

## A CONTROVERSY ON BUDDHISM.

BY

RT. REV. SHAKU SOYEN, OF KAMAKURA, JAPAN.

REV. DR. JOHN H. BARROWS, OF CHICAGO, ILL.

REV. DR. F. F. ELLINWOOD, OF NEW YORK CITY.

I.

*Rev. Dr. John Barrows, Chicago, Ill.*

DEAR SIR :

Friends in America have sent me a number of the *Chicago Tribune*, dated Monday, January 13, 1896, which contains the report of your second Haskell lecture, delivered at the Kent Theatre in the Chicago University. The subject is "Christianity and Buddhism," and I anticipated a friendly and sympathetic treatment of Buddhism at your hands, for I do not doubt that you desire to be just in your judgment. Your utterances are of importance because they will be received as an impartial representation of our religion, since you, having been Chairman of the Religious Parliament, are commonly considered to have the best of information about those religions that were represented at this famous assemblage. I was greatly disappointed, however, seeing that you only repeat those errors which are common in the various Western books on Buddhism. You say, "The goal which made Buddha's teachings a dubious gospel, is Nirvâna, which involves the extinction of love and life, as the going out of a flame which has nothing else to feed upon." Now the word *Nirvâna* means "extinction" and it means the eradication of all evil desires, of all passions, of all egotism, so that the flame of envy, hatred, and lust will have nothing to feed upon. This is the negative side of Nirvâna. The positive side of Nirvâna consists in the recognition of truth. The destruction of evil desires, of envy, hatred, extinction of selfishness implies char-

ity, compassion with all suffering, and a love that is unbounded and infinite. Nirvâna means extinction of lust, not of love; extinction of evil, not of existence; of egotistic craving, not of life. The eradication of all that is evil in man's heart will set all his energies free for good deeds, and he is no genuine Buddhist who would not devote his life to active work, and a usefulness which would refuse neither his friends nor strangers, nor even his very enemies.

You say that "human life does not breathe, in Buddhism, the atmosphere of divine fatherhood, but groans under the dominion of inexorable and implacable laws." Now I grant that Buddha taught the irrefragability of law but this is a point in which, as in so many others, Buddha's teachings are in exact agreement with the doctrines of modern science. However, you ought to consider that while the law is irrefragable, no one but those who infringe upon it groan under it. He who understands the laws of existence and especially the moral law that underlies the development of human society, will accommodate himself to it, and thus he will not groan under it, but in the measure that he is like Buddha he will be enlightened, he will be a master of the law and not a slave. In the same way that the ignorant savage is killed by the electric shock of lightning, while an electric engineer uses it for lighting the halls and streets of our cities, the immoral man suffers from the moral law, he groans under its inexorable and implacable decree, while the moral man enjoys it, and turning it to advantage glories in its boundless blessings.

This same moral law is the source of enlightenment and its recognition constitutes Buddhahood. This same moral law we call Amitâbha-Buddha, the boundless light of Buddhahood which is eternal, omnipresent, and all-glorious. We represent it under a picture of a father, and it was incarnated not only in Gautama-Buddha, but also in all great men in a higher or lesser degree, foremost among them in Jesus Christ, and, allow me to add, in George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and other great men of your country. Allow me to add, too, that Buddha's doctrine, far from being scepticism, proclaims the doctrine that man *can* attain enlightenment and that he attains it not only through study and learning, which, as a matter of course, are indispensable, but also and mainly through *the earnest exertions of a life of purity and holiness.*

