddha said to his converts, 'Come (ehi), be my disciple,' he bade them expect to get rid of suffering, he told them to stamp out suffering by stamping out desires (see pp. 43, 44). When the Christ said to His disciples, 'Come, follow Me,' He bade them expect suffering. He told them to glory in their sufferings—nay, to expect the perfection of their characters through suffering.

It is certainly noteworthy that both Christianity and Buddhism agree in asserting that all creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, in suffering, in tribulation. But mark the vast, the vital distinction in the teaching of each. The one taught men to be patient under affliction, and to aim at the glorification of the suffering body, the other taught men to be intolerant of affliction, and to aim at the utter annihilation of the suffering body.

What says our Bible? We Christians, it says, are members of Christ's Body—of His flesh and of His bones—of that Divine Body which was once a suffering Body, a cross-bearing Body, and is now a glorified Body, an ever-living, life-giving Body. Hence it teaches us to honour and revere the human body; nay, almost to deify the human body.

A Buddhist, on the other hand, treats every kind of body with contempt, and repudiates as a simple impossibility, all idea of being a member of the Buddha's body. How could a Buddhist be a member of a body which was burnt to ashes—which was calcined, —which became extinct at the moment when the Buddha's whole personality became extinguished also?

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But, say the admirers of Buddhism, at least you will admit that Buddha told men to avoid sin, and to aim at purity and holiness of life? Nothing of the kind. The Buddha had no idea of sin as an offence against God, no idea of true holiness (see p. 124.) * What he said was—Get rid of the demerit of evil actions and accumulate a stock of merit by good actions.

And let me remark here that this determination to store up merit—like capital at a bank—is one of those inveterate propensities of human nature, one of those irrepressible and deep-seated tendencies in humanity which nothing but the divine force imparted by Christianity can ever eradicate. It is for ever cropping up in the heart of man, as much in the West as in the East, as much in the North as in the South; for ever reasserting itself like a pestilent weed, or like tares amidst the wheat, for ever blighting the fruit of those good instincts which underlie man's nature everywhere.

Only the other day I met an intelligent Sikh from the Panjab, and asked him about his religion. He replied, 'I am no idolater; I believe in One God, and I repeat my prayers, called "Jap-jee," every morning and evening. These prayers occupy six pages of print, but I can get through them in little more than ten minutes.' He seemed to pride himself on this rapid recitation as a work of increased merit.

I said, 'What else does your religion require of you?' He replied, 'I have made one pilgrimage to a holy well near Amritsar. Eighty-five steps lead down to it. I descended and bathed in the sacred pool. Then I ascended one step and repeated my Jap-jee with great rapidity. Then I descended again to the pool and bathed again, and ascended to the second step and repeated my prayers a second time. Then I descended a third time, and ascended to the third step and repeated my Jap-jee a third time, and so on for the whole eighty-five steps, eighty-five bathings and eighty-five repetitions of the same prayers. It took me exactly fourteen hours, from 5 p.m. one evening to 7 a.m. next morning, and I fasted all the time.'

I asked, 'What good did you expect to get by going through this task?' He replied, 'I hope I have laid up an abundant store of merit, which will last me for a long time.'

This, let me tell you, is a genuine Hindu notion. It

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is of the very essence of Brahmanism, of Hinduism, of Zoroastrianism, of Confucianism, of Muhammadanism. It is even more of the essence of Buddhism. For, of all systems, Buddhism is the one which lays most stress on the accumulation of merit by good actions, as the sole counterpoise to the mighty force generated by the accumulation of demerit through evil actions in present and previous forms of life. Nor did the Buddha ever claim to be a deliverer from guilt, a purger from the taint of past pollution. He never pretended to set any one free from the penalty, power, and presence of sin—from the bondage of sinful acts and besetting vices. He never professed to furnish any cure for the leprosy of man's corrupt nature—any medicine for a dying sinner.* On the contrary by his doctrine of Karma he bound a man hand and foot to the inevitable consequences of his own evil actions with chains of adamant. He said, in effect, to every one of his disciples, 'You are in slavery to a tyrant of your own setting up; your own deeds, words, and thoughts in your present and former states of being, are your own avengers through a countless series of existences:

"Your acts your angels are for good or ill,
Your fatal shadows that walk by you still."

