

# THE OPEN COURT.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

No. 439. (Vol. X.—4)

CHICAGO, JANUARY 23, 1896.

{ One Dollar per Year.  
{ Single Copies, 5 Cents.

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## BUDDHISM IN ITS CONTRAST WITH CHRISTIANITY, AS VIEWED BY SIR MONIER MONIER- WILLIAMS.

AMONG the authors who have written on the subjects of Brahmanism and Buddhism Sir Monier Monier-Williams, Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, is one of the most distinguished and prominent authorities. Not only are his Sanskrit Dictionary, Grammar, and Manual standard works of philological scholarship, but also his translations exhibit the genius of a poet who can re-think and re-feel the ideas of bards who lived in ages long past and uttered thoughts which it is difficult for us to comprehend in their original significance. There can be no doubt but Sir Monier Monier-Williams's books on Brahmanism and Hinduism and on Buddhism give us most reliable and instructive information concerning the two great religions of India, and I confess that their study has proved to me extremely profitable. But one point challenges my opposition; it is, not that he writes from the standpoint of a Christian, for he has not only a right, but is even under the obligation to do so; nor is it that his works possess the character of contributions to Christian apologetics, a mission which is implied in the duties of the Boden professorship held by him: it is that he narrows Christianity to the dogmatic conception of the Anglican church creeds, and establishes on this ground distinctions which, if tenable, will not, as Sir Monier believes, lift Christianity above Buddhism, but, on the contrary, would give the first place to Buddhism and annul all the claims that Christianity may make to catholicity.

Professor Williams openly states that he has "depicted Buddhism from the standpoint of a believer in Christianity" (p. ix), and when delivering in 1888 his Duff-Lectures which form the nucleus of his book on Buddhism, he expressed his "deep sense of the responsibility which the writing of these Lectures had laid upon him and his earnest desire that they may by their usefulness prove in some degree worthy of the great missionary whose name they bear."<sup>1</sup> Even the title of the book announces that Buddhism is treated "in its contrast with Christianity."

After these statements we are prepared for an *ex*

*parte* exposition of Buddha's doctrines which, however, considering the antagonistic attitude of Sir Monier Monier-Williams is as just and fair as can be expected. The book is valuable on account of its author's unquestionable ability in selecting and marshalling his materials in a masterly way, but it is marred by repeated attempts to belittle Buddha, "who," Sir Monier says, "if not worthy to be called the 'Light of Asia,' and certainly unworthy of comparison with the 'Light of the World,' was at least one of the world's most successful teachers." In spite of Buddha's alleged unworthiness to be compared with Christ, Sir Monier compares the two constantly; he does so in spite of himself, and all Christians do so and cannot help doing so, because the comparison forces itself upon every one who familiarises himself with the lives of these two greatest religious leaders of mankind.

Professor Williams is undoubtedly anxious to be just toward Buddha, but we cannot help taking him to task for a certain animosity which is shown in occasional distortions of the accounts of Buddha's life and doctrines. Thus he says, when Buddha preached to his disciples, his sermon "was addressed to monks," while "that of Christ was addressed not to monks but to suffering sinners" (p. 44), as if the disciples of Christ were not in the same predicament as the monks that followed Buddha; for Christ's disciples, too, had forsaken their homes in order to devote themselves exclusively to the salvation of their souls. The term "monk" smacks of a Roman Catholic institution that has become odious in Protestant countries. On the other hand, the word "sinner" expresses a self-humiliation popular in certain Christian circles only, but offensive to those who believe in the dignity of man. Albeit, whether monks or sinners, both the disciples of Buddha and Christ were salvation-seeking men.

An actual misrepresentation, prompted by an unconscious disdain for Buddha, lies in the following passage:

"The story is that Gautama died from eating too much pork (or dried boar's flesh). As this is somewhat derogatory to his dignity it is not likely to have been fabricated. A fabrication, too, would scarcely make him guilty of the inconsistency of saying 'Kill no living thing,' and yet setting an example of eating flesh-meat."

<sup>1</sup>Quoted literally, only changing "me" into "him."

The fact is, that according to the common and probably reliable tradition, Buddha's last meal consisted in dried boar's meat and rice given him by the smith Chunda of Pava; and we must not forget the advanced age of the great Shakyamuni, whose life at the time of his death was four score years. I have been unable to discover any report which states that Buddha ate "too much," but there are reports stating that the meat was not fit to eat. Whatever the condition of the meat may have been, it is certain that while the great majority of Buddhists abstain from meat, Buddha taught that salvation could not be obtained by abstinence from meat alone but by purity of heart. Professor Williams probably remembers the Amagandha-sutta which sets forth that evil habits, wicked deeds, and impure thoughts defile a man, but *not the eating of flesh*—a declaration seven times emphasised in the refrain of the verses 4-10.

