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ARTICLE II.

WHY SEND MISSIONARIES TO THE HEATHEN?[1]

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ARE the heathen lost without the gospel? Do they need our religion? We sometimes hear it said that they do not; that while Christianity is all right for us, yet Buddhism is good enough for the Buddhists, Hinduism for the Hindus, Mohammedanism for the Mohammedans, Confucianism for the Confucianists, and so on. Why disturb them in their faiths? God cannot condemn those who have never heard the gospel; and if we preach to them, we simply impose upon them a responsibility from which they are now free.

Where shall we find answers to these questions? We might turn to the Scriptures, but in this paper I prefer to seek testimony from the heathen themselves. What do they say of their own religions? Are they sufficient to their needs? Do they save? Are they adequate guides to right moral conduct? Do they strengthen the soul in the midst of the conflicts of life? Do they make it triumphant over death? Do they give promise of a better life beyond the grave? Aside from the question of religion, are the heathen in their own consciences free from the sense of responsibility before God? Are they without condemnation? And the testimony of the heathen themselves

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regarding these questions ought to have weight. We are accustomed to attach great importance to Christian experience as an evidence of the truth of our religion; and in these days there are those who even go so far as to claim for it, or for what they call the Christian consciousness, an authority above the Bible. I am neither approving nor disapproving this claim. What I say is, that, aside from divine revelation, the consciousness of the heathen concerning himself and concerning his religion ought to have as much weight in determining his actual spiritual standing and the real value of his religion as the consciousness of the Christian has in determining the validity of his beliefs. If there is any one who ought to know whether his religion is good for him or not, it is the heathen himself.

What do heathen religions do for their followers? Specifically, what hope of salvation do they offer? It will be manifestly impossible within the limits of this article to apply the test fully to all the non-Christian religions of the world. I propose to consider at some length Buddhism, the one with which I am most familiar, and then I may refer briefly to the other heathen cults. I think I shall be able to show that, whatever others may think about him, the heathen himself is conscious of condemnation. His own conscience does not relieve him from responsibility; and, though he may cling tenaciously to his religion, yet in his heart of hearts he realizes that it offers him no real hope.

I.

Buddhism is generally recognized as being the loftiest and purest of heathen religions. It originated in India near the upper reaches of the Ganges River in the fifth century before Christ. There is no evidence that Gautama, its founder, con-

sciously intended to inaugurate a revolt against Hinduism, the dominant religion of his day. On the contrary, as Wesley, the founder of Methodism, never severed his connection with the Church of England, so Gautama seems to have regarded himself to the very last as a good Hindu. But the system which he established, with its broad humanitarianism and its high ethical standards, proved to be utterly subversive of Hinduism, with its grossness and with its distinctions of caste. Hinduism has always been very tolerant of rival faiths, and has generally managed to absorb them; but to the credit of Buddhism be it said that it never made any compromise with the older system of religion. Within a few centuries it was able, by reason of its inherent superiority, to displace Hinduism over most of India, and spread on into Ceylon, Burma, and Siam, on the south and east, and into Tibet, China, and Japan, on the north and northeast. Wherever it went, its influence was beneficent. Later on in India, the land of its origin, through the operation of forces which are not now quite understood, it gradually disappeared, and at the present day Buddhism in its purest form is generally conceded to be found in Ceylon and Burma. As set forth in the Pali Pitakas it inculcates a high code of morals. It knows nothing of the gross representations of deity and the licentious practices in the name of religion which are characteristic of many other faiths. It teaches many noble truths, and outside of Christianity there is no religion which can compete with it in lofty idealism. If Buddhism cannot give a good account of itself, it is useless to turn to any other non-Christian religion.

But what is the hope which Buddhism holds out to its followers? While there are some Christians who teach the annihilation of the wicked, Buddhism teaches the annihilation of the good. For, although Oriental imagery is exhausted in

Buddhist writings in extolling the perfect peace, the untroubled calm, the seraphic bliss, of the state of Nirvana, which is sometimes called the Buddhist Heaven, yet Nirvana itself, which is of only short duration, means the extinction of the forces that make for being, and it ends in Parinirvana, which is complete and final cessation of existence. To make clear how this can become the goal of the Buddhist's desire and by what method he proposes to attain it, a brief explanation is in order.

Every one knows that Buddhism is atheistic in its teachings. It is not so generally understood that, in addition to denying the existence of God, it denies the existence of soul or spirit. But the very first step in its Noble-Eightfold-Path, or Way of Deliverance, is to eradicate from the mind as the rankest heresy the thought that there is such a thing as an Ego, a distinct personality. In place of what we call the Ego, the Buddhist puts five Skandhas, or Aggregates, including the elements of form, sensation, perception, subjective discrimination, and reason. These Skandhas are indispensable to the existence of any being, but no one or more of them, nor all of them together, constitute personality.

The function of these Skandhas in the Buddhist system can perhaps be best illustrated by a story taken from the Melinda, an account of a visit of the Greek King Menander of Sagala in Baktria to a Buddhist monk named Nagasena:—

"The king said, 'How is your reverence known? What is your name?'

"Nagasena replied, 'I am called Nagasena by my parents, the priests and others. But Nagasena is not a separate entity.'

"To this the king objected that in that case there could be no virtue nor vice, no reward nor retribution. He then mentioned one after another all the parts of the body and mind, and the Skandhas, and asked of each whether it was Nagasena. All these questions were answered in the negative.

"'Then,' said the king, 'I do not see Nagasena. Nagasena is a sound without meaning. You have spoken an untruth. There is no Nagasena.'

"The mendicant asked, 'Did your majesty come here on foot, or in a chariot?'

"'In a chariot,' was the answer.

"'What is a chariot?' asked Nagasena. 'Is the ornamental cover the chariot? Are the wheels, the spokes of the wheels, or the reins, the chariot? Are all these parts together in a miscellaneous heap the chariot? If you leave these out, does there remain anything which is the chariot?'

"To all this the king said, 'No.'

"'Then I see no chariot, it is only a sound, a name,' said Nagasena. 'In saying that you came in a chariot you have uttered an untruth. I appeal to the nobles and ask them if it be proper that the great king of all Jampudwipa should utter an untruth?'

"But the king was not convinced. 'No untruth have I uttered, venerable monk. The cover, wheels, seat and other parts all united or combined chariotwise form the chariot. They are the usual signs by which that which is called a chariot is known.'

"'And just so,' said Nagasena, 'in the case of man.' And he quoted the words of the Teacher, Gautama, where he said, 'As the various parts of a chariot form, when united, the chariot, so the five Skandhas, when united in one body, form a being, a living existence.'"