There are many more points in your lecture which I feel tempted to discuss with you, but they refer more to Christianity than to Buddhism, and may imply a misunderstanding of Christian

doctrines on my part. I am anxious to know all that is good in Christianity and the significance of your dogmas so that I may grow in a comprehension of truth, but I have not as yet been able to see that mankind can be benefited by believing that Jesus Christ performed miracles. I do not deny the miracles nor do I believe them; I only claim that they are irrelevant. The beauty and the truth of many of Christ's sayings fascinate me, but truth does not become truer by being pronounced by a man who works miracles. You say, "We can explain Buddha without the miracles which later legends ascribe to him, but that we cannot explain Christ—either his person or his influence—without granting the truth of his own claim that he did the supernatural works of his father." We may grant that Jesus Christ is the greatest master and teacher that appeared in the West after Buddha, but the picture of Jesus Christ as we find it in the Gospel is marred by the accounts of such miracles as the great draft of fishes which involves a great and useless destruction of life (for we read that the fishermen followed Jesus leaving the fish behind), and by the transformation of water into wine at the marriage-feast at Cana. Nor has Jesus Christ attained to the calmness and dignity of Buddha, for the passion of anger overtook him in the temple, when he drove out with rope in hand those that bargained in the holy place.

How different would Buddha have behaved under similar conditions in the same place. Instead of whipping the evil-doers he would have converted them, for kind words strike deeper than the whip.

I do not dare to discuss the statements you make about Christianity for fear that I may be mistaken, but I am open to conviction and willing to learn.

I hope you will not take offence at my frank remarks, but I feel that you, if any one in Christendom, ought to know the real teachings of Buddha, and we look to you as a leader who will make possible the way for a better understanding between all the religions of the world, for I do not doubt that as you unknowingly misrepresent the doctrines of the Tathagata, so we may misunderstand the significance of Christianity. We shall be much obliged to you if in justice to the religion of Buddha you will make public this humble protest of mine, so that at least the most important misconceptions and prejudices that obtain among Christians may be removed.

I remain with profound respect

Your obedient servant,

KAMAKURA, JAPAN.

SHAKU SOYEN.

## II.

*Rev. Shaku Soyen,*

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Your interesting letter of March 1st has been sent to me from Chicago. I am to be here for the next six months. In December I go to India and I expect to spend next April in Japan, where I hope to meet you and the other friends who came to the Parliament. I send you a pamphlet giving a little sketch of my tour.

Your letter I will send to-day to a friend in America, asking him to have it printed in an important journal so that you may give American people the opportunity of your views.

I have been looking over the lecture to which you refer. Only a small part of it was printed in the *Tribune*. If you had read it all you would have found it full of appreciation both for Buddha and his ethical system. My interpretation of Nirvâna is that of some of the most friendly students of Buddhism who have gained their views from reading the Buddhist Scriptures. But if modern Japanese Buddhism teaches conscious personal life after death and believes in a personal Heavenly Father, full of love, its divergence from Christianity is not so marked as we had supposed.

What you write about Christianity would require much more time for a proper reply to it than I can possibly give it at present. I am on the point of going to Paris to deliver an address on "Religion, as the Unifier of Humanity." I think that the work that was done in Chicago shows how religion may help to draw men together.

Will you remember me very kindly to the Buddhist friends who came with you from Japan. How pleasant it would be to meet again in Paris in 1900!

Very faithfully yours,

GÖTTINGEN, GERMANY.

JOHN HENRY BARROWS.

## III.

*Rev. Shaku Soyen.*

DEAR SIR :

I have been asked to reply publicly to a letter addressed by you to Rev. John H. Barrows, D. D., of Chicago, under date of March 1, 1896. I have not seen Dr. Barrow's answer to you, but I have consented to reply to some of the points in your letter to him.

I have been pleased with the courteous spirit of your communication no less than with your admirable use of the English language. Though firmly believing with Dr. Barrows (if I may judge from an address which I heard from his lips on the eve of his departure for India) that Christianity is the only religion that is adapted to the universal wants of mankind, and the only one that offers real salvation, yet I have long cherished and widely advocated a tolerant spirit toward other faiths, and have endeavored to give full credit to the ethical or religious truths which they inculcate. But since the close of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago I have realised more than ever the need of candid and accurate language in speaking on this subject, instead of giving way, either to hasty and ignorant denunciation, or to lavish expressions of approval for courtesy's sake which might be construed as a surrender of one's own opinions. Our American hospitality toward the representatives and the religious systems of other lands was carried to such a degree by large numbers in the Parliament, that statements soon came back to us from Japan that the delegates from that country had reported on their return that Buddhism had triumphed over Christianity on its own soil.