Accordingly, there is no inconsistency in Buddha's eating meat, yet as to the statement that Buddha ate "too much," we can only say that it is an unjustifiable accusation which we confidently hope Professor Williams will expunge from eventual future editions of his book. Buddha probably often enough ate disgusting food on his wanderings through the country of Magadha, for he was not always the guest of kings, but more often a recipient of the hospitality of poor villagers—a fact which is not only in itself probable, but is actually mentioned in various Chinese accounts of Buddha's life, as, for instance, in the Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King. Considering the hot climate of India, too, it is not improbable, that the meat Buddha ate for his last meal was tainted. Such in fact is the report of the Mahaparinibbāna Sutta IV., 19, where we read:

"Now the Blessed One addressed Chunda, the worker in metals, and said: 'Whatever dried boar's flesh, Chunda, is left over to thee, that bury in a hole. I see no one, Chunda, on earth nor in Māra's domain, nor in the Brahma's heaven, no one among Samanas and Brāhmanas, among gods and men, by whom, when he has eaten it, that food can be assimilated, save by the Tathāgata.'

"'Even so, Lord!' said Chunda, the worker in metals, in assent, to the Blessed One. And whatever dried boar's flesh remained over, that he buried in a hole."

In the face of death, and suffering from the pains of the consequence of his last meal, Buddha reveals a nobility of character, which shows that he was not only great, but also amiable. When Buddha felt that his end drew near, he said:

"Now it may happen, Ānanda, that some one should stir up remorse in Chunda, the smith, by saying, 'This is evil to thee, Chunda, and loss to thee in that when the Tathāgata had eaten his last meal from thy provision, then he died.' Any such remorse, Ānanda, in Chunda, the smith, should be checked by saying, 'This is good to thee, Chunda, and gain to thee, in that when the Tathāgata had eaten his last meal from thy provision, then he died. . . . There has been laid up by Chunda, the smith, a karma

redounding to length of life, redounding to good birth, redounding to good fortune, redounding to good fame, redounding to the inheritance of heaven, and of sovereign power.' In this way, Ānanda, should be checked any remorse in Chunda, the smith."

While Buddha rejected the idea of obtaining salvation through abstinence from flesh food, he certainly did not encourage the slaughter of animals for the sake of making food of them. Thus a great number of Buddhists abstain from eating fish and meat; but there are some Buddhists (I refer, for instance, to the Shin-Shiu, the largest sect of Japan) who do eat fish and flesh, and they are recognised as good Buddhists as much as Lutherans may be called good Christians.

There is no need of picking out all the passages in Sir Monier Monier-Williams's book on Buddhism which appear to be dictated by a partisan spirit favoring a dogmatic conception of Christianity and apt to prove offensive to the followers of Buddha. I shall, therefore, limit my critical remarks to the last chapter of the book, entitled "Buddhism, contrasted with Christianity" (pp. 337-563).

Professor Williams says: "Christianity is a religion, whereas Buddhism, at least in its earliest and truest form, is no religion at all." And why not? Because

"A religion, in the proper sense of the word, must postulate the existence of one living and true God of infinite power, wisdom, and love, the Creator, Designer, and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. It must also take for granted the immortality of man's soul or spirit. . . . Starting from these assumptions, it must satisfy four requisites: (1) it must reveal the Creator, (2) it must reveal man to himself, (3) it must reveal some method by which the finite creature may communicate with the infinite Creator, (4) it must prove its title to be called a religion by its regenerating effect on man's nature."

We must add that Professor Williams apparently understands by God and soul the traditional conceptions of dogmatic Christianity; and his faith in God and soul is a mere "postulate," for in the realm of experience no trace can be found of either. Thus our knowledge of both must be attributed to a special and supernatural revelation. The word "reveal" in the passage quoted is intended to be understood in the narrow sense, as opposed to the revelations of the senses and of science.

What a poor comfort is the belief in a postulated and specially revealed God! A postulated God is distant and hidden—even to the sages of the most enlightened pagans. We are informed that what they, the "unaided," know of noble and elevating truths is a mere natural product of their investigation; it is at best what any scientist can discover by the usual methods of scientific inquiry. Their God, it appears, can only be the God of the Religion of Science, who is the divinity of existence, the eternal condition of man's rationality, the standard of all truth, and the authority

of right and justice; but not a metaphysical ego-deity whose existence can only be known by an act of special revelation.

