

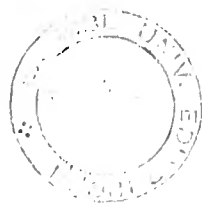
The Buddhist conception of man
in relation to the Christian conception.

A thesis submitted to the University of Edinburgh in
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

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Preface.

The origins of this thesis are not hard to trace. As a member of the Christian Community in Ceylon, one is increasingly being made aware of the fact of a "renaissance", particularly among the leaders of Buddhist thought. Buddhism in Ceylon is endeavouring to maintain the traditional Hinayana Buddhist Faith in the context of the modern world. Anyone in Ceylon, who is engaged in missionary work of a serious character, must take cognisance of this fact.

As a minister of the Reformed Church in Ceylon it is but natural that, in seeking to relate the Gospel to the contemporary Buddhist situation, I should find inspiration and help for this task within the main stream of Reformed Church Theology.

While the thesis itself is not concerned with the immediate problem of Evangelism, it has its roots in the pressure of the situation to-day. It has been undertaken in the hope that an academic statement on the Buddhist and Christian conception of man is not entirely unrelated to the needs of the contemporary scene.

It is difficult to express my debt to the many people, who have helped me in my work in one way or another. There are

some however whose names cannot be omitted.

To Dr P.D.Devanandan of the United Theological College, Bangalore, I owe a great deal, for first arousing my interest in the subject matter of Buddhism itself. Dr Nical MacNicoll provided me with useful information and guidance during the initial stages of my studies in Edinburgh. Miss I. Horner, Honorary Secretary of the Pali Text Society, very kindly provided me with information about the Pali originals and the English Translations of the Tripitaka. I am especially indebted to Bhikkhu Kassapa of Colombo, for the most valuable assistance he rendered me, by telling me where I might begin my search for Buddhist man in the pages of the Pitakas.

My indebtedness to Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr is apparent on almost every page, and to have acknowledged it in the actual text would have been to risk tedious repetition! It is with the tools of Reformed Theology, as shaped by them, that I have sought to explicate the relations between Buddhist and Christian man. Any failure in this attempt is mine, any success must be attributed to the inspiration which their work has provided.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my deep appreciation of the help I have received from Dr John Baillie and Principal Duthie, who were my patient supervisors, and who gave me most useful criticism and advice.

B.de Kretser.

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Abbreviations.

Sacred Books of the Buddhists	S.B.B.
Sacred Books of the East	S.B.E.
Pali Text Society	P.T.S.
Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics	E.R.E.
Buddhism in Translations by H.C. Warren	Warren.
The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha by J.G. Jennings	Jennings
Compendium of Philosophy	Compendium.

Introduction.

The scope of the Thesis.

My first duty must be to explain the limits within which this investigation has taken place. The title suggests that this is to be a comparative study of the Buddhist and Christian conceptions of man. But there are many types of Buddhism, even as there are different interpretations of Christianity, and the results of an attempt to state, and relate, all the various points of view on man, would have been very confusing. In any case, such an attempt, though interesting, perhaps, for the student of the Philosophy of Religion, would not serve the real purpose of this thesis.

The subject of this study is strictly confined to the task of analysing the Hīnayāna Buddhist conception of man and relating that point of view to the Christian outlook. In the general discourse, no attempt will be made to critically examine the Hinayana Scriptures. The Buddhist Tripitakas have been interpreted, and understood, in the way that Nagasena, Buddhaghosa, and all the commentators of the Theravada tradition, down the centuries, have accepted them. Comparison will be made between dogmatic Hīnayāna orthodoxy, and dogmatic Christianity. In the case of the Christian alternative, no apology will be offered for the particular tradition through which the Biblical view of man will be interpreted. The stand-point is that

of the Reformed Protestant Faith, in which Augustine, Luther, and Calvin take their place. These thinkers will be referred to in the appraisal of the Christian evaluation of human nature, in the same way that the Buddhist commentators, and their interpretations, will be used in the understanding of the text of the Tripitaka.

Several students of Comparative Religion, and of Buddhism, have contrasted the "dogmas" of Buddhism with an over-simplified version of Christianity, which no Church would accept, or else they have reduced both faiths to a few simple moral principles. Both these methods seem to fail to do justice to the two religions, for the Christian faith is not just "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man", nor is the message of Buddhism, a pure, and rational Ethicism.

The text of the Tripitakas.

This thesis is not concerned with the critical problem of the Tripitaka text. It will not try to distinguish between the Buddha and later Buddhism. Many scholars have recently tried to do this, but with doubtful success. The scientific and critical attitude of contemporary scholarship to the text of the Pali canon, is a natural and inevitable development. Earlier students, with the enthusiasm of first discoverers, tend to accept the authenticity of the text too easily. This stage in the history of the Pali text has now

come to an end. Several factors have influenced this process. The Pali Text Society has made the literature of the Pali canon available, both in the original language, and in translations. A number of other societies have sponsored similar undertakings. In addition, new Buddhist manuscripts are constantly being discovered in India, Tibet, and China. The most important factor, however, is that scholars are realizing the need to relate early Buddhism, to the background of the contemporary scene in India.

This work is of fundamental significance, although no generally accepted conclusions have emerged as yet. There are many lacunae in our knowledge of the India of Buddha's day, and the exact connection between Vedanta thought and Buddhism is still undecided.¹ But the necessity of approaching the Buddhist Religion, in the context of Hindu India, is now unquestioned. For while it is true that Hinayana orthodoxy has developed, divorced from the main stream of Hindu thought, the real historical issue is this; how much of the radical difference between Hindu and Buddhist ideology is the result of the teaching of Gotama himself, and how much of it the consequence of later Sangha thought? This is the fundamental question.

Unfortunately, the critical apparatus at the disposal of scholars for examining the Text, is exceedingly meagre. The gap in time, between the teaching of the Buddha himself, and the writing of the Pitakas,

1. See Appendices for a closer examination of this problem.

is so great, that in any case the value of such an exercise would be questionable. Consequently, every attempt that has been made to emend the text, has been conditioned by "theory". Each scholar has arrived at conclusions utterly at variance with the conclusions of other scholars, because their initial "theories", as to what original Buddhism was, have differed.

In this thesis no attempt has been made to provide yet another theory, in which True Gotama is separated from later Monk thought. It is content to accept the Hīnayāna Orthodox assessment of the Text, which assumes that the Tripitaka faithfully records the teaching of the Buddha himself. This is by far the more relevant and useful method. The Buddhism of Ceylon is still the Buddhism of the Tripitakas. The attempt to discover "another" Buddha is therefore only of academic interest. The Buddha of the Tripitakas is the Buddha who exerts a living influence on millions of men and women of to-day. It may be that in future years, when scholarship establishes final and conclusive results, the Tripitaka portrait of the Buddha will undergo radical transformation, but this has not yet happened. Nor is it a really serious possibility. The potent and vital expression of Buddhism, the one which claims to be most in conformity with the mind and intention of the Founder, and the one which receives the support of the commentators, is the Buddhism of the Theravāda Tripitakas.

Method.

All through the thesis, an attempt has been made to place the Buddhist concepts in the context of Hindu Vedanta thought. The reason for this may not be obvious. On the doctrine of man, the ideas of Hinayana Buddhism are radically different from those of the Vedanta. Apart from the Semitic tradition, this is the only complete rival evaluation of human nature, which has exercised a decisive influence on mankind.

But the relation of Hinduism to Buddhism is not only one of contrast. Metaphysically, Buddhist and Hindu man are in opposition, yet, at the same time, they have much in common. On many important and significant aspects of man's nature and destiny they are in fundamental agreement. Their common origin in the soil of India made this inevitable.

In attempting to relate the Buddhist conception of man to the Christian, it was felt that the Christian position could best be stated dialectically. There are motifs in the Hindu and Buddhist conceptions of man, which receive their true fulfilment in the Christian doctrine. Both the Hindu doctrine of "Ātman" and the Buddhist doctrine of "anatta" "feel after" the truth, which is contained in the Christian idea of man. This does not mean that the Christian conception is a "Hegelian" synthesis

of the Hindu thesis of ātman and the Buddhist antithesis of anatta. Apart from the fact that such generalizations are, almost always, over-simplifications of the situation, such a hypothesis would only be maintained on the basis of a general theory of the History of Religion, which the thesis does not try to substantiate. But it has been necessary to follow some plan in order to set out the various strands of thought in Buddhism and Christianity, in some consistent manner. And the tool of dialecticism appeared to be a suitable instrument for this purpose.

No attempt is made to prove that a real dialectical relationship exists. While such a theory might have value for those who are in search of a synthetic Philosophy of Religion, the issue does not substantially affect the main contention of the thesis. Buddhism and Christianity are integrated systems of thought, and they present radically alternative views of life. One must choose between them. They cannot both be right, although they may both be wrong! All that has been attempted here is an assessment of the two systems as they confront each other, in their theories on the nature of man, in the hope that such an encounter will, of itself, be valuable and an aid to those who search for the Truth.

The thesis covers a fairly wide area of subject matter, for two reasons. In the first place, Buddhism and Christianity have

such diverse, and contradictory, standpoints, from which they evaluate the nature of man, that it has been necessary to deal with subjects which would not normally have had any claim to serious consideration, if either of the two conceptions were being treated separately. And in the second place, these subjects have been examined only to the extent to which they are related to, or else illustrate, the Buddhist and Christian ideas of man.

Finally, as regards Method, it must be remembered that neither Buddhism nor Christianity is directly criticised. The basic assumptions of both faiths have been accepted, without comment. Where Greek/^{thought} and modern science have been cited, they are not intended to defend, but only to illustrate the argument. For instance, when the Buddhist doctrine of Becoming is compared with that of Bergson, it is not meant to suggest that Buddhism anticipated the weltanschauung of the author of Creative Evolution. The comparisons have been made only in order to help the exposition of the Buddhist and Christian teaching on the nature and destiny of man.

Revelation.

This thesis is not immediately concerned with the problem of General and Special Revelation. Yet, as the subject matter covers an area, which normally falls within the category of the Comparative

Study of Religion, some indication of the standpoint from which it is approached, is probably desirable.

The history of the attitude of Christianity to other Faiths, is a curious one. Early Christian thought oscillated between the liberalism of Clement and the conservatism of Tertullian. Thomas Aquinas is concerned with the problem in Summa Contra Gentiles. The Reformers maintained that, while the Gentiles had some knowledge of God, a saving knowledge was only to be found in Jesus Christ. More recently, the idea behind Farquhar's Crown of Hinduism was popular. Under the influence of evolutionary thought, and as a result of a closer acquaintance with other Faiths, the Church tended to take the line that Jesus Christ fulfilled other Religions somewhat in the same way as He fulfilled the Old Testament. Kraemer's "The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World", shattered this easy solution of the problem. Frick's book, "The Gospel, Christianity, and other Faiths" expresses, perhaps, most clearly the right attitude to this issue. Frick works out his theory in terms of two illustrations. He suggests that the relationship between the Gospel, Christianity, and other Religions should be regarded as a continuous and triangular one. Many scholars have wrongly assumed that Christianity and the Gospel are identical. They are not. In actual fact, the Gospel judges both Christianity, and other Religions. The process is tri-

angular, because, while the Gospel, through the medium of Christianity, judges other Religions, it also judges Christianity itself, through the medium of other Faiths. In the other analogy, Frick brings out more definitely, the nature of the difference between Christianity and other Religions. The Gospel is the centre of a circle, and all Religions, including Christianity, stand on the circumference. A single line connects the centre to the point on the circumference where Christianity is. The illustration intends to teach that, while, from the point of view of human effort, Christianity belongs, with other Religions, to the outer circle of revelational Truth, yet because of its connection with the historical revelation of God in Jesus Christ, it is unique.

This issue has not been directly raised in the argument of the thesis. Instead, an endeavour has been made to state the fundamental principles of the Buddhist and Christian doctrines of man, as objectively as possible. Buddhism and Christianity present man with total, and alternative, pictures of man's nature and destiny, and it is in terms of their total claims, that each man's individual decision regarding the two faiths, has to be made.

Limitations.

A fundamental weakness and handicap underlies even the basic presuppositions of this study. The Christian understanding of man

cannot be easily equated with the saving knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, which is the Gospel. A statement on Christian Anthropology attempts to put into words an insight into the nature of man, which comes by Revelation alone. Such speech is necessary, for it is the inevitable accompaniment of the encounter between God and man. It is also relevant speech, for all men, everywhere. Nevertheless, the distinction between Revelation which comes by faith, and the objective description of the truth of Revelation, is important, and cannot be ignored.

It is also certain that no Buddhist will accept this outline of Buddhist man, unreservedly. For non-Buddhist can stand completely within the framework of real Buddhist experience. To attempt to do so, would be artificial and unreal. In this respect, Buddhism and Christianity are on a different plane from scientific and humanistic thought. They are both religious faiths, and, in the final analysis, they both demand decision. The "wisdom" of Buddhism and the "wisdom" of Christianity do not belong to the knowledge of the world, and are therefore, not subject to empirical proof. A choice must be made. And, for one who has made such a choice to attempt to be purely neutral, is to attempt the impossible!

The Argument.

The first chapter indicates the chief tendency in the Buddhist

and Christian understanding of Reality. In both religions, there are undoubtedly several currents of thought on this subject. Here an attempt is made to try to summarise the principal direction in which they "move". Such a sketch is a necessary background preparation. It provides the contours and the perspectives for the more detailed study of the subject itself. The second chapter states the attitude of both Buddhism and Christianity to history, because man's life is conditioned by it. These two preliminary studies, prepare the way for the third chapter, which is, in some respects, the most important section of the thesis. The first three chapters consider man's nature, and the concluding three discuss man's destiny. The argument tries to show that soteriology is affected by anthropology, and vice versa. The final chapter also reveals the ultimate implications of each faith—man becomes an Arahant, or a member of the Community of Jesus Christ.

The Appendices.

Several of the appendices are concerned with aspects of the Buddhist doctrine of man, which have not been included in the main argument for the sake of clarity. Some of the historical and critical problems, which have been deliberately ignored in the thesis itself, are also discussed. The subjects which are

considered, are not unrelated to the main topic of the thesis itself; for the relation of the Buddha to the teaching of the Upanishads is of crucial importance for the assessment of the content of the word anattā. And the meaning of Nibbāna determines the real seriousness with which the anattā concept is meant to be regarded. In connection with this latter, two other possible interpretations suggested by scholars, have also been discussed.

The Fundamental Character of Reality.

What is man's chief end? The first question of the Westminster Catechism is the only important question on human existence. In every answer issues of far-reaching consequence are raised, as regards the nature of man, and the character of Reality. For what the catechism really asks is this- "What is the essential meaning of life, apart from the every day concerns of existence in terms of food, shelter, and security?" The answer to this question must take place in the context of the total dimensions of existence, for the nature and destiny of man receive their true meaning, only when they are stated in the setting of man's insight into the significance of Reality itself.

Every philosophy and all religions have this at least in common; they are engaged in the universal search for the correct answer to this question. Christianity and Buddhism provide two answers. But the answer of Buddhism can best be understood in the background of Hindu India, therefore in considering the Buddhist and Christian answers, three out of the four great classic religions of the world are involved.

The Buddhist interpretation of Reality can be appreciated only in the environment of Hindu thought. Buddhism is both a

development from, and a contradiction of, the basic emphases of the Hindu religious system. Consequently, it cannot be correctly evaluated, if it is divorced from its roots in the soil of Hindu India.

The early Indian thinkers were among the first to attempt to answer the riddle of man's existence. The Vedic Scriptures, which are the work of the early Aryan settlers in North India, contain the record of man's initial guesses about the nature of Reality. The last stage in the development of Vedic Religion is to be found in the Upanishads, which mark the culminating point in the history of religious thought in India. This climax was reached between the eighth and sixth centuries before Christ,¹ and the whole of Indian thought, from then, might be described as the attempt to explain, and explicate, the fundamental position of these Scriptures, concerning the nature of Reality.

The central insight of Vedantic thought is easily stated.

1. "The period of their fullest fruition (Vedanta thought), when with most originality and insight Hindu thinkers proposed to themselves and to the circle of their pupils solutions of the world's greatest mysteries, both mental and spiritual, is supposed to have been from the eighth to the sixth century before our era" (E.R.F. On the date of the Upanishads)

For the Hindu, the fundamental character of Reality is contained in the word "Brahman". Over against the multiplicity, and diversity, of the phenomenal world of space-time, the Vedanta affirms the sole reality of the Brahman. It is sat, cit, anandan. (Absolute Being, Absolute Perfection, Absolute Bliss). The Brahman is the only real, and the one eternal and abiding principle of life.

"there is only one ultimate Reality, called the Brahman, from which the universe proceeds. It is self-existent and it alone is (sat), and not being originated, it is eternal and real" 1

This Brahman, as the Nirguna Brahman, is utterly unrelated to all historically conditioned existence. Nothing positive may be affirmed about it, except that it is not to be identified with any created thing, either in the world or in the mind of man (Neti, Neti. Das "Nein Nein")

But there is also a pantheistic strain in Upanishadic thought, which equates the Brahman with the universe, in all its parts. The Brahman is the universe, and the universe is the Brahman. In the Gita, Krishna says,

"I am the immolation. I am the sacrificial rite. I am the libation offered to ancestors... I am the Father, Mother, the sustainer, the grandfather of the Universe.. the mystical doctrine, the purification, the syllable "Om"... the path, the supporter, the master, .. the habitation, the refuge, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the place, the receptacle, the inexhaustible seed, ... I am ambrosia and death, the existing and the non-existing" 2.

1. Studies in Vedanta by Rao Bahadur Vasudeva J. Kirtikar p.2.
2. J.C. Thomson's Translation Bhagavadgita Ch 4.

Hinduism has no doctrine of creation. Whenever a pantheistic strain is in evidence, the world is regarded as being an emanation of God. On the whole, the more consistent idea is the radical view, which denies the reality of the world. It is suggested that avidyā (ignorance) is the first Cause of life. Man believes the phenomena of the physical world to be real because of his avidyā. For the very idea that the world exists is māyā-an illusion.

"Brahman, or the Supreme Spirit, is real; the world is unreal" 2

Man, as the ātman, is the Brahman, and only avidyā prevents him from realising this truth. A false sense of separateness makes man believe in his individual existence, as distinct from that of his neighbour and the Brahman. The constant refrain of the Upanishads, "tat tvam asi" (That art Thou) reminds man of his essential unity both with the Brahman, as the param-ātman, and with man, as ātman. They are one and the same Being.

"The individual Self is ~~the~~ only the Supreme Self, and no other" 3

1. Canon Quick's comment, "Generally speaking all theories which suggest that evil in the ultimate analysis is illusion are sufficiently met by the retort that the fact that the mind is illuded is not itself illusion and therefore, according to the theory, cannot be evil" The Gospel of the New World note p.19.

2. Bankaracharya. on the Vedānta E.R.E.

3. idem

The Hindu evaluation of Reality is similar to that of all idealistic philosophy. In the parable of the cave men, Plato summarises the basic tendency of all forms of idealism. The world is only a shadow¹ cast by Reality; "we are such stuff as dreams are made of"². Man sees but the shadows; Reality is elsewhere. In Hinduism, this ultimate principle of Reality is equated with the ātman, as the ultimate principle in individual man. In Greek thought, man as the nous, loses his personal identity in the all-pervading Reality of God.

The assumption of all such philosophies is that life is an orderly, and intelligible whole³. Consequently, evil, as the irrational element, is explained away, either by an outright denial of its existence, or else by means of some scheme, in which evil has the appearance⁴ of evil, but is, in fact, ultimately good.

1. "It is one of the constant thoughts of Plato that the ordinary man is not really awake, but is walking about like a somnambulist in pursuit of illusory phantoms". F. E. More The Religion of Plato p. 330

2. "Plato was influenced by Parmenides and Orphism; he wanted an eternal world, and could not believe in the ultimate reality of the temporal flux" B. Russell. History of Western Philosophy. p. 814

3. J. S. Mackenzie Cosmic Problems. p. 2.

4. "Neo-Platonism undertakes to account for evil negatively by means of successive emanations or expansions, from a metaphysical unity of an extreme type. Theoretically, evil, as a mere distance from, or diminution of, Being, per se does not exist, is non-being". More idem p. 236.