The *New York Independent* published a letter reporting the proceedings of a meeting held under the auspices of the Buddhist Young Men's Association of Yokohama, and which was addressed by yourself, Mr. Yatsubuchi, and others.

From one of these addresses these words are quoted: "The Parliament was called because the Western nations have come to realise the weakness and folly of Christianity, and they really wished to hear from us of our religions and to learn what the best religion is. The meeting showed the great superiority of Buddhism over Christianity, and the mere fact of calling the meetings showed that the Americans and other Western peoples had lost their faith in Christianity and were ready to accept the teachings of our superior religion."

If such were the impressions which you received from the courtesy of Dr. Barrows and others, it is not strange that you were disappointed when you read his real estimate of Buddhism in the published address to which your letter refers.

Turning to what seems to be the chief point of difference between you and Dr. Barrows,—viz., the meaning of Nirvâna as taught by Buddhist philosophy,—I may say that I should as a rule be inclined to accept every intelligent man's statement of his own belief and the belief of his countrymen, or at least of his particular

sect. But when we come to speak of a system which has undergone many and radical changes in the course of the ages, and a system which has presented important modifications in different lands even in the same age, we can hardly make any one broad assertion which shall cover the whole ground.

Buddhism is one thing in Ceylon, quite another in Thibet, and still another in China and Japan, where we find at least a dozen more or less divergent sects. Buddhism in its beginnings is generally supposed by Western scholars to have been atheistic or at least agnostic; in Nepaul it became theistic, holding, according to Hodgson's Sanskrit translations, that *Adi Buddha* is "self-existent," "the source of all existence in the three worlds," the "omnipresent who is one and sole in the universe," the "Creator of all the Buddhas." "He is the essence of all the essences." "He is the author of virtue, the destroyer of all things." Those types of Buddhism which pay divine worship to *Gautama*, or *Amitâbha*, or *Quanyin*, I should call quasi theistic or demi-theistic, while some of the Japanese sects, as described by Rev. *Bunyu Nanjio*, Oxon, seem to be pantheistic. The promised joys in *Amitâbha's Paradise*, as described in *Max Müller's* translation of a Sanskrit manuscript, part of which had been sent him from Japan, would indicate an immortal blessedness of a real soul and without further rebirth, while *Subhadra's Catechism of Buddhism*, "compiled from the sacred writings of the Southern Buddhists for the use of Europeans," declares that "Buddhism teaches the reign of perfect goodness and wisdom without a personal god, continuance of individuality without an immortal soul, eternal happiness without a local heaven," etc.

It would be difficult, therefore, to give one all embracing characterisation of Buddhism, and when one speaks of the meaning of *Nirvâna* we must first ascertain his point of view. There are as many different conceptions of *Nirvâna* as there are *Buddhisms*.

I agree with you entirely in your definition of *Nirvâna* as the "eradication of all evil desires, of all passions, of all egotism, so that the flame of envy, hatred, and lust will have nothing to feed upon." All scholars are agreed, I believe, that the word *Nirvâna* properly means an attainment to be realised in this life. I grant you also that "the positive side of *Nirvâna*," speaking from the Buddhist standpoint, "consists in the recognition of truth." *Buddha* is supposed to have attained *Nirvâna* at the time of his illumination under the *Bo-tree*, and for forty-five years thereafter he illustrated this positive side of it in his efforts for the good of men. I think

that Dr. Barrows would agree with you so far. But the real question between you lies farther on. It is this: What becomes of the possessor of Nirvâna when he dies? If Nirvâna cuts off rebirth in this world or any other, what follows the final dissolution of body and mind? And what did Buddha mean when he said to his followers: "Mendicants, that which binds the teacher to existence is cut off (he has attained Nirvâna), but his body still remains. While his body shall remain, he will be seen by gods and men; but after the termination of life, upon the dissolution of the body, neither gods nor men shall see him"?