'If you have been a murderer, a thief, a liar, impure, a drunkard, you must pay the penalty in your next birth—perhaps as a sufferer in one of the hells,† perhaps in the body of a wild beast, perhaps in that of

* It is true that in the Lalita-vistara Buddha is described in terms which appear to assimilate his character to the Christian conception of a Saviour; but how could any man, however good and great, have any claim to be called either a Saviour or Redeemer who only revealed to his fellow-men such a method of getting rid of pain and suffering, through their own works and merits, as must lead them in the end to extinction of all personal existence? The very essence of Christ's character as a Saviour is His divine power of transferring His own perfect merits to imperfect men, and leading them from death to eternal life, not to eternal extinction of life.

† In regard to the Buddhist doctrine of terrific purgatorial torments in some of the numerous Hells, see p. 120 of this volume.

some unclean animal or loathsome vermin, perhaps as a demon or evil spirit. Yes, your doom is sealed. Not in the heavens, O man, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place where thou canst escape the force of thine own evil actions.* Thy only hope of salvation is in thyself. Neither god nor man can save thee, and I am wholly powerless to set thee free.'

And now, contrast the few brief words of Christ in his first recorded sermon.† 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.'

Yes, in Christ alone there is deliverance from the bondage of former transgressions, from the prison-house of former sins; a total cancelling of the past; a complete blotting-out of the handwriting that is against us; an entire washing away of every guilty stain; the opening of a clear course for every man to start afresh; the free gift of pardon and of life to every criminal, to every sinner—even the most heinous and inveterate.

Still, I seem to hear some admirers of Buddhism say: We admit the force of these contrasts, but surely you will allow that in the moral law of Buddha we find precepts identically the same as those of Christianity—precepts which tell a man not to love the world, not to love money, not to hate his enemies, not to do unrighteous acts, not to commit impurities, to overcome evil by good, and to do to others as we would be done by?

Well, I admit all this. Nay, I admit even more than this; for many Buddhist precepts command total abstinence in cases where Christianity demands only temperance and moderation. The great contrast, as I have already explained, between the moral precepts of Buddhism and Christianity, is not so much in the letter of the precepts, as in the power brought to bear in their application.

Buddhism, I repeat, says: Act righteously through your own efforts, and for the final getting rid of all suf-

* See Dhamma-pada, 127.

† I have not followed the exact words in our authorized translation of St. Luke iv. 18, because they must be taken with Isaiah.

fering, of all individuality, of all life in yourselves. Christianity says: Be righteous through a power imparted in you from above, through the power of a life-giving principle, freely given to you, and always abiding in you. The Buddha said to his followers: "Take nothing from me, trust to yourselves alone." Christ said: "Take all from Me; trust not to yourselves. I give unto you eternal life, I give unto you the bread of heaven, I give unto you living water." Not that these priceless gifts involve any passive condition of inaction. On the contrary, they stir the soul of the recipient with a living energy. They stimulate him to noble deeds, and self sacrificing efforts. They compel him to act as the worthy, grateful, and appreciative possessor of so inestimable a treasure.

X Still, I seem to hear some one say: We acknowledge this; we admit the truth of what you have stated; nevertheless, for all that, you must allow that Buddhism conferred a great benefit on India by encouraging freedom of thought and by setting at liberty its teeming population, before entangled in the meshes of ceremonial observances and Brahmanical priestcraft.