The similarity of Greek and Hindu thought is obvious. But there is one important difference. Because the Hindu answer is given in a profoundly religious context, the affirmation of the reality of the Brahman, in contrast to the unreality of the temporal cosmos, is asserted more vehemently and emphatically than are the corresponding concepts of God and the world, in Greek thought. As a result, in Hinduism, the separation of the world from the reality of Brahman is a much more radical one.¹

When Gotama, the Buddha, commenced his life work, the main teaching of the Upanishads had been made explicit.² And the truly remarkable feature of his teaching, as recorded in the Tripitaka, is that his Buddhism either completely ignores, or else implicitly repudiates, the basic teaching of the Vedanta.

The Buddhist conception of Reality differs fundamentally from that of the Vedanta. Where the Vedanta speaks of Being, the Buddhist thinks of Bhava, Becoming.

"What is this that is being said, "Becoming (bhava), Becoming, what is this?"³

1. "The reality of the Absolute is so sharply opposed in the Vedanta system to the unreality of the temporal process that it is difficult to see how the latter can even appear to exist. The only explanation that seems to be offered is that the temporal process is to be regarded as a sort of "play" of the Absolute. Mackenzie Cosmic Problems p. 22

2. cf Appendix B. No judgment on the vexed problem of the relation of the Buddha to the Upanishads is implied here. What is maintained is that Mahayana Buddhism offers a radically different interpretation of Reality.

3. Gradual Sayings vol 1. p. 205

Where the Hindu is anxious to stress the "changeless", the Buddhist broods on the "changing". Buddhism urges its adherents to pay attention to this world alone. Reality is the entire universe in perpetual flux, and ceaseless motion. Nothing more, and nothing less.¹

Man participates in this world of change and becoming,

"Depending on what does man persist?"

"Depending on bhava man persists". 2.

He is one of the forms which Reality assumes, and his character must be understood from within the main stream of the life-process, as it moves forward, restlessly. Man never is, but always is becoming.

"Strictly speaking, the duration of the life of a living being is exceedingly brief, lasting only while a thought lasts. Just as a chariot-wheel in rolling rolls at one point of the tyre, and in resting rests only at one point; in exactly the same way, the life of a living being lasts for the period of one thought. As soon as the thought has ceased the being is said to have ceased. As it has been said- "The being of a past moment of thought has lived, but does not live, nor will live."

"The being of a future moment of thought will live, but has not lived, nor does it live".

"The being of the present moment of thought does live, but has not lived, nor will it live". 3.

1. "It is only of late years that it has come to be recognised in the West that for no two consecutive moments is the fabric of the body the same; and yet this doctrine was taught by the Buddha more than twenty-three centuries ago. "Nadi soto viya" (Like the current of a stream) is the Buddhist idea of existence." Compendium p.8. "Life, then, in the Buddhist view of things, is like an ever-changing river". idem p.12.

2. Points of Controversy p.56.

3. Visuddhi-Magga ch 8. Warren p.150.

The component parts of this Bhava-Reality may be termed dhammas¹ (elements of being) or sankhāra (constituents of being). When the term dhamma is used in this context, it refers to the unsubstantial elements which, alone, comprise the structure of life.

"If three things (dhammas) were not in the world... then the Leader would not appear in the world... What are these three? Individual existence, decay, and death". 2.

These dhammas are responsible for the existence of the material and mental worlds. They are the neutral elements from which both spirit and matter arise. In a way, the Buddhist idea of the nature of dhammas anticipates Bertrand Russell's plea for a Neutral Monism. Modern Psychology has learned that the mind is more "material" than it was once supposed to be, while the Physicists have begun to realise that a naïve materialism is incompatible with the new understanding of the structure of the physical world.³ Buddhism

1. Warren p. 116. Buddhism in Translations.

2. Anguttara Nikaya Sutta 76 Jennings p.476.

Also E.R.E. article on Nargarjuna "Every thought, every volition, every sensation, is a dharma. Mental dharmas perish moment by moment, others last a little longer. Man is a collection of dharmas". and Buddhaghosa Commentary on the Dhammasangani p.49. (P.T.S.) "Dharma implies absence of an entity or living soul".

3. "Physics and Psychology have been approaching each other, and making possible the "Neutral Monism" suggested by William James' criticism of "consciousness". The distinction between mind and matter came into philosophy from religion; and, although for a long time it seemed to have valid grounds, I think that both mind and matter are merely convenient ways of grasping events. Some single events, I would admit, belong only to the material groups, but others belong to both kinds of groups, and are therefore at once both mental and material" Russell History of Western Philosophy p.861.

maintains that life originates from ambiguous and neutral dharmas, which are potentially both physical and mental. The dharmas are the raw material for the construction of the universe. They are the bricks of the cosmos of matter and form. The dharmas are both atom and percept.¹

Buddhism regards these dharmas dynamically. They are never the same, but constantly change. Reality assumes new forms and variations, under its own inner potency, and moves onward, as a stream of Becoming. In the endless sequence of life, the dharmas are, at one and the same time, the result of previous causes, and the producers of consequent effects.²³

The word "Sankhāra" is usually employed when this more synthetic, and constructive, aspect of the dharmas is being considered. Sankhāra describes Reality in its composite nature, consisting, as it does,

1. This may be the solution to the problem of "Idealism vs Realism" in early Buddhist thought.

2. "The momentary, transitory, character of dharma is central to early Buddhism" E.R.E. article on Nāgarjuna.

3. "All dharma is intimately bound up with its cause and effects; its essential character is to be an effect and to be a cause, it is a moment in continuous time". E.R.E. Mahayana.

4. "We should not regard the Sankhāras (used as a synonym of dharma) as things in relation to mind; rather the term has the more general signification of product, as well as of producing, and is therefore naturally and directly applied to the whole world of external reality as well as to mental products." B. Keith. Buddhist Philosophy p.74.

of dhammas, organised according to the Laws of Relations.¹ It also reiterates the conditioned nature of Reality. Life is characterised by the inescapable nexus of cause and effect.

"And why, mendicant brothers, do you say composite-unities (samkhāre)? They make up a compound (samkhatam), mendicant brothers; therefore they are called "composite-unities". And what compound do they make up? They make up matter (rūpam) into a material-compound; they make up sensation (vedanā) into a sensation-compound; they make up perception (sannam) into a perception-compound; they make up individual-character (samkhāre) into a character-compound; they make up consciousness (viññānam) into a consciousness-compound. They make up the compound indeed, mendicant brothers, therefore they are called "composite-unities". 2

This description of Reality differs radically from the "indu and the Platonic conception of Reality. Modern Buddhism is aware of this, and declares, quite categorically, that the Buddhist interpretation of Reality contradicts the essential tenets of Plato's thought.³ On the other hand, there are many points of resemblance between the Buddhist approach and that of those philosophers in the West

1. Patthana. Abhidhamma Pitaka

"Sankhāra is Actuality, the object, the subject, and that which unites them" Dahlke Buddhism p. 148

2. Samyutta Nikāya Khandha -vagga. P.T.S. vol 3. p.87. Jennings p.507

3. "Buddhists do not recognise the existence of the Platonic idea corresponding to any name they may give to a thing". Compendium. p.200 Note. Also "The rejection by Buddhists of the Atman, or the Noumenal Ego, and of an Absolute in general, was called "the sore spot of its metaphysicless view of the world" (Dr G. Wallesey) Compendium Preface p.17. Mrs Rhys avids.

who belong to the tradition of Heraclitus.¹ The description of Reality, as a process of Becoming, is one that has found favour and support from many philosophers in recent years. Bergson, one of the originators of the new approach, adopts a position, which, in several respects, is comparable with that of Hinayana Buddhism.² According to him, change is the only actuality, and life must be understood as a dynamic and endless chain of event and sequence, cause and effect, which never remains the same. Existence moves, driven by its own inherent laws. The need for an "End", which controls the movement, and gives it meaning and direction, is not recognised. Life is not teleological. Aristotle explained life in terms of four causes—the material, the formal, the efficient, and the final—and he argued that the final cause determined the entire movement. Both Bergson and Gotama refuse to believe that the life

1. "All things are flowing". "Nothing ever is, everything is becoming". "All things are in motion like streams". "We affirm, then, that Heraclitus held that any given thing, however stable in appearance, was merely, so to speak, a section in the stream, and that the matter composing it was never the same for two consecutive moments of time". J. Burnet Greek Philosophy p. 149

2. "There are changes but no things that change—change requires no substratum or substance. There are movements, but not therefore unchanging subjects which move—a movement does not presuppose a moving thing." Jevons Personality p. 87. Also "The ultimate principle of Reality is an eternity of life and movement". idem p. 92 For a criticism of Bergson cf. J. Maritain. Redeeming the Time and for a general criticism of the bhava philosophy cf. C. E. Joad Decadence p. 397.

process is under the control of a transcendental Ideal.

But here the analogy between the Eastern and Western conceptions of Becoming ends. On the whole, the modern philosophy of becoming is an optimistic one. Life is assumed to be moving in the direction of higher and better conditions. The spirit of evolution, and the triumphs of science, have fostered this outlook. In the Buddhist weltanschauung, however, there is no such note of optimism. Life, as samkhāra Reality, being conditioned, is inherently transient and subject to decay.

"Impermanent, monks are all conditioned things. Unstable, monks, are compounded things. Insecure, monks, are compounded things. So, monks, be ye dissatisfied with all things of this world, be ye repelled by them, be ye utterly free from them". 1.

The cry "sabba sankhāra aniccā ti yada pannaya passati" ("all that men say and do is transient), expresses the poignant sense of dissatisfaction, which the Buddhist feels about Reality. Man is urged to realise that this truth about the nature of Reality in general, is even more truly descriptive of his own existence.

"Whether Right-farers arise, mendicant brothers, or do not arise, it remains a principle, a foundation of nature, a certainty of nature, that all individuality (samkhāra) is transitory (aniccā). 2.

1. Gradual Sayings vol 4 p.64. Also the last words of the Buddha "Decay is inherent in all component things" Mahāparinibbāna sutta S. B. E. vol 3.
2. Anguttara Nikaya Tika-Nipata Jennings p.34.

All existence is conditioned existence; conditioned existence is impermanent existence; and impermanent existence is discontented existence. Only the blind and the foolish are deceived by the apparent stability of Reality. The wise man sees through the disguise, to the real character of life; he becomes dissatisfied with it, and rejects the whole "business of living".

The Buddhist alternative to Bergson's "Élan vital" and Freud's sex instinct, is tanhā (desire). This is the raison d' être of existence.

"As to rebirth I declare it to be for what has fuel, not for what is without fuel. When a being lays aside this body and rises up in another body, for that I declare craving (tanha) to be the fuel". 2.

This grasping after life is, in the final analysis, life itself, and the cause of its continuance,

"Craving it is that causes man to be" 3

In imitation of Descartes' cogito, ergo sum, Buddhism may be understood to say, "I grasp because I am, and I am because I grasp". All existence is thrust forward by tanha.

1. Majjhima Nikāya Mahasudassanā Sutta.

2. Kindred Sayings vol 4. p.280.

3. Kindred Sayings vol 1. p.52.

4. "Grasping is the only activity in the world, and that there is only one object of this Grasping; the bodily form conventionally called Personality. That this latter is the object in dependence upon which Grasping exists, and at the same time is that which exists in dependence upon Grasping, to understand this, to realise it, to live it out, this in the deepest sense means Buddhism". Dahlke Buddhism p.12.

According to the Tripitakas, the real insight of the Buddha does not consist, so much, in his understanding the transient nature of Reality, as in his realization that this process of Bhava is conditioned by causes. The Buddha's Enlightenment consists of an appreciation of the principle of Dependent Origination, (Patticca-samuppāda).

"Before the sun had set the Great One thus put to flight the army of Mara. And then.... he rendered clear in the first watch of the night the knowledge of previous existences, and in the middle watch the divine vision, and in the last watch of the night he obtained knowledge of the causative-process (patticca-sammuppādenānam). When he had thoroughly mastered this way and that way, backwards and forwards, the formula of the twelve steps of causation the ten thousand worlds quaked twelve times up to their ocean boundary". 1

The venerable Assaji summarizes the substance of the Buddha's doctrine in these words,

"The Buddha hath the causes told,
Of all things springing from a cause,
And also how things cease to be-
'T is this the mighty monk proclaims" 2.

The principle of Paticca-samuppāda declares the Buddhist belief in the reign of law in the universe. Life, maintains the Buddhist, is a rational one. It moves forward, driven by causes which man

1. Jataka Commentary Introduction. Jennings p.469.

2. Mahāvagga 1.231. Warren p. 88.

can understand.

"When, namely, this (cause) happens, there is that (effect) because this (cause) occurs, that (effect) arises. Thus we get the (niyāma) the constancy of rule, law, or uniformity of conditioned things". 1.

Buddhism is particularly anxious to help man to comprehend the exact causes which condition, and control, human existence.

"O wonderful is it, Reverend Sir! O marvellous is it, Reverend Sir! How profound, Reverend Sir, is Dependent Origination and of how profound an appearance! To me, nevertheless, it is as clear as clear can be!"

"O Ananda, say not so! ... Profound, Ananda, is Dependent Origination, and profound of appearance. It is through not understanding this doctrine, Ananda, through not penetrating it, that thus mankind is like to an entangled warp, or to an ensnared web, ... and fails to extricate itself from punishment, suffering, perdition, and rebirth." "Ananda, if it be asked, "Do old age and death depend on anything?" the reply should be, "they do". And if it be asked, "On what do they depend?" The reply should be, "Old age and death depend on birth".

"Ananda, if it be asked, "Does birth depend on anything?"

"Birth depends on existence... existence on attachment, attachment.. on desire... desire on sensation... sensation on contact... contact on name and form.. on name and form depends consciousness".

"Accordingly, Ananda, here we have in name and form the cause, the occasion, the origin, and the dependence of consciousness."

"Verily, Ananda, this name and form coupled with conscious-

1. Compendium p. 260.

"every event is the result or sequel of some previous event or events, without which it could not have happened, and which being present, it must take place." S.B.B. Vol 3. Dialogues of the Buddha vol 3. Intro.

ness is all there is to be born, or to grown old, or to die, or to leave one existence, or to spring up in another. It is all that is meant by any affirmation, prediction, or declaration, we may make concerning anybody. It constitutes knowledge's field of action. And it is all that is reborn to appear in its present shape". 1.

This analysis achieves two things. It denies the Vedanta belief in a permanent entity or ātman, by reducing all life to a series of dhammas, and it also emphasizes the fact that life can be attributed to understandable causes. ² The Buddha's main interest was to find out, "What being, what is?", because he believed that if this were known, he would possess the necessary power to arrest the life process. In the Tripitakas, before he begins his active ministry, the Buddha wonders whether man will be able to understand this principle of Dependent Origination,

"it is hard for them (mankind) to understand the law of dependence on assignable reasons, the doctrine of Dependent Origination, and it is hard for them also to understand how all the constituents of being may be made to subside, all the substrata of being be relinquished, and desire be made to vanish, and absence of passion, cessation, and Nivvāna be attained". 3.

1. Mahā-nidāna Sutta Warren p.203.

2. "It is the repudiation of the belief in any permanent, transmigrating, intelligent Principle in man, and the affirmation of the contrary view—that vimāna (consciousness) is a contingent phenomena, a happening by way of cause and effect, something that "becomes and dies away". S.B.B. Dialogues of the Buddha vol 3. p.43.

3. Majjhima Nikaya 1.167.31 Warren p.339.

The Buddha had to persuade men, who lived in an age of superstition and credulity, to accept the formula of Dependent Origination, with its explanation of life in terms of natural law. Man has to realise that, because life is the result of intelligible reasons, it is possible for him to control the causes, and thus to allow the individual life stream to peter out.

It is true that the causality of the Paticca-samuppāda is not the causality of modern science, for while scientific causality is mechanistic, Buddhist causality is the causality of growth, of life. But the rationalistic temper of Buddhism approximates closely to the spirit of science to-day. They are agreed that life is governed by rule, and that the knowledge of the laws of the universe is accompanied by the power necessary to effect changes beneficent to man.

Buddhist man sees life as a series of cause and effect, (Paticca-samuppāda) in an unending chain of bhava-existence. There is no

1. "The Paticca-samuppāda is, of course, causality, but not the scientific causality of pure succession of cause and effect, in which alone issues scientific causality; but it is causality in accord with Actuality as the succession-simultaneousness of growth". Dahlke Buddhism p.166. Also Points of Controversy p. 290.

trace of the ultimate origin of the series, but at every stage its continuation depends on Avidyā (ignorance).

"Ignorance is the beginningless starting-point from which life, with all its joys and sorrows, with its truth and its errors, its living and its dying, ever and again springs forth, as from some hidden source that never dries up, so long as it remains undiscovered". 1

"For its continued existence, life needs nothing else but ignorance about itself" 2

When man has dispelled Avidyā, then he realises that only tanhā (desire, grasping), keeps him enchained to bhava-existence, and that tanhā has to be eradicated, before the process can be arrested.

"The existence of everything depends on a cause, hence if the cause of evil or suffering can be detected and removed, evil itself will be removed. That cause is lust (tanhā) and craving for pleasure". 3.

"If a man lay this heavy burden down,
And take not any other burden up,
If he draw out that craving, root and all,
No more an hungered, he is free". 4.

1. Dahlke Buddhism p.4

2. idem p. 175.

3. Hinduism and Buddhism Intro Vol 1 p.21 Sir Charles Eliot.

4. Kindred Sayings (P.T.S.) Pt 3. p.24.

"I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit"; this confession of faith is normative for every Christian interpretation of Reality. The Triune God, of Biblical Revelation, is the ground of all knowledge, and the constitutive Principle of Being. The God of the Bible is the Living Lord, whose existence is never made the subject of discursive argument. The Bible contains the record of His continuing encounter with man, and His inescapable Presence in the world of human affairs. He is the Self-existent One, the Holy, Almighty, and Righteous, God.

The Biblical Revelation assumes that knowledge of this God, and knowledge of man's nature and destiny, are coterminous events. The character of God determines the character of man, and a true understanding of the nature of Reality, depends upon a knowledge of both God and man.

"Our wisdom in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts; the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these (two) are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other". 1

"God, the Father Almighty" is the maker of Heaven and Earth. All Reality, outside the Reality of God, is created Reality. It

1. Calvin Institutes 1.1.1.

comes into existence through the Word of God. God speaks His Word, and the world is created out of nothing. This created universe of nature and man is distinct from the uncreated Being of God. The Christian doctrine of Creation is incompatible with the Hindu pantheistic explanation of the origin of the world. The Creation is not just an outward expression of the Being of God. God remains God, and sovereign Lord of the World.

Nevertheless, the created world is related to God, in a real and significant manner. It is not the result of Avidyā, as Buddhism suggests, nor is it merely an illusion (māyā), as in Vedānta thought. Creation, precisely because it is His Creation, reflects God's Handiwork, and has real value and meaning. According to the Biblical account, God looked on the finished work of creation, and "saw that it was good".²

Man belongs to the created world. He is called into being by the Word of God. But, although man, in his origin, shares the creatureliness of all created beings, he is also related to God in a real and special way. He has his origin not only by, but in the Word of God. God speaks to him, and he can reply. The essence of man's reality is this ability to respond to God. His being consists of this responsible existence. God, as the God of Love, calls him into responsible

1. John.1.1-3

2. Gen 1.31.

fellowship, in love. By nature, man is made for community. He is elected, by the decree of God, to community in love. His being (esse) is constituted by this Call to love and fellowship. But the knowledge of this Election is given to man only in Jesus Christ.¹ For between creation in the Word of God, and redemption by the Word of God in Christ Jesus, is the mystery of the Fall.