And what, accordingly, is meant by the Pâli term *parinibbana*, or in Sanskrit *parinirvâna*? I find no other meaning for this word than total extinction. It follows the Nirvâna as a natural consequence of the cutting off of Karma and rebirth. Professor Rhys Davids expresses the distinction exactly when he says: "Death, utter death, with nothing to follow, *is a result of, but is not Nirvâna.*" It is *parinirvâna*.

If I am asked concerning the meaning commonly given to Nirvâna in the Mahayana literatures of Northern Buddhism, I must declare my belief that it means a state of blessedness here and hereafter, but if by Buddhism is meant the system which Buddha taught and which is preserved in the earlier and canonical literature of Ceylon, then I must give a very different answer.

Professor Rhys Davids has illustrated very fully the great change which came over the Buddhism of the canonical Pitakas of the South as it was gradually developed into the "Great Vehicle" of the North. The whole emphasis of the system was changed from the ideal of Arhatship to that of Bodisatship. Even in the South, and before Buddha's death, the real logic of the Tathâgata's teachings was felt to be depressing. "Existence in the eye of Buddhism," says d'Alwis, "was nothing but misery. . . . Nothing remained then to be devised as a deliverance from this evil, but the destruction of existence itself." It was an impracticable doctrine, and Davids declares that "though laymen could attain Nirvâna, we are told of only one or two instances of their having done so: and though it was more possible for the 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." The more practical races of the North desired something more available and more hopeful. A Bodisat submitting to successive rebirths for the sake of service to mortals, came to be more highly appreciated than an extinct Arhat. The Northern litera-

ture came at length to even disparage Arhatship, while Bodisats like Avolokitesvara, and Amitâbha rose high in popular esteem Davids tells us that the *Lotus of the True Law*, one of the Sanskrit books of Nepal, and widely accepted in China and the North, openly disparages Arhatship and presents Bodisatship "as the goal at which every true Buddhist has to aim; and the whole exposition of this theory, so subversive of the original Buddhism, is actually placed in the mouth of Gautama himself."

Professor Davids, in alluding to the accounts given of Nirvâna by Rev. Zitsuzen Ashitzu at the Chicago Parliament, says: "It shows how astounding is the gulf on all sides between popular beliefs and the conclusion of science." (American Lectures, p. 208.) He states that two forms of Nirvâna which Ashitzu ascribes to the Southern literature cannot there be found, and that the two which he ascribes to the Mahayana school are (strangely) ascribed to the immediate disciples of Buddha. The Nichiren sect of Japan, according to Nanjio, get around this chronological difficulty by the theory that Nichiren, living far on in the Christian era, was an incarnation of an ancient Bodisat who was instructed by Buddha in a "Sky Assembly" on a certain celestial mountain.

This change from Arhatship to Bodisatship was unconsciously promoted by the introduction of fanciful Jatakas or stories of Buddha's pre-existent lives as a Bodisat. The claim that Buddha, though inconsistently with the whole drift of his teaching concerning the one supreme end,—had waived Nirvâna and submitted to rebirth hundreds of times for the salvation of all beings, changed the emphasis of his whole system. It showed from his own example that to be reborn again and again as a Bodisat was far better than to end a useful existence in Parinirvâna. The practical nations of the North espoused this new doctrine warmly, and both Beal and Edkins have described the luxuriant development of this tendency in the Mahayana School. Bodisats, past, present, and to come, were multiplied. Even before Asanga of Peshawar had introduced his ruinous compromise between Buddhism and Hindu Saktism, Hindu deities had begun to be admitted as Bodisats into the Buddhist pantheon. The bounds of the universe were enlarged to furnish an adequate field for their divine energies. At least five world systems, each with a trinity of Bodisats were recognised, each trinity embracing a Dhyana or Celestial Buddha, of whom Amitâbha seems to have been the most popular.