We must add that, in our opinion, the God of dogmatism is not the God of the Israelitic prophets, nor of Paul, nor of Christ. The founders of Christianity were as broad as Socrates, as Lao-tsz', and even as Buddha—though Buddha was the broadest of all. They proclaimed no *Quicunque*; the condition of salvation which they held out to the poor in spirit resembled closely the Dharma of Buddha, but not the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, nor the confession of faith of any other Christian church. It would take too much space to reprint any one of them, be it the Augustana of the Lutherans, or the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopalians, or the Westminster Confession, or the decrees of the Tridentinum, or a papal bull, perhaps the famous bull of Innocence VIII., issued in 1484, which brought the terrors of the witch persecutions down on Europe.<sup>1</sup>

There is none of these but contains the most irrational and even barbarous and immoral propositions proclaimed in the name of God and professing to be the true and orthodox interpretation of God's revelation. Compare any one with Buddha's Dharma, which is briefly condensed in the famous stanza:

"To abandon all wrong-doing,  
To lead a virtuous life  
And cleanse one's heart.  
That is the religion of all Buddhas."

Buddha's religion is very much like that of Christ, but it differs greatly from the Christianity of Christian dogmatism. Christ requests men to have *faith* (i. e., Hebrew *amunah*, firmness of character, or Greek *πίστις*, faithfulness or fidelity), which is a moral quality implying steadfast confidence; the churches demand *belief*, i. e. taking something for granted. We cannot live without faith, but we can very well exist without belief, for we can be faithful in the performance of our duties, the correctness of which we may be able to know and understand. In fact, whenever belief is necessary, it plays a mere temporary part, for we must strive with might and main to replace it by knowledge.

Measured by the standard of Professor Williams's religious ideal, (which, being the Christianity of belief, not of faith, starts, as he expressly states it, from "assumptions," and is based upon a "taking for granted,") Buddhism is no religion at all. For, says he of Buddhism:

"It failed to satisfy these conditions. It refused to admit the existence of a personal Creator, or of man's dependence on a higher Power. It denied any eternal soul or Ego in man. It acknowledged no external, supernatural revelation. It had no priesthood—no real clergy; no real prayer; no real worship. It had no true idea of sin, or of the need of pardon, and it con-

demned man to suffer the consequences of his own sinful acts without hope of help from any Saviour or Redeemer, and indeed from any being but himself."

Now, as I understand Buddhism, all these drawbacks are its greatest glory; and if there is any truth in Christianity, Christianity also must possess these very same features.

Professor Williams says on page 14:

"Buddhism—with no God higher than the perfect man—has no pretensions to be called a religion in the true sense of the word."

Remember that Christ was crucified on the charge of blasphemy. If the dogmas of Christianity have any meaning at all, they proclaim this central truth of all genuine religion, that the Deity is revealed in humanity; God is nothing more nor less than those eternal conditions of being which beget man—i. e., the rational and morally aspiring being. Christ is God's equal. God is the Father, Christ is the Son; and the Son and the Father are one. In a word, the significance of Christianity is that God reveals himself in the perfect man. The ideal of human perfection is identical with true divinity.

Buddhism developed the idea of Amitábha Buddha, personifying in him the omnipresent conditions of enlightenment. There is no God higher than Buddha, and there is nothing greater in God than that which produces the ideal of a perfect man.

But Buddhism denies the existence of "a soul or ego." Very well! Did Christ ever teach that the soul of man is his ego? If the belief in an ego-soul were one of the essential ingredients of "a religion in the proper sense of the word," Christ should have enlightened us about it. He did nothing of the kind, and this being so, we must begin seriously to doubt whether Christ ever taught a religion in the proper sense of the word. Indeed if Buddha's doctrine of the soul is nihilistic and pessimistic, we must say the same of St. Paul, for he declares that he himself has been crucified with Christ, and that not he himself, i. e., Paul, liveth, but Christ liveth in him.

As to prayer we can only say that Christ did his best to abolish "real prayer," (that is, prayer in the sense of begging) by instituting for it the Lord's prayer, which is no prayer in the proper sense of the word. Christ said: "When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; . . . when ye pray use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, . . . your father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." The Lord's prayer, accordingly, is a prayer which contains no prayers whatever; the fourth supplication, "give us this day our daily bread," appears as a request, but considered in the context of the whole Sermon on the Mount, we find that Christ emphasises the word "this day," which must be interpreted as noth-

<sup>1</sup>The bull is known by its initial words: "*Summis desiderantes affectibus*,"

ing else than the injunction "Take no thought for the morrow!"