Commenting on this story, Professor T. W. Rhys Davids, the great authority on Buddhism, says, "Whatever we may think of the argument, it is at least clear that a soul is just as much and just as little acknowledged in man as a separate *substance* is acknowledged in a chariot."[1]

Now, at death, these Skandhas are supposed to be separated and scattered; but, unless one be so fortunate — or unfortunate — as to have attained the state of Nirvana, there is always a force called Upadana, or Attachment, which brings them together again in another being. This gives rise to what is known as metempsychosis, or transmigration of the soul. The term is, however, a misnomer as applied to Buddhist teachings. The Hindus believe in real metempsychosis. With the

[1] Buddhism, pp. 96, 97.

Buddhists it is rather trans-incorporation, to use a term which is preferred by Sir George Scott. These Skandhas, which have passed into dissolution on the death of one being, are brought together again at the birth of another being, dissolved at its death, and reassembled at the birth of another being, dissolved and reassembled, dissolved and reassembled interminably. But there is no soul or common consciousness connecting these existences, nothing of the kind, only this reassembling of the same Skandhas.

Now, what was the problem which Gautama set before himself? It was to discover some method by which this assembling of Skandhas after dissolution might be terminated. I have already mentioned Upadana, or Attachment, as the force which brings together the Skandhas again. But Gautama taught that behind Attachment is Tanha, or Desire. Desire arises from the six senses (for Buddhists make the mind constitute a sixth sense), and, as sensation may be pleasant, painful, or indifferent; and as any of these may be considered subjectively or objectively; and viewed again as past, present, or future (for Buddhism delights in all such refinements), Desire becomes theoretically one-hundred-and-eight fold. Practically the term Desire seems to apply to every possible craving and even to every possible emotion whether good or bad, to greed, covetousness, jealousy, concupiscence, anger, love, hope, ambition, aspiration, every conceivable stirring of the thoughts or feelings within. And herein, in Desire, is to be found, according to Buddhist conceptions, the key to the problem of the world's miseries. For to the Buddhist all sensation, all thought, all feeling, all emotion, everything that makes one realize that one is, is misery. Buddhism is frankly pessimistic. It sees no compensating joy in life, nothing that is really worth while, only emptiness and vanity. The one re-

peated cry of the devotee as he counts the beads of his rosary at the pagoda is, "Anissa! Dukkha! Anatta!" "Anissa! Dukkha! Anatta!" "Impermanent! Painful! Without Ego!"

Another doctrine on which Gautama placed great emphasis was that of the law of Karma. According to this law, which is absolutely inexorable, evil deeds in one state of existence are visited with penalty in subsequent states of existence, and good deeds are rewarded with merit; so that, when one being dies, the resultant of its good and evil deeds passes over to the next being, and, according as the accumulated balance of merit or demerit indicates reward or penalty, there is a rise or fall in the scale of existence. When that being dies, the resultant of its good and evil deeds, and of the deeds of all previous existences which have accumulated upon it, passes over to still another being. This is the Buddhist's favorite way of accounting for the inequalities of life. If a man is well and prosperous, it is because his Karma, his inheritance from previous existences, is good. If he is poor and unfortunate in any way, it is because some previous assemblage of his Skandhas constituted a being who did evil. There are six different grades of sentient beings. In the highest are gods, so-called. These beings are not gods in our sense of the term, not even according to the usage of the ancient Greeks. They are merely beings who are temporarily occupying a more blissful, or rather less miserable, abode than some other beings. Below these in rank are men, then animals, then Asuras, or devils, including sprites and fairies, then Pretas, or ghosts, and finally beings undergoing torment in the numerous hells. The Skandhas may pass through the entire gamut of these existences,— for no one of them is permanent,— and a being in one state of existence can never know in what kind of a being its Skandhas will assemble for the next succeeding state

of existence. Karma determines that. But if by reason of the predominance of good deeds there is a rise in the scale of existence, then with the rise there is a gradual lessening in the power of Upadana, or Attachment, until, if Nirvana be reached, Attachment ceases, and when again the Skandhas are dissolved, there is nothing to reassemble them, and being is extinct.

We are now ready to consider the way by which Gautama proposed to put an end to the power of Attachment, namely, his so-called Noble-Eightfold-Path. This consists in (1) Right Views, (2) Right Aims, (3) Right Words, (4) Right Deeds, (5) Right Livelihood, (6) Right Exertion, (7) Right Mindfulness, (8) Right Meditation. What is meant by these expressions, which have a really fine sound, will be explained later. In accordance with the scheme of doctrines already outlined, we find that he who perseveres in following this Path will pass through Four Stages in which he will be delivered from Ten Fetters binding him to existence. In the First Stage he will be delivered from Sakkayaditthi, or the Delusion of Ego-ity, the false belief in his own personality; from Vicikiccha, or Doubt as to Buddha and his Law; and from Silabbata-Paramasa, or Dependence on Rites, which includes all faith in God or Providence, in rites or ceremonies, in worship, or in any form of dependence on a superhuman agency. He who has attained to the Fruit of the First Stage of the Path is called Sotapanna, and is supposed by some to be forever exempt from reincorporation in any form of existence lower than that of man. He who attains to the Second Stage will be almost, but not quite, freed from the Fourth and Fifth Fetters, namely, Kamaraga, or Sensuousness, which includes every conceivable form of pleasure or desire for pleasure, not only base carnal lust, but also natural affection and the grati-

fication of many desires which by the Christian are considered entirely legitimate and praiseworthy; and from Patigha, or Anger. Such a person is called Sakadagami, and it is supposed that his Skandhas must be set up in the form of man once more only. He who attains to the Third Stage will be entirely free from Sensuousness and Anger, and will become Anagami, never to be born again on earth, but to pass on to the abodes of the Brahmas whence he will attain Nirvana. He who arrives at the Fourth Stage will have cast off the five remaining Fetters, namely:—

Ruparaga, or Desire for Corporeal Life, which is the desire for bodily form whether as man on the earth or as a god in one of the lower heavens.

Aruparaga, or Desire for Incorporeal Life, which is the desire for incorporeal existence in one of the higher heavens.

Mana, or Pride.

Uddhacca, or Self-exaltation.

Avijja, or Ignorance.

Such an one is termed an Arahat, and is exempted from any further rebirth. He has attained to Nirvana, or the complete extinction of Desire. The forces which make for being have been conquered. His Skandhas will never be set up again, and so at death he will pass into Parinirvana, or utter annihilation.[1]

I am not concerned now to point out the absurdities of this system, which are of themselves sufficiently obvious. Two questions only are relevant to the present inquiry; namely, What is the practical value of the salvation thus held out to the Buddhist? and, What are the prospects of its attainment? In answer to the former question I may say that the average Buddhist does not care for it. However highly the select few

[1] H. H. Tilbe, Pali Buddhism, pp. 30, 31.

may extol the blissfulness of a brief Nirvana followed by Parinirvana, or annihilation, it has no attractions for the man on the street. Natural instincts are too strong for him. To train one's self to desire neither corporeality nor incorporeality requires too great refinement of the senses for the man who has good red blood coursing through his veins. The testimony of many missionaries who have made a study of these people is that Buddhists of the rank and file do not wish to attain to Nirvana. Their highest hope is that in future existences they may be born as gods or men.