In the Bible, the reality of sin is given full and serious recognition. No attempt is made to minimise its deadly and irrational character. Sin is man's declaration of irresponsibility, man's endeavour to repudiate his character, as constituted in the Word of God. Yet man is not made wholly responsible for the evil nature of the created world. The Devil represents a principle of evil, which transcends, and dominates,² man's evil will.

The original purpose of God, which is thwarted by man's sin, is restored, and fulfilled, in Jesus Christ. Man realizes his being in the Word of God, and his destiny to love, in the "Word made Flesh". Jesus Christ, as the Second Adam, is the Founder of the New Community of love. It is He who informs man of his beginning, and his end, in the mind of God. In Him, man learns of God's Call to community in creation, and through Him, man knows that this purpose of God is

1. "For Calvin, knowledge of God the Creator is only by faith in God's Word of Revelation" Parker The Oracles of God p. 53

2. Gen 3.

restored forever. The victory of the Christ is the assurance of the ultimate fulfilment of God's purpose, and the final establishment of His Kingdom.

The essence of Reality is this election of man to Community, by God, and the possibility of the rejection of this election, by man. Man lives in the "tension" between responsible existence, and irresponsible sin. The power of darkness and the power of God's love, struggle together for the mastery of the human soul. Man's being is the arena of this conflict. But in, and through, the work of the Holy Spirit, man is reconciled to God and his neighbour, and the Community Purpose of God is fulfilled. The Resurrection of Christ, is the guarantee of the triumph of God's purpose of love.

The difference between the three conceptions of Reality thus becomes clear. Hinduism tends to concentrate exclusively on the Reality of the Brahman. It equates the being of man, with the Being of the Brahman, in a static, ontological unity. Consequently, in spite of the temporary reality conceded to finite existence, Reality is eventually reduced to a monism. According to the Biblical view however, the essence of Reality lies in the dependent relationship between the Creator and the creature. The doctrine of creation establishes the permanent difference between man and God, and, at the same time, ensures the meaningfulness of creation-existence.

It is in this very doctrine of creation that Christianity differs from Buddhism also. For Buddhism, with its repeated emphasis on the impermanence of all finite existence, suggests that Reality is ultimately meaningless! Christianity also recognises the presence of the "irrational" in Reality, but it refuses to concede that this irrationality is ultimate. The fact of creation, and the fact of the Incarnation, make this conclusion impossible for the Christian.

Man's existence cannot be equated with the Being of Brahman, above the flux of temporal reality, nor can man be identified with meaningless finitude. The real human situation is more complex than either of these alternative doctrines appear to indicate. Man is torn between the conflicting movements of being, in the Word of God, and meaningless becoming, in the flux of existence. He is both the Old Adam, and the New Man in Christ.

The main difference in the conceptions of Reality in the two faiths is clearly indicated by the Mappamondo painting in the Campo Santo in Pisa, and in the Buddhist idea of the Wheel of Life, the Bhava-chakra. In both faiths, Reality is depicted by the same analogy, and its tragic nature is emphasized. But while the Buddhist artist paints the wheel in the hands of Yama, the Christian pictures it in the Hands of God. The final word for the Buddhist is Yama, the God of Death, for the Christian, it is the Living God!

The Nature of History.

There is a remarkable unanimity of opinion between Greek and Indian thinkers on the nature of history. Although they start from different assumptions, they are agreed that, for the individual, and for the race, history follows a cyclic and repetitive pattern.

For many reasons, the early Greek thinkers concluded that the movement of history was cyclic. Men like Heraclitus and Democritus observed that growth and decay were characteristic of all natural life. The rhythmic and regular changes of the seasons of the year, and the orderly movements of the heavenly bodies, appeared to indicate that the laws of the universe were uniform, and cyclic in behaviour. Pythagoras was convinced that the circulatory movements of the physical world were paralleled by similar occurrences in the life of the individual. In his doctrine of metempsychosis, Pythagoras taught that the souls of men were reincarnated, again and again. Even Plato, while more reluctant to make positive affirmations about this speculative hypothesis, accepted the general assumption of this teaching. Together with the belief in rebirth, the ancient Greeks also believed that the universe went through a similar process of integration

and disintegration. It evolved out of chaos, and returned to chaos through a mighty conflagration. Some of the mathematically-minded philosophers even ventured to calculate the exact length of time each cyclic movement of the universe took to complete its revolution. As a result of all this speculation, the conception of the Magnum Annus gradually became part of the normal weltanschauung of the ancient Greek citizen.

Strangely enough, almost contemporaneously, Indian thinkers adopted a similar interpretation of history. But for a different reason. The Indian belief in rebirth arose out of a concern for the moral structure of the world. It was an endeavour to reconcile the teaching of karma, with the obvious inequalities of human life. Samsāra (the repeated round of birth and rebirth) attempts to explain life's differences, by suggesting that deeds, accumulated in a previous existence, condition the birth and environmental factors of every individual person. Of necessity, a future existence must be postulated, in order that a man's actions in the present life, may be allowed to work themselves out. It is this sense of moral justice, therefore, which is responsible for the Indian doctrine of karma-samsāra.

"Whatever actions done by an individual leaves behind it some sort of potency which has the power to ordain for him joy or sorrow in the future according as it is good or bad. When the fruits of action are such that they cannot be enjoyed in this present life or in a human life the individual has to take another birth in order to suffer them" . 1.

The word "Samsāra" rings with the feeling of the repeated cycle of birth and rebirth in the life of the individual. Samsāra is the one certain and constant feature of the historical process. In Greece, and also in India, the principle of rebirth is fitted into the picture of a cyclic movement for the entire universe. The cosmos moves to chaos; all will be destroyed, and all will be reborn, again, and yet again.²

Hinduism offers various explanations for the origin of samsāra. History occurs because of the lilā (play) of the Gods, or is the result of avidyā (ignorance).³ "Its fruition (of avidyā) is seen in the cycle of existence and the sorrow that comes in its train".⁴ Man, as ātman, transcends the events of this history, for

1. Das Gupta Indian Philosophy. p.71. vol 1

2. An anticipation of the Second law of Thermo-dynamics?

3. Avidyā in Vedānta thought has several meanings, it can mean creation, the mystery underlying nature, the limitations of human understanding, or the Principle of Individuation and our entanglement in that principle.

4. Das Gupta idem p. 99.

the atman remains a spectator of this māyā existence. Nevertheless, for the ordinary man, the process of history is real enough. The endless round of birth and rebirth can be arrested only when he has mastered "the way" by which he gains release (mokshā) from the round of samsāra.

The Hindu view of history has two important consequences. Hindu man has no sense of a decisive or significant "Now", in any historical event. When a man believes that his life reaches back into infinite past time, and that his future is equally limitless, he can have no awareness of a need for critical action. Unlimited, historical life must "sag" under the burden of an endless vista of recurrent existence. And secondly, a cyclic interpretation of history, destroys the meaningfulness of life, and, because its origins are in avidyā, its "end" can have no ~~true~~ value. In the final analysis, Hinduism reduces all life to fatuity. History is a mere froth and bubble.

The Buddhist approach to history is very similar to that of the Hindu. Buddhism takes the main features of the Hindu samsāra

1. 1. "Both mysticism and nature-religions may ally themselves with different philosophies, but always with some philosophy for which history as such is irrelevant". C.H. Dodd. History and the Gospel p.21. The "Indus are-"indifferent to the past because they do not recognise that the history of the world, the whole cosmic process, has any meaning or value". Sir Charles Eliot. Hinduism and Buddhism vol 1. Intro p.67.

conception for granted.¹ It appears to be particularly anxious to emphasize the length of time in which man has been involved in the stream of samsāra,

"it is the ocean of repeated births. Inasmuch as the ultimate origin in birth of these beings is not apparent-whether it was a hundred, or a thousand, .. or a hundred thousand cosmic periods prior to which they were not or whether they were born in the time of a certain king or a certain Buddha-prior to which they were not-no limit can be set" 2

This feeling of being in possession of everlasting life (samsāra) already, is strengthened by elaborate descriptions of the incalculable aeons of world-cycles through which man has lived.

"It is as if O priests, there were a mountain consisting of a great rock, a league in length, a league in width, a league in height, ... and every hundred years a man were to come and rub it with a silken garment; that mountain consisting of a great rock, O priests, would more quickly wear away and come to an end than a world-cycle. O priests, this is the length of a world-cycle. And many such world-cycles. .. and many hundreds of thousands of world-cycles". 3.

The Buddhist Scriptures contain innumerable illustrations of this kind, all of which lay stress on the fact that the process of birth and rebirth is of utterly limitless duration.⁴

1. Hundred Sayings vol 5. p.320.

2. The Expositor by Buddhaghosa p.13. The phrase "gambhire samsārasāgare" "the deep ocean of continued existence" is full of the pathos of life's continuity.

3. Samyutta Nikāya. 15.5.6.

4. Jennings p.456.

Unlike Hinduism, Buddhism refuses to make any attempt to explain the origin of samsara existence.

"Without a cause and unknown is the life of mortals in this world". 1

and

"The Wheel of existence is without known beginning".2

In the Chain of Paticca-samuppāda , avidyā is the source of the life process. But avidyā is not supposed to provide an explanation for the primal beginnings of life itself. Assuming the fact of samsāra, avidyā causes the process to continue to operate. No attempt is made to provide man with a theory about life; yet only ignorance about the nature of samsāra existence, ties man down to life.

"Paticca-samuppāda is a vattakattā (discourse on evil) not a theory of the origin of the world from primordial matter. Even as a theory of the origin of evil, it only shows where evils originate. And so life is taken as it is." 3

In Hinduism, man is saved from final despair about historical life,

1. Sutta Nipata. S.B.B. vol 15.

2. Visuddhi-magga Warren p. 175. "The world of transmigration has neither beginning nor end: to those who wish to escape from it the Buddha can show the way: of obligation to stop in it there can be no question" (suicide forbidden) Eliot. Hinduism and Buddhism vol 1. p.205. The difference between the Hindu conception of reincarnation and the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth will be considered later.

3. Compendium p. 262.3

because of the continual affirmation of the reality of the Brahman, which transcends the weariness of temporal existence. But for the Buddhist there is no such relief. Consequently there is a deeper, and more emphatic, negation of the whole of history. Not only is Reality anicca (impermanent), but history is dukkha (sorrowful). The four Noble Truths stress the sorrow of life. The Buddha's vision of disease, old age, death, and the monk who repudiates life, are the norms in terms of which all existence is assessed.

"Your majesty, birth is misery, old age is misery, disease is misery, death is misery, . . . association with those we do not love is misery, separation from those we love is misery, . . . poverty is misery, . . . such, such, your majesty, are the various and manifold miseries which one encounters in the course of rebirth" 2

and

"Thus many a day have ye been suffering ill, have ye been suffering pain, have ye been suffering disaster, have the charnel fields been growing" 3

Buddhism does not deny that life often offers transitory

1. The recognition of the fact of dukkha stands out as an essential in early Buddhism. The four Noble Truths deal mainly with dukkha.

2. Milindapanha 127.13. Warren p.439

3. Kindred Sayings pt 2. ch 15. also p 120. "The tears we have shed through death and suffering are greater than the waters of the four seas". and "Verily, this world has fallen upon trouble, one is born, and grows old, and dies, and falls from one state, and springs up in another" S.B.B. vol 3. p.23.

happiness. There can be joy and gladness in many circumstances in life, and often in human relationships. But the earnest seeker knows that in actual fact, all such experience inevitably brings the aftermath of pain. He realizes that life is like a suffering sea, with happiness only on the surface. The cycle of samsāra moves on, because man does not see through the veneer of seeming joy.

"Escape" is therefore, the watchword of the enlightened man. He who knows the sorrow of all historical existence, refuses to be ensnared by the deceptions of the world. The first joy of the released Arahāt is that of knowing that he has been freed from the weary round of samsāra. This solemn utterance, which is never omitted by any Buōdha, is indicative of the judgment which Buddhism passes on the whole of history:-

"Through birth and rebirth's endless round,
Seeking in vain, I hastened on,
To find who framed this edifice,
What misery-birth incessantly"

"O Builder, I've discovered Thee,
This fabric thou shalt ne'er rebuild;
Thy rafters all are broken now,
And pointed roof demolished lies,
This mind has demolition reached,
And seen the last of all desire" . 1

This analysis of history sounds strangely unfamiliar, especially

in the West, where the meaningfulness of history is almost taken for granted. The triumphs of science, and the philosophy of evolutionary progress, have helped to give man a sense of power over history. The Marxian Communist speaks confidently about the future of the movement of history. But the real inspiration for this attitude to history, is due originally to the genius of the Hebrew-Christian religion. For a forward-looking understanding of history is possible, only within the framework of the non-cyclic view of history, which is the peculiar possession of the Biblical tradition.

The Christian approach to history is determined by the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. History is seen to have a beginning and an end, because it receives its "middle" in Him. His Incarnation is critically decisive for the individual and for the race. The history of individual man has meaning, only in relation to God in Christ, and the history of the race is significant to the extent that it finds fulfilment in Him.¹

Christianity's attitude to the Old Testament affords signal proof of its concern for history. The Buddha does not fit into a definite weltanschauung, in the same way as the Christ fulfils the history of the Old Testament. In this sense, Buddhism is

1. "the coming of Christ, His death and resurrection, constitute the fulfilment of history, not as the last term of a process of development, but as the concentration in one decisive historical moment of the factors determinative for all preceding history, through which, consequently, that history becomes not only meaningful, but in the full sense real". Dodd History and the Gospel. p.145.

Independent of history, while Christianity is integrally related to it. The Bible witnesses to the fact that the God and Father of Jesus, is also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is a God whose mighty acts in history are recorded in the pages of the Old Testament. These decisive encounters with man reveal the character of God, and also, the character of history. History is the vehicle which "carries" the purpose of God.

Through the covenant-relationships into which He enters with His People, God's purpose for man is seen to be that of Community. Man is called to live a life of love and fellowship with God, and with his neighbour. History is significant because it is the area within which God's call is heard, and man's response is made. It is critical, because it is in history that man has the responsibility of making his choice between God and "the Prince of this world".

In the Christian analysis of History, the presence of an Evil One is recognised. And the tragedy of human life is that man, as sinner, is actively seeking to frustrate God's purpose of Community. The story of the tower of Babel contains the eternally valid insight into the condition of Fallen man; for community, there

1. "What distinguishes the Buddhist canon so strikingly from the Christian Bible is the absence of Historical development". Dahlke p.25 Buddhism.

2. Amos 2.10 Deut 32

3. Isaiah 4.26 Rom. 8.28.

4. Gen 11.

is confusion; for understanding, there is divergence, and instead of love, there is hate. History is the co-existence of God's purpose of community in love, and the counter-purpose of defiance and enmity.

Jesus Christ is God's answer to the tragedy of history. The original purpose of community is fulfilled by this intervention of God, which indicates the serious nature of man's sin and rebellion, but at the same time substantiates the meaningfulness of history itself. Through God's action in Christ, man is restored to fellowship with God and his neighbour. Mankind is divided at Babel, and reconciled at Pentecost.¹ The failure of the Old Covenant does not detract from the glorious success of the New. The sovereignty of God in history is revealed by this act of restoration and reconciliation. His Kingly Rule is seen in His Ability to save fallen man, in Jesus Christ. When Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God, He refers primarily, to His power to restore man to fellowship with God, in His own Person. Christ both brings the Kingdom, and is Himself the Kingdom. It is in Him, and through Him,² that man is redeemed, and the life of community made possible.

Man lives "between the times" of Christ's First Coming, and His Second Coming to judge the quick and the dead at the end of

1. Acts 2

2. Col 1.20.

history. The eschatological outlook of the New Testament is the logical necessity of a lineal view of history. History has its beginning, and must have its end, in God. Jesus, the Word made flesh, is also the creative Word of Genesis, and the Final Word of the book of Revelation. The symbol of the Final Judgment indicates the Christian belief that history is meaningful. The final purpose of God will be revealed when He gathers up all things to Himself in Jesus Christ.¹

This framework of history reminds man of the urgent need for immediate decision. He lives his life "Now" within the three dimensions of the creation and the fall, the Incarnation and Redemption, and the Restoration in Jesus Christ. The Biblical cry, "Now is the day of salvation",² endeavours to bring home to man the fateful nature of his existence, at every moment of time. Man must decide between life and death, for community, or against community, "Now". Only when history is placed under the eschatological "Now" of the Gospel, is it rescued from meaningless inanity, and made decisively significant.

1. Eph 1.10.

2. 2.Co 6.2 "Now is the only aspect of time with which we are concerned" C.H. Dodd History and the Gospel.

This characteristic "Now" of Biblical thought is foreign to Buddhism. The teaching of samsāra prevents Buddhism from realising the critical nature of history. Besides, by the elaborate schematization of human beings into "rebirth categories" and "salvation groups",¹ Buddhism teaches that only a certain limited number of people in each age are capable of perceiving the truth of the Dhamma. This division of mankind inevitably affects the Buddhist "value-judgment" of the individual person. In any case, the significance of the individual is brought out more forcefully by the Christian teaching that, in the present time, "Now", all men are called to respond to the call of God in Christ.

In Buddhism, as in Hinduism too, the sense of life's continuity in an unending series, robs history of its serious character. For history becomes significant, only when each moment of time is fraught with issues of life and death seriousness. History is meaningful only when God meets man in a divine-human encounter, through which man can enter into community-"Now". In this event history can be, and is, fulfilled.

Finally, the Christian conception of history conclusively indicates the responsible character of history. When the difference

1. Buddhism in a Nutshell p.39



When man and God is "blurred", as in the atman-Brahman formula, when all historical existence is categorised as "dukkha", history becomes a "tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". In such a conception of history there is no place for responsible human action. For responsibility is possible only when man as man can respond to the call of God, and when the historical vehicle in which this dialogue between man and God takes place, is not given over to complete irrationality. The fact that man can respond negatively to God's call of love, reveals the latent tragedy of history, and it is to this aspect of history that the Buddhist doctrine of dukkha points. But to make this the only possibility, is to remove real responsibility from man, and to hand over history to sheer catastrophe!

The Character of Man's Existence.

The Buddhist Psychology of Man.

The Buddhist understanding of the nature of Reality, in terms of constantly changing Dhammas, and its evaluation of History as an everlasting cycle of sorrow, have a profound influence on the Buddhist analysis of man. Buddhist psychological investigation is not undertaken in the spirit of "pure science". Its motive is soteriological. It is conditioned by the assumption that the Buddhist judgments on reality and history are valid, and that they must be determinative, in the attempt to assess the exact nature of the constitution of man. As a result, Buddhist psychology is characterised by a severely practical approach to its subject. Life being what it is, man must seek to unravel the mystery of his nature, to enable him to overcome the tragedy of his existence.

Buddhist philosophy has to be placed in the main stream of Indian philosophical thought before it can be accurately interpreted. Its Psychology has also been influenced by other Indian systems. In particular, Buddhism shares a common psychological vocabulary with the Sankhya system; although their conclusions, which are controlled by philosophical principles, are divergent.

Buddhist psychology analyses man under two categories, Nāma (Mind) and Rūpa (Body). Although Nāma is not exactly translated into English by the word "mind", it does refer to the psychological and mental aspects of the human personality, while the word Rūpa describes the

1. Buddhism by Mrs Rhys Davids p.90.

2. Visuddhi Magga Ch 18. Warren p.185.

physical. Consequently, Nāmarūpa taken together comprise the psycho-physical organism. It is also the principle of individuation. Nāma is individual man, separate and distinct, as a nāmarūpa organism, from all other men. In this sense Nāma may be translated by the word "name", especially if it is remembered that the name of a man sets him apart from the rest of humanity because it acquires association with his character. Nāmarūpa distinguishes man, both in terms of outward form and inward meaning, and gives him personal significance.

Unlike modern psychologists, Buddhist thinkers are not unduly troubled by the problem of the relationship between mind and body. This is because the Buddhist analysis of reality into Dhammas enables them to think of man as a unified whole. No chasm exists between mind and matter; for the Dhammas may have a mental value from one point of view, and a material from another. As a psycho-physical unity, man consists of Dhammas, organised in a particular way, to help the mental and physical aspects of human life to function together.