Yes, I grant this; nay, I grant even more than this. I admit that Buddhism conferred many other benefits on the millions inhabiting the most populous part of Asia. It introduced education and culture; it encouraged literature and art; it promoted physical, moral, and intellectual progress up to a certain point; it proclaimed peace, good will, and brotherhood among men; it deprecated war between nation and nation; it avowed sympathy with social liberty and freedom; it gave back much independence to women; it preached purity in thought, word, and deed (though only for the accumulation of merit); it taught self-denial without self-torture; it inculcated generosity, charity, tolerance, love, self-sacrifice, and benevolence, even towards the inferior animals; it advocated respect for life and compassion towards all creatures; it forbade avarice and the hoarding of money; and from its declaration that a man's future depended on his present acts and condition, it did good service for a time in preventing stagnation, stimulating exertion, promoting good works of all kinds, and elevating the character of humanity.

Then again, when it spread to outlying countries it assumed the character of a religion; it taught the existence of unseen worlds; it permitted the offering

of prayers to Maitreya and other supposed personal saviours; it inculcated faith and trust in these celestial beings, which operated as good motives in the hearts of many, while the hope of being born in higher conditions of life, and the desire to acquire merit by reverential acts, led to the development of devotional services, which had much in common with those performed in Christian countries. Nay, it must even be admitted that many Buddhists in the present day are deeply imbued with religious feelings, and in no part of the world are the outward manifestations of religion—such as temples and sacred objects of all kinds—so conspicuous as in modern Buddhist countries.

But if, after making all these concessions, I am told that, on my own showing, Buddhism was a kind of introduction to Christianity, or that Christianity is a kind of development of Buddhism, I must ask you to bear with me a little longer, while I point out certain other contrasts, which ought to make it clear to every reasonable man, how vast, how profound, how impassable is the gulf separating the true religion from the false philosophy, and from the later religious systems developed out of it.

And first, observe that Buddhism has never claimed to be an exclusive system. It has never aimed at taking the place of other religions. On the contrary it tolerates all, and a Buddhist considers that he may be at the same time a Hindu, a Confucianist, a Taoist, a Shintoist, and even, strange to say, a Christian.

A Christian, on the other hand, holds as a cardinal doctrine of his religion, that there is only one Name under heaven given among men, whereby any human being can be saved. To be at the same time a believer in Christ and a believer in Buddha implies an utter contradiction in terms.

Then it need scarcely be repeated here that Christ is before all things a majestic example of a great historic personality. Any really historical, matter-of-fact account of the life of Buddha, like that of the life of Christ by the four Evangelists, may be looked for in vain through all the Buddhist scriptures. The Buddha's biography is mixed up with such monstrous legends, absurd figments, and extravagant fables, that to attempt the sifting out of any really historical element worthy of being compared with the pregnant

simplicity—the dignified brevity of the biography of Christ, would be an idle task.

Still we may note two or three obvious points of comparison and contrast.

And perhaps the most important is, that Christ constantly insisted on the fact that He was God-sent, whereas the Buddha always described himself as self-sent. How indeed could the Buddha have said 'the great I A M hath sent me unto you *' when he had no belief in the eternal existence of any Ego at all? Not even in the reality of his own individuality.

All that he affirmed of himself was that he came into the world to be a teacher of perfect wisdom, by a force derived from his own acts. By that force alone he had passed through innumerable bodies of gods, demi-gods, demons, men, and animals, until he reached one out of numerous heavens, and thence by his own will descended upon earth and entered the side of his mother in the form of a white elephant, (see pp. 23, 477). Let those who speak of his 'virgin-mother' bear this in mind.

Christ, on the other hand, made known to his disciples, that He was with His Father from everlasting, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' Then in the fulness of time, He was sent into the world by His Father, and was born of a pure virgin, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in the likeness and fashion of men.

Next let us note a vast contrast in the fact that Christ was sent from heaven to be born on earth in a poor and humble station, to be reared in a cottage, to be trained to toilsome labour as a working-man; whereas the Buddha came down to be born on earth in a rich and princely family; to be brought up amid luxurious surroundings, and finally to go forth as a mendicant-monk, depending upon others for his daily food and doing nothing for his own support.