But granting all that can possibly be claimed for Nirvana, supposing its attractions to be capable of making an unrivaled appeal to every man, what is the prospect of its attainment? Gautama himself thought that he had discovered an easy way for reaching his goal of Nirvana. He called his Noble-Eight-fold-Path a Middle Course, because it avoided the extreme austerities of the Hindu ascetics on the one hand and the licentiousness of the Tantras on the other hand. But Professor Rhys Davids says:—

"Though laymen could attain Nirvana, we are told of only one or two instances of their having done so; and though it was more possible for members of the Buddhist order of mendicants, we only hear, *after* the time of Gautama, of one or two who did so. No one now hears of such an occurrence; but the Buddhist hopes to enter, even though he will not reach the end of, the paths in this life; and if he once enters them, he is certain in some future existence, perhaps under less material conditions, to arrive at the goal of salvation, at the calm and rest of Nirvana." (Buddhism, p. 125).

This is certainly not a very hopeful statement, yet we may be sure that Professor Davids, who is thoroughly sympathetic in his attitude towards Buddhism, has made it as hopeful as he could. It is safe to say that among the millions of Buddhists living at the present day not one, even among the most enlightened and devout, believes himself to be in anything like

immediate prospect of the attainment of his poor heaven of Nirvana. Only those who have cut themselves off from all family ties or other worldly entanglements, have joined the order of monks, and have devoted themselves unremittingly to profound meditation could hope to attain it in any case, and they after unthinkable and practically impossible exercises of the mind. As for the great mass of the Buddhist people, probably almost without exception, when they are brought to face the future, they can look forward to it only with dread. Few, if any, expect to rise in the scale of existence. They hope, though their hope is shaded by fears, that they may at least escape the eight great hells surrounded by 40,040 lesser ones where popular fancy has it that in addition to other tortures terrible flames leap from wall to wall across enormous spaces and extend on all sides for twelve thousand miles beyond, or where equally hideous cold exists, but most of them expect to be reborn at best in as low a state of existence as that of animals, and go through ceaseless rounds of wretched births and rebirths.

I have thus far been treating of Buddhism as set forth in its most favorable light by modern scholars and missionaries who have given it careful and sympathetic study, and as modified in recent years by contact with Christianity. Buddhism as presented by Buddhists in their own Scriptures is far more pessimistic. Turning, for instance, to Bigandet's Life or Legend of Gautama, which is a translation of some of the best of these, we find such comparisons as the following:—

"Let us suppose that a needle be dropped from one of the seats of Brahmas, and at the same time a man on earth be keeping another needle with the point upwards. It will be more easy for the two needles' extremities to come in contact one with the other, than it will be to a being in the condition of animal to reach the state of man" (3d ed., vol. i. p. 202).

The lowest of the seats of the Brahmas is 1,008,000 miles above the earth; and if it is so difficult for a being to pass from the state of animal to that of man, which is just above, how much more difficult must it be for a being to compass the twenty-six remaining states above the condition of man!

But what if one fall into any of the hells with their many, many gradations? Dr. Jamieson, one of the most cultured and refined of our missionaries, is said to have remarked once that he did not often preach to the Burmese about the Scriptural doctrine of hell, and, when asked the reason, replied that he did not need to, the Buddhists had twice as good a hell as ours. And I am sure that any one who knew the dire frightfulness of the Buddhist teachings about hell would have missed any seeming uncouthness in the remark. There is always a theoretical possibility of escape to be sure, but the briefest stay in hell is for five hundred hell years, the equivalent of nine million years of earth. And the tortures inflicted there are beyond description. Dante's hell is Elysian as compared with the scenes depicted to-day on the walls of sacred buildings in Burma, and these are but like a reminiscence of the horrors described in their books. People in this country laugh at the mention of hell. Buddhists do not. Whatever doubts some Christians may have, it is a terrible reality to them. And then supposing one to have climbed toilsomely out of the profound abysses of hell, there are still the three intervening states which one must pass through before even attaining again the condition of man.

What about Gautama, the founder of Buddhism? He claimed to have attained to Buddhaship, that is, to perfect enlightenment, under a large peepul tree, to be known afterwards as the Sacred Bo Tree, to which he had betaken himself for the purpose of meditation. But how long had he been in ac-

complishing this feat? The account has it that during seven thingies of worlds Gautama felt a thought for the Buddhaship awakening within him. During nine more thingies of worlds the inward workings of his mind prompted him to ask openly for the Buddhaship. Finally, during four additional thingies of worlds, having received the promise of the Buddhaship, he was actually approaching that ineffable condition. A world is a revolution of nature, for the Buddhist believes that all nature passes through a great cycle of changes and then repeats itself, the changes recurring in precisely the same order. But how long is a world or cycle of nature? And how many courses or cycles of nature are there in a thingy? To answer the latter question first, a thingy is a number represented by a unit followed some say by sixty-four, some by one hundred and forty, ciphers. We are not accustomed to think in such high figures. One thousand million make a billion, and a thousand billion make a trillion, a thousand trillion a quadrillion and so on, next in order coming quintillions, sextillions, septillions, octillions, nonillions, decillions, undecillions, duodecillions, tredecillions, quattuordecillions, quindecillions, sedecillions, septendecillions, duodevigintillions, undevigintillions, vigintillions. The lesser sum mentioned, the number one with sixty-four ciphers following it, would amount to ten vigintillions, while the greater sum would amount to one hundred quinquequadragintillions. A world cycle or single course of nature, on the other hands, is composed of four æons, and each æon has sixty-four andrakaps, and an andrakap is a period of time during which the length of man's life rises very gradually from an average of ten years to an average of an athinkaya of years,— an athinkaya being represented by a numeral followed by one hundred and sixty-four ciphers, in other words, one hundred tresquin-

quagintillions — and then gradually diminishes again to an average of ten years. Of course a whole andrakap must be very, very much longer than an athinkaya. Probably several hundred, perhaps even thousands, of ciphers would be required to represent it. And yet Gautama was particularly favored, for in all his transmigrations, or rebirths, he was spared the degradation — and the delay — of becoming a serpent, or any kind of vermin, or a woman; anything, in fact, lower in the scale of existence than a snipe. In his race for the distinction of Buddhaship he was what might be called a sprinter. Twenty thingies of world cycles with each their four times sixty-four andrakaps! All this in order to attain that marvelous enlightenment which enabled him to unfold the mysteries of his Noble-Eightfold-Path!