Buddhism teaches that Nāma and Rūpa belong to each other in an integral manner. They eventuate together, and are inter-dependent.

"Form (rūpa) goes on when supported by Name (nāma), and Name when supported by Form" 1

Buddhaghosa illustrates the relationship between Nāma and Rūpa, by likening one to a blind man, and the other to a cripple. Apart, they are helpless; but if they agree to work together, the blind man mounting the lame on his shoulders, both of them would greatly

1. Visuddhā Magga Ch 18. Warren p. 185.

benefit.¹ Similarly, nāma and rūpa function together in human behaviour.

The Buddhist conception of mind differs very considerably from the usual one prevalent both in the East and in the West. Ordinarily, it is assumed that the mind is the more stable and constant factor in human life. This Buddhism denies,

"but this that we call mind, that we call consciousness, arises as one thing, ceases as another; whether by day or by night. Just as a monkey faring through the woods, through the great forests, catches hold of one bough, letting it go, seizes another; even so that which we call mind, consciousness, that arises as one thing, ceases as another, both by day and by night!"²

According to Buddhism, mind is in a perpetual state of flux. It is never the same. It would indeed be more sensible to regard the body as the element which contains some degree of permanency, than to think of the mind as having any lasting duration.

"but it were better, O priests, if the ignorant, unconverted man regarded the body which is composed of the four elements as an Ego (atta), rather than the mind. And why do I say so? Because it is evident, O priests, that this body, which is composed of the four elements, lasts one year, lasts two years, lasts a hundred years and even more. But that, O priests, which is called mind, intellect, consciousness, keeps up an incessant round by day and by night, of perishing as one thing and springing up as another!"³

and yet, in spite of this drastic reduction of mind into changing

1. Visuddhi Magga Ch 18. Warren p. 135.

2. Hundred Sayings Book 2. p. 66

3. Samyutta Nikaya 12.62. Warren p. 151. In support of this contention, Bosanquet "threw doubts upon the persistent identity of the individual throughout his life on earth—thus apparently regarding the subject as even less persistent than the bodily substance with which its life is carried on". Cosmic Problems Mackenzie p. 82.

phenomena, Buddhism is concerned to stress the importance of man's mind, both in creative activity, and in human behaviour. The Buddha reminds his disciples that man's mind, which is capable of conceiving great artistic creations, is in itself immeasurably greater than the things it is able to produce.

"Bhikku, have you seen a masterpiece of painting?" "Yes, Lord".
Bhikku, that masterpiece of painting is designed by the mind. Indeed, Bhikku, the mind is even more artistic than that masterpiece".1.

More important still, mind plays a vital part in human moral conduct. It is through the mind that man comes to understand the teaching of the Buddha, and it is by means of the mind that man applies this teaching to life. Through mind, man becomes the creative artist, and the master of his destiny.

2. ^{Through} "Consciousness, leads, rules, makes, all modes of mind,
And whoso speaks or acts with evil mind,
Him evil follows as the wheel the ox.
Consciousness leads, rules, makes, all modes of mind,
And whoso speaks or acts with a good mind,
Bliss like a faithful shadow follows him".2

The division of man into the two categories of mind and body, is only the first step in the minute psychological studies which Buddhist psychologists undertake, when investigating the nature of the human constitution. The classic Hinayana Buddhist analysis of man is contained in the doctrine of the five khandhās (aggregates). In reply to the question "what is nāma?", the answer is that it consists of the khandhās of feeling, perception, the aggregates,

1. The Expositor vol 1. p.86.
2. Dhammapāda. 1.2.

consciousness-these immaterial elements are known as Nāma. And rūpa is made up of the four basic elements of material existence. This description occurs repeatedly in the Pitakas,

"And the Blessed One spoke as follows-"I will teach you, O priests, the bearer of the burden, the taking up of the burden, and the laying down of the burden. And what, O priests, is the burden? Reply should be made that it is the five attachment-groups (khandhās). And what are the five? They are the form-attachment-group, the sensation-attachment-group, the perception-attachment-group, the predisposition-attachment-group, the consciousness-attachment-group. These, O priests, are the burden" 2.

The answer summarises the Buddhist teaching that Nāma consists of the four immaterial khandhās of vedanā(feeling), sannā(perception) sankhāra(the aggregates) and vinnānam(consciousness). These four, together with the fifth, rūpa, comprise the five khandhās of the human personality.

In many respects, the Buddhist analysis of mental processes is supported by the findings of modern psychology. Man becomes a self-conscious person (vinnanam), when he is brought into contact with the

1. Dhammasangani. 1309. p. 226. "tattha katanam nāmam? Vedanakkhandho, sannakkhandho, sankharakkhandho, vimmanakkhandho-asankhata ca dhatu-idam vuccati nāmam. Tattha katanam rūpam? Cattara mahābhuta catunam ca mahābhuttanam upadaya rūpam-idam vuccati rūpam"

2. Samyutta Nikaya. 22. 22. 1. Warren p. 159.

3. It is very difficult to give the exact meaning-content in English of the Pali word, sankhāra. Rhys Davids suggested the word "confections" as best conveying the Buddhist sense of synthesis. But Sankhāra is used in many different senses in the Pitakas. It can be applied to describe the whole of reality, (It includes everything of which impermanence may be predicted, or which is the same thing, everything which springs from a cause". Designation of Human Types. p. 2.). It can also mean all the five khandhās, taken together, to signify individual man. As one of the khandhās it has been suggested that it conveys the meaning of will (Jennings' The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha p 504) though admittedly, sankhāra translated as Will cannot bear the full weight attached to the word in modern psychology.

external world, and becomes aware of it through his sense organs. These sensations, (vedanā) organise themselves into percepts, (sannā) which again, through the process of ideation (sankhāra), makes self-conscious reasoning possible. This analysis may be found in the most elementary psychology books to-day, and yet, it is remarkable that these mental processes should have been described so accurately by Buddhist psychologists, more than two thousand years ago!

The separation of the human person into the five khandhās claims to be exhaustive, for while it is true that the Abhidhamma Pitaka further reduces human consciousness into no less than fifty-seven sub-divisions, the main intention of the appraisal is made clear at this stage. The description of man in these psychological and physical terms is meant to be a complete one. The five khandhās are the total human personality. Man consists of these five khandhās -nothing more!¹

The exact nature and value of the khandhās, therefore, require to be stated. For as the human person is made up of them, it is important that one should understand their real significance. In the Buddhist evaluation of reality, these words occur as a constantly repeated dirge, "Impermanent are all conditioned things". The Buddhist reduction of man into the five khandhās is made with the

1. "The formula of the five khandhās, as the expression of the doctrine of no-soul.... forms with the Chain of Causation, the chief theoretical basis of Buddhism". The Life of Buddha by E. J. Thomas. p. 203.

deliberate intention of proving that man shares in the transient character of all reality. For the khandhās, which are conditioned, because of their dependent origination, are evanescent and impermanent. They are fraught with ill, "the fivefold aggregate is sorrowful"¹. They lead inevitably to rebirth.

In support of the contention that man consists solely of the five khandhās, Buddhism sets out to prove that every idea man has about himself is related to one or more of the khandhās. The idea of the self, as a permanent entity, is the result of man's mistaken identification of one of the khandhās with the self.

"When one says "I" what he does is that he refers either to all the khandhās combined or to any one of them, and deludes himself that that was "I". Just as one could not say that the fragrance of the lotus belonged to the petals, the colour, or the pollen, so one could not say that the rūpa was "I", or the vedanā was "I", or any other of the khandhās was "I". There is nowhere to be found in the khandhās "I am".²

The Buddhist analysis stresses the transient character of the khandhās in order that man may realise the folly of imagining that anything so impermanent can contain an abiding self. Only thus

1. "pañc' upadāna-kkhandha pi dukkhā". Vin. 1.13.

2. Samyutta Nikaya 3.130. Also "whether devotees or Brahmans regard the self (attānam) they all regard it as the five grasping aggregates. (pañc' upadānakkhandhe). Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha. by J.G. Jennings. p.508.

will man learn that his life is fleeting and temporary.

"Form(rūpa), O priests, is not an attā (permanent entity). For if now, O priests, this form were an attā, then would not this form tend towards destruction, and it would not be possible to say of form, "Let my form be this way, let not my form be that way!". But inasmuch, O priests, as form is not an attā, therefore does form tend towards destruction, and it is not possible to say of form, "Let my form be this way, let not my form be that way"...as respects all sensations whatsoever....all perceptions....all predispositions...all consciousness...the correct view, in the light of the highest knowledge is this: "This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my attā".¹

The full significance of the Khandhās is brought out in the conversations of Nagasena with King Milinda, and, because they throw light on many aspects of the doctrine, they deserve to be quoted rather fully-

"And Milinda, the King, spoke to the venerable Nagasena as follows-

"How is your reverence called? Bhante, what is your name?"

"Your majesty, I am called Nagasena; my fellow-priests, your majesty, address me as Nagasena; but whether parents give one the name Nagasena, or Surasena, or Virasena, or Sinhasena, it is, nevertheless, your majesty, but a way of counting, a term, an appellation, a convenient designation, a mere name, this Nagasena; for there is no Ego (attā) to be found here".

Then said Milinda, the King.

"Listen to me, Lords, ...Nagasena here says thus, "There is no Ego to be found here". Is it possible, pray, for me to assent to what he says?"

And Milinda, the King, spoke to the venerable Nagasena thus, "Bhante Nagasena, if there is no Ego to be found, who is it then furnishes you priests with the priestly requisites, robes, ...in that case there is no merit, there is no demerit, there is no one who does, or causes to be done, meritorious or demeritorious deeds, neither good nor evil deeds can have any fruit or result. Bhante Nagasena, neither is he a murderer who kills a priests, nor can you priests have any teacher, preceptor, or ordination. When you say "My fellow-priests",

"your majesty," "address me as Nagasena".What then is this is this Nagasena?Pray,Bhante,is the hair of the head Nagasena?"

"Nay,verily,your majesty"

"Is the hair of the body Nagasena?"

"Nay,verily,your majesty".

"Are then,bhante,form,sensation,perception,the predispositions, and consciousness,unitedly,Nagansena?"

"Nay,verily,your majesty"

"Is it then,bhante,something besides form,sensation,..consciousness,which is Nagasena?"

"Nay,verily, your majesty"

"Bhante,although I question you very closely,I fail to discover any Nagasena.Verily now,Bhante,Nagasena is an empty sound.What Nagasena is there here?Bhante,you speak a lie, a falsehood,There is no Nagasena".

Then the venerable Nagasena spoke to the King as follows-

"Your majesty,you are a delicate prince,an exceedingly delicate prince,and if,your majesty,you walk in the middle of the day on hot,sandy,ground ,...your feet become sore,your body tired,the mind oppressed,and the body-consciousness suffers.Pray,did you come afoot,or riding?"

"Bhante,I do not go afoot,I came in a chariot".

"Your majesty,if you came in a chariot,declare to me the chariot.Pray,your majesty,is the pole the chariot?"

"Nay,verily,bhante"

"Is the axle the chariot?"

"Nay,verily,bhante"

"Is the chariot-wheel,the banner-staff,...the chariot?"

"Nay,verily,bhante"

"Is it then something else besides pole,wheels,..which is the chariot?"

"Nay,verily,bhante"

"Your majesty,though I question you very closely,I fail to discover any chariot.Verily now,your majesty,the word chariot is an empty sound:what chariot is there here?

Your majesty,you speak a falsehood,a lie.There is no chariot here.....Listen to me,my Lords,Milinda the King,says thus,

"I came in a chariot",and being requested,"Your majesty, if you came in a chariot,declare to me the chariot",he fails to produce the chariot.Is it possible,pray,for me to assent to what he says?"

"...Bhante Nagasena,I speak no lie: the word "chariot" is but a way of counting,term,apellation,convenient designation, and name for pole,axle,chariot-body,and banner-staff".

"Thoroughly well,your majesty,do you understand a chariot. In exactly the same way,your majesty,in respect of me,Nagasena, is but a way of counting,...for the hair of my head.. form,sensation,..consciousness.But in the absolute sense there is no Ego(atta)to be found.And the priestess Vajira said as follows in the presence of the Blessed One,

"Even as the word of "chariot" means
That members join to frame a whole;
So when the groups (khandhas) appear to view,
We use the phrase "a living being". 1.

Nagasena clearly states the real purpose of the khandhas teaching. Man is man, precisely because of the five khadhās, which have been brought together in a special relationship. His person is the consequence of their co-existence; and, were they to be separated, no person would remain!

Actually, whether man is described as a nāmarūpa organism, or as the five khandhās, he is made up of ever-changing bundles of dhammas, and nothing more. The psychological investigation is undertaken in order to make this quite clear. Buddhaghosa repeatedly warns his readers against the mistake of imagining that the divisions nāma and rūpa, give any permanency to man. They come into existence like sound, produced by the lute, which does not come from any "store", and does not go to one either. Nāma and Rūpa are convenient ways of referring to the individual person. The khandhā teaching re-emphasizes the fact that man is subject to the law of impermanence and suffering.

The Buddhist Doctrine of Anattā.

One important aspect of the Buddhist teaching on the character of man's existence remains to be considered. Buddhism asserts that man, as the five khandhās, is part of the whole of reality, in its bhava (becoming) process. Does this analysis claim to be a completely

1. Milindāpanha .Warren p.129.

2. Warren p.126.

exhaustive one? Or does the fierce repudiation of every attempt to identify the Self (attā, the real human person) with all, or any, of the khandhās, imply that the real ground of the Self, while not discoverable in historical existence, can be found elsewhere? Many Hindu thinkers have argued that this is the case. They have urged that the Vedānta, too, refuses to equate the Self (ātman, Sanskrit, attā, Pali) with any temporal act or process, and that, as in the Vedānta, so also in Buddhism, the denial is made in the interests of a more positive conception of the Self.

On the other hand, orthodox Buddhist thinkers have maintained, with a remarkable unanimity, that the exact opposite is true. They have contended that the Anattā (no-soul) doctrine, ^{is} either consciously or unconsciously, a direct challenge to the teaching of the Upani- shads, and that it is a contradiction of Vedānta thought. As the Anattā doctrine is the central concept of Buddhist anthropology, it will have to be examined in some detail, and, because it is essentially a negative affirmation, it can only be rightly evaluated and assessed, by way of contrast with the Vedānta ātman (soul) doctrine, to which it is opposed.

The cardinal tenet of the Vedānta, is the assertion, "Man is ātman". Every man is an abiding and persistent entity, which lasts through all change.

"If there is one doctrine more than another, which is

characteristic of Hindu thought, it is the belief that there is an interior depth to the human soul, which, in its essence is uncreated and deathless, and absolutely real". 1.

In the Katha Upanishad, Yama, the God of death, answers Naciketas' question, "Does the soul exist or not after death?" by saying, "Believing that this world exists and not another, the careless youth is subject to my sway. The wise man is not born, he does not die, he is not produced from anywhere". Man, so the argument runs, is Ātman; he is an immortal soul by nature, and is not subject to the law of change and decay.

Closely connected with this affirmation, is the teaching that this Ātman is of the same essence as the Brahman, the ultimate principle in the universe.

"The fundamental idea of the Upanishads is that, underlying the exterior world of change, there is an unchangeable reality, which is identical with that which underlies the essence in man" 2.

"In me the universe had its origin,
In me alone the whole subsists.
In me it is lost - this Brahman
The Timeless, it is I myself" 3.

Man is the Brahman, for as ātman, he and the Brahman are one. This is the main affirmation of Vedanta thought;

"Sankhara's advaita or non-duality, has for its central thesis the non-difference between the individual self (ātman) and Brahman". 4.

But this ātman is sharply distinguished from the normal

1. Radhakrishnan Eastern Religions and Western Thought p. 33

2. Das Gupta Indian Philosophy Vol 1. p. 42

3. Kaivalya 19

4. Radhakrishnan. idem p 87.

psycho-physical organism. The fundamental error of man is his failure to realise that the empirical self is not the real self. Only ignorance of his real nature keeps man entrapped in the world of endless samsāra. In the Mundaka Upanishad, a distinction is made between two kinds of birds, dwelling on the same tree; one of them is eating the sweet fruit on the tree, while the other looks on. The former is compared with the empirical self and the latter with the transcendental Self. The ātman is untouched by the actions and conditions of this life, and only a false and illusory sense of the reality of this life keeps man enchained to the wheel of samsāra.

Traditionally, the Buddhist doctrine of anattā has been understood to be utterly opposed to the Hindu doctrine of Ātman. The Tripitakas record the uncompromising struggle of the Orthodox, to maintain the revolutionary new teaching of anattā against every

1! "Buddhism denies the existence of an unchanging or eternal soul" Narada Thera Buddhism in a Nutshell p30.

and H. Oldenberg writes "Ein bleibendes Selbst-jener Atman, der für das Denken der alten Zeit die Gewisheit aller Gewisheiten war- ist in diesem Treiben nicht zu finden. "Wenn nun, ihr Jünger" sagt Buddha, "ein Selbst (attā-skt ātman) und etwas dem Selbst Zugehöriges (attaniya) sich in Wahrheit und Gewisheit erlassen läst, ist dann nicht, ihr Junger, der Blaube, der da sagt; dies ist der Welt, und ich das Selbst: dies werde ich sterbend werden, fest, beständig, ewig, unwandelbar; so werde ich in Ewigkeit bestehen". "Ist das nicht bloss leere Torheit?". "Wie sollte es nicht, Herr, bloss leere Torheit sein?". Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus p. 298.

attempt to minimise its implications. Buddhism fiercely repudiates every attempt to find a permanent entity for man, either in the empirical psychological organism, or in an area that claims to transcend the physical. ¹ Hinduism finds the stable and the constant factor of human existence, in the innermost depths where the ātman resides, but Buddhism consigns the ātman within, to impermanence and sorrow. It suggests that man seeks for something permanent, driven on by the desire for life, and that this very search is part of natural man's delusion. The Buddha refers to an individual who cherishes this opinion, thus,

"there is the world, there is soul. In a future state I shall be permanent, stable, lasting, untouched by change, existing on, ever the same" p 95

then he comes to hear from an Awakened One, of the Dhamma which sweeps away all such theories, and leads to the renunciation of existence in every form, and he thinks within himself, p 96

"Then I shall be cut off! I shall perish! Then I shall be no more!" and he grieves and mourns and laments, and beats his breast in dismay.

"Could ye, O priests, own any possession whereof the ownership might remain permanent, stable, lasting, untouched by change, existing on, ever the same? Know ye of any such possession?" p 96 f-51

"Indeed, we do not, Lord".

"Well said, Bhikkhus, neither do I see any such possession.

But, Bhikkhus, cleave ye to any soul-belief (atta-veda) whereby sorrow comes no more to him who cleaves, neither lamentation,

1. "The Upanishads did not try to establish any school of discipline or systematic thought. They revealed throughout the dawn of an experience of an immutable Reality, as the Self of man, as the only abiding truth behind all changes. But Buddhism holds that this immutable Self of man is a delusion and false knowledge". Das Gupta Indian Philosophy Vol 1. p.111.

"nor sorrow, nor grief, nor despair? Know ye of any such soul-belief?"

Indeed, we do not, Lord"

"Well said" Bhikkhus, neither do I perceive any such belief. Since such things as a Me and a Mine are really and truly nowhere to be found, what of the theory, "There is the world. There is soul. In a future state I shall be permanent, stable. Is not such an idea an utterly and entirely foolish one?"

"How should it not be, Lord?" 1.

The inevitable consequence of the denial of the ātman is, either that the accompanying Hindu belief in the Brahman is positively repudiated, or that the concept is not treated seriously. There is a reference to the Brahman concept of the Vedānta, in its more pantheistic form, in the Alagaddūpanna. The disciples are warned against the temptation to indulge in various speculations about the nature of the world, and ^{of} the soul. Among these is

"the speculative tenet that the world around me is the Self which I shall hereafter become, eternal and permanent, ... But if, really and truly there is to be found neither Self nor anything of the nature of the Self, is it not mere absolute folly to hold the speculative view that the world around me is the Self into which I shall pass hereafter?" .. "How could it not be mere absolute folly?" 2.

