

To sum up the above : from the call of Abraham to the day of Pentecost, comparatively speaking, God was gathering out *many* Jews and *few* Gentiles for His Name. From Pentecost until the Second Coming of our Lord, comparatively speaking, *many* Gentiles and *few* Jews are being similarly gathered out for His Name. After our Lord's return, and as a result, "*all* Israel shall be saved," and through Israel "*all* the Gentiles upon whom My Name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts xv. 17). In other words, as someone has said, God's plan of evangelizing the world centres round three words—"election, selection, and collection." May He give us each grace to be forwarding His purposes of mercy, through the death and resurrection of Christ, "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile," and so hasten "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him."



Buddha or Christ ?

BY THE REV. W. ST. CLAIR TISDALL, D.D.

A FEW months ago the daily papers announced the formation in London of a Buddhist Society, in which only a few members were natives of Eastern lands. There are reviews devoted to the spread of Buddhistic and other Eastern philosophies in our midst. These require and receive a great deal of diluting with Christian ideas before they are fit for European consumption, and those sciolists who, in adopting a brand-new Europeanized pseudo-Buddhism, pride themselves upon liberality and advanced thought, little know what that system really is of which they ignorantly profess to be admirers. Some years ago the publishers of a well-known poem, in which the learned author had borrowed from the Evangelists' palettes most of the colours he had used to paint an attractive picture of Buddha, announced that they were able to issue a cheap edition

of the romance because "so many English Buddhists had adopted it as the textbook of their faith"! Yet the author of the work stated to a friend that he did not believe anyone could be so foolish as to fancy that his book gave a true picture of Buddha and the philosophy which he founded, because the poem was confessedly a romance, based upon a late and quite unauthoritative Sanskrit novel. Imagine any sane person taking Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" as an accurate and historical account of King Arthur! But this would be wise in comparison, for he would not be making a *religion* out of it, and priding himself on being a champion of advanced philosophy and modern thought, as our "English Buddhists" do. It is amusing, if somewhat painful too, to meet a portly and comfortably attired Englishman professing himself a Buddhist, and yet, without any consciousness of his inconsistency, sitting down to a meat dinner of many courses in the evening, in the society of his wife and, perhaps, children. Of course, if he knew *anything* about Buddhism, he would know that he could not be a member of the Order (*Sangho*) unless he were a *monk*, wearing only a single yellow robe, living on food given as alms and collected by himself in a beggar's bowl, abstaining from flesh, and eating nothing after midday except a few sanctioned sweetmeats. Nor is he justified in saying that all this is but the outer husk of Buddhism, and that he has the kernel. A very slight study of the subject would show him that observance of all the 227 rules of the *Pātimokkham* are necessary to enable a true Buddhist to walk in the "Noble Eightfold Path," and that intellectual (?) admiration for a few misunderstood sayings ascribed to Buddha is not enough in any part of the world to entitle one to be called one of his disciples. It may be that he is as much a Buddhist as some of us are Christians, but no number of wrongs make a right, nor can any multiplication of hypocrites constitute one true man. What is really needed to prevent people from making such spectacles of themselves is "more light," to use Goethe's last words. We should not then hear so much of these modern "freak" religions. Buddhism

as taught by Buddha is a serious thing, a deep though erroneous system of philosophy, and it is worthy of a better fate than thus to be turned into ridicule by men utterly devoid of earnestness even in error.

Attempts are sometimes made to compare Buddha with our Lord. There are doubtless a few superficial resemblances, but the more careful the scrutiny is the less easy is it to institute such a comparison. If we leave out all that marks Christ Jesus as being what He claimed to be, the Incarnate Son of the One Living and True God, we are omitting the most essential part of His character and of the faith which He taught. Buddha, however, was confessedly nothing but a man. Born¹ like all ordinary people, he lived until he was twenty-nine years of age in luxury (according to some accounts in something worse). Then, deserting his wife and child, he sought for calm of spirit in asceticism. (The Buddhist accounts which credit him, one with 40,000 wives,² and one with many more, may be quite unreliable, but they are all we have to go by in this as in other matters.) He spent seven years fruitlessly in Hindū self-tormentings, and then, finding all such practices vain, he suddenly attained, or fancied he had attained, omniscience (*sambodhi*), and became henceforth "the Buddha"—*i.e.*, the Enlightened One. From that time onwards until his death, at the age of eighty years (when he died through some error in diet), he wandered about as a religious mendicant, teaching his system of agnostic pessimism. Few who have any real knowledge of what he actually taught will venture to say that his philosophy was calculated to comfort, to aid, or to elevate his hearers; but in no other way did he, apparently, even try to help any human being during all his long life. He asserted that no power in the universe other than themselves could assist his followers to attain the dreary goal at which he bade them aim. That goal was *Nirvāṇa*, which literally means "extinction,"

¹ *Vide* note on Buddha's birth in my "Noble Eightfold Path," pp. 202-206.