Then, again Christ as He grew up showed no signs of earthy majesty in his external form, whereas the Buddha is described as marked with certain mystic symbols of universal monarchy on his feet and on his hands, and taller and more stately in frame and figure than ordinary human beings (see pp. 476, 501).

Then, when each entered on his ministry as a teacher, Christ was despised and rejected by kings and princes, and followed by poor and ignorant fishermen, by com-

* Exodus iii. 14.

x This shows that his doctrine was not pure & he always & he was
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mon people, publicans, and sinners Buddha was honoured by kings and princes, and followed by rich men and learned disciples.

Then Christ had all the treasures of knowledge hidden in Himself, and made known to His disciples that He was Himself the Way, and the Truth,—Himself their Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. Buddha declared that all enlightenment and wisdom were to be attained by his disciples, not through him, but through themselves and their own intuitions; and that, too, only after long and painful discipline in countless successive bodily existences.

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can be done
by magic*

Then in regard to the miracles which both the Bible and the Tripitaka describe as attestations of the truth of the teaching of each, contrast the simple and dignified statement that 'the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them,'* with the following description of the Buddha's miracles in the Mahā-vagga (I. 20, 24): †
'At the command of the Blessed One the five hundred pieces of fire-wood could not be split and were split, the fires could not be lit up and were lit up, could not be extinguished and were extinguished. Besides he created five hundred vessels with fire. Thus the number of these miracles amounts to three thousand five hundred.'

Then, although each made use of missionary agency, the one sent forth his high-born learned monks as missionaries to the world at the commencement of his own career, giving them no divine commission; the other waited till the close of His own ministry, and then said to His low-born, unlearned disciples, 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you' (St. John xx. 21).

Then, when we come to compare the death of each, the contrast reaches its climax; for Christ was put to death violently by wicked men, and died in agony an atoning death, suffering for the sins of the world at the age of thirty-three, leaving behind in Jerusalem about one hundred and twenty disciples after a short ministry of three years. Whereas the Buddha died peacefully among his friends, suffering from an attack

* St. Matthew xi. 5.

† Sacred Books of the East, xiii. 133.

of indigestion at the age of eighty, leaving behind many thousands of disciples after forty-five years of teaching and preaching.

And what happened after the death of each? Christ, the Holy One, saw no corruption, but rose again in His present glorified body, and is alive for evermore—nay, has life in Himself ever flowing in life-giving streams toward His people. The Buddha is dead and gone for ever; his body, according to the testimony of his own disciples, was burnt more than 400 years before the Advent of Christ, and its ashes were distributed everywhere as relics.

Even according to the Buddha's own declaration, he now lives only in the doctrine which he left behind him for the guidance of his followers.

And here again, in regard to the doctrine left behind by each, a vast distinction is to be noted. For the doctrine delivered by Christ to His disciples is to spread by degrees everywhere until it prevails eternally. Whereas the doctrine left by Buddha, though it advanced rapidly by leaps and bounds, is, according to his own admission, to fade away by degrees, till at the end of 5,000 years it has disappeared altogether from the earth, and another Buddha must descend to restore it. (Compare Postscript at end of Preface, p. xiv.)

Then that other Buddha must be followed by countless succeeding Buddhas in succeeding ages, whereas there is only one Christ, who can have no successor, for He is alive for ever and for ever present with His people: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

Then observe that, although the Buddha's doctrine was ultimately written down by his disciples in certain collections of books, in the same manner as the doctrine of Christ, a fundamental difference of character—nay, a vast and impassible gulf of difference—separates the Sacred Books of each, the Bible of the Christian and the Bible of the Buddhist.