And now what of his followers? Instead of entering at once upon deliverance as represented in the modern, scholarly, sublimated account of the Path and its Four Stages which I have given above, here we find that he who has attained to the Fourth Stage of the Path must still linger on in weary existences for 20,000 more world cycles, he who has entered upon the Third Stage must linger on for 40,000 cycles, he who has entered the Second Stage, 60,000 cycles, and he who has entered on the First Stage only, 80,000 cycles or revolutions of nature before he obtains release. This seems a sufficiently long time to wait for deliverance, but of course it is an almost instantaneous process as compared with the length of time which Gautama took to reach the Buddhaship, or which they might have required to attain Nirvana without his sublime instructions. No wonder they regard his memory with the profoundest gratitude and awe!

II.

To what is the hopelessness and despair of Buddhism to be attributed? Undoubtedly to the fact of sin. Buddhism knows no God; but the history of the world shows that when the human conscience is aroused, it is inexorable in its demands. There needs no law of God nor outward condemnation. The heart itself is its own most terrible, most exacting judge. Very significant are the words of Jesus when he described the last judgment scene,—"These shall go away into eternal punishment." They will not need to be driven or sent. They will go of themselves, impelled by their own sense of the fitness of things. And so the utter hopelessness of Buddhism is undoubtedly due to the Buddhist's recognition of the awful fact of sin. But I have to add that while the Buddhist seems to have a profound consciousness of the *fact* of sin, yet as compared with Christian ideas the Buddhist's sense of the *guilt* of sin is far from profound. To draw an analogy from Karen conceptions, it is more like a sense of *penalty* than a sense of guilt. Before going out to Burma as a missionary, I used frequently to hear my mother, who had also been a missionary there, tell of her experiences. She often spoke of asking heathen Karens if they were sinners, and receiving the invariable answer that they were. She inferred that they had a sense of guilt. But I have since learned that her inference was only in part correct. She was on the field only five or six years, and her knowledge of the Karen language was necessarily limited. When she asked the heathen if he was a sinner, she asked him if he had *tah-deh-bah*, a word which is used in the Karen Bible, for want of a better, to translate the word "sin." The word means rather "penalty." When Cain was told that he was to be a fugitive and a wanderer on the face of the earth, he said, "My punishment is greater than I

can bear." *Tah-deh-bah* would be a precise translation of the word "punishment" here, and it is so used with perfect fitness in the Karen Bible, almost the only place in the whole book where it precisely translates the original. Now, races inhabiting the same country, even though they may differ in religion and language, are likely to share much the same ideas, and so, while the Karens are not Buddhists but Animists, and while they have a language of their own, yet I think that the Buddhist sense of sin is, like theirs, properly speaking, a sense of penalty. Some go so far as to say that Buddhists have no sense of sin whatever. To cite a paragraph which appeared in a recently published pamphlet entitled "Modern Buddhism in Burma," and is itself quoted from an article in *The Buddhist Review*:—

"The sense of *sin* which oppresses all Christian nations is entirely absent among Buddhists. In the first place, in Burmese at least, there is, so far as I am aware, no word which can be translated 'sin' at all. In the second place, the fundamentals which go to make up the emotion of the sense of sin among Christians are distributed for the Buddhist among other emotions, partly to shame, and partly to the sense which is strongly developed in them of having done that which will entail damage to their own personality."

The fact is that the great problem of life as Gautama saw it was not that of the existence of sin, but that of how there came to be suffering in the world, and his search was directed to finding a method by which suffering might be escaped. This of itself shows his lack of a sense of guilt. When Cain said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," he proved his impenitence at once. Had he been truly penitent, he would have accepted his punishment without complaint, and would have felt that it was no more than he deserved. Nowhere perhaps is a better definition given of true repentance than in Lev. xxvi. 41. Speaking of the chastisements to be visited

upon the Israelites if they forsake their God, the writer says they will be carried into captivity and there pine away, but "if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity," they will be restored to their land. Accepting the punishment of iniquity is the best evidence of sincere repentance. The very fact that Gautama attacked the question of human suffering from the side of penalty rather than from the side of guilt, shows that he had an altogether inadequate sense of man's responsibility for his sinful condition. It was a shallow view of the great problems of human life. The Psalmist was also perplexed (Ps. lxxiii.), yet not by the problem of suffering itself, but by the fact that the wicked often seemed to prosper while the righteous met with adversity. It was a moral question with him, and he found the solution of it in the house of his God. Gautama, denying as he did the existence of God, found no such solution of his problem. To him all existence was misery. True he ascribed the sorrows and sufferings of life to sins or rather to acts of demerit committed in previous existences, but by his denial of any such thing as a soul he took away all sense of responsibility for those sins. If I suffer now, it is because some one,— not I, for there is no I, no Ego, according to Gautama's teaching, no, not I, but,— some concourse of attributes or Skandhas assembled in a being who existed before me, committed some act or acts of demerit. I may be very angry at that being because he has not spared me all this misery, but that does not imply or involve any sorrow on my part, for I am not responsible for it. I simply happen to be in the line of the Karma or accumulation of merit or demerit of another being with whom I have no direct personal connection whatever. Furthermore, according to Buddhist teaching I must put away all thought of guilt even for my actual present

misdeeds, for, to quote again from the pamphlet mentioned above,

> "As there is no forgiveness, to be conscience-stricken is not a sign of hope, but a proof of coming punishment; and such a condition should be steadily averted, in the first place by avoiding sin, and secondly by never calling to mind one's past misdoings. A spirit of penitence is as remote as possible from the mind of the good Buddhist."

Here surely is a condition of things which it is hard for the Christian to understand or even to conceive. It goes without saying that one who takes such a view of life is in no position whatever to appreciate the disciplinary value of suffering which goes so far, so very, very far, towards reconciling the Christian to the many maladjustments, the disappointments and failures, the griefs and sorrows of life.

What was the result of this strange, this perverse outlook upon the problems of human existence? Gautama drew up an elaborate code of morals, and many excellent precepts are to be found in Buddhist writings. But in general it may be said that the value of the Buddhist system of ethics has been greatly overestimated. Unfortunately some Western scholars have not scrupled, in writing on Buddhism, to translate Buddhist terms by words and phrases whose meaning has been enriched by centuries of Christian usage without any intimation that Buddhists did not understand them in the same sense as we. Edwin Arnold's poem, "The Light of Asia," in particular, was a conscienceless attempt to make Buddhism appear much better than it really is. Even the so-called Noble-Eightfold-Path, to which reference has already been made, is disappointing from the Christian point of view when its meaning is properly understood, although here, if anywhere, we might expect to find a call to the loftiest idealism and holiest effort, since it is supposed to mark out the way of salvation.