The same is true of the fifth supplication, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." The burden of these words lies in the clause introduced by "as," which again is no prayer, but contains a vow.

The Lord's prayer is not so much addressed to God who "knoweth what things we have need of," but to the person who wants to pray. It is no begging, but a self-discipline. It satisfies a craving which is natural in weak-hearted persons, in adult children, but unworthy of a man. In the form of a prayer, the Lord's prayer abolishes "real prayer." It teaches man no longer to pray, or to attempt to change the will of God, but to change the will of the praying person, by saying "not my will but God's will must be done." "Real prayer" is a heathenish notion implicating the heart in hypocrisy.

If there is any philosopher of weight who can be called Christian it is Kant. Educated by pious parents, and himself deeply religious, he preserved of the faith of his childhood as much as possible; and hear what he says about prayer:

"To expect of prayer other than natural effects is foolish and needs no explicit refutation. We can only ask, Is not prayer to be retained for the sake of its natural effects? Among the natural effects we count that the dark and confused ideas present in the soul are either clarified through prayer, or that they receive a higher degree of intensity; that the motives of a virtue receive greater efficacy, etc., etc.

"We have to say that prayer can, for the reasons adduced, be recommended only subjectively, for he who can in another way attain to the effects for which prayer is recommended will not be in need of it.

"A man may think, 'If I pray to God, it can hurt me in no wise; for should he not exist, very well! in that case I have done too much of a good thing; but if he does exist, it will help me.' This *Proserpina* (face-making) is hypocrisy, for we have to presuppose in prayer that he who prays is firmly convinced that God exists.

"The consequence of this is that he who has made great moral progress ceases to pray, for honesty is one of his principal maxims. And further, that those whom one surprises in prayer are ashamed of themselves.

"In public sermons before the public, prayer must be retained, because it can be rhetorically of great effect, and can make a great impression. Moreover, in sermons before the people one has to appeal to their sensuality, and must, as much as possible, stoop down to them."

The Buddhist prayer is of the same nature as the Lord's prayer, in the sense in which we conceive it and as Kant would have interpreted its purport. It is no longer a prayer in the proper sense of the word; it is a vow. Like the Lord's prayer, the Buddhist vows teach men to take refuge in religion, and that is more than any "real prayer" can ask or do for us.

Professor Williams says (p. 544), "the main idea implied by Buddhism is intellectual enlightenment."

With all deference to Professor Williams's knowledge of the significance of Buddhist doctrines, we must beg him to omit the word "intellectual." Buddha's idea of "enlightenment" (in contradistinction to Christian dogmatism) certainly includes "intellectual enlightenment," but it is first and last and mainly an enlightenment of the heart.

Professor Williams says:

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

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

Here we have a new Christology and a new Christian dogma which demands Christians "almost to deify the human body." The passage to which Professor Williams refers (I. Cor. vi., 15-20) cannot be interpreted in the sense that Christians "are members of Christ's body—of His flesh and of His bones." For in that very passage we read:

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

Further says Paul:

"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." (Rom. vii., 24.)

The New Testament treats the body as forfeited to death; and there is certainly truth in this view, although it has been wrongly interpreted in Christian asceticism and monk morality. As to Buddha, it is well known that while he did not seek the pleasures of the body, he spurned asceticism as a wrong method of seeking salvation. Whenever Buddhists retained mortifications they did so in violation of the most unequivocal injunctions and of the historically best assured traditions of Buddha's Dharma. As to "the Body of Buddha," Professor Williams overlooks here the well-known Buddhist doctrine that Buddha's body is the Dharma. When Buddha died, his bodily life was dissolved into non-existence, but not his doctrine. His individuality was gone, but not the enlightenment of his Buddhahood. We read in "The Book of the Great Decease" (Chap. VI., 1):

"Now the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda, and said: 'It may be, Ānanda, that in some of you the thought may arise, "The word of the Master is ended, we have no teacher more!" But it is not thus, Ānanda, that you should regard it. The truths and the rules of the order which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher to you.'"

Further Professor Williams says:

"The Buddha had no idea of sin as an offence against God

(p. 546). Nor did the Buddha ever claim to be a deliverer from guilt, a purger from the taints of past pollution. . . . On the contrary, by his doctrine of Karma he bound a man hand and foot to the inevitable consequences of his own evil actions with chains of adamant. He said, in effect, to every one of his disciples, 'You are in slavery to a tyrant of your own setting up; your own deeds, words, and thoughts in your present and former states of being, are your own avengers through a countless series of existences.'