The old theories of a real and conscious soul for which Buddha had substituted the doctrine of an impersonal Karma, had



again crept into Buddhism with these and other Hindu elements, and with them the notion of continued and conscious existence and a changed Nirvâna or Moksha. In Nepaul a positive doctrine of absorption into Adi Buddha (following the Hindu theories) is plainly taught.

“The Buddhism of Thibet,” says Davids, “is the very reverse of the old Arhatship.” It is a form of Bodisatship which renders very substantial every-day service as a semi-political force. The practical and helpful ministry of Quanyin in China and Japan is also an illustration of Bodisatship.

But altogether the most striking departure from the original Arhat doctrines of the South is seen in the teachings of the Shin Shu sect of Japan. As described in Rev. Nanjio’s little volume, also in Max Müller’s translation above referred to, and still more clearly in a *Shin Shu* tract, a translated copy of which may be found in the Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Vol. XIV., Part 1, June, 1888, this sect comes nearer to the doctrines of the Apostle Paul than to those of Shakya Muni. It presents a mediator between Karma and the sinner, a salvation not by the “eightfold path,” but by faith, a righteousness not by personal merit, but by imputation, a renunciation of all trust in works as being “useless as furs worn in summer,” and, like Christianity, it enjoins a consecrated service, not as compensation but from love. The heaven promised is called “Nirvâna,” but it is something exceedingly attractive to the Buddhist masses. The tract approves of the marriage of priests and of all rational ways of living, and condemns the asceticism of the other sects as not only uncalled for but as a dismal failure in point of fact.

If, then, we are to decide upon the meaning of Nirvâna, or Parinirvâna as taught by Buddha, we must turn back from all these Northern developments to the older canonical teachings.

Burnouf maintained that the canon of Ashoka’s Council must be the final authority, just as the four Gospels must be accepted as the doctrines of Christ. If the preponderating verdict there given is not decisive, then why might we not adopt any theory concerning Buddha’s teachings which our presuppositions might require? There was indeed in Ashoka’s time an endless variety and chaos of traditions and theories. The two intervening centuries had been prolific. Tissa, a prominent member of the Council, arraigned and refuted no less than two hundred and fifty heresies. (See Rhys Davids’s American lectures.) But if after all this careful sifting the Pitakas are not authoritative then we are at sea concerning the

original doctrines of Buddhism. Moreover, these Pâli scriptures are buttressed, so to speak, by Cingalese versions which are said to have been translated from the Pâli two centuries B. C. by Mahenda, the devout son of King Ashoka. These were at a much later day retranslated into Pâli by Buddhagosha. The Pâli and Cingalese have therefore corroborated each other for centuries and rendered modification doubly difficult.

If we may believe Prince Chudhadharn of Siam, who presented a paper in the Parliament of Religions, the Siamese Buddhism (also of the Southern school) corroborates the testimonies of Ceylon. He said: "The true Buddhist does not mar the purity of his self-denial by lusting after a positive happiness which he himself shall enjoy here or hereafter. . . . What is to be hoped for is the absolute repose of Nirvâna, the extinction of our being, nothingness."