The characteristic of the Christian's Bible is that it claims to be a supernatural revelation, yet it attaches ~~no mystical talismanic virtue to the mere sound of its words.~~ On the other hand, the characteristic of the Buddhist Bible is that it utterly repudiates all claim to be a supernatural revelation; yet the very sound of its words is believed to possess a meritorious efficacy capable of elevat-

where are dogmas

*Christianity was spread by bloodshed
Buddhism was spread by peace & love*

** Only a woman said that we went up to heaven, therefore we cannot believe it.*

ing any one who hears it to heavenly abodes in future existences. In illustration I may advert to a legend current in Ceylon, that once on a time 500 bats lived in a cave where two monks daily recited the Buddha's Law. These bats gained such merit, by simply hearing the sound of the words that, when they died, they were all re-born as men, and ultimately as gods.

Then as to the words themselves, contrast the severely simple and dignified style of the Bible X narrative, its brevity, perspicuity, vigour, and sublimity, its truthfulness to nature and inimitable pathos, with the feeble utterances, the tedious diffuseness, and I might almost say 'the inane twaddle' and childish repetitions of the greater portion of the Tripitaka (see note 2, p. 541)

But again, I am sure to hear the admirers of Buddhism say: Is it not the case that the doctrine of Buddha, like the doctrine of Christ, has self-sacrifice as its key-note? Well, be it so. I admit that the Buddha taught a kind of self-sacrifice. I admit that he related of himself that, on a particular occasion in one of his previous births,* he plucked out his own eyes, and, that on another he cut off his own head as a sacrifice for the good of others; and that again, on a third occasion, he cut his own body to pieces to redeem a dove from a hawk †. Yet note the vast distinction between the self-sacrifice taught by the two systems. Christianity demands the suppression of selfishness; Buddhism demands the suppression of self, with the one object of extinguishing all consciousness of self. In the one, the true self is elevated and intensified. In the other, the true self is annihilated by the practice of a false form of non-selfishness, which has for its real object, not the good of others, but the annihilation of the Ego, the utter extinction of the illusion of personal individuality.

Furthermore, observe the following contrasts in the doctrines which each bequeathed to his followers:—

According to Christianity:—Fight and overcome the world.

* It is necessary to point out that these acts of self-sacrifice took place in former state of existence, for when a man becomes a Buddha he has no need to gain merit by self-sacrifice.

† See p. 130.

*Bible is full of indecent words
cursing, damning, &c on...*

According to Buddhism:—Shun the world, and withdraw from it.

According to Christianity:—Expect a new earth when the present earth is destroyed; a world renewed and perfected; a purified world in which righteousness is to dwell for ever.

According to Buddhism:—Expect a never-ending succession of evil worlds for ever coming into existence, developing, decaying, perishing, and reviving, and all equally full of everlasting misery, disappointment, illusion, change and transmutation.

According to Christianity, bodily existence is subject to only one transformation.

According to Buddhism, bodily existence is continued in six conditions, through countless bodies of men, animals, demons, ghosts, and dwellers in various hells and heavens;—and that, too, without any progressive development, but in a constant jumble of metamorphoses and transmutations (see p. 122).

Christianity teaches that a life in heaven can never be followed by a fall to a lower state.

Buddhism teaches that a life in a higher heaven may be succeeded by a life in a lower heaven, or even by a life on earth or in one of the hells.

According to Christianity, the body of man may be the abode of the Holy Spirit of God.

According to Buddhism, the body whether of men or of higher beings can never be the abode of anything but evil.

According to Christianity:—Present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and expect a change to glorified bodies hereafter.

According to Buddhism:—Look to final deliverance from all bodily life, present and to come, as the greatest of all blessings, highest of all boons, and loftiest of all aims.

According to Christianity, a man's body can never be changed into the body of a beast, or bird, or insect or loathsome vermin.

According to Buddhism, a man, and even a god, may become an animal of any kind, and even the most loathsome vermin may again become a man or a god.

According to Christianity:—Stray not from God's ways; offend not against His holy laws.

According to Buddhism:—Stray not from the eight-fold path of the perfect man, and offend not against yourself and the law of the perfect man.

