

anity. Let us for a moment, with all reverence, place Buddhism and Christianity in the crucible together. It is often said that Buddha's discourses abound in moral precepts, almost identical with those of Christ. Be it so; but in fairness let us take a portion of Buddha's first sermon, which contains the cream of his doctrine. I should like to give it to you from the translation which has just come out at Oxford. The Buddha, who is said to be second only to Christ, made use of words to the following effect:—'Birth is suffering. Decay is suffering. Illness is suffering. Death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate is suffering. Separation from objects we love is suffering. Not to obtain what we desire is suffering. Clinging to existence is suffering. Complete cessation of thirst or craving for existence is cessation of suffering; and the eight-fold path which leads to cessation of suffering is right belief, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right means of livelihood, right endeavour, right memory, right meditation. This is the noble truth of suffering.' And now, with all reverence, I turn, on the other hand, to the first gracious words which proceeded from the mouth of the Founder of Christianity, as given by St. Luke: '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 heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' In contrasting these first utterances of two Eastern teachers, one of whom we Christians believe to be Divine, I ask, What is there of hope for poor suffering humanity in the first utterance of Buddha? Is it not more like a death-knell than a voice proclaiming good tidings of great joy to poor suffering sinners? And here I seem to hear some learned Orientalist—perhaps there are some present at this meeting—remark, 'Of course it was impossible for Buddha to speak of the Spirit of the Lord, when he denied the existence of all spirit, human or divine; when he denied any being higher than himself, the perfect man; but assuredly it must be admitted that Buddha preached his gospel to the poor?' Well, bear with me for a little longer, while I point out a few other contrasts, showing how vast is the gulf which separates the gospel of Buddha from the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I feel I am compelled to speak out on this occasion, even as I spoke out recently at Oxford in contrasting the Veda of the Brahmins with our own Holy Bible; for a kind of doctrine called Neo-Buddhism is spreading, I am sorry to say, in many places, both in Europe and America, and also in India, where we hoped that Buddhism had been long extinct. This new doctrine magnifies Buddhism as if, forsooth! it were a very rational sort of creed for an intelligent man to hold in the nineteenth century. Yes, monstrous as it may seem, the Gospel of Christ our Saviour—the gospel of peace—is in some quarters becoming out of fashion, and giving place to the gospel of misery—the gospel of Buddha.

"Mark, then, two or three more contrasts which make the gulf I spoke of just now wholly impossible to be bridged over. In the gospel of Buddha we are told that the whole world lieth in suffering, as you have just heard. In the gospel of Christ the whole world lieth in wickedness. 'Glory in your sufferings; rejoice in them; make them steps towards heaven,' says the gospel of Christ. 'Away with all suffering; stamp it out, for it is the plague of humanity,' says the gospel of Buddha. 'The whole world is enslaved by sin,' says the Christian gospel; 'The whole world is enslaved by illusion,' says the Buddhist gospel. 'Sanctify your affections,' says the one; 'Suppress them utterly,' says the other. 'Cherish your body, and present it as a living sacrifice to God,' says the Christian gospel; 'Get rid of your body as the greatest of all curses,' says the Buddhist. 'We are God's workmanship,' says the Christian gospel; 'and God works in us and by us and through us.' 'We are our own workmanship,' says the gospel of Buddha, 'and no one works in us but ourselves.' Lastly, the Christian