"If you have been a murderer, a thief, a liar, impure, a drunkard, you must pay the penalty in your next birth . . . your doom is sealed. Not in the heavens, O man, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place where thou canst escape the force of thine own evil actions. Thy only hope of salvation is in thyself. Neither god nor man can save thee, and I am wholly powerless to set thee free."

Buddha teaches that the evil consequences of error, sin, and wrongdoing cannot be escaped; but the passage to which Professor Williams refers is incomplete without its counter-truth, that good deeds, too, will not fail to bear good fruits. Buddha teaches:

"As the welcome of kinsfolk and friends awaits him who has been abroad and is now returning in safety: so the fruits of his good works greet the man who has walked in the path of righteousness when he passes over from the present life into the hereafter."

To quote the one without the other would be the same as if some one cited from the New Testament the words, "He who does not believe shall be damned," and forgets to add the counter proposition, "He who believes shall be saved."

In Professor Williams's opinion, Christianity is superior to Buddhism, because it is said actually to relieve the believer from the consequences of sin. He continues:

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

Buddha would never have said, "the spirit of the Lord is upon me," (which is a peculiarly Hebrew expression,) and it is very improbable that Christ would ever have thought of saying anything like it. As to the substance of this proclamation, Professor Williams will be aware that both Buddha and Christ promised to give liberty to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, and the faculty of comprehension to the deaf.

Professor Williams sums up:

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

Captain C. Pfoundes, a resident of Japan, who has made a study of Japanese Buddhism, says on the sub-

ject of the doctrine of atonement, viewing it from a purely practical standpoint:

"It is all too true, and more the pity it is that it is so, that the converts (nominal) to Christianity are largely natives whose conduct is such that by the general opinion of foreign residents such converts are not the most desirable class to employ. The true Buddhist has ever in mind the fear of punishment hereafter for misdeeds, not to be lightly atoned for. 'The naughty little boy who is always ready to say he 'is sorry,' if he is assured that this will obtain forgiveness,' has no counterpart in true Buddhism; and the too easily purchased pardon of Christian mission teaching is viewed as a danger, from the ethical standpoint, by the educated and intelligent Asiatic."

If the essence of Christianity consists in the hope of an entire washing away of every guilty stain and getting rid of the consequences of our evil deeds, we can only hope that the civilized nations of mankind will abandon Christianity. Buddha's doctrine is certainly grander and, what is more, truer than this hollow doctrine of a salvation of the guilty by the death of the innocent. Buddha, when speaking of sacrifices, rejected the idea that blood can wash away sins, and when he regarded himself as the saviour of man, he meant that he was their teacher. He claimed to have pointed out the way of salvation and to have removed the cataract from the eyes of the blind, but he expects every one of his followers to exert himself when walking on the path.

A man converted from sin is saved in the sense that henceforth he will walk in the right direction; his character is changed; he turns over a new leaf, but he cannot annihilate the past and the consequences of his former karma.

The dogma of the vicarious atonement through Christ's death is a survival of the age of barbarism; for it is based upon the savage's idea of religion which represents God as an Apache chieftain who, when offended, thirsts for the death of somebody and must be pacified with blood.

He who believes it necessary to "postulate" the existence of a metaphysical *âtman*-God in addition to the real God, whose presence appears in the facts of experience, and of a *purusha*-soul in addition to the psychic realities of our life, will naturally regard the extinction of the illusion of "the thought '*I am*,'" (i. e., the error of the existence of an individual *ego*-self) and of an individual God-being, as dreary nihilism and "morbid pessimism." Professor Williams says:

"What is Buddhism? If it were possible to reply to the inquiry in one word, one might perhaps say that true Buddhism, theoretically stated, is Humanitarianism, meaning by that term something very like the gospel of humanity preached by the Positivist, whose doctrine is the elevation of man through man—that is, through human intellects, human intuitions, human teaching, human experiences, and accumulated human efforts—to the highest ideal of perfection; and yet something very different. For the Buddhist ideal differs *toto caelo* from the Positivist's, and consists

in the renunciation of all personal existence, even to the extinction of humanity itself. The Buddhist's perfection is destruction."

The Buddhist perfection consists in the complete surrender of the illusion of an ego-self; and Professor Williams meant to say that the Buddhist's perfection should, from his standpoint of a believer in an ego-self, be regarded as tantamount to destruction; for he knows very well, and happily says it too, that it is not so. But so little does Professor Williams understand the positivism of Buddha's doctrine, that he regards Buddha as inconsistent, because, instead of proclaiming the ideal of destruction, or surrendering himself to quietism, Buddha rouses himself and his followers to energetic work and sympathetic usefulness.