Orthodox Buddhism does not deny the existence of Brahma, or of other gods, or of the world of the spirits. What it does deny is the suggestion that any deity has eternal being, and absolute power. The world of the gods, no less than the world of men, is subject to the law of karma. Existence in every realm, moves forward, constrained by the urge after life. The only difference is that,

1. Majjhima Nikāya Alagaddūpanna. S. B. B. Vol 5. pt. 1.

2. S. P. B. Vol 2. pt 1. p 95.

in the spirit worlds, the life-urge creates more attenuated forms than in the worlds of matter.

In the Brahma-jala Sutta, the Buddha indicates the manner in which the idea of creator and creature arises. The world system disintegrates at the end of a cyclic era, and the beings of the world live in the world of radiance. When a new world system evolves, one Being enters the palace of Brahma alone. In his loneliness, he wishes that other beings would join him, and, simultaneously, with his desire for company, other Beings, whose period of merit is also exhausted, appear in the palace. The first Being to appear thinks he created the others, and they, in their turn, falsely attribute their existence to him!

"The Tathagatha knows that these speculations thus arrived at (about the soul, brahman, etc) thus insisted upon, will have such and such a result, such and such an effect on the future condition of those who trust in them. That he knows, and he knows also other things far beyond, and having that knowledge he is not puffed up, and thus, untarnished, he has, in his own heart, realised the way of escape from them; has understood things as they really are, the rising and passing away of sensations, their sweet taste, their danger, how they cannot be relied on, and not grasping after any, he, the Tathagatha, is quite free". 1.

Existence in all the worlds takes place because of desire. The Dharma of the Buddha enables man to see that there is no real basis for the belief in an ātman or Brahman. The two conceptions are obsessions of the diseased-mind of man.

1. S.B.B. Vol 2. Brahma-jala Sutta.

Man in the Stream of Becoming.

Rejecting the Hindu doctrine of the ātman, and defining the character of man in terms of the Khandhās, Buddhism places man in the stream of life, which is in a continual state of flux. Man's life must be understood as a bhava, a becoming. He shares the character of the whole of reality, which moves onward in an unceasing flow. For no two moments of his existence is a man the same person. His whole being changes, from moment to moment; nothing is static, nothing abides.

The conception of life as bhava, raised difficulties even among the followers of the Buddha. It appeared, by the denial of the continuity of personal existence, to endanger ethical living. Its atomistic division of life into ever-changing dhammas, seemed to make moral responsibility impossible.

"Bhante, if there is no Ego to be found, ..there is no merit, there is no demerit, ..neither good nor evil deeds can have any fruit or result" 2.

But Buddhism asserts that the problem arises, only because of man's failure to see that the doctrine steers a middle path between the false ideas of annihilationism and eternalism.

"Bhante, Nagasena," said the King, "is a person, when he is just born, that person himself, or is he someone else?"

1. Kindred Sayings 2. p.44. 130

2. Milindapanha Warren p 129 Also "Bhante, if it is not this same name and form that is born into the next existence, is not one freed from one's evil deeds?" Warren p.235. And Kindred Sayings vol2. p.18.

"He is neither that person", said the Elder, "nor is he some one else".

..."It was I, your majesty, who was a young, tender, weakly infant lying on my back, and it is I who am now grown up. It is through connection with the embryonic body that all these different periods are unified".1.

Orthodox Hinayana Buddhists argue the case for understanding man's temporal life in terms of becoming, with a certain degree of plausibility and significance. Even modern science would support the contention that man's constitution is never the same, but is always in a state of flux, and the refusal to recognise the existence of any hypothetical "self", beneath the external manifestations of the psycho-physical organism, receives the support of many contemporary psychologists. But the Buddhist process of Becoming is not limited to the span of one life. It is, instead, stretched out into infinite past and future time. The consideration of the Buddhist attitude to history revealed the fact that, together with the Hindu, the Buddhist felt the necessity of accepting the concept of samsāra. Yet, the acceptance of a cyclic view of life for the individual, appears to be strangely contradictory to the doctrine of anattā. Nevertheless, this teaching is of special importance, both for the Buddhist interpretation of the nature of man, and for its teaching on man's destiny.

For the Hindu, the belief in samsāra, and transmigration, creates no insoluble problems. The ātman has been involved in an infinite

number of past existences, and will continue to live an infinite number of future ones, until it attains release. Each existence is determined by the kamma (deeds) of the previous existences, and each present existence, in its turn, determines future ones. The continuity of life is provided by the ātman, which links up one existence with another, just as a thread connects the beads of a necklace. Buddhism however, denies the existence of the "thread", and consequently cannot explain the connection between the lives in any very obvious way.

But the position is clarified when one remembers that Buddhism teaches a kind of rebirth for each individual, moment by moment, even in the present existence. Nagasena tells the King that a "new" individual comes to being at each stage of the life series. This new individual is not the same person of the previous moment, nor is he someone completely different. Nevertheless, he appears to be satisfied that there is real continuity between the two persons, although there is no attā, or substratum, to provide the link between them. Nagasena uses the same kind of argument in support of the Buddhist contention that man's life, as a bhava existence, is connected with the past, and will be connected with the future.

"Said the King, "Bhante Nagasena, does rebirth happen without anything transmigrating?"

"Yes, your majesty, rebirth takes place without anything transmigrating"

"Give an example"

"Do you remember, your majesty, having learnt as a boy some verse or other from your professor of poetry?"

"Yes, bhante, I do".

"Pray, your majesty, did the verse pass over (transmigrate) to you from your teacher?"

"Nay, verily, bhante"

"In exactly the same way, your majesty, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating". 1.

When it is realised that Buddhism endeavours to prove that man's life is a continued dying and being born again, the reasons for the silence of the Buddha on some occasions, when he was questioned about the nature of the Self, are more easily understood. Vacchagotta asks,

"How is it, Lord Gotama? Is there a self?.. at these words the Exalted One remained silent.

"Or, Lord Gotama, is there not a self?" and for the second time the Exalted One remained silent.

And when the wandering monk had departed, Ananda asks

"Why, Lord, has the Exalted One not answered the question put to him by the wandering monk, Vacchagotta?"

"If, Ananda, to the question.... "Is there a self?" I had answered, "There is a self", I should have been agreeing with the ascetics and Brahmins who teach everlastingness, and if to the question, "Is there not a self?", I had answered "There is no self", then I should have been agreeing with those ascetics and Brahmins who teach annihilation. If to the question "Is there a self?" I had answered "There is a self" would that have been in agreement with the knowledge of the non-selfness of all things?"

"No, Lord".

"If to the question, "Is there not a self?" I had answered "There is not a self", the infatuation of the infatuated Vacchagotta would have become greater. Alas I had a self, and now I have it not". 2.

1. Milindapanha. 71. 15. Warren p. 234.

2. Samyutta Nikaya in the Middle Way Vol 20 No 3. p. 54.

The Buddha does not remain silent in the interests of a Self, which defies human description because of its transcendent character. He refuses to speak because Vacchagotta is so obsessed with the idea of the Self, that he is obviously not prepared to understand the true Buddhist attitude to his question!

The principle of Dependent Origination explains the exact manner in which bhava takes place. Man's life as a bhava, is divided into past, present, and future time. Twelve Nidānas (links and causes) show the necessary relations which exist between these main stages in human life. This Chain of twelve links is often represented by the picture of a Wheel, containing symbolic depictions illustrative of the work of each nidāna in the series-

- "On ignorance (blind man with a stick) depends karma, (a potter with his wheel)
- On karma depends consciousness, (a monkey with flowers in his hand climbing a tree)
- On consciousness depends name and form, (rūpa a ship, and nāma the four passengers, feeling, perception, aggregates and consciousness)
- On name and form depends the six organs of sense, (empty house)
- On the six organs of sense depends contact, (man and a woman embracing)
- On contact depends sensation, (man with an arrow in his eye)
- On desire depends attachment, (woman giving drink to a seated man)
- On attachment depends existence, (woman with child)
- On existence depends birth, (woman in child birth)
- On birth depends old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair. Thus does this entire aggregation of grief arise! (man carrying a corpse to the cemetery) 1.

1. Samyutta Nikaya. 22.90.17. (also Warren p.166)

Avijjapaccaya Samkhāra, Samkhārapaccaya vimānam,
Vimānampaccaya nāmarūpam; nāmarūpampaccaya salayatanam;
Salayatanampaccaya phasso; phassapaccaya vedanā;
Vedanāpaccaya tanhā; tanhāpaccaya upādānam;

Avijjā(ignorance) is the "prior incalculable limit",and the originating principle of life itself.The symbol of the blind man with a stick,presents a pitiable spectacle of helpless groping, which indicates what life itself is like.

Avijjā and Karma(The Samkhāras,Activities) belong to the Past of each man's life.The uninitiated may believe that the conditions of any man's present existence can be explained in terms of hereditary and environmental factors,but the wise know that these are but the "effects" of a man's past karma.This alone determines the character of each man's appearance on the stage of history. The picture of the ship vividly illustrates the Buddhist conception of life as a journeying on,a bhava ,a becoming.The kind of vessel each man sails in,is conditioned by the past,but the presence of vimāna(consciousness) as the pilot,reminds man of his high responsibility for the course the ship will take on its present voyage.

The driving force for the voyage is tanhā,desire.Karma decides the kind of existence each man lives,but it is tanha which decides the fact of life itself.Under its influence,man acts;and these actions,performed in the present,influence the circumstances of his future life.As long as tanhā remains,the Wheel will revolve inexorably.It will only stop when tanhā itself,the élan vital of existence,is put to flight.

"Upādānappaccaya bhavo,bhavapaccaya jati,
Jatipaccaya jaramaranam;sonapariđevadukkha,
Domanssupayasa sambhavanti"

The Problem of the Self and Personal Identity.

Critics of the orthodox interpretation of the word anattā have urged that there are a great many texts in the Tripitaka itself which undoubtedly appear to contradict the conclusion that man is anattā and nothing more. They have not been slow to point out that the entire emphasis of Buddhism on the need for the traveller of the Magga(Path) to rely on himself for salvation, and to exercise self-discipline and self-control, contradicts the more negative conclusions of Hinayana orthodoxy.

"Do ye abide, brethren, islanded by the Norm(Dhamma)
taking refuge in the Norm, seeking refuge in none other". 1.
and

"Oneself is the refuge of oneself; what else could
refuge be? With oneself fully controlled, one obtains
a refuge hard to gain". 2

But the commentators warn the readers of the Pitakas against any interpretation which would suggest that there was an inner contradiction in the text itself. They argue that the reference

1. Kindred Sayings vol 3. p.47.

2. Dhammapada 5.160. (Unfortunately, the word attā falls an easy victim to the interests of "theorists"! Scholars in the orthodox tradition maintain that often it means the "individual man" and nothing more. Others have insisted that it refers to the atman of the Vedanta, or to the idea of immanent deity. Mrs Rhys Davids translates Dhammapada 379 "The man should by the self incite the self", and then there are unmistakable Vedanta tones in the passage. But the Pali has no article before the atta, and Warren translates it as "Ego", which again gives an entirely different connotation to the word!

to the Self, and the doctrine of anattā, are by no means incompatible concepts; especially when this self is placed within the main stream of Buddhist thought. Although the injunction, "Seek the Self", is definitely soteriological, the self here does not refer to the attā of Vedānta thought. Man is urged to look within, so that he may understand his true nature, and realise the utter folly of imagining that anything so impermanent, can have the character of attā-hood.

On the other hand, in several instances, the word is used merely as the normal term of every day conversation, when man is referred to, either as an individual or in the group. The Buddha is compelled to employ the word in the generally accepted sense, when speaking to the masses, who assumed the reality of the individual self.

"Because it is grasped by foolish people, as this body or this collection of the five aggregates is my Self, therefore the bodily frame and the fivefold aggregates is called the "Self-state" (attabhava) 1

and the explanation is given,

"The Buddhas have two kinds of discourses, the popular and the philosophical. Those relating to a being, a person, a deva, a brahman, and so forth, are popular discourses; those relating to impermanence, ill, soul-less, the aggregates, the elements, the senses, the application of mindfulness, the intent contemplation, and so forth, are discourses on highest meaning" 2.

Clearly then, all such references to the self are to be understood

1. Expositor vol 2. p. 404.

2. Devatae Commentary. (P.T.S.) p. 41.

in a strictly pragmatic way. For ordinary practical purposes, the usual interpretation is both valid and necessary. Only the initiates can discriminate between the "self-delusion" of the masses, and the insight into the self's entirely temporal character, which those who travel the Magga, receive.

Consequently, it is a grave mis-understanding of the teaching of the Buddha, to place any serious value on these references to the self. For these in no way substantiate the teaching of the Vedanta; at the most, they imply the refusal of Buddhism to countenance any attempt on the part of man to seek assistance from a divine agency, by repeatedly emphasizing the need for man to work out his own salvation. To interpret them in any other way, is to play traitor to the entire content and central emphases of Buddhist thought.

But one other problem remains. If man's whole life is a continuous process, in which no self or subject is present, how then can the undeniable sense of Personal continuity and identity, and the equally real phenomenon of memory, be accounted for? Buddhism believes that the answer to this problem is to be found in the elaborate laws of Relations, which are laid down in the Patthana.¹ Life is governed by certain laws of relationship, so that, whenever one facet in the human constitution appears, it inevitably results in the simultaneous appearance of the other constituent parts. It is the constancy of relationship between the various component khandhās, which provides

1. The seventh book of the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

the illusion of personal identity, and also makes memory possible.

Buddhist scholars assert that the Patthana, which treats of related modes of existence, is the only adequate defence for a Humean philosophy, which reduces both mind and matter into constantly changing sensations, in which nothing whatever of a permanent or stable factor exists.

"a word on the anattā theory, which forms the central doctrine of Buddhist philosophy. Berkeley, the greatest idealist of the West, reduced matter to a mere group of qualities, and proved that the hypothetical substance or substratum, in which the qualities are supposed to inhere, is a metaphysical fiction. But the mind-stuff proved refractory to his logical crucible. Hume, however, was sceptical as to the existence of this very mind-stuff, for, whenever he tried to catch himself he always "tumbled on a particular perception". But both Berkeley and Hume were forestalled, twenty-three centuries ago, by the Buddha, who had "got rid of that shade of a shadow of a substance by pushing the Berkeleyan arguments a step further to their rigid, logical, conclusion. If Hume stands refuted to-day, it is probably because Humean philosophy does not contain the elaborate "Laws of Relations" (Patthana) which the Buddha propounded and expounded in the valley of the Ganges, two centuries before Aristotle sowed the seed of the "Association Philosophy".2.

Again,

"In the Buddhist view, both the subject and the object are alike transitory, the relation alone between the two impermanent correlates remain constant. This constancy of Relationship which, according to our tentative definition, is consciousness itself, gives rise to the erroneous idea of Personal Identity".3.

1. Hume "Treatise on Human Nature" "when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I find nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions"

2. Compendium p. 6-7

3. idem p 11

This attempt to state the Hinayana Psychological and Philosophical understanding of the constituent parts of the human person might well be brought to a conclusion with a quotation from the same writer, in which the doctrine of anattā is stated with clarity and vigour.

"In Buddhism there is no actor apart from action, no percipient apart from perception. In other words there is no conscious subject apart from consciousness. Indeed the subject loses itself in the very relation of which it has been supposed, in and by our tentative definition, to be a correlate. Whenever therefore the word "subject" occurs in this essay, it must be understood to mean, not the self-same permanent conscious subject, but merely a transitory state of consciousness."

"The object of the profound analysis known as Abhidhamma is to show generally that such a state of consciousness is no simple modification of mind-stuff, and, above all, that there is no soul or ego which is apart from the state of consciousness; but that each seemingly simple state is in reality a highly complex compound, constantly changing and giving rise to new combinations". 1.

1. Compendium p.7.

The Biblical Psychology of man.

The Bible is concerned, primarily, with the character of God, and the nature of the demands He makes on men. It spends very little time dealing directly with the problem of human psychology. Nowhere in the Bible is there a comprehensive statement on psychology, in the manner which is common to many Buddhist writers. The references to the physical and mental constitution of man are made incidentally. This characteristic of the Biblical outlook sounds the necessary note of warning—a correct "scientific" appraisal of human psychology is not a priority concern in the Bible. Consequently, the Biblical estimate of man has nothing to do with empirical psychology. Nevertheless, the Bible does employ a "psychological vocabulary", and the words used to describe man provide important source material for an understanding of some of the significant things that the Bible has to say about him.

The Bible describes man from two different standpoints. When it wants to emphasize the frailty and weakness of man, he is referred to as a "creature of dust"¹ and "flesh"² (basar in the Old and sarks in the New Testament). These words stress the fact of man's dependent existence and finite character, in contrast to the eternal Being and independent existence of God. But the difference between the rest of creation and man is brought out equally emphatically in the words

1. Gen 2.7. Ps. 30.9.
2. Gen 6.12. Is. 40.6.

nephesh(living being)¹ and psyche(soul)², for these convey the impression of man's transcendence of mere temporal existence.

But this difference in approach is not, as it is in Hinduism, a radical one. There is no suggestion that man's real character lies in the spirit, which has unfortunately got entangled in the snare of physical existence. The spirit of man is not entombed in the body.³ Physical life does not contain any inherent defect, but, as the creation of God, is both good and significant. It is true that, particularly in the thought of Paul, the "flesh" is the usual avenue through which temptation gains an entrance,⁴ but even where the weakness of the flesh is recognised,⁵ there is no wholesale denunciation of the flesh.⁶ There is no trace of Manichean dualism in the Biblical view of man.

Even more important, by way of contrast, is the fact that the Bible teaching on the meaning of nephesh and psyche differs from the ideas contained both in the Greek word, psyche, as it is used in Greek philosophy, and the Hindu word atman. Where the English word "soul" is used to translate either of these Biblical words, it is

1. Gen 2.7.

2. Jn. 12.27. Matt. 22.27.

3. Robinson The Christian doctrine of Man p 20.

4. Rom. 7.25.

5. Is. 40.6.

6. "The ultimate enemy of the spirit of God is not flesh, but the sin of which the flesh has become the weak and corrupted instrument". Robinson. idem 117.

important to remember that there is no suggestion that man participates, by right as it were, in the nature of the divine.¹ The Hindu atman and the Greek Psyche² are immortal, but in the Bible the soul which sins will die. Nor do the words refer to some special element in man transcending the psycho-physical organism, as in certainly the case when Hinduism refers to the atman.³ Generally, they are used to describe the whole person.

It is here that the psychology of the Bible is in marked contrast to Buddhist thought. The Bible looks on man as a single, and undivided personality. Man is spoken of, and addressed, as an integrated being. It refuses to separate one aspect of man's life from the rest of his person. It teaches that in, and through, every act of man, the whole person is involved. It is the total person who acts, and it is with this total person that the Bible is concerned.

"The same human being, who has been created by God, has physical, psychical, and spiritual functions, which as such are absolutely distinguishable, but which cannot be distinguished metaphysically. There is no anima immortalis but only a personality, destined by God for eternity, a person who is body-soul-spirit, who dies as a whole, and is raised as a whole".⁴

But the decisive Biblical word on the nature of man has to do with man's relation to God through the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches

1. "It should be noted by the reader of the English Bible that this word (nephesh) is often translated "soul" when all that it means in our usage is "life". W. Robinson idem. p.16.

2. Ez. 18.4.

3. Matt. 16.26.

4. E. Brunner Man in revolt p.363.

that in creation, man, as basar(flesh) becomes nephesh(living soul), only when the Spirit of God is breathed into him. This Spirit never becomes the property of man. It is perfectly possible for the ruach (spirit) of God to be withdrawn, and, were this to happen, man's essential character would disappear, and he would disintegrate. ¹

"Man is flesh, made from the dust of the earth, and animated by ruach(spirit) so that he is nephesh(living being). The ruach is given him by God; it is God's neshamah(breath). When this ruach returns to God, then man's dust returns to the earth, Ecclesiastes 12.7; Psalm 146.4. The division is man and flesh on the one side; God and ruach on the other".²

The work of the pneuma(spirit) in the New Testament is similar to that of the ruach in the Old. In fact, the ruach of creation and the pneuma which dwells in the heart of the New man in Christ, are the same spirit. It is only in, and through, this pneuma-possession ^{3.} that man has real existence.