² *Buddhavaṃso* XXVI., śl. 15.

first of all of impulses, good and bad alike, and then of existence itself. His last words were: "Come now, Mendicants, I bid you farewell. Compounds are subject to dissolution. Prosper ye through diligence"—in the observance of all the minute rules of practice which "English Buddhists" reject. His followers then believed, in accordance with his own creed, that he ceased to exist.

It is not easy to see how in all this we can find one single point in which to compare Buddha with our Lord, whose whole life was spent in doing good, especially to the poor and ignorant, for whom Buddha expressly said that his own philosophy was not intended. Nor must we forget our Lord's teaching about His Father, nor His atoning Death, His glorious Resurrection, and His promise to be with His people "all the days." Perhaps there are only two points of resemblance which really exist between the two persons whose names stand at the head of this article. The first is that they both lived and founded their systems in the historic period; the second that each claimed universality for his teaching.

Buddha asserted that his philosophy was necessary for both gods (*devas*) and men and for all other beings, because all alike, though in different degrees, need deliverance from an existence which, in whatever condition, is misery. The only way in which anyone can gain the goal of extinction is by walking in the way which he pointed out; in other words, by becoming a Buddhist monk (or nun, for he afterwards admitted women to his Order, though most reluctantly). The very foundation of his whole system of philosophy was the dogma that all existence is misery, and must ever be such. This was the cheerful creed which Buddha commanded his disciples to proclaim to the world at large. Though theoretically men of all ranks and of every caste might enter the Order of Mendicants which he founded (for, like all Hindū ascetics, Buddha did not recognize caste), yet nearly all his first followers belonged to the titled and wealthy classes. Professor Oldenberg says: "I am not aware of any instance in which a *Candālo*—the Pariah of that age—is

mentioned in the sacred writings as a member of the Order. . . . 'To the wise belongeth this law,' it is said, 'not to the foolish.' Very unlike the word of that Man who suffered little children to come unto Him, 'for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' For children, and those who are like children, the arms of Buddha are not open. . . . To reach the humble and wretched, the sorrowing who endured yet another sorrow than the great universal sorrow of impermanence, was not the province of Buddhism."¹ Family life was permitted only to "lay adherents," who were not recognized as members of the Order, but were allowed the privilege of working hard in order to support the monks in idleness. The latter say of themselves in the *Dhammapadam* (šl. 199):

"Very happily indeed we live inactive amid the active:
Amid active men we dwell free from activity."

We are sometimes told that Buddhism is in accordance with modern thought. Perhaps this inactivity may accord with the views of savages, whose males leave all the work to be done by their women, but we do not generally regard them as the exponents of modernity. Our tramps, too, might admire such a system, but not even our leisured classes would regard it as their idea of perfection. Englishmen, at any rate, cannot really approve of a philosophy which has in it no room for chivalrous respect for women. Woman is a snare in the eye of the Buddhist. Even as a nun she has to occupy a very inferior station in the Order. In contrast to this the Bible tells us that woman was created to be an helpmeet for man, and directs us to love, honour, and cherish our wives as being "heirs together of the grace of life."²

Regarding universality, there can be no doubt that Christianity is intended to be the religion of the whole human race. Far more emphatically than Buddha's monks are Christ's disciples commanded to "preach the Gospel to all creation." But when we have said this we have stated all that can be correctly said

¹ "Buddha," English translation, pp. 156-163.

² 1 Pet. iii. 7.

regarding the likeness between Christianity and Buddhism. We must briefly call attention, on the other hand, to a few of the many points in which the two systems stand in absolute and utter contrast to one another.