Professor Williams says:

"In fact it was characteristic of a supreme Buddha that he should belie, by his own activity and compassionate feelings, the utter apathy and indifference to which his own doctrines logically led."

According to my comprehension of Buddhism, Buddha need not in his ethics belie his own doctrines; for his ethics are an immediate consequence of his doctrines. Should not Professor Williams first suspect his conception of Buddhism, before he imputes to so profound and clear a thinker, as Buddha unquestionably was, a gross inconsistency on the main issues of his religion?

A few days ago I received a booklet entitled *Happiness* which is a comparison of Christianity with Buddhism from a Buddhist standpoint. It is ostensibly written by a Buddhist who presents a friend and co-religionist with the impressions he receives during a sojourn in England. In spite of its crude make-up the booklet is cleverly designed and makes some good points which are decided hits on a literal belief in dogmatic Christianity. Salvation is defined by this Buddhist author as "The destruction of ego or of the misery of existence." He adds: "I find that they [the Christians] always think we mean the destruction of existence itself and not of the misery." Concerning the Christian idea of salvation he says: "They imagine they go to their heaven, ego and all; throwing their blackest sins on the shoulders of their God."

The Buddhist and Christian conceptions of religion are contrasted as follows:

"Ours. Destruction of *Ego* by knowledge, gratitude, and love; the practice of which is intense happiness.

"Theirs is more the worship of *God*, chiefly for the forgiveness of sin, as if such forgiveness were possible, without suffering; whilst ours is the destruction of the evil itself."

When speaking about the doctrine of atonement, our Buddhist author says:

"This strange idea arises I think from their notion of a despotic and capricious *God*, who forgives or condemns in a moment without reason, yet, at the same time, with this unmerciful *God*

there is no forgiveness—the debt of sin must be paid with innocent blood, though it involve the sacrifice of his own innocent son."

Several paragraphs are devoted to prayer which with Buddhists is "contemplation and self-examination." Speaking of the Lord's prayer our Buddhist critic says:

"You would think Him [the God of the Christians] an incompetent being, when they set Him a good example—'Forgive us . . . as we forgive.' But if He followed their example He would rarely forgive them.

"Again, you would say they were praying to some evil spirit, when they beg him not to lead them into temptation."

The Buddhist and Christian conceptions of Hell are tersely condensed in these statements:

"Ours. The effect of obedience to *Ego*, here and hereafter, while it lasts.

"Their *Hell* is like their *Heaven*, a place—not a state—where the identical earthly bodies of nearly all humanity will be tormented in actual fire for ever; to no purpose, except to satisfy the vindictiveness of their Creator, whom they call the 'God of Love.

"They do not see that it is the *Ego* that tortures, and not *God*; that he cannot torture, and has no *Hell*."

These quotations show how easily a religion is misrepresented, but we are sorry to say that the great mass of Christians justify the above criticism by actually believing in the letter of their dogmas. We trust that there is a nobler Christianity than Christian dogmatism, but Sir Monier Monier-Williams regards the belief in the atonement of sin by the innocent blood of Christ, the efficacy of real prayer, the reality of an ego-soul, and the existence of a personal and miracle-working God-Creator, as the essence of Christianity.

In a summary of his comparison of Christianity with Buddhism, Professor Williams says:

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

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

"Yes, I grant this: nay, I grant even more than this. I admit that Buddhism conferred many other benefits on the millions inhabiting the most populous part of Asia. It introduced education and culture; it encouraged literature and art; it promoted physical, moral, and intellectual progress up to a certain point; it

proclaimed peace, good-will, and brotherhood among men; it deprecated war between nation and nation; it avowed sympathy with social liberty and freedom; it gave back much independence to women; it preached purity in thought, word, and deed (though only for the accumulation of merit); it taught self-denial without self-torture; it inculcated generosity, charity, tolerance, love, self-sacrifice, and benevolence, even towards the inferior animals; it advocated respect for life and compassion towards all creatures; it forbade avarice and the hoarding of money; and from its declaration that a man's future depended on his present acts and condition, it did good service for a time in preventing stagnation, stimulating exertion, promoting good works of all kinds, and elevating the character of humanity."

If Professor Williams's conception of Christianity must be accepted as true Christianity, Christianity will pass away to make room for Buddhism. Happily, Christianity is a living religion, that, having passed through the stage of metaphysical dogmatism, is still possessed of the power of regeneration, so as to approach more and more—though progress is sometimes slow—the ideal of a genuine catholicity. Those features which Professor Williams regards as the essential grandeur of Christianity, are a most serious defect; and their absence in Buddhism indicates that it is the more advanced religion. That religion only which has overcome the pagan notions of a special revelation, of atonement through blood, of wiping out the past, of the miraculous power of prayer, of the ego-consciousness as a kind of thing-in-itself, and of a creation out of nothing by a God-magician, can eventually become the religion of mankind.