Christian anthropology is really concerned with the problems which arise in connection with the relationship of man to God, through the Spirit. The Church's teaching on creation, the Imago dei, and Original sin, are doctrines which emerge as related problems. As these doctrines are the Christian alternatives to the Buddhist doctrines of Avidyā, Anattā, and Karma respectively, they demand attention at this point.

1. Ez 37.1-14.

2. N.H. Snaith The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament p.150.

3. 1 Cor. 11.14.

Creatio ex nihilo.

The opening words of the first book of the Bible, "In the beginning, God"¹, provide the necessary standpoint from which the whole Biblical record must be viewed, to be correctly understood. Whereas the approach of the Tripitaka is directed towards man, the Bible is concerned with God, and its concern for man, only arises as a consequence of its concern for God. The knowledge of man is given only together with the knowledge of God. This knowledge is always primary, and the determining principle, in man's attempt to understand himself. In Buddhist thought, man occupies the centre of the stage; in Biblical thought, man derives meaning only in relation to God. The Triune God, the Living Lord, is the supreme reality, and the main subject of Biblical conversation.

2

The world comes into existence by the Word of God. Man is created by, and through, the Word. The "beginnings" in Genesis must not be taken to refer to an event which happened in Time, for in the act of creation, time also commences. All questions regarding the "before creation" are unreal ones, for there cannot be a point before time, even as there cannot be a point when time is not. God is not, therefore, chronologically prior to creation, although logically, He is before it. The Genesis account of the origins is concerned with primal

1. Gen 1.1.

2. Gen 1.16. Jh 1.1.

history, and the narratives belong to Urgeschichte, not to ordinary historical existence.

The origin of man, therefore, also belongs to Urgeschichte, it does not form part of the scientific investigation of human origins. All scientific research, evolution, biology, geology, take place within the given framework of history. The Christian affirmation "God made man" precedes all inquiry into the origins of human life. Man comes from the hand of God, in the beginning, and all through historical existence.¹

The Christian assertion that man was made ex nihilo, and that he is a creature, run counter to almost every other religious understanding of human nature. Hinduism teaches that man is an emanation of the divine, and this belief is found in other religions too. Even popular psychological studies sometimes suggest that the essential Self in man, the self which stands outside the control of empirical forces, participates by right and by nature, in the eternal being of God."

"The saints, in moments of mystical insight, seem to discern beneath the personality, an inner self, which participates in the nature of ultimate reality, by whatever name they may call this "reality" ".2.

The idea that man is intrinsically divine, is the chief tenet of most monistic and mystical faiths. But the Bible describes the

1. Brunner Man in Revolt p.142.

2. V.H. Mottram The Physical basis of Personality. p.118 (Pelican)

origin of man, in entirely different terms. Man is a creature. He is human, and not divine. He is not immortal by nature. His life has meaning in, and through, the Word of God.¹

The Imago Dei.

The doctrine of the Imago Dei separates man from the rest of creation. Only man was made in the Image of God.² As creature, man shares the necessary limitations of creaturely existence; he is finite, and located in time and space, and his life is circumscribed by the lives of other human beings. Nevertheless, as a creature who is in the divine image, he is a unique creation. Unlike Buddhism, which refuses to draw a clear line of demarcation between man and the animals, the Bible emphatically places man in a relationship to God, which no other created being shares.

Man owes his existence to the sovereign Word of God, and being made in the Image of God, is called to a life of love and communion with Him. Because he is in the Image of God, man can respond to the Word of God. He is a creature who can be addressed, he can live responsibly. This imago dei is not something which man can take for granted or possess. It is, indeed, only his as long as he is upheld by the Word of God. Man does not possess the imago dei as the coin does the image of its sovereign, but as a pool of water "possesses" the image of the moon. Man is man, because God confronts him,

in

1. Ps. 119.50

2. Gen 1.26.

a relationship which makes it possible for him to know that he belongs to God. Man knows that God calls him, and claims him. Man can respond when God speaks. And it is only because God speaks to him that man can be described as being in the image of God.¹

The imago dei therefore, depends on the continuance of the relationship between God and man. It is given man, at every moment of his existence, even as he lives his life in dependence on God. In Buddhism, the illusion of Personal Identity is explained by means of the Laws of Relationship. But because nothing "outside" is recognised, these relations have no serious significance. In the Bible however, the relationship is guaranteed by God, who continually authenticates and upholds man. Once this is realised, then it becomes clear that the significant and constituent element in man, (be it called soul or atman) is determined, not by something within man himself, but by something without. God, and God alone, calls man into being; and man is soul, because he has been so called by God.

The search of man for soul, within the psycho-physical organism, is always destined to bring in inconclusive, and even negative results. Buddhism analyses man into bundles of ever-changing dharmas which are subject to the law of decay, and contain no permanent entity or soul. The verdict of psychology is, at best, undecisive, and, on the whole, even sceptical as to the existence of any element

1. E. Brunner idem p.93.

which transcends the empirically discoverable component parts of the human constitution. But, as the soul is not a semi-corporeal body, lying somewhere near the heart or the brain, all such searchings and analyses are meaningless. Man is soul only in relation to God. He is soul, because God has called him to fellowship and love. The creative word of God is the decisive factor. Man, made in the image of God, can hear the word of God and can respond. It is because he is a res-ponsible and addressable being, a creature who can answer when God speaks, that man is a creation sui generis.

Original Sin and the Fall.

The Genesis account of the origin of man in the image of God is the first, and the decisive insight of the Bible, into the character of man; the second describes man's present historical existence, and deals with man as a Fallen creature. The drama of the temptation by the serpent, and the fall of Adam and Eve, belong also to Urgeschichte. The Garden of Eden is not a particular locality which can be identified on a map of the world. These events take place before all spacio-temporal existence, and contain a true and valid description of what happens to man everywhere. Man, who is destined to live his life in loving dependence on God, chooses to revolt against Him.

The Bible estimate of the character of sin is contained in the words of the temptation, "Ye shall be like God"¹. Sin is pride. Man refuses to accept a dependent position, and seeks to declare his independence. He affirms his self-sufficiency. Inevitably, this fundamental sin has a profound effect on the whole of his person, making him a slave to the flesh, and bringing him into a position of hostility, and hatred, with regard to his fellow man. And equally certainly, as a rebellious creature, his moral insight is perverted and distorted. But the prior cause of these mal-adjustments, is his protest against God-the ever-present refusal of Promethean man to accept his creaturely and subordinate existence.

In the Bible, sin is always "theofugal"², it leads man away from God. In fact, the very "word" "sin" is exclusively a Biblical word, for its full meaning cannot be brought out in any other context. That is why it has no place in Buddhist thought. Sin describes man's attitude to God-"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned".

1. Gen 3.5.

2. Is. 1.2. Ps 51.4. M. Sneath writes "All these four prophets, then, are unanimous in thinking of sin as fundamentally a rebellion against God. Their most characteristic word is "pasha", the word which is translated "transgression" by the English versions, but actually means "rebellion". idem p.63.

The story of the Fall, and Original sin, indicates that in the mystery of man's repudiation of his dependent status, man has refused to recognise the only relationship in which it is possible for him to know that he has been created in the image of God. He has not answered God's word, and has failed to live responsibly. By his denial of the constitutive element of his being, he has shattered the framework of his existence. As a result, man as we know him now, is not only a creature made to live in communion and love with God, but he is also a fallen creature. And, regarded as fallen creature, he is no longer "soul", no longer truly person. It is to this terrible possibility of human existence, that Buddhism rightly points, in the doctrine of anattā. For man is not now constituted, as he was originally intended to be, when he came from the hand of God, his character has been disturbed by the tragedy of his revolt!

But man, even in his fallen state, remains a responsible creature. He is responsible, precisely because he is in revolt. His will is in opposition to the Will of His Maker. The Fall is not a once-for-all happening, it belongs to the constants of historical existence. It is an event which takes place in the life of every individual, with inevitable certainty. The fundamental contradiction of human existence, remains true for all men, at all times, everywhere. That this state of rebellion accurately describes man's permanent historical attitude, is the one great enigma of human life. The

doctrine of the Fall expresses two logically irreconcilable strands both of which must be preserved, if the human situation is not to be falsely depicted. Man, created in the image of God, a responsible creature, is not inevitably bound to rebel against His Maker. Man, as fallen creature, must necessarily be a sinner! This is the final and irreducible paradox of human existence. To accept necessity, and deny responsibility, is to make life meaningless. To deny sin, is to repudiate the verdict of the Cross on human life.

The Christian doctrines of the Creation, the Imago dei, and the Fall, eventuate as a result of an insight into the character of man's nature, which is given to the Christian simultaneously with the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Torn from this essential relationship, they can only become caricatures of the Christian estimate of man. This means that only redeemed man can know the true meaning and significance of the doctrines that have just been considered. For-to-gether with the knowledge of becoming a New

1. Augustine's profound distinction between man, the original creation of God, as one who is "non peccare posse", Fallen man as "non-esse non peccare", and the Final state of the Redeemed as "non posse peccare" is still valid, especially if the concepts or states are not allowed to become historical "fossils".

Man in Christ, there is given to man to know the full extent of the tragedy of his fallen state, from which he has been redeemed by Christ.¹

When the Christian understanding of the origins of human life are isolated from the knowledge of man, which is given in Jesus Christ, the situation is falsified. For all these doctrines, to be correctly assessed and evaluated, have to be closely related to each other. The true character of man's existence cannot be contained in the doctrine of the Creation, unless it is balanced by a statement about the meaning of the Fall. Nor can man be described as a sinner responsible for his sin, without the remembrance that the very fact of responsibility points back to his creation in the Image of God. This knowledge of the Creation and the Fall comes only only by revelation.² Man knows that he lives his life in dependence on the Word of God, only when he hears the Word of God addressed to him, in Jesus Christ.³

1. "If a man has no consciousness of sin, he could not be a man, if he has consciousness of sin, he would not be a sinner". Brunner Man in Revolt.

2. "Not only do we know God by Jesus Christ alone, but we know ourselves only by Jesus Christ." Pascal Pensees. p.147 (Everyman)

3. Karl Barth The Doctrine of the Word of God p. 276.

A Note on the Problems of Evil, Adam, and Original Sin.

In the accepted treatise on the Christian doctrine of man, considerable importance is attached to these doctrines, which have been considered very briefly here. A more comprehensive survey would not have facilitated the attempt to state, and relate, the principle ideas of Buddhism and Christianity on the nature of man, and so it was not included in the main body of the argument.

The ultimate origin of evil is the biggest problem of Christian theology. Once the affirmations, "God is Omnipotent", "God is Beneficent", and "Evil is real", have been made, the problem becomes logically insoluble. However, at various periods in the history of the Church, theologians have endeavoured to reconcile them, and inevitably they have been compelled to use non-Biblical modes of thought, for the Bible offers no theoretical solution of the problem. In this matter, the Church Fathers have been greatly influenced by Greek speculative thought, where evil is regarded either as a mere absence of knowledge, as in Hinduism, or else is equated with finite existence as in Buddhism. Thomas Aquinas, who was considerably indebted to Aristotle, tends to look on evil as the mere absence of being, "the absence of some actuality or perfection which belongs to the full and proper nature of a particular thing" (Canon Quick The Gospel of the New World. p.20). Berdyaev, a theologian of the Orthodox Church, suggests that evil is "a necessary constituent of the world created in space-time" (Quick idem p.23). In Augustine, there is an unresolved conflict between his early Greek thought and the genuinely Biblical approach to the problem, in terms of sin. Among the Reformers there is a characteristic Biblical reserve and caution; for while the reality of evil is never questioned, no attempt is made to explain it in philosophical terms.

Various attempts have also been made to explain the doctrine of the Fall. Theologians have been especially concerned to provide a rationale for the relationship between Adam, the first man, and all other men. Paul's statement, which is uttered in a soteriological context, "As in Adam all die, ... so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I. Cor 15.20), provoked the keenest anthropological speculation among Church Fathers. The traditional solution was that Adam was humanity's legal representative, and that all men were affected by, and responsible for, Adam's sin, because they had a legal pre-existence in him. The answer created yet another problem, because it raised certain issues concerning the relation between God and each man's origin, which were keenly debated in the "Creationism or traducianism" controversy: What is the relation between God and the soul? Does God implant a soul into man at birth, or is the soul propagated in like manner to the body?

The problem of Original sin received the closest attention in the discussions between Augustine and Pelagius. Pelagius maintained that children were born free and sinless, and that they only sinned because of the bad example set them by others. Augustine taught man's necessary bondage to sin, and the helpless condition of the will of man, apart from God's grace. Sometimes, the Church has tended to support Augustine, and at others it has been frankly Pelagian. The majority of theologians have been content to accept an uneasy middle way between the extremes of both Augustinianism and Pelagianism.

In more recent times, several alternative theories have been offered on all these problems. Evolution appeared to be able to provide a fairly reasonable explanation of the origin of evil and sin, by suggesting that they were both the "residue" of an animal ancestry which, with the rapidly expanding development of social science and education, would soon disappear. N.P. Williams in his book "The Idea of the Fall and of Original Sin" suggested that evil could only be accounted for by postulating some kind of pre-cosmic revolt and fall.

But, when Christian theologians refuse, either to say with the Hindu that evil is unreal, or to agree with the Buddhist, that while evil is real, God is not, there can be no rationally satisfying explanation. The existence of a principle of evil, in a world controlled by a Good and Powerful God, is the first and last dilemma of the Christian Faith. And while the tension can be reduced by saying that the possibility of sin must accompany God's will to create a free and responsible community, to live with Him in love, the fundamental problem still remains.

A Summary.

The Buddhist believes that the tragedy of man's existence is life itself. Man is only a bundle of transient emotions and sensations, tossed to and fro, on a surging and suffering sea of becoming. The Christian believes that life, as the gift of God, is good and meaningful. But man, by his act of defiance against God, has brought tragedy into human life. They are agreed that man's present situation is a well-nigh desperate one, and both religions offer "ways of escape". Buddhism points to the Dhamma, as that which alone can solve the riddle of human life, Christianity looks to the Christ, as He who has the answer to all life's baffling mysteries. The Dhamma and the Christ, are the two central soteriological conceptions of the two faiths. But as Gotama, the Buddha, was the first historical person, to point the way to the Dhamma, it will be helpful to try to understand the significance of the Founders of Buddhism and Christianity, before considering more closely the teaching of the Buddhist Dhamma and the Christian doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ.

The studies on Reality, History, and the Character of man's existence, have helped to elucidate the Buddhist and Christian evaluations of the nature of man. The following chapters will be concerned with the problem of man's destiny.

The Buddha and the Christ.

Buddhism is a historical religion. In this respect, it differs from Hinduism, which refuses to recognise the real seriousness of historical existence. Every orthodox Hindu knows that the persons of Rama and Krishna are not "historical", they belong to the myth of religion. In the Gita, Krishna confronts Arjuna, who has asked for a vision of God, in the most bizarre of forms. The lesson is plain, Arjuna is told that God can never be visualized in any human or historical form. The word "avatar", which is the Hindu equivalent of the Christian word "Incarnation", literally means "an apparition". Rama and Krishna are "avatars of God, they are apparitions. They do not become "flesh" and dwell with men.

No serious historian has doubted the historicity of Gotama, the Buddha, Prince of the Sakyas. Only a definite human existence can

1. "There is then a "descent" (avatarana) of the Light of Lights as a light, but not as "another" light. Such a descent as that of Krishna or Rama differs essentially from the fatally determined incarnations of mortal natures that have forgotten who they are. It is indeed their need that now determines the descent, and not any lack on his part who descends. Such a descent is one of "che solo esso a se piece" and is not seriously involved in the form it assumes, not by any co-active necessity, but only in "sport" lila. A.K. Coomaraswamy Hinduism and Buddhism p. 31.

Incidentally, it is also worth noting that this writer, who claims that Hinduism and Buddhism are in all essential respects similar, is compelled to deny the historicity of the Buddha in order to substantiate his theory. "Buddha is only anthropomorphic, not a man" "It is true that the majority of modern scholars... suppose that this was not MAN, but a man, subsequently deified. We take the contrary view, implied by the texts, that the Buddha is a solar deity descended from heaven... his birth and awakening are coeval with Time" p. 50.

explain the abiding influence which his character and person have exercised on the mind and heart of millions of people. The strangely fascinating story of an Indian Prince, renouncing his kingdom, and leaving his family, to seek the Kingdom of the Dhamma, will never pall. The Tripitaka records leave one with the impression of a strong, rational, confident, winsome yet powerful, personality. They tell of the indelible impression the sight of disease, old age, and death, made on the mind of the Young Prince, and of his resolute intention to find some way of escape from the pain and burden of existence. One of the grandest and most inspiring pieces of descriptive prose in the literature of the world, is the account of his death, as described in the Maha-pari-nibbana Sutta. In any estimate of Buddhism, primary consideration must be given to the founder, Gotama himself. The continuing influence of Buddhism, through twenty-five centuries, has been due to the deep impression his life has made on his faithful adherents.

But, once the historicity of the Buddha is granted, the student is confronted by difficulties of another sort. Even the Tripitaka claims for the Buddha, which are modest, in comparison with those of Mahayana Buddhism, are hard to reconcile. One thing, however, is clear. The statements referring to the Buddha as a supernatural

being cannot be fitted into the ontological framework of Hinayana Buddhism. Yet such passages are undoubtedly present in the Pitakas. These claim for the Buddha, consciousness at birth, ability to answer any question, power to do what he wills; in other words, both omniscience and omnipotence. For Mahayana Buddhism, which teaches that the Gotama was an incarnation of the Eternal Buddha, these attributes have value and meaning, but they contradict orthodox Hinayana ontology.

On the whole, Hinayana thought tends to minimise these super-human descriptions of the Buddha. His status is often described as being that of a Primus inter pares. In several passages, it is stated that only a chronological priority—as the discoverer of a way not known before—makes him different from other Arahats.

"The Tathagatha, who being arahat, is fully enlightened, he it is who doth cause a way to arise which hath not risen before, who doth proclaim a way not proclaimed before, who is the knower of a way, who understandeth a way, who is skilled in the way—and now, brethren, his disciples are wayfarers who follow after him. That is the distinction, the specific feature which distinguishes the Tathagatha who, being arahat, is fully enlightened, from the brother who is freed by insight". 3.

Nevertheless, the texts consistently maintain that only one such Buddha can appear in any one era.

"The Buddha is the most precious, but also the rarest flower that can spring up out of the swamp of samsara". 4.

1. cf B. Keith Buddhist Philosophy. p.26.

2. Mahapadana Sutta. Nigama Nikāya (Dialogues of the Buddha)

3. Minor Sayings vol 3. p.58

4. Dahlke p.233.

and

"Of Sammasambuddhas there is always only one in his particular era-... Why is that? That is the law of actuality; just as it is the law of actuality that many plants can bear only one flower". 1.

But, in the final analysis, the status of the Buddha is a subordinate one. He is significant, not so much for what he is, as for The Way he has discovered. Dhamma (The Law of Actuality) is more important than the Buddha himself, for although he brings the Dhamma, he is not the Lord of the Dhamma. Law triumphs over persons, even in the case of the Buddha himself.

The subordinate position of the Buddha to the Dhamma is also clearly in evidence in the teaching that there have been many Buddhas in the past, and will be more in the future. The Dhamma will evolve its Buddhas, because Actuality wills it.

"The Buddha, by his nature, is not at all something unique. The process of awakening has run its course in numberless Buddhas before this historical Buddha Gotama; and it will run its course in the numberless Buddhas after him". 2.