Professor Max Müller, in an article published in the *London Times* and republished in his *Science of Religion*, takes the ground with Burnouf, Bigandet, Saint Hilaire, Rhys Davids, Childers, Spence Hardy, and others, that the philosophic teaching of the Pitakas represents Nibbana or Parinibbana as equivalent to extinction. He declares that "no careful reader of the metaphysical speculations in the canon (on Nirvâna) can reach any other conclusion than that of Burnouf," though in his *Buddhist Nihilism* he seems inclined to think that the canon may have done injustice to the real teachings of Gautama. He finds inconsistencies in the statements of the canon, and he gives Buddha the benefit of the doubt. And on general principles he concludes that the great teacher could not have maintained "that Nirvâna, instead of being a bridge from the finite to the infinite, is only a trap-bridge hurling man into an abyss at the very moment when he thought he had arrived at the stronghold of the eternal." This seems to me, however, a clear case of special pleading. On the same principle we may go back of the New Testament history and build up any modified theory of the doctrine of Christ. Professor Oldenberg, an acknowledged Pâli scholar, after a careful study of the alleged dialogues of Buddha with his more thoughtful disciples, as to whether his own ego would survive after death, reaches the conclusion that he left no decisive answer on one side or the other. "The question was treated as of no practical importance to one seeking deliverance now and here." Neither the Hindu philosophers who cross-questioned him as the Pharisees questioned Christ, nor even his faithful but perplexed disciple, Mâlukya, obtained any but an evasive

answer, coupled with exhortations to gain deliverance now and here.

Personally I believe that Gautama had taught Parinirvâna in the sense of extinction (he was so understood by his followers and by the opposing Hindus, who nicknamed the Buddhists "nastakas," i. e., "believers in destruction or nihilism), but that after seeing the perplexity and depression which the doctrine produced, he became reticent and refused to commit himself. Nevertheless, his more thoughtful disciples in carrying out the general drift of his teaching to its logical conclusions, established the doctrine of Parinibbana as Burnouf, Saint Hilaire, Childers, Spence Hardy, and d'Alwis, have found it expressed in the canonical Pitakas.

But altogether the most decided position taken by any Pâli scholar in reference to Parinibbana is that of Rhys Davids, partially quoted above. He says: "Stars long ago extinct may be still visible to us by the light they emitted before they ceased to burn, but the rapidly vanishing effect of a no longer active cause will soon cease to strike upon our senses; and where the light was will be darkness. So the living, moving body of the perfect man (Arhat) is visible still, though its cause has ceased to act: but it will soon decay and die and pass away, and, as no new body will be formed, where life was will be *nothing*. Death, utter death, with no new life to follow, *is then a result of, but is not, Nirvâna*. The Buddhist heaven is not death, and it is not *on* death, but on a virtuous life here and now, that the Pitakas lavish those terms of ecstatic description which they apply to Nirvâna as the fruit of the fourth path of Arhatship."

This statement occurs in his small volume entitled *Buddhism*, and is fully corroborated in the lectures delivered in America 1894-5. Those passages in the Dharmapada which are supposed to indicate a continued and blessed existence after death, he regards as figurative expressions, applicable to the state of Nirvâna in this life, and he quotes from the Parinibbanti Anasaba this clear statement: "Some people (at death) are reborn as men: evil doers in hell; the well-conducted go to heaven, but the Arhats go out altogether." There is nothing figurative here, nothing could be plainer. He adds that in the later Sanskrit books the notices of Nirvâna "are so meagre that no conclusion can be drawn as to the views of their authors, but it is clear that they use Parinibbana in the sense of death, with no life to follow."

Aside from these opinions of the highest authorities, I think that the Buddhist metaphysics, carried out logically, militate