*this creating
a new world
is not in
vain*

*this is
the fact*

Heaven

Heaven

Heaven

According to Christianity:—Work the works of God while it is day.

According to Buddhism:—Beware of action, as causing re-birth, and aim at inaction, indifference, and apathy, as the highest of all states

Then note other contrasts.

According to the Christian Bible:—Regulate and sanctify the heart, desires, and affections.

According to the Buddhist:—Suppress and destroy them utterly, if you wish for true sanctification.

Christianity teaches that in the highest form of life, love is intensified.

Buddhism teaches that in the highest state of existence, all love is extinguished.

According to Christianity:—Go and earn your own bread support yourself and your family. Marriage, it says, is honourable and undefiled, and married life is a field on which holiness may grow and be developed. Nay, more—Christ Himself honoured a wedding with His presence, and took up little children in His arms and blessed them.

Buddhism, on the other hand, says:—Avoid married life; shun it as if it were 'a burning pit of live coals' (p. 88); or, having entered on it, abandon wife, children, and home, and go about as celibate monks, engaging in nothing but in meditation and recitation of the Buddha's Law—that is to say—if you aim at the highest degree of sanctification.

And then comes the important contrast that in the one system we have a teaching gratifying to the pride of man, and flattering to his intellect; while in the other we have a teaching humbling to his pride, and distasteful to his intellect. For Christianity tells us that we must become as little children, and that when we have done all that we can, we are still unprofitable servants. ~~Whereas Buddhism teaches that every man is saved by his own works and by his own merits only.~~

Fitly, indeed, do the rags worn by the monks of true Buddhism symbolize the miserable patchwork of its own self-righteousness.

Not that Christianity ignores the necessity for good works; on the contrary, no other system insists on a

whatever you do here good or bad
you will get your reward in the next
birth.

(This line)
Proper work
is done

lofty morality so strongly ; but never as the meritorious instrument of salvation *—only as a thank-offering, only as the outcome and evidence of faith.

Lastly, we must advert again to the most momentous—the most essential of all the distinctions which separate Christianity from Buddhism. Christianity regards personal life as the most sacred of all possessions. Life, it seems to say, is no dream, no illusion. 'Life is real, life is earnest.' Life is the most precious of all God's gifts. Nay, it affirms of God Himself that He is the highest Example of intense Life—of intense personality, the great 'I AM that I AM,' and teaches us that we are to thirst for a continuance of personal life as a gift for Him ; nay, more, that we are to thirst for the living God Himself and for conformity to His likeness ; while Buddhism sets forth as the highest of all aims the utter extinction of the illusion of personal identity—the utter annihilation of the Ego—of all existence in any form whatever, and proclaims as the only true creed the ultimate resolution of everything into nothing, of every entity into pure nonentity.

What shall I do to inherit eternal life?—says the Christian. What shall I do to inherit eternal extinction of life?—says the Buddhist.

It seems a mere absurdity to have to ask in concluding these Lectures :—Whom shall we choose as our Guide, our Hope, our Salvation, 'the Light of Asia,' or 'the Light of the World?' the Buddha or the Christ? It seems a mere mockery to put this

* A Buddhist writer in a Buddhist magazine, published in Ceylon, has lately taken me to task for asserting in a recent speech that Christianity denies the all-sufficiency of good works as an instrument of salvation. It is easy to quote passages, such as those in the epistle of St. James, in support of his one-sided view of this question, but I need scarcely say that the writer has much to learn as to the true character of our Bible, in which no text has full force without its context, and no part can be taken to establish a doctrine without a comparison with other parts, and without the balancing of apparent contradictions in both Old and New Testaments.

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final question to rational and thoughtful men in the nineteenth century: Which Book shall we clasp to our hearts in our last hour—the Book that tells us of the dead, the extinct, the death-giving Buddha, or the Book that reveals to us the living, the eternal, the lifegiving Christ?



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