For myself, I must confess that I never felt more like a true Buddhist than after a perusal of Professor Williams's description of Buddhism; for I am now more firmly convinced than ever, that our Church-Christianity can only become a scientifically true and logically sound religion of cosmic and universal significance, by being transformed into that Buddhism which Professor Williams refuses to regard "as a religion in the proper sense of the word."

Did you never read in the Scriptures, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner"? P. C.

#### GERALD MASSEY.

BY AMOS WATERS.

THE proverbial ingratitude of democracies, allied to the jealousies of the literary mutual-admiration society against eminent "outsiders," has been vividly illustrated in the later years of Gerald Massey, poet, Egyptologist, Shakespearean philosopher, and evangelist of the Higher Spiritualism. Hither and thither for Tennyson's successor the critics have cast, log-rollers have advertised their superior article, minor bards have self-consciously assisted the chorus of discussion with tongue-in-cheek: a serene conspiracy of silence has, all the while, concealed the very existence of Massey from court and people. To adopt the oblique sneer of Rudyard Kipling, Massey "does not advertise." Yet many of a former generation held his singing-voice as the sweetest in the land. Some observant ones held that the right of re-

version belonged, by way of separation, to Massey when Tennyson should resign his crown. The charge of plagiarism always singularly irritated the late Laureate. Yet, years before Tennyson penned three of his more famous war-songs—"The Revenge," "The Defence of Lucknow," and "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade," Massey conceived and published "Sir Richard Grenville's Last Fight," "The Relief," and "Scarlett's Three Hundred." The unique coincidence of lilt and imagery convict the laggard, if more eminent minstrel, of "lifting" from the more obscure and original bard.

Gerald Massey was one of the pioneers of Chartism over fifty years backward, a colleague of the late General Trumbull whose pen embellished the pages of *The Open Court*, and of George Julian Harney, now of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. Apart from his poems *My Lyrical Life*,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Massey is esteemed for his *Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*,<sup>2</sup> a brilliant plea against the revolting "autobiographical theory" of the sonnets, and a noble vindication of elevated drama against neurotic analysis. This "labor of love" is monumental in scheme and scope. His muse is universal, reaching all heads; his interpretation of Shakespeare appeals to cultured students. Yet his massive claim to be counted on the roll of heroic speculators is unquestionable, when we consider his contributions to the profounder aspects and results of evolution. In four mighty volumes,<sup>3</sup> he writes as "an evolutionist for evolutionists" an attempt to recover and reconstitute the missing origins of myth and mystery, type and symbol, religion and language. In Africa he finds the birthplace, in Egypt the mouthpiece. He battles for evolution with original and aboriginal evidence rescued, whether truth or illusion, as audacious divers rescue portents from the perilous depths of mysterious seas. Herr Pietschmann with some truth said the *Book of the Beginnings* was "inspired by an unrestrained thirst for discovery"; a judgment which may suggest itself to all who weigh the stupendous mass of evidence accumulated by the author, during the dozen years of labor when, like Livingstone, he disappeared from public gaze.

Roughly outlined, Mr. Massey's contentions are that the black race is first and emerged in Africa, swarming thence into Egypt, this exodus being the precursor of language, religion, literature, and civilisation. He is not content as Captain Burton said, to allow the Sanskrit edifice to fall by its own weight but rides at it lance at rest. Every name, tradition, symbol, observance, is ingeniously traced to Egyptian origin. Occasionally conclusions are historically startling—such, for example, as the identification of the Arsu ruling in the anarchic interval preceding the reign of Seli-Nekht with Moses. His key of Kamite typology is applied to type-names of places, rivers, caves, and hills in Britain, to demonstrate that the most ancient of these names are not Aryan nor Semite but are still extant in Africa. Root-words run through all languages, which points to unity of origin. The types and symbols preceding languages yet remain and the words they represent are held as valuable in evidence as archaic coins. This method is enlarged into such all-embracing conclusions, as that the true subject-matter of various scriptures is astronomical mythology converted—or perverted—into human history. Mythology is the mirror of prehistoric sociology, which reflects the minutest details of origins: the signs of gesture-language and typical figures, these becoming sacred in the course of time and passing into the fetichistic phase. In Mr. Massey's profound interpretation phallic foundations are disclosed with a curious and simple necessity, which subdues the "grin of the satyr in Greece, or the libidinous leer of the subject in its Italian phase." The final applica-

<sup>1</sup>Two volumes, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.