against any theory which supposes a continued and conscious blessedness to follow the extinction of Karma and the end of rebirth. It is difficult to see how there can be any conscious enjoyment of any kind where there is really no soul. Buddhism recognises no transition of a soul from one state of being to another. There are instead five skandas, partly physical, partly intellectual, and these produce the phenomena which others than Buddhists ascribe to an abiding, personal, conscious, and responsible soul. But according to Buddhist philosophy there is only a succession of thoughts and emotions proceeding from the interaction of the skandas, just as a flame proceeds from the combustion of the chemical elements in a candle. The flame is not the same in two consecutive moments, neither is the soul. The only permanent element remaining when the body with its skandas dies is the Karma. But if, as in the case of the Arhat, even the Karma is cut off, what can be left but extinction? Professor Oldenberg, with his metaphysical acuteness, and with a more than willingness to find something in the Buddhist philosophy less doleful than extinction, seems to suppose a sort of substrate of being which antedates this world of form and change, and therefore may survive it. He finds a passage in the Pâli scriptures, and Max Müller makes reference to the same, which reads as follows: "There is an unborn, unbecome, not created, not formed. But for this unborn, unbecome, not created, not formed, there would be no way out of the world of the born, the become, the created, the formed. . . . The wise ones who do no harm to any being, who keep their body ever bridled, they go to the eternal place. He who arrives there knows nothing of pain; but the monk, penetrated by goodness, who holds to the Buddhist doctrine, let him turn to the land of peace, where the transitory find rest." Of this passage Oldenberg says: "One who clearly and decidedly rejected an eternal future would not speak in this way." But this comes far short of a positive doctrine of conscious Nirvâna. And besides, what is that essence of being which antedates and follows conscious existence here?

The *raison d'être* of the doctrine here expressed is the supposed metaphysical necessity for some antithesis for the born, the become, etc. This can be found only in the unborn and the unbecome. Therefore the unborn and the unbecome must actually exist as the only way of getting out of the world of the born, etc. But I do not see how anything can be predicated of a state of existence only arrived at by such a process. I think it fair to Buddha to as-

sume that this fine piece of dialectics was due not to his practical mind, but to some one of his speculative followers.

In the paper which you read in the Chicago Parliament of Religions you stated that the world is governed by one universal law of cause and effect, that "there is no cause which is not an effect and no effect which has not also a cause." This theory, of course, excludes the idea of a Great First Cause. This is to Western minds unthinkable, as was illustrated in the same Parliament by Father Hewitt of the Paulist Brothers of New York in his paper on the Being of God. He used the illustration of a train of cars in which the last car is drawn by the one before it and that by another. In his view such transmitted motion would be impossible unless there could be found at the head of the train, an engine having power in itself. Your theory seemed to involve the supposition that an infinite number of cars on an infinite circular track might move without an engine. But the point which I would make just here is that your theory appears in itself to exclude the idea of a conscious and blessed Nirvâna beyond this life. It deals with such causes as we find in this world, which in your view includes all things past, present, and future; and it ought to note only such effects as are seen in this world as Buddhism conceives it. Everything must move in the circle of being if it moves at all. Men and gods are born and die and are reincarnated either on the earth or in heaven or in hell, where also they will die again: all is change; but according to the idea of Nirvâna as a changeless future existence, it is a breaking out of the circle. It belongs to the world of being, and yet it does not so belong. It is an eternal standstill, a rest, not of a soul, not of the skandas, not of Karma, but of a something which produces no longer the old effects, and which therefore does not belong to your-world of invariable causality. Perhaps you can remove my difficulty.

I shall welcome any further light which may be thrown upon this subject, and I assure you of my belief that good will come from a full and fair elucidation of all those facts and principles which belong to Buddhism or any other religious system. I have a profound respect for the searchings of earnest men of all ages in reference to the great things which concern our highest destiny.

There are two or three things in your letter in regard to which I will add a single word. Referring to the life of Christ, you speak of the miraculous draft of fishes as an indication of a lack of proper regard for animal life on his part. I do not propose to enter into a defence of Christianity, but I would only say that you seem to me

to miss the true import of the passage when you assume that Christ and his disciples went away and left the fishes to decay upon the shore. We might as well suppose that they left their boat to drift about on the waves. The true meaning is simply that three men, mentioned by name, etc., left the business of fishermen and became disciples. The narrative states that there was another boat in partnership. Even though there had been no partners or servants to look after the fish, there was never lacking a crowd in the footsteps of Jesus, to whom they could have been given. A multitude is here mentioned. A general Gospel injunction was,—sell all thou hast and give to the poor and follow me.