Christianity is the religion of deathless hope ; Buddhism the philosophy of utter despair for time and for eternity. It tells of twenty-six heavens, indeed, as well as of 136 hells, but all existence in any of them is painful. Only by ceasing to exist can any being attain—not happiness, for that cannot be found anywhere, but—release from misery. The way to do this is to make oneself preternaturally miserable here—that is to say, to steel one's heart against all feelings of affection, and to become indifferent not only to other people's woes, but also to our own. We must not even hope for a life beyond the grave, for such a life would but bring upon us more suffering. We must even convince ourselves that we have no real personality, though at the same time we dread transmigration. All actions entail upon the doer the "eating of their fruit" here or hereafter ; and as this is only too likely to be bitter, the wise man will strive to avoid all action and even all wishing for good things in this or in any other world. All that hinders or delays one's attainment to Nirvāṇa is evil,¹ all is good that brings it nearer. Hence selfishness is the truest wisdom for a Buddhist. He is taught, it is true, to feel universal *benevolence*, but not to practise *beneficence*. Thus a Buddhist would be doing right in saying to the destitute, "Depart² in peace, be ye warmed and filled," without giving them any help, while it would be most cruel and hypocritical for a professed follower of Christ to do the same. Our Lord bids us *do* unto others what we would have them do unto us : Buddha's nearest approach to the Golden Rule consists in the negative precept commanding his disciples to abstain from treating other people as they would not like to be treated themselves.³ But the world cannot be reformed by negative precepts, nor even by positive ones. Each may be excellent in

¹ Subhadra Bhikschi, "Buddhistischer Katechismus," p. 53.

² Jas. ii. 16.

³ *Dhammapadam*, §. 11. 129-134.

its own way, but some motive-power is required before anything practical can be effected. That of Buddhism is an enlightened self-love, that of Christianity the constraining love of Christ, who first loved us and gave Himself for us. A Buddhist's devotion to his "Teacher" is at most admiration for a guide who has long since ceased to exist (so he believes); that of a Christian is a living faith in a Saviour who is "alive for evermore" and is with him "all the days."

In Ceylon many years ago a Christian official said to a learned Buddhist monk: "You have studied Christianity as well as your own religion, what do you think is the main point in which they differ from one another?" The monk replied: "There is much that is good in both of them, but the great difference between them is, I think, that you Christians know what is right and *have power to do it*, while we Buddhists *have no such power*." This testimony is true.

The old classical fable tells us that Hope was the one jewel left in Pandora's box, when all its other contents had escaped. Buddhism fully recognizes the existence and power of all the *evils* from which humanity suffers, but refuses to acknowledge that *hope* exists for either time or eternity, except in the dreary prospect of extinction, though even this is too good a thing to be ever granted to men in general. Here, again, the contrast with the Gospel is clear. Buddhism aims at eternal death, Christianity announces eternal life and offers it to all. Life is full of purpose for a Christian, for in it he is a worker together with God. Death has been annulled by his Saviour, and no longer terrifies him. "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." For the dawning of that glorious day he looks with trustful confidence. Evil may sometimes seem to prevail, but the Christian knows that the time will surely come when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Perhaps the best of all is that, while there is absolutely no proof whatever of either the truth of Buddha's lofty claims to "enlightenment" or of his doctrines, we have absolutely con-

vincing evidence that Christ was what He professed to be. The true Christian has "the witness in himself"; but besides this the whole course of history ever since our Lord's time has confirmed His claim to our allegiance. The fulfilment of prophecy (with reference, for instance, to the Jews), the triumph of His Kingdom over every successive attempt to crush it out of existence, its extension to every part of the world, the wonderful fact that Christ appeals successfully, not to men of one race only, but to all, that love of Him even in our own day can transform a bloodthirsty savage into an evangelist and a martyr, that every advance in our scientific knowledge of God's universe throws new light upon the teaching of His Word—all this and much more constitutes a mass of evidence which, already almost unlimited, is growing from day to day. Under these circumstances it is sad indeed to see men, with the full light of the Gospel shining around them, turning away to pursue the will-o'-the-wisp of Buddhism over the pathless quagmires of despair. *Populus vult decipi*, perhaps; but let us not add *decipiatur*. If we can only lead them to realize their own ignorance of both Christianity and Buddhism, perhaps those who now announce themselves as renegades from the Christian faith may some day aid us heart and soul in leading the adherents of him who has been styled the "Light of Asia" to walk as children of the "Light of the World."

"O Father, touch the East, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born."



Vestments: An Appeal to Facts.

BY THE REV. HUBERT BROOKE, M.A.

THE Vestments: What are they? What do they mean? Why do some people want to introduce them? Why do some people object to their introduction? To many a thoughtful person, who remembers the last command of the Master, it