Right Views, Right Aims, Right Words, Right Deeds, Right Livelihood, Right Exertion, Right Mindfulness, Right Meditation,— these words have a stirring sound. But by Right Views are intended those views of life which are set forth in the Four Noble Truths, namely, that all existence is sorrow; that all sorrow springs from desire; that the extinction of sorrow must therefore be sought in the extinction of desire; and, lastly, that the extinction of desire is to be attained by walking in the eightfold path which we are considering,— views which, so far from being right, are utterly wrong. Right Aims in the Buddhist sense involve abandoning wife and family as the best method of extinguishing the fires of passion. Right Words are those uttered in recitation of the Buddha's doctrine. Right Deeds are those proper to a monk. Right Livelihood is living by alms as a monk does. Right Exertion is the suppression of the individual self. Right Mindfulness is keeping in mind the impurities and impermanence of the body. Right Meditation is trancelike quietude.[1]

Self-renunciation is enjoined by the Buddhist code of morals, but " the only self it aims at renouncing is the self of personality, and the chief self-love it deprecates is the self-love which consists in craving for continuous individual life."[2] Much is said about compassion, especially the compassion of Buddha, who, it is written, in order to teach men his wonderful law, resolved to continue in sentient existence even after he might have gone to Nirvana. And indeed Gautama himself seems to have been possessed of a good deal of real kindness of heart. But, strictly speaking, Buddhist compassion is no active virtue, it can only be a general feeling of benignity, and Gautama's active interest in the well-being of his fellow men

[1] Cf. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, Buddhism, p. 45.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

could not possibly be reconciled with his own philosophy, which made absolute indifference to everything the supreme attainment.[1]

In fact, the entire Buddhist system is self-contradictory and inconsistent with high ideals. Gautama counsels his followers to put away sloth, yet teaches that activity tends to produce Attachment, and Attachment continued existence, and continued existence, as has been shown, misery. The Buddhist disciple is recommended not even to observe any detail or character of an object.

"He should not know, for instance, when he sees a figure, whether it is a man or a woman, whether the object before him is a stone or a mango, a good mango or a bad, lest observing detail he should linger on them, and attachment be produced."[2]

If one must not even observe, of course all more strenuous forms of activity are forbidden, and the practice of virtue in the Christian sense becomes impossible. Buddhism professes to teach the greatest respect for the life of all sentient beings, even of animals, yet makes extinction of being, or at least of the consciousness of existence, in Nirvana, its chief good. It inculcates the persistent cultivation of the personality only to have the personality blotted out.

How is it possible for any system of philosophy to instill effectively in the minds of its followers the principles of high idealism when it teaches, as does Buddhism, that the origin of all existence is in Ignorance,— for, according to Gautama's great theory of Dependent Origination, back of Attachment, and back again of Desire, lies Ignorance as the final source of all existence and misery; or when that philosophy makes the feeling of disgust its chief incentive to holier living; and when abstraction of the mind is the supreme method which it sets

[1] Cf. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, Buddhism, p. 41.

[2] Copleston, Buddhism, p. 138.

before its followers for the attainment of its goal? The first of the Four Earnest Meditations recommended to the Buddhist monk is on the impurity of the body, and the Buddhist Scriptures contain many descriptions of the weaknesses and imperfections of the body nauseating in their details. In Buddhist treatises it is not so much the idea of retribution which is made the deterring principle in the doctrine of Karma,— for instance, in the passing of a greedy man into a hog,— as the weary interminableness of the thing which is made the ruling aspect of transmigration or transincorporation.[1] Gautama disparaged the study of such subjects as metaphysics, psychology, astronomy, and geography because they do not tend to produce dissatisfaction.[2]

It is related that an elder named Tissa, who lived on the Cetiya Hill in Ceylon, was going forth thence to Anuradhapura on his begging rounds, when a young bride, who had quarreled with her husband, coming out of Anuradhapura in the early morning on the way to the house of her kinsfolk gaily dressed and adorned like a celestial maiden, seeing the Elder on the road, laughed a loud laugh in the wantonness of her heart. The Elder looked around to see what it was. He saw her teeth; they suggested to him the thought of the thirty-two impurities of the body, and he at once attained to arahaship. So it is said:—

> **"When he saw her teeth (bones)**
> **He followed up in thought the hint;**
> **And then and there the wise Elder**
> **Attained to rahatship."**

Her husband came along the road after her, and, when he saw the Elder, he asked, "Did you see a woman, sir?" The Elder replied:—

[1] Copleston, Buddhism, p. 146.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

> "I know not whether woman
> Or man it was who went by;
> But a bundle of bones
> Is going along the high-road."

And this remark is considered a proof of the Elder's saintliness.[1]

Although Gautama again and again sought to inculcate charity and kindness, humility, patience, self-abnegation, resoluteness, yet his system has tended inevitably to develop in his followers spiritual sins of the worst and most vicious type. As has already been made sufficiently clear, Buddhism is a religion of works. Its law of Karma, or of merit and demerit, is inexorable. A redeemer is an impossibility. No one can hope to receive merit from any one else, and it is useless to try to impart merit. To be sure it is popularly supposed, contrary to the teaching, that if any one erects a pagoda or builds a shrine or digs a sacred well which afterward falls into disrepair and any one else repairs it, the merit for the act will go to the first builder. But practically no one ever repairs the work of another, for merit is such a precious commodity that each one must try to get all he can for himself, and no one can afford to make merit for others.

Every one must try to work out his own salvation. Buddhism therefore has no priests, and Buddhist monks make no pretense of trying to improve the spiritual condition of others. Their business is simply to cultivate their own holiness and sanctity, and they concern themselves with the spiritual well-being of no one else. They teach that it is wicked to take animal life, and that if one takes the life of an animal, he must suffer indescribable torments in hell. Yet they themselves eat meat, and, if their patrons bring them only rice and salt to eat, will curse them to their face. And the strange part of it

[1] Copleston, Buddhism, p. 364.

is that, although some monks of the present day seem to see the inconsistency of this position, yet Gautama himself appears not to have seen it. He expressly permitted the monks who lived in his own day to eat meat, and in fact he himself died from eating pork. What Christian, whether preacher or layman, would think of eating anything the preparation of which would send a fellow being to hell? How utterly different is this from the attitude of Paul, who said, "If meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble"! To refer once more to the example of Cain, who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" the Buddhist considers himself quite free to eat meat, if some one else has taken the life of the animal whose flesh is furnished him, because he is not his brother's keeper, and what happens to his brother is no affair of his. In fact, so utterly perverted is the moral sense of the Buddhist that he would say, If a man kills an animal so that I may have meat to eat, the fault is in no wise mine, but his own, for an evil Karma, the result of sin in previous existences, must have compelled him to it.