With regard to animal life, I know that it is often claimed that Buddha was more compassionate than Jesus. I think he was less discriminating. Jesus had a tender regard for all animal life, and taught that even the sparrows were the subjects of his Father's care; but nevertheless he believed that men were in God's sight of "more value than many sparrows." He rebuked the stiff conservatism of the Pharisees, which would have forbidden the finding of a lost sheep on the Sabbath, or the rescuing of a dumb beast from suffering. Buddhism is perhaps much more particular in avoiding the destruction of insect life than Christianity, but on that score I think Buddhism has yet to reckon with the modern science of Bacteriology, and the question whether the living germs of disease shall destroy or be destroyed, and whether it is less merciful on the whole that animals and fishes shall be food for each other and for man than that myriads of living microbes shall destroy them by the slow torture of disease. Life and death are shown by science to be so balanced that in the total of existence death is as beneficent as life. The economy of the sea is one of constant carnage and so also with the earth; but for this the sea would soon become a solid mass of suffering, living forms, and the earth would be uninhabitable by men. Christian precept is humane but it is discriminating. It would destroy the wolves and serpents of India rather than allow them every year to destroy thousands of the people, and it would allow the Esquimaux to feed on fish rather than suffer the extinction of their race.

The other reference in your letter was to Christ's anger and violence in driving men as well as oxen from the temple. Two kinds of argument are used in such a case, one is a whip or a cane, which even without actual blows is the common persuasive used with dumb beasts, and the other, adapted to men, is remonstrance; and Christ used both of these. There were probably two occasions

on which this thing occurred, and all the evangelists speak of such an incident. Only in the passage in the Gospel of John is there any reference to a whip of small cords, and in this there is no indication that the whip was designed for any but the beasts. In the New Version, translated by the most able Greek scholars in this country and Great Britain, the conjunctives, there more properly used, are "both—and,"—"And he drove them all out, both the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overthrew the tables, and he said unto them that sold doves, etc."

You speak of the miracles of Jesus. From a materialist this would not be surprising, but Buddhism like Christianity has opened to men the world of the spiritual and the supernatural. The greatest miracle in the New Testament is the Incarnation, but that is no greater departure from the common law of heredity than the incarnation of an old Karma in a new being wholly distinct from his predecessor.

And if we are to speak of the miraculous in Buddhism—passing in silence the marvellous legends—I should ask whether any mere human being, sitting under a tree, could without a miracle raise himself *per saltum* into intellectual omniscience,—and also into an absolute freedom from all the appetites and passions of our common humanity? That Buddha gained a victory over them I can well believe, but if you leave out the miracle—I speak of course from your standpoint—you must suppose that like the equally consecrated Paul of Tarsus, he found that when he would do good evil was present with him and that the warfare had to be waged to the end.

This accords with the universal experience of mankind, and it is the teaching of the *Shin Shu* tract which I have quoted above. I have never seen the moral disability of sinful men and their need of a Divine and therefore supernatural salvation more strongly set forth in any Christian treatise than in this tract where it speaks of those "who attempt the holy path as failing in every particular" and of their perishing need therefore of relying upon what Nanjio calls "the vicarious Power of the Original Prayer" of Amitâbha.

In closing I should like to express my appreciation of some of those high ethical teachings of Buddhism of which Rev. Dharmapâla spoke so intelligently and eloquently in the Parliament, but that my paper is already too long.

Let me add that practically the millions of Buddhists are not so helpless of the future as many have supposed, and simply for the reason that they disregard Nirvâna and look forward to a happy

transmigration, and many of them, in earth or in heaven. Even the devout pilgrim, Hioun Zsang, prayed on his death-bed that he might be born in a Buddhist heaven.

Assuring you that I aim to be an earnest student of whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, wheresoever they may be found,

I remain sincerely yours,

F. F. ELLINWOOD.

NEW YORK CITY.