The appearance of a Buddha is the consequence of growth, with endless sacrifice and renunciation, extending over many kalpas (eras) Bahlke defines the characteristic marks of the Buddha thus-

"He is one who has become the Doctrine; he is a process, a Prototype of Actuality, in which all is lived out- the transition from beginningless Ignorance to Knowledge, from beginningless suffering to Deliverance". 3.

1. Bahlke ibid p. 226.

2. ibid p. 225.

3. ibid p. 226. also Theravada ch 11. (C.E.B)

The Buddha is important as one who has gained enlightenment. He has understood the nature of the maker of the tabernacle of samsāra; he has broken all the chains of existence, because he has extinguished desire. He is the one, who has travelled to Nibbāna, the one who points out to men the cause of their suffering, and the way of deliverance from it. The Buddha is significant, as the one who proclaims the way, he is not the way itself. The final word is Dhamma.

"They who were Buddhas in the days of yore,
 And they who will be Buddhas yet to come,
 And he who Buddha is in this our day,
 Slayer of griefs for many multitudes,
 All these have ever lived or now do live
 Holding in reverence the Holy Norm (Dhamma)
 Ay, and in the days to come so will they live". 1.

Incarnate Lord.

Christian Faith has its roots both in History and in the Being of God. The polarity of Christian thought is contained in John's Prologue, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God", "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us". 2

1. Hundred Sayings vol 1.p.176.
 2. Jh ch 1.1. & 1.14.

The Church believes that Jesus of Nazareth was Himself the Word of God, the creative Word of Holy Scripture, the express image of the invisible God. He reveals the inner character of God Himself. He is the Word of creation and the Word of judgment. He is "very God of very God. This Word was made flesh (sarks), this Word became incarnate, in history. The use of the Greek word "sarks" to describe the incarnation of God in Jesus, emphasizes the complete and radical identification of Godhead, with human life, and material existence. The Church Catholic is agreed that in Jesus, faith meets One Who is both God and Man.

In this belief, the Church affirms that God has "broken through" into time and space in Jesus Christ. Man knows now that God is. He is no longer a mystical possibility, or a speculative hypothesis, but a Living Lord, who confronts men with His absolute claim in the Person of His Son. Man's knowledge, both of creation and redemption, has its source in this revelation of God in Christ. In Him, man knows both that he is created in the image of God and that he is a Fallen creature. He understands that because the creation was good, the incarnation was possible, and that because the creation lies in the Evil One, the incarnation was necessary.

Luke asserts that Jesus was born at the time of a census¹, and the Creed states that He was crucified under the Roman administrator, Pontius Pilate. These dates are the two ultimate terms of reference for Christian faith. The years 1 A.D. to 33 A.D. are central for history, and give it meaning and value. The fact of the Incarnation and the tragedy of the cross belong together, and determine both the origin, and the end, of human existence. Here, man receives the truest insight into the nature of human history. The Lord of history, dies in history, in order that history might be redeemed.² Through this act of the Redeemer God, man becomes a New Creation. And the Creator God and the Redeemer God are One Lord.

The historical character of Jesus Christ is of a much more profound and unique significance than is the historicity of the Buddha. In Buddhism, Gotama himself is not decisive and critical. Even as Hinduism affirms (incarnations) history, as Buddhism recognises

1. Lk. 2. 1.

2. "Jesus of Nazareth, die and suffered certain things at a certain point of history, whereby God redeemed the world". C.H. Dodd History and the Gospel . 18.

3. "There is an unbridgeable gap between a religion that despairs of the material world, and a religion that is built upon faith in an event by which the material world was not condemned but saved. It is in their view of history and the time-process that Christianity and Hinduism are most irreconcilably opposed. The incarnations of Hinduism give no significance to history as does the unique Incarnation of Christian belief." Penguin New Writing p.138. (No 29)

the value of the historical, but denies the Incarnation. Dhamma, and not the Buddha, is the final Norm.

In Christianity, the final reference is a Person, and that Person is the Christ of God. The eiachax (once-for-all) Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, is the determinative event for all men, everywhere. Christian faith is a relation to this Person. As against all forms of mysticism, Christianity teaches that God can only be met, in, through, and with, His Revelation in Jesus Christ. For in Him, God gives Himself to man.

All men must meet Jesus to meet God, yet to meet Jesus is not necessarily to meet the Christ of God. The Christ cannot be encountered save in the person of Jesus, but men may meet Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, and not perceive in Him, the Incarnate Lord of their lives. It is only through faith, that man meets the Christ in the historical Jesus. Where this happens, man discovers both that he becomes contemporary with Jesus of Nazareth, and that Jesus becomes his contemporary. The eternal significance of Jesus Christ, as Risen Lord, is that He is available to all men. And this availability is determined by the fact that he was available in history. Only when this is affirmed, is history given serious meaning. Man learns that he cannot discover the truth of history away from history. Yet, with this discovery, he also knows that the final meaning of life cannot be contained within the purely historical. It is found in a Person, who transcends history, even as He fulfils it.

Enlightenment and Revelation.

Dhamma is the ultimate norm of Buddhism. In a certain sense, the Buddha, as the quintessence of the Dhamma, is normative for the Buddhist; but his authority is derivative, for he himself is the product of the Dhamma. Consequently, although his "enlightenment" is the only one of its kind which is possible in a particular era, it is not really sui generis. For when men are responsive to the teaching of a Buddha, Dhamma, as the latent possibility in every man, becomes theirs from within.¹ Buddhist man is not asked to submit to the claims of a transcendent Lord, he responds to the inner behest of Dhamma. The truth of his existence does not come from without, it is an immanent principle, which wells up within, "Knowledge arises from the inside".² The Buddha's part in this process is purely maieutic.

"The Buddha's teaching, therefore, appears as the occasion, but not as the cause of the knowledge, which develops within each hearer, brought into efficacy by the suggestion of the Master's discourse".³

For the Christian, the Incarnation contains two equally important

1. "I explain, I declare the Law. If you walk as I explain, then ere long end in the present life, and by yourselves, you will learn fully, recluse, and having attained, abide in that unsurpassed (ideal)" Butta Pitaka Majjhima Nikāya Sutta 26. Jennings p. 525 of S. B. B. Y. p. 122

2. F. C. Jennings idem p. 32.

3. B. Keith idem p. 25.

*I am not satisfied with
it is said. It seems to me
that we usual in the
Buddha's biographies
a need a summary of the
teaching in the Buddha's
teaching. The teaching
of the Buddha is
the teaching of the
Buddha.*

facets of revelational truth. The first is that the Revelation of God comes to man from "without". Man cannot discover the truth of his existence from within. He cannot know the true source of his being, because, as fallen creature, he endeavours to live away from the centre of his existence. Though he may search all history, his every attempt to regain his lost Paradise is doomed to failure. God stands on the "other side", and man cannot find Him, unaided. The Incarnation is the miracle of God's Grace. Jesus Christ is God's response to man's quest.¹ He is the Word expressing the inner character of God Himself.² He brings the Truth and He Himself is the Truth. He is not controlled by "Dhamma", He is Dhamma, and "Dhamma" is, because he wills it to be. He alone, as God, reveals the Truth of God to man.⁴ This is Revelation. Man cannot discover it for himself. It is experienced only where the Personal God has decided to reveal Himself to man, in Jesus the Christ.

But the Incarnation is not only a revelation of what God is

1. "unless God reveal Himself to us in Christ, we cannot have that knowledge of Him which is necessary to salvation". Calvin Institutes 2.8.4. "We know God only by Jesus Christ" Pascal Pensées p.146 (Everyman) 2.7h.1.12.
2. Smith idem p.77.
3. "When it comes to revelation, only God could do justice to God" F.T. Forsyth. The Person and Place of Jesus Christ. Also "What is offered to man's apprehension in any specific Revelation is not truth concerning God, but the living God Himself" William Temple and His Message (Pelican) p.90.

like, it is also a revelation of what man can become. As God, Jesus Christ declares the Truth of God to man. As Man, He makes known to men, the truth of their own existence. He restores the meaning of life to men. Man knows once more what it means to say that he was made in the imago dei,¹ in re-discovering his relationship to God, through Jesus Christ. Man becomes son through the Person of the Son of God. He does not merely find the truth, he becomes true, when he is re-made and re-created by the Word of God. Revelation brings the wonder of the knowledge of the New Creation in the Christ of God.

The death of the Buddha and the death of Jesus Christ.

The difference in the ways in which Gotama and Jesus Christ faced death illustrates the essential contrast between the two faiths. Christianity is life-affirming, Buddhism is life-negating. The Buddha faced the prospect of death, with equanimity and fortitude—the Christ moved to Calvary through the agony of Gethsemane. The Buddha, having renounced life, easily reconciled himself to departure from it, the Christ, because of His utter

1. "Salvation..... is a question of the image of God being restored in us and of our receiving this incorruptible seed to come to the Heavenly glory...to be transformed even into the glory and immortality of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be partakers of His Divine Nature". Calvin T.H.L. Parker. The Oracles of God p.90.

identification with humanity, wrestled with God in prayer, before Golgotha. The Buddha faced the future with the quiet of one who has overcome every vestige of desire for existence, and who can, therefore, meet the inexorable demands of nature, undismayed. For the Christ it was different; He went to Calvary because of His refusal to surrender His hold on either God or man. The value of man to God made the cross possible, the sin of man made it a necessity. The cross affirms the intention of God neither to ignore the sin nor to repudiate the sinner.

The death of the Buddha has no cosmic significance. He dies, as every man must die, and his last words, "Work out your own salvation" emphasize this fact. The Buddha cannot help any man at death. In contrast, the death of the Christ has universal meaning. Through His death, every man receives both the judgment and the forgiveness of God, for He dies for man the sinner, and yet also that all men might live! For the Buddha, life peters out into the silence of Nibbana. For the Christ, death brings with it the glorious promise of the Resurrection.

It is at the Cross that man, alienated from God, is forgiven. It is to the Cross that man must go to learn of his destiny as a child of God. The Incarnation and the Cross of Christ are as the "watershed" of life. In the Incarnation, man learns to live his life, as one who receives it as a gift from God, and at the Cross, he knows what it means to live, justified by faith.

The Buddhist Dhamma or Order of Redemption and
Justification by Faith

Dhamma and Justification by faith are the soteriological conceptions of Buddhism and Christianity respectively. They both claim to be diagnoses of, and remedies for, the problem of human existence. The two techniques of salvation illustrate the fundamental character of the faiths, for they are conditioned by a previous understanding of the nature of man, and by an evaluation of man's destiny.

The alternate orders of redemption are radically different because the Buddhist estimate of the nature of man's predicament, and the Buddhist conception of the fundamental character of Reality are not the same as those of the Christian. A study of Dhamma and Justification by faith will consequently help to reveal certain concepts regarding the nature of man in Buddhism and Christianity, which exercise a controlling and formative influence on the orders of redemption.

Sorrow and Sin

Religion endeavours to provide man with a way of escape from the tragic predicament of life. It is born in the womb of man's

conscious knowledge of pain and frustration. Man begins to wrestle with the deepest problems of life when he recognises the presence of a strange and inexplicable "fate", which appears to thwart his desires and haunt his memory at every decisive point of his existence. Religion is the attempt of man to find an answer to the pain and sorrow of life.

Buddhism arises within this universally present uneasiness and restlessness. The cry, "All life is suffering", provides Buddhist man with the necessary dynamic for his search after the Dhamma. Someone has said that this insight of Buddhism is the prolegomenon of all Religion. The Buddhist sees through the façade of the world's joy and laughter, into the deep-seated pain at the heart of the Universe.

The Christian would readily agree with the Buddhist that the world is full of change and decay. He too is conscious that life is evanescent and transient, and that "our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught". And yet there is a fundamental difference. In Buddhism, suffering is identified with existence as such, but the Christian refuses to denounce the created universe, because such a denunciation would negate the Christian's faith in the goodness of God, and destroy the meaning of history.

The Christian asserts that suffering is not a primary, but

a derivative affliction of man's life. Sin, and not suffering, is man's fundamental problem, and the real cause of human sorrow. Christianity refuses to believe that death, and suffering, and the sin of the world, are writ in the nature of the universe, as originally made by God. They are only part of the totality of life, because life is sinful now. Suffering is the aftermath of God's judgment on man the sinner. It is the negative pressure of God on man, and is a constant reminder to him that he cannot find true happiness apart from God. While suffering stimulates man's search for God, it should also awaken him to a sense of his responsibility for the sorrow of the world.

Always?
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1-3

Kamma and Sin.

The doctrine of Kamma, with its attendant belief in samsāra, is the one religious tenet which all Indian thinkers accept. The Carvakas or materialists, were the only philosophical school to deny it. In the time of the Buddha, the vast multitudes received the doctrine without any reservation. In modern India, the idea of kamma continues to be the basic religious assumption, and is the determining principle in human conduct. Its appearance in other

parts of the world also, seems to suggest that some such doctrine is the necessary corollary of a cyclic view of history. For only such a concept can explain the inequalities and differences in human life.

Buddhism takes the main idea of the kamma principle for granted.

"All beings have karma for their portion, they are the heirs of their karma, they are sprung from their karma, their karma is their kinsman, their karma is their refuge, karma allots beings to meanness and greatness" 1

The Buddha continually inveighed against those who tried to deny the moral reality of life. He was convinced that the universe was governed by inescapable moral law, and he could account for the environmental and hereditary variations among men, only by assuming that their past kamma had conditioned their present life.

"Depending on the difference in kamma appears the differences in the births of beings, high and low, base and exalted, happy and miserable". 4

The main idea of the kamma doctrine is that man is what he is, because of his own past deeds. These condition the present, just as certainly as man's present deeds (kamma) will decisively affect the future.

1. The Expositor. vol 1. p.87 Warren p.215.
2. Digha Nikaya 1.55. (P.T.S.)
3. Anguttara Nikaya 1.149. (P.T.S.)
4. The Expositor vol 1. p. 87.

Men cannot escape from the effects of his behaviour, for every act, whether good or evil, produces its inevitable and inexorable consequence.

"His good deeds and his wickedness,
Whate'er a mortal does while here,
'T is this that he can call his own,
This with him take as he goes hence.
This is what follows after him,
And like a shadow ne'er departs".1.

The doctrine of kamma has important implications for the Buddhist understanding of man. The main concern of the doctrine is to safeguard the freedom, and preserve the independence, of man.

"By oneself is the evil done, by oneself is one purified".2. It emphasizes the fact that man is the creator of his own destiny; and that he alone is the architect of his world. While it is true that he cannot alter the consequences of his past deeds, he can choose his course of action in the present, and so control the future. "Work out your own salvation", were the last words of the Buddha. "You alone", he seems to say, "are responsible for the present predicament, and only you can find the way out".

1. Kindred Sayings Vol.1.p.98.

2. Dhammapadam Ch 12.(S.P.T.) also "we ourselves are responsible for our deeds, happiness and misery." "we build our own hells." "we create our own heavens." "we are the architects of our own fate. In short, we ourselves are our own kamma" Parada Thera idem p.19.

Handwritten notes:
This quotation is from the
Dhammapadam Ch 12.
The text is in Pali.
The translation is by
the author of the book.

The most obvious characteristic of the kamma doctrine is its individualistic outlook. Modern Buddhism, realizing this inadequacy, is trying to introduce the idea of "collective" or "corporate" kamma, which stresses the to-getherness of mankind. But this emphasis is alien to the genius of the original Buddhist faith. Clearly, the orthodox doctrine has no room for this new approach, for kamma has traditionally been understood in terms of individual deed and consequence. This approach ignores man's inescapable bond with his neighbour, and the failure to take the presence of the neighbour seriously, has important effects on the conceptions of love and forgiveness.

The Christian analysis of the situation is fundamentally different. The origins of human life take place in two dimensions, both of which are true, and both of which must be maintained, if the full significance of human life is to be preserved. The first, and the more ultimate dimension, is the dimension of Creation. Man, as he comes from the hand of his Maker, is good. He was created for the purpose of living a life of fellowship and love with God, and his neighbour, in community. The second dimension is that of the Fall. Man, as he actually is in history, is a fallen creature. The story of Adam, which describes these two truths of human life, is the Christian alternative to the Buddhist doctrine of kamma.

The Christian account of human life is concerned to emphasize two important factors, namely man's responsible existence, and his indissoluble to-getherness in community with his fellowmen. The revolt of man against His Maker (which is the essence of sin in Biblical thought) is the mystery of human existence. For this sin is at one and the same time, the necessary element in every human life, and yet not the inevitable consequence of human existence! That is to say, all men are sinners, as part of a fallen creation, and yet, man as man, is both guilty and responsible for this sin. Man, who was created by God, and who is summoned to live with Him, does, in actuality, deliberately choose to live apart from God.

This analysis of man's plight endeavours to steer clear of two alternate explanations which have been offered. Firstly, it stresses the fact that sin cannot be regarded as the necessary consequence of finite existence. Christian thought refuses either to identify sin with material existence, as Buddhism does, or to denounce the whole of existence as māyā, ultimately unreal, as in the case of Hinduism. The doctrine of creation makes either of these explanations quite impossible. And the concept of Adam and Original sin also asserts that sin is not blind fate. Man is not the victim of irrational phenomena, but is himself responsible for sin. Man does not need to sin, yet he does sin. This is the tragedy

of his existence. Man, who was created in the image of God, has broken away from the centre on which his being depends, and is now a creature who has lost the essential character of his constitution. He has broken the relationship in which alone he was truly man.

The Christian doctrine has the decisive word, at the place where the Buddhist kamma concept falters and fails—in the idea of the solidarity of the human race. The great value of the Adam story is that the explanation of human history is made both individual and racial. Adam stands for the revolt of individual man against his Maker; it also represents the rebellion of humanity against God. It teaches the complete responsibility of each man in his sin, and also the complete to-getherness of all men in sinful humanity. In Adam all have sinned. Mankind is tarred with the same sinful brush. Man's existence is an existence in community. Man's sin has broken the relationships between God and Man, and man and man. It is because of sin that the original purpose of God has been thwarted. Instead of God's purpose of community being realised, man's enmity against God has affected his relations with his fellowmen, so that these too are infected with the sin of enmity and hatred.

The Buddhist kamma teaching ignores the corporate nature of sin. In its desire to bring out the individual's responsibility for his actions, the doctrine falsifies the life situation. The

analysis of deed into act and result, for the individual alone, is an artificial one, which life empirically contradicts. Mankind belong together, both for good and ill, in an utterly inescapable way. Hinduism and Buddhism both fail to perceive this truth, and, consequently, in both faiths, salvation consists in an escape from the world of community. Such a way of escape is possible only where sin is conceived of purely individualistically. In Christian thought, the way out of the human predicament, is the way into community. On the cross, Christ restores the "imago dei" for fallen humanity.¹ In Him, in principle, man has been reconciled to God and his neighbour.² Man as individual, and man-in-community, is redeemed by Christ.³

The knowledge of the human situation, as one in which man is sinner, and belongs to his fellowman in sin, is given, together with the knowledge of redemption in Christ.⁴ In the New Testament,

1. Col 2.10.

2. 2 Cor. 5.18.

3. Eek 2.14.

4. "But we know at the same time our wretchedness, for this God is none other than the saviour of our wretchedness. So we can only know God well by knowing our iniquities". Pascal Pensées p.146 (Everyman)

humanity's bondage to sin and death is only the negative aspect of the total picture; it is complete only when it is related to the knowledge of the New Creation won for humanity in Jesus Christ. The work of Christ is both individual and cosmic. Even as men belong to each other in sin, so too, do they belong together in redemption. Christ dies for each man, and also for all men. Man's unity in sin, has, for its opposite truth, man's oneness in life and forgiveness.

Justice and Forgiveness.

The third line of approach to an understanding of the orders of redemption, concerns itself with the problem of justice and forgiveness. And here it will be necessary, first, to consider the Hindu answer, because the Christian one differs from both Hindu and Buddhist, and can rightly be assessed, only by contrast with both of them.

