

There are certain striking resemblances between Buddhism and Christianity, especially in the Roman Catholic aspect of the latter, which prepare the way, in a sense, for the acceptance of the Gospel. Primitive Buddhism had and could procure no cheer, only austerities, and at last annihilation. Reformed Buddhism worships one Buddha, to the exclusion of all others. This Buddha bears the title of Amita, the Boundless, or Nirvana. The worshipper renounces all personal merit, and puts faith in nothing but the mercy of Amita. The soul is brought into a state of salvation by the act of faith. Though salvation is thenceforward assured, the delivered does not abandon the conflict; but growth in holiness is the result, not the cause of salvation.

It will thus be seen that God, who does not leave Himself without a witness among men, has sent Guatama His light and so taught an infinitely purer and loftier faith than the abhorrent paganism of India, with its worship of thirty millions of gods, many of them incarnations of all that is loathsome and vile. To Guatama, as to Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and many another earnest seeker after truth, God has vouchsafed a measure of His spirit. The yearning soul,

Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touched God's right hand in the darkness,
And was lifted up to strength.

Some of the Buddhist priests have shown much kindness to the missionaries; others of them are bigoted, jealous and obstructive.

Many of the Buddhist priests retire to caves or huts, where they shut themselves up in solitary confinement. The place is sometimes sealed by numerous strips of paper, on which is written the day when the hermit entered upon his lonely life. Only a little hole is left in the cell through which food is passed. Here the hermit stays for years, keeping a taper lighted before his shrine, and repeating prayers until he becomes dull and stupid. The merit which he is supposed to gain by this self-denying process, it is thought may be made over to another person, and so rich men who do not wish to endure the long confinement hire some one to do it for them.

In practice no doubt many corruptions sprang in and many shortcomings were apparent. Many superstitions were engrafted upon this purer faith, and many millions of its dark devotees are without God and without hope in the world. The worship of Buddha's tooth can bring no comfort to a heart burdened with a sense of guilt and sin. The beautiful offerings of flowers and fruits are certainly far superior to the cruel torture of the Indian fakir, and Buddhism, we conceive is a divine preparation of the purer Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

ONCE to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right;
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

—Lowell.