One of the favorite religious stories of the Buddhists is that of Wethandaya. According to this story Wethandaya was a beautiful prince who was so liberal in his giving that his father in a rage banished him from his kingdom. Thereupon Wethandaya went to his wife Madi and told her that he had vowed to go out into the jungle and lead a life of contemplation. "I too will come with my lord," said the faithful wife, "how can I live parted from thee for a moment? As a moonless sky, as waterless earth, so is a wife without her husband." So they went together into the jungle. After some days a Brahman came and asked the prince for his splendid chariot. When the Princess Madi grew angry at the request, the Prince

rebuked her, saying, "O Madi, if there were none to make requests, there would be no giving. When then should we mortals gain the true insight that comes only to the liberal?" and with great joy he gave both chariot and horses to the Brahman, exclaiming, "O Brahman, through this gift, freely given, may I be empowered to guide the Chariot of the Righteous Law!" Then taking up their children on their shoulders they passed on their way. One day when the Princess was out gathering roots, a hunchbacked Brahman came and asked the prince to give him his children for servants. So Wethandaya gave his children to the Brahman. Thereupon the earth quaked six times in approval of the deed, and the children fell at their father's feet, crying, "O father, let us but see our mother before we leave you both forever." But the Prince, covering his face with his hands to hide his tears, said in a breaking voice, "O my children, I give you away that I may attain perfect insight." And they laid their hands upon his feet, and prayed for forgiveness of all their faults, and so went forth. When Wethandaya entered alone into his hut, straightway the air was filled with the cries of legions of spirits exclaiming, "Oh, the great deed of sacrifice! Wondrous is he whose mind is unshaken even by the loss of both his children." When Madi, the mother, returned and inquired about the children, Wethandaya made answer, "Rejoice, my wife. A Brahman came and asked me for them, and I gave them to him." As a stricken hart she fell at his feet and lay as a fish that breathes out its life upon the shore: and as a cow robbed of her calf she mourned. "As young tender lilies my children suffer: as young gazelles snared by the huntsman they are dwelling with strangers. They whom I nourished at these breasts are now in the hands of sinful men; hungry and thirsty they cry for me in despair. O miserable woman!

What dreadful sin have I committed in this life or in past existences that this suffering has overtaken me?" But at length she came to herself and said, "I will not be a hindrance to you, my husband. If it pleases you, give me also as a gift." Later another Brahman came to the prince and said, "Fair is the Princess; blameless wife and peerless among women. Give her to me as my slave." Madi reviled him, saying, "O man of lust, long not for her who delights only in the law of righteousness." But Wethandaya said to her, "O wife, I seek after the heights, and I must pass beyond anguish to calm: no lament or complaint must I utter. Do thou therefore go with the Brahman uncomplainingly," then to the Brahman, "Best of my gifts is this! Take, O Brahman, my dear, dear wife, loving and submissive in all things."

The story turns out well, for the Brahmans who had asked for wife and children proved to be impersonations of gods, and Madi was restored to her husband with the recommendation that he should never again part with so devoted a wife. But there is no disapproval of his acts. All through the story there is only praise for the wonderful sacrifices made by this man who was so despicably selfish that he was ready to sacrifice wife and children to lives of shame and misery in order that he himself, forsooth, might rise in the scale of existence. And when not long since, in commenting on this story to a learned Buddhist, some one remarked that no Western mind could bring itself to believe that Wethandaya did right in dealing thus with his wife and children, this intelligent Buddhist replied with a shrug,—and his reply was entirely consistent with his philosophy,—"Unless their Karma had brought it upon them, it could not have come to pass."

The utter perverseness of Buddhist ideals is sufficiently evident. It is easy to see whither such doctrines as these would

lead. They would justify in the name of religion every form of cruelty and barbarity imaginable. Nothing but pride and selfishness can be the outcome of such a system when consistently applied. It should be added that the people are better than their creed. There is that in human nature and in the necessities of human society which makes for decency in spite of creeds. But the tendency of such teachings as those of Buddhism must be ever downward, and, although under the spur of Christian example desperate attempts are being made by the modern school of Buddhists to reform the system, yet such reform is hopeless. Buddhism as a system can never be improved, for its whole attitude and direction are away from God and truth, as will appear later on.

Turning now from Buddhism as a system to the specific code of morals promulgated by Gautama, we find that, while many excellent precepts are laid down, the whole scheme of ethics is vitiated by a wrong emphasis and by the confusion of the important with the unimportant. Strictly speaking, there are three codes, one for laymen, one for monks, and one for those who seek by strenuous effort to attain Nirvana. The first and lowest of these corresponds fairly well to the second table of the Mosaic code, and contains injunctions against taking life of any kind, against taking what is not given, against unlawful sexual intercourse, against speaking falsely, and against drinking intoxicating liquors. No merit is acquired by keeping this code, a fact which should be borne in mind in estimating the value of the system. The second code, that for the monks, contains all the injunctions of the first code with the change of the injunction against unlawful sexual intercourse to the requirement of absolute chastity, and in addition prohibits eating food at unreasonable hours, that is, between noon of one day and sunrise of the next; attending

worldly amusements, such as dancing, music, and stage plays; using unguents, dentifrices, perfumes, or ornaments; sleeping on high or broad beds; and owning or accepting gold or silver. He who would enter the Noble Path must take the vow to keep these ten precepts. The third code, that for the attainment of saintship, is much longer and is taken up chiefly with rules and regulations regarding the trancelike meditations and mental exercises which are so highly esteemed by Buddhists.

The differences between the first of these codes and the Mosaic code will be perceived at once. As Buddhism recognizes no God, its code can of course contain nothing corresponding to the first table of the Mosaic law. Instead of the command to commit no murder the Buddhist code prohibits the taking of life of any kind. It contains no commandment against covetousness, but prohibits the use of intoxicating liquors.

In practice several radical defects may be pointed out in these codes. First is the undue respect, amounting almost to reverence, paid to animal life. Indeed, to kill an animal is considered such an enormity among the Burmese as to make most other sins, not even excepting murder, seem light in comparison. Most Buddhists hold that there is a worse hell for killing a flea or a louse than for telling a lie. The Buddhist believes that if he kills a dog, he must pass through as many miserable existences as there are hairs on the dog's back. The result is that dogs multiply and roam about the country until they become a menace and a scourge. Not even mad dogs are killed. Fortunately, however, the Buddhist does not object when other people kill them, and will often even put them in the way of doing so. In a single season no fewer than six mad dogs were killed on my compound in Shwegyin. The Buddhists would not kill them themselves, but they would drive them towards our compound, knowing that we had no such

scruples. A Buddhist monk will not kill a mosquito. He carries with him a strainer to strain out of the water he drinks any animal life that may be in it. He will sweep ants out of his path lest he should inadvertently step on them. He shaves his head, some say, so as not to be in danger of taking the lives of any animals that might infest his hair. Recently a Buddhist monk has made a great reputation all over Burma as a preacher of righteousness. Those who have heard him say that he will unsparingly denounce the prevailing vices of his people, immorality, lying, stealing, swearing, and then at the close he will exclaim, "Now, brethren, stop eating meat," — an exhortation which to a Christian would certainly seem like an anticlimax.