The Hindu teaching that the way of bhakti (faith) is one of the methods of obtaining salvation, might appear to suggest that in Hindu thought, the need for an utter reliance on the mercy of God to get man out of his sin predicament, compares favourably with the Christian teaching on forgiveness. But the fatal dualistic approach of Hinduism, which separates ultimate reality from the

affairs of the world, prevents the Hindu from making any real or vital connection between this attitude of faith on the part of the believer, and God. Between the world of the Brahman, and the world of karma-samsāra, there is no inter-relationship. The final reality of the world of samsāra is denied; and consequently, the marga (way) of bhakti is also relegated to the world of māyā or illusion.

The Brahman stands outside the world of action. Man's behaviour can either bind him more closely to the world of karma-samsāra or it can help him to obtain release from the delusion of "self-existence". But this effort has no real place in the final life of the ātman, as Brahman. The ātman, being Brahman, is already sat, cit, ānandan. There is a radical dichotomy between the ātman and all historical existence.

The basic assumption of the Vedānta conception of salvation is present in all forms of mysticism. Because there is no serious awareness of the gulf between guilty man and the Holy God, there is no real teaching on the need for forgiveness. In any case, the Brahman cannot act in grace, for if he were to do so, he would himself be involved in the chain of karma-samsāra. Like the God of the Deists, Hinduism sees a closed universe, from which God is barred admission.

The affirmation that man is, in the depths of his being, already ātman, prevents Hinduism from seeing that the tragedy of life is

that man in his total being, is in fundamental disharmony and contradiction. There is no part of his nature, spiritual or material, which is not tainted by deliberate and guilty, responsible and sinful, action. Swami Vivekanandan said that the only sin was to call man a sinner! And where sin is denied, there can be no sense of the awful distance between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. The idea of a cross, through which God utters his eternally valid word of forgiveness, can have no place in Hindu thought, for where there is no gulf to be crossed, no bridge is necessary.

In Buddhism, on the other hand, the entire structure of soteriology rests on the firm conviction that the universe is governed by just law. All that man needs to do is to play the game of life according to the rules already laid down in the very structure of life. The machine works according to definite conditions; once the cause is known, the result is entirely predictable. Man knows that life eventuates because of desire, and that the continuance of desire will lead to rebirth, as certainly as night follows day. But it is equally certain that if desire were removed, then rebirth would be no more. The Buddhist technique of salvation assumes the abiding stability of the justice structure of the world.

But to think of life in terms of justice exclusively, must inevitably lead to a conception of life, where the person is

1. Points of Controversy p. 324. On Niyāma and Karma. "Both results are inherent to the cosmodycy or natural order which includes a moral order (karma-niyāma) and which any judge, terrestrial or

lost in the interests of justice. Justice is always impersonal, its laws can be compared with the laws of science. The laws of science deal with abstractions. They are valid only because they are generalisations about life. Scientific law never considers the particular, except in so far as it agrees with the universal. Because it is abstract and impersonal, its laws become less and less relevant the more they are concerned with the specifically human and individual. This criticism is true of justice also. Justice is impartial and non-personal.¹ It is concerned with rules, not with persons.² While it is the necessary framework for human existence, if it is erected into the final principle of human existence, the essential personal factor in every man is sacrificed on the altar of juridical rigidity. In Buddhism the conception of justice ends in the final dissolution of man himself.

In Christianity, on the other hand, the ultimate end of salvation is considered entirely in terms of the personal. The chief end of

celestial, does or would only assist in carrying out. To that a Buddhist might adapt and apply the Christian logion-"Before Abraham was, I am"-and say "Before the Judge was, it is". That some happenings are moral, some immoral, is not so because of any pronouncements human or divine".

1. Brunner Justice and the Social Order. p. 115. "Justice is rational because it views man in a rational system. Justice exists where something is rendered to man which is his due. It is sober and realistic in so far as it is impersonal. It is not for nothing that justice is represented blindfold. It does not regard the person."

2. Brunner idem p. 14. "However various its forms, however restricted its domain, no human being is quite ignorant of justice.... It is a constant factor in all human history".

3. "Here there is no being, but only becoming, it is not substance, but only law which can be recognised as the first and the last".

W. C. Claiborne.

Human life is the knowledge that in Jesus Christ alone man becomes truly person. And because the person is important, love, and not justice is the final norm in human life.

"For love loves that particular being, it says "Thou", it is directed to the concrete person his uniqueness, even though it does not love because that person is what he is, but because he exists. It loves him, this particular person, not a human being, nor humanity in his person, which cannot be loved but only respected in justice. It loves because God gives that love, because it loves that person as the beloved of God".¹

The fundamentally divergent objectives account for the radical difference in the two techniques of salvation. If, as in Buddhism, salvation were made to depend on the strenuous application of certain rules, then man can attain release alone and unaided. But if salvation has to do with the person, and if man can become person only by means of a restored relationship with a personal God, then man's efforts have nothing at all to do with the chief problem. For the essence of personal existence is that it is not completely controlled by law or legal morality. Personal relationships are free relationships. Where the ultimate thing in life is defined in terms of persons, forgiveness, and not justice, becomes normative.

"God is his own necessity. Justice is what God wills because such is His Nature. If His thoughts were as our thoughts then He would insist upon justice first, ... If His ways were as our ways, then He would seek first to establish a Kingdom of Justice. But His thoughts are not as our thoughts, and His ways are not as our ways. God knows that justice is not enough".²

1. E. Brunner idem p. 116.

2. H. Binswanger idem p. 77.

is
 this/exactly what happens even in human life; where the existence
 of the other person is taken seriously, there forgiveness is taken
 seriously too. Action, deed, penitence, may all be necessary where
 wrong has been done, but the restoration of fellowship is not
 governed by these things. Forgiveness takes place between persons
 in a mysterious, and yet creatively significant way, only when in
 the freedom of the human spirit, one person forgives another. This
 event of forgiveness is the inner meaning of all life. In all
 genuine human existence, in the relations between man and woman,
 parent and child, friend and friend, what truly matters, when wrong
 has been recognised, is the possibility, and the actuality, of
 forgiveness.

Forgiveness, based on love, does not contradict justice, it transcends
 it. Wrong deeds do bring their consequence, and this is the valid
 insight of the Buddhist conception of justice, for "justice is
 always the pre-condition of love;..... True love is always more
 than just; it fulfils first the impartial law of actual justice" ¹
 But when the person is the real concern of salvation, then love
 and not justice, is ultimate.

The Buddhist Norm "is proclaimed to him that is a friend of
 that which is righteous"², the Christian Gospel is preached to
 sinners ³. It proclaims God's free gift of forgiveness, as the

1. Brunner idem p.117.

2. Kindred Sayings Vol 1 p.112.

3. Matt 9.3.

John Paul...

only basis on which fellowship can be restored between persons. The Cross is the place to which man must go to hear God pronounce this word of forgiving love.

The Rationalism of the Dhamma and the Christian Way of Faith.

Buddhism claims to be a rational faith. Its adherents support this contention by saying that kamma is a reasonable explanation of the inequalities in human life, and that the Dhamma, which is latently present in every man, is a general truth. They cite the dying words of the Buddha, "Work out your own salvation"¹, as proof of the insistence of Buddhism on the need for men to work things out for themselves.

The denial of the existence of the "person" squares with this approach to the subject of religious truth, for to admit the person is to recognise the presence of mystery. Person confronts person in the mystery of separateness and difference. Man as person cannot be completely defined, either in psychological or philosophical terms. All attempts to classify mankind describe man in the mass, they do not deal with the individual. That is why universal definitions, which are true for all men, are, at the same time, false for each individual person. The person eludes the

1. Maha-pari-nibbana sutta. 3.B.B. vol 2.

categories of analysis, and is never exhaustively described by any formula. It is not surprising therefore, that Buddhism, which pleads the cause of pure reason, is compelled by the inner logic of its system to deny the ultimate validity of human personal existence.

In Hinduism, the approach to religious truth is different. Instead of denying the reality of the person, the person or atman, is sharply distinguished from all knowable reality. Reality can only be discovered by those who plumb the depths of their own natures, and there discover the true character of their existence in the Brahman. Where Buddhism leads to rationalism, Hinduism affirms the way of mysticism.

The Christian conception of faith, as the way to truth, stands in direct contrast to both the Buddhist and the Hindu, precisely because personal existence is given serious recognition. To assert the personal, is to deny the contention that the truth about life can be reduced to rationalistic explanations of life, and to affirm personal individuality, instead of the atman-brahman equation, is to close the door on mysticism. The essential fact about the relationship between the Personal God of the Bible and man, is that man can never possess God either by means of rational propositions or through a mystical experience, but must, instead, continue to encounter Him, moment by moment, in an attitude of trust and faith.

In a sense it is true that both Christianity and Buddhism depend on an attitude of faith. Despite the claim of the Buddhists that kamma-samsāra is reasonable, the teaching of birth and rebirth cannot be established by means of any known scientific laws, and the belief that the enlightenment of the Buddha is ultimately valid depends entirely on the willingness of the adherent to trust the word of the Buddha. But this element of faith is not something that is a continual necessity in the Buddhist man's religious life. Man is asked to make the Dhamma his own, and once he has done this he himself becomes the judge of its ultimate validity. Buddhism does not point to anything outside man for the explanation of existence. Even the Buddha did not claim serious uniqueness. There had been Buddhas before him, and more would appear in the future. The truth of the Dhamma is something which all men can discover for themselves. It does differ from scientific truth, but it is nevertheless, truth that man can obtain by his own effort.

In Christianity, however, faith always remains a mysterious event. It is the positive, alternative mystery to the negative one of sin and rebellion. The one has to do with the inexplicable, but real fact of man's separation from God, the other deals with the equally unfathomable, but real fact of man's reconciliation to God in Faith. Faith is always part of the Divine-Human encounter, of God's Call, and man's response. Faith is that which

works in man when he meets God in Jesus Christ. On the basis of what God has done for man in Christ, God says "Yes" to man instead of "No", and because of what Jesus Christ has done for man, man can say "Yes" to God, where previously he had said "No". Faith is the affirmative of God meeting the affirmative of man in Jesus Christ. It is of this decision of God and man that Christianity speaks when it refers to the supreme act of man as the act of faith, in which he breaks through to God in the very moment that God finds him, at the cross.

Man can never fully understand the "how" or the "why" of man's act of faith, when he is confronted by the claims and the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ. The only human parallel, which very imperfectly reveals something of the character of this act, is to be found in the normal, personal relations between men. The decisions of men in the area of personal historical action, cannot be foretold, nor are they completely determined, from the outside. Although the area of personal freedom is limited, it cannot be ignored, for it, alone, makes responsible existence possible. The real decisions of men take place within this restricted area of freedom. It is this area of free spirit, which is not determined by environmental or hereditary forces.

Christianity transcends the possibilities of objective and

rational proof, because it deals with this area of human life. When Christianity talks of the act of faith, it refers to man as he stands, alone and separate from all other persons, and from God Himself, facing all other men and God, in the solemn and awful moment of decision and response. What happens between this man and God in the act of reconciliation through Jesus Christ, must forever evade human categories of understanding. It is to this Truth that the Christian Faith points. It is not concerned with beliefs but with an event, the event in which man is made true in Christ Jesus.

It is this conception of faith that the natural man cannot understand, and which runs counter to all other religions. These teach that the final truth about life can be discovered by man himself. Christianity maintains that the final truth is not something which man can discover, but is something which only God can give. For the final truth is God Himself.

Man refuses to listen to the truth about his existence. In his pride he does not want to hear. He is ready to forgive, but he does not want to be forgiven. He is in revolt, and does not want to surrender. Yet the miracle of faith takes place again and yet again. Man in revolt, becomes obedient man. He finds the true meaning of his life in God in Christ. He becomes truly himself, and truly

free. The Church speaks of this miracle of grace and reconciliation between God and man, in the doctrine of justification by Faith.

The Buddhist Dhamma.

According to Buddhism all life is controlled by Dhamma. Man's life is governed by the iron laws of Dhamma. Man can only reach Nibbāna when he becomes aware of Dhamma, and uses the rules inherent in the Dhamma, to work out his salvation. Dhamma is one of the five cosmic orders of the universe-

"Besides the order of kamma, of the physical forces, of biological forces, and of mind, there is also the regenerative cosmos (Dhamma-niyāma) by which the living universe evolved its Buddhas and toiled upward out of the eternal round of samsara towards salvation and the ideal".1.

Through the insight given to him by the Dhamma, man comes to realise that he is in the stream of bhava, that history is dukkha (sorrow), and that he is anatta. But together with this knowledge, he also receives the wisdom needed to condition and control the endless succession of sorrowful existences. The law of Dhamma not only helps man to appreciate the tragedy of his life, it also informs him that he does not need to be tied forever to the chain of becoming. He can escape! Life may be burning with tanhā (desire), even as a house may be consumed by fire, but

1. Psalms of the Sisters. Intro p.35. Note by Mrs Rhys Davids.

man can get away from the blazing flames. Buddhist critics, who stigmatise the religion for its intense pessimism, fail to remember that its pessimism is not an ultimate pessimism. The Dhamma claims to be able to provide a way out, it offers man a means of deliverance from the Wheel of Becoming.

The root ideas of the Buddhist Dhamma are paralleled both in Eastern and Western thought. It is similar to natural law in Stoic thought. The Stoic injunction, "Live according to nature", (kata phusin), was based on the belief that men should live in conformity with the inner law of life, which gave cohesion and regularity to the moral world. The equivalent conception in Indian philosophy is the Vedic notion of Rta. The Vedas ask men to live in obedience to the inward behest of rta, which, as the principle of law and order, undergirds the whole of substantial reality.

The Buddhist idea of Dhamma is very similar, in its general

1. "In India we find a wider conception than karma. It is Dhamma, thought of as a universal law of action. It appears in the Vedas, expressed by "rta", law, the law that everything in the universe has a prescribed course, from the path of the sun to the duties of each individual according to his own caste. Law or Dhamma thus universalized the conception of karma ... Brahma, after having created the castes, is said to have created dharma. "He further created a better form. That was dharma, the power of the power which is dharma. Therefore there is nothing beyond dharma. Hence a weaker man prevails over a stronger as though by a king. Even so that which is dharma is truth. Both indeed are one and the same thing" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka 1.4.14.) E. J. Thomas History of Buddhist Thought. p.108.

outlines, to the Rta of the Vedas. The Dhamma exists in its own right, and is the norm of all existence. The Buddha is the interpreter of Dhamma, and the Sangha is the bearer of Dhamma, but the Dhamma itself is greater than both of them. The law of Dhamma is the final arbiter of man's fate.

Amongst orthodox Buddhists the word "Dhamma" is often used in its more narrow sense for the teachings of the Buddha, as they are contained in the Tripitakas. This is the meaning it generally has when a Buddhist says, "Dhammam saranam gacchami" (I go for refuge to the Dhamma). But this difference is not one of serious consequence. The Buddhist believes that the Buddha is the personal expression of the Dhamma (Dharmakaya), and therefore there is no real distinction between the Dhamma itself, and his interpretation of it.

In the Tripitaka the Dhamma is succinctly summarised in the rules of the Eightfold Path¹, which claims to steer a middle way between the ethical extremes of asceticism and sensualism, in the same way that the Buddhist idea of Becoming mediates between the static Being of Vedanta thought, and the annihilationism of Carvaka thought.²

The Buddha lived at a time when the emphasis on asceticism had reached new heights of ardour. The various philosophical

1. Vinaya Pitaka Mahā-vāṅga. Phandhaka 1.6.22.
2. Indra's Sayings vol 1. p. 171.

schools rivalled each other in their attempts to reach more rigorous standards of ascetic discipline, in the belief that in this way release (moksha) would be attained. The Buddha himself followed the precepts of these schools, until he realised that such asceticism would not bring final release. On the other hand, there were the Carvakas, who denied the truth of the doctrine of karma, and advised men to "eat, drink, and be merry", for life was short. As a system of ethics, the Buddhist Dhamma adopts a moderate and restrained attitude to the problem of practical morality. But it should also be remembered that, in many respects, the details of ethical conduct, as they are required in the Eightfold Path, are the same as those of many other Indian schools of thought. The Sankhya and Jain systems have a great deal of ethical teaching, which is similar in substance to the injunctions of the Eightfold Path. The real difference is in the special Buddhist interpretation of Reality, and the relation of the Path, as a whole, to the attainment of Nibbana.

The Dhamma reveals the Buddhist belief in the uniformity and regularity of all life. It assumes the validity of the Buddhist doctrine of Paticca-Sammupāda (Dependent Origination). Life is what it is, because of certain understandable conditions, which can be controlled. The analysis of life into its various strands

enables man to understand the nature of his existence, and this knowledge brings with it the necessary power by means of which man can escape from the sorrow of becoming. In this sense, the Four Noble Truths adequately summarise the meaning of the Dhamma. Man enlightened, knows that all existence is suffering existence; this suffering is due to desire, and can be eradicated only by the removal of desire itself. The traveller of the Magga (Path) achieves this, and with the destruction of desire, the dynamic of life ceases to be.

The Arahant does not seek to accumulate good deeds in order to obtain a better reward in his next existence. He endeavours to destroy the very root conditions of life itself. Tanha (desire) is the foe which has to be routed. Tanha is the vicious element, which in devious ways, entangles man in the mesh and snare of becoming. But man can come to know that he lives because of desire, and, by refusing to provide the fuel of desire, can desist from being enchained to the Wheel of life.

It is with this end in view that Buddhist man travels the way of the Eightfold Path, "And what, O priests, is the noble truth leading to the cessation of misery?"

"It is this noble Eightfold Path, to wit, right belief, right resolve, right speech, right behaviour, right occupation, right effort, right contemplation, right concentration". 1

1. cf Jennings p.46.

The Path to "freedom" is a synthetic whole. Equal emphasis is laid on the need for mettā(caritas), nāṇam(knowledge), and jhāna (meditation). Release comes to man, at the end of his journey, as a result of his total effort.

"There is that wheel of repeated births, whose nave is made of ignorance and craving for existence, whose spokes are the storing up of merit, whose rim is old age and death, which is pierced by the axle made of the cankers, the cause (of ignorance, etc) and yoked to the chariot of the three existences, and which has been rolling from time immemorial. Standing on the legs of energy, at the circle of the tree of knowledge, and holding with the hand of faith the axe of knowledge which brings about the loss of kamma, he has destroyed all the spokes of this wheel-so He is saint" .1.

The Buddhist Dhamma pays no attention to deity. The world of the spirits does exist, and the manner of their existence is depicted in the manner common to Spiritualists to-day, but this world plays no significant part in the life of the sincere and earnest disciple. Buddhist man does not expect any divine intervention on his behalf. He lives his life, consciously aware that inexorably, his own deeds will bring their repercussions. He knows that he alone controls his own life and destiny. "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul".

1. Visuddhi-magga. Pt 2. p.228. (P.T.S.)

Justification by Faith and Dhamma.

The consideration of these "soteriological concepts", which have just been considered, have now to be brought together with reference to the main "gospels" of the two faiths.

The discussion on the kindred doctrines of kamma and sin revealed certain decisive differences, which affect their soteriology. The way of the Dhamma is an individual road to salvation, because kamma is individualistic in tone and character. It also lays great stress on the complete responsibility of the individual for his conduct and salvation. Consequently, the technique of salvation is applied by individual man, without reference to any external helper. The Arahat does not look either to gods or men to help him in his journeying to Nibbana. He applies himself strenuously to the tasks set before him, confident in the knowledge that he holds the key to his own predicament.

This attitude is an impossible one for the Christian to adopt because the human "disease" is diagnosed quite differently. Sin, not deed, attitude and not act, is the fundamental problem. The Christian cannot do anything about his predicament himself, for, although he can decide to rebel against God, God alone can elect to pronounce His word of forgiveness on him. The next step does not depend on man, it rests with God. Once the attitude of the Personal God is

made the decisive factor, then all man's attempts to extricate himself out of his sin predicament have nothing to do with the main issue. "Justification is ...not the experience of the soul, but the attitude of God towards...man"¹.

For the Christian, sin is not merely an individual, but a social problem. The entire human race is entangled in sin, and no way out of this total sin situation can be found, unless it be one that includes both the individual and the community. The indissoluble bond between man and his neighbour makes the individualistic approach of Buddhism irrelevant