<sup>2</sup>Same publishers.

<sup>3</sup>*Book of Beginnings and The Natural Genesis*. Williams & Norgate, publishers.

tion of the whole method to the creed of Christendom concludes one of the most remarkable departures of modern speculation.

In *Ten Lectures*,<sup>1</sup> now widely circulating, MR. MASSEY in such subjects as "Lunilatry Ancient and Modern," and "Man in Search of His Soul During Fifty Thousand Years, and How He Found It," popularly reviews certain results of his researches and colors such results with ethics and humanitarian sentiments. The spiritualism that dawns on many pages is not the vulgar cult of the hired medium, but the affirmation of eternal soul against shallow and now discarded materialism. These lectures, when verbally delivered, attracted cultured audiences in America, Australia, and England.

### THE UNKNOWN GOD.

BY WILHELMINE DARROW.

"I found an altar with this inscription:  
'To the unknown God.'"

Know ye not Him,—the Unknown God,  
To whom ye altars raise?  
Know ye not Him?—every phase  
Of life is attribute to Him.  
His temples are the forests dim,  
And blossoming verdure of the sod.

Know ye not Him, whose vestures flame the sky  
In glory of the sunset's glow?  
'Mid the shining heights of Alpine snow  
His covenant, "the everlasting hills,"  
Deep-voiced with many rills,  
All Him proclaim,—the Priest most high.

Know ye not Him? His Written Word  
To read, nor scribe nor cabala  
From first to last of nature's law.  
Who builds his faith, 'tis of his need,  
But outward upward from that need  
By growth of soul he shall know God.

So many lives the martyr's path have trod,  
So many lives uncircumscribed by creeds,  
Who hold the burden of another's needs,  
Who Christlike bear for truth the cross,  
For honor's sake dare suffer loss,—  
These souls somewhere, some time, shall know their God.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### THE "DOITCHER'S" PURITANISM.

To the Editor of *The Open Court*:

Hardly any experiment is more hopeless than to tempt me to enter an *ex parte*, prejudiced court for instruction or justice. This last specimen number, for instance, has the Doitcher's view of puritanism, as you might catch it in a beer-garden, and goes on to flout the early settlers of the country as if it were the commonest certainty that other folk at that remote day were generally better informed and better behaved than they. *The New York Nation* seems to me a preferable Court. J. Nelson Trask.  
*New Salem, Mass.*

[How fallacious we mortals are! The article referred to by our correspondent is written by Dr. Felix Oswald, one of the most zealous advocates of total abstinence in the world!—En.]

<sup>1</sup>Watts & Co., publishers.

### BOOK REVIEWS.

SECHS GESÄNGE AUS DANTE'S GÖTTLICHER KOMÖDIE. Deutsch und eingeleitet mit einem Versuch über die Anwendung der Alliteration bei Dante. By B. Carneri. Wien: Carl Koenigen. 1896.

Mr. B. Carneri, the well-known author of books on evolution and the ethical aspect of evolution, one of those few great pioneers of progress who hailed Darwin and understood the import of his teachings before he was recognised by the world at large, presents us with a booklet containing six cantos of Dante's *Divina Comedia* translated into German and calling attention for the first time to the wonderful use which Dante made of alliteration. The frequency of the instances quoted by Carneri in his Preface, prove his theory beyond a doubt, and it shows at the same time the mastership of Dante, who was very far from playing with alliteration, but used it only as an enforcement to give additional strength to rhyme when emphasising certain ideas.

As to the translation of six of the most beautiful cantos (V., XV., XIX., XXIII., VI., XVII.) we have to say that they will be welcome to many who can appreciate the delicate sense of beauty of the translator. No doubt there are several very good and complete German translations. But Mr. Carneri has done his work with much love and has been successful in avoiding all harsh sounds and hiatuses. His booklet is a good introduction to those who know little or nothing about Dante's *Divina Comedia*, and it will be considered by those who know Dante a valuable contribution to Dante-lore.

P. C.

### NOTES.

Messrs. Henry Holt & Co. have decided to publish an English translation of Guyau's *Irreligion of the Future*.

## THE OPEN COURT

"THE MONON," 324 DEARBORN STREET.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, Post Office Drawer F.

E. C. HEGELER, PUBLISHER.

DR. PAUL CARUS, EDITOR.

TERMS THROUGHOUT THE POSTAL UNION:  
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