Another serious defect in the Buddhist system of ethics is that it provides no proper place for home life. Originally Gautama intended all his followers to become monks. Not until the impracticableness of this plan was pointed out to him, and he was made to see that if his followers were all monks there would be no one to feed them while engaged in their meditations and exercises, could he be persuaded to recognize an order of householders, people who accepted his teachings, but were unwilling to cut themselves off entirely from worldly pursuits. Gautama knew nothing of the refining, uplifting power of pure womanhood. He could not conceive of such a thing. To him woman was only a temptation and a snare, lower in the scale of existence than the beasts of the field, fit only to be compared with vermin. A Buddhist monk may not even take his own mother's hand to pull her out of a ditch into which she may have fallen, for it is a sin for him to touch a woman. He may at the most reach her a stick, and, if she can grasp it, draw her out; but this he must do, not from love, but for the sake of the merit

which will accrue to him, and even while doing it, he must think of himself as dragging a log out of the mire.

The undue value attached to religious works as against works of humanitarianism (much more merit being acquired, for instance, in feeding monks than in feeding the poor); the premium put upon sloth by the high position accorded to the institution of monasticism; the inclusion of the use of tooth powder in the same class of sins with lying; and in the third code making equanimity of such great importance that one must put out of mind even the thought of one's own misdeeds, and not desire virtue lest it conduce to attachment,— these further defects in the Buddhist system of morals might be pointed out, but I think I have said enough to show that the whole scheme is topsy-turvy and of little value as a guide to right living.

III.

How are we to account for the existence of Buddhism? What was the underlying cause of it? What was the hidden motive or purpose which gave rise to this elaborate system of human speculation? Some say that the various heathen religions of the world are the outcome of sincere efforts on the part of their founders to seek after God. Buddhists, Hindus, Confucianists, Taoists, Shintoists, Mohammedans, all, it is said, are searching for the way of truth and light. Paul's words on Mars' Hill, — "that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him,"— are seized upon and made to imply that all men are really yearning after God and trying to find him. Is this conception true to facts?

One of the profoundest of all religious writings is that contained in the third chapter of Genesis. There we have given the history of the entrance of sin into the world. We are told

that when man became conscious of sin, he did not turn toward God, although then if ever he needed to do so, but first he began to make an apron for himself, and then when he heard the sound of the Lord God in the garden, he went and hid himself among the trees of the garden. Human experience shows that this is always the tendency of the consciousness of sin. A guilty conscience left to itself never drives a man towards God, but always away from him. It requires God's special intervention to draw men to himself. Now, the various heathen religions of the world are undoubtedly the result of the consciousness of sin. To this consciousness they bear with unvarying monotony and with terrible insistence their united testimony. But no more than in the individual experience does this consciousness of sin induce a Godward look. If heathen religions were the outcome of a sincere effort to find God, then Buddhists, in view of the thoroughness of their system, ought to be the first to receive the gospel and to acknowledge the true God when he is presented to them. But, aside from the Mohammedans, of whom there is not space to write here, they are the most difficult to persuade and to convince of the truth of the Scripture. In Burma living side by side are the Burmese, who are Buddhists, and the Karens, who are mere animists and have no well-thought-out system of beliefs. The Burmese frequently twit the Karens on having no religion. Among which of these two races has the gospel been most successful? If Buddhism is a sincere seeking after God, the Burmese ought to be the more eager of the two peoples to receive it. Yet after a hundred years of effort on the part of most earnest Christian men, our converts among the Burmese number only about 3,500, whereas among the religionless Karens they number over 50,000. No, it is not the highly civilized Japanese with their speculative philosophies and their men

of scholarly attainments who are turning in greatest numbers to God, but the backward Koreans; not the refined Brahmans of India with their lofty mysticism, but the lowest outcastes; not the descendants of the Pharaohs in Egypt, but the negroes of the Congo. Wherever on the face of the earth there is found a race or a people or a social class or an individual that makes no boast of self-wrought righteousness, but is ready to stand in nakedness of soul before God, there is to be found soil open for the reception of the gospel. The various heathen religions of the world are only aprons of fig leaves which men have made that they might hide from themselves and cover up a little their sense of shame, their consciousness of sin. And the better the religion appears to human understanding, the more carefully thought out, the more philosophical in form, the better calculated it is to keep the soul from God.

The words of Paul on Mars' Hill have been misapplied. He never meant to intimate it as his belief that the heathen world was seeking after God. No, his real opinion of that world is laid down rather in the first chapter of Romans, where he says that "knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise,"— and none make greater pretensions to wisdom than do Buddhists,—"they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Buddhists do not make images to worship except of Gautama, the founder of their religion, but, in view of the sacredness in which all animal life is held by them, it might reasonably be said that they hold in veneration amounting almost to worship all forms of animal life, even down to reptiles and vermin. Their religion, while in some respects the most lofty of non-

Christian cults, is also the most degraded,— and its basal purpose is the denial of God.

Are Buddhists — and presumably the adherents of other religions as well — conscious of all this? Do they know that they are holding down the truth in unrighteousness, suppressing the knowledge of those things which God himself has revealed to them and in them? To ascertain the true answer to the question is by no means easy, for it is not to be expected that they would openly confess it or even acknowledge it to themselves in definite terms. Rather the answer must be sought in what is known in these days as the subconsciousness, a field which it is very difficult to explore. No doubt Gautama had placed before him the idea of a Supreme Being and consciously rejected it; for it is known that there were philosophers in his day who taught it, and in several of his sermons he distinctly combats the idea. This does not prove, however, that he consciously suppressed the revelation of God in his own soul, to which Paul seems to refer in Rom. i. 19 when he says: "That which may be known of God is manifest *in* them; for God hath showed it unto them." The idea of a Supreme God as presented to him by the philosophers may have been so gross and so encumbered with absurdities as to be utterly unworthy of acceptance. But the revelation of God in the individual heart, even though it may be incomplete, is a safe guide so far as it goes. Did Gautama suppress that, the inner light that lighteneth every man? (John i. 9). The question is too deep to be gone into fully here. Suffice it to say there is evidence that he did, that in pride of heart he consciously set himself above everything that is named in heaven or in earth. He called himself The Enlightened One. He professed to have all knowledge. He claimed for himself supreme wisdom.

> **"I have no teacher anywhere;**
> **My equal nowhere can be found;**
> **In all the world with all its gods,**
> **No one to rival me exists."** [1]

In one of his sermons Gautama tells of a priest who wanted to know when the four elements said to compose the human body finally cease, and represents him as going upward to the gods who occupy the various heavenly abodes without finding any one who knows, till he comes to the abode of the Great Brahma, who declares himself thus.—

> **"I, O priest, am Brahma, Great Brahma, the Supreme Being, the Unsurpassed, the Perceiver of All Things, the Controller, the Lord of All, the Maker, the Fashioner, the Chief, the Victor, the Ruler, the Father of All Beings Who Have Been and Are to Be."**

Taking the priest to one side, Brahma is made to say:—

> **"O priest, these gods of my suite believe as follows: 'Brahma sees all things; knows all things; has penetrated all things.' Therefore was it that I did not answer you in their presence. I, O priest, do not know when these four elements, to wit, the earthy element, the watery element, the fiery element, and the windy element, utterly cease."**

Yet Gautama himself professed to answer the question.[2]

But aside from these sayings of Gautama, the genuineness of which is denied by some, his philosophy itself, although cleverly atheistic in its construction, seems to bear evidence to the ineradicableness of the idea of God. It acknowledges four mysteries, one of which is Karma. But why should Karma, the doctrine that good deeds bring reward and evil deeds bring punishment, have been a mystery to Gautama except for his atheism? God and good are logically so inseparable that to

[1] **Majjhima-Nikāya, Sutta 26, in Henry Clarke Warren's Buddhism in Translations, p. 343.**

[2] **Digha-Nikāya xi. 67, in Warren's Buddhism in Translations, p. 311; quoted by Phinney in Buddha, Buddhism and Burma, pp. 37, 38.**

deny the one is to deny the other. There is no room for goodness in a purely atheistical scheme. It has no sanction, no authority to enforce it. And in seeking to incorporate goodness in his scheme of thought Gautama himself seems to have realized the difficulty; but instead of acknowledging it frankly, he concealed his difficulty under the name of a mystery.

What of his followers to-day? In general they profess to be contented with their atheism. Indeed, some observers say that they seem on the whole to be getting more and more atheistic in their tendencies. But a few years ago when in the city of Rangoon, Mr. F. D. Phinney, of the American Baptist Mission, published a booklet in which he called attention to these and other like facts taken from the life and teachings of Gautama, it created a tremendous furore among the Buddhists. They professed great indignation, tried to deny his statements, and threatened him with arrest and a public trial. Their heat was cooled when they began to reflect that in some of their own recent publications there had appeared statements far stronger than his that had passed unchallenged. But why were they indignant in the first place, if they did not feel in their heart of hearts that to deny the existence of God was wicked folly?

These are things which the Christian world needs to know and to understand. We have chairs of comparative religion in our theological seminaries, and we have schools of missions, in which great emphasis is laid on the resemblances, most of them utterly superficial, between Christianity and the other religions of the world, and it is taught that the missionary needs to have a sympathetic insight into these religions in order to approach their followers successfully. And that is well so far as it goes. Certainly nothing is to be gained and much may be lost by a failure to recognize such truth as non-

Christian religions possess. But it is far more important that the missionary and every Christian in whatever land should know the real nature of these various heathen systems and understand their secret springs. This is becoming more and more difficult. As the work of missions prospers and becomes more aggressive, the adherents of these different faiths are becoming alarmed, and are either trying to cover up skillfully the defects in their systems or are even modifying their ancient beliefs to make them conform more or less to Christian ideals. With the aid of pagan scholarship from the West the Oriental is eliminating the grosser elements from his various faiths and is becoming very adept in the use of high-sounding phrases which seem to breathe the very spirit of truth. Some years ago Tom Paine's writings, with their bald skepticism, were introduced, and are probably still in vogue among the ignorant. But the more cultured minds have discovered a cleverer way. They imitate the manners of Christians, copy their methods, and adapt their teachings to their own systems. Some of them even profess great reverence for Jesus, and would fain include Him among their own prophets or seers. Meanwhile the resulting confusion is being helped on by those in Christian lands who, being obsessed with certain evolutionary ideas, try to make it appear that religion is a growth; that the differences between the various systems of religion are more apparent than real; and that they are all essentially the same, being merely developments along different stages of progress. The result is that not a few Christian people are being deceived. Some missionaries even are led to believe that the triumph of the gospel is to be brought about by the gradual conformity of heathenism to it. Never could a more fatal mistake be made. Not the superficial resemblances, but the abysmal differences between the religion of Christ and all other

religions, need to be emphasized. The real spirit of heathenism is the same as it has always been. It is enmity against God, and some of those who profess the greatest reverence for Jesus are among the stoutest opponents of his religion.

To return to the question with which I began this article, I have pointed out the utter hopelessness and inadequacy of Buddhism,— and by inference of every other heathen religion, — as a means of salvation. I have shown that, although it has a profound sense of condemnation, its conception of sin is shallow and its code of morals perverted. I have given reasons for believing,— and this is a conviction which I am confident would be confirmed by intelligent and reflective converts from Buddhism,— that its direction is away from God rather than towards God; that so far from its being an attempt to see the source of all light and truth, it is a carefully constructed scheme to get away from the light and blind the eye against it. The heathen do not desire to know God. They wish rather to keep away from Him and obliterate from their minds the consciousness of His presence. This is the true philosophy of their religions, and in their heart of hearts they know it. The old missionary incentive is still in place. We need to send the gospel to the heathen in order that they may be saved.

The objection is sometimes made that by sending missionaries to the heathen we are taking away their own faiths and too often putting nothing in their stead. I think I have made it sufficiently clear that these various systems of religion ought not to be called faiths, for they are systems not so much of belief as of unbelief. But even if they are conceded to be faiths of a kind, I have this to say, that, in so far as supplanting old faiths without putting a new faith in their stead is concerned, in my opinion others are more responsible for this

than are the missionaries. In Burma and India, at least, I think that much more is being done along this line by British officials and European tradespeople than by the missionaries, for no one can be without an influence of one kind or another; and, while the influence of these people is not for the most part in favor of Christianity, oftentimes being quite the contrary, yet it does tend powerfully to the disintegration, in some respects at least, of the ancient systems of the people of those lands. Missionaries do not as a rule supplant ancient beliefs except as they introduce far better beliefs in their place. But in so far as the work of the missionaries does tend to do this, I think it will be admitted, in view of what I stated regarding the origin and nature of heathen religions, that even so the heathen is better off; for without any system, without any religion to keep him from God, he is placed in a position where he is more open to the truth.

In closing I may say that, if now we turn to the converts from heathenism and ask for their testimony, with one acclaim they will answer, "Why send the gospel to the heathen? Because it has saved us. It has lifted us up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and it has put a new song into our mouths, even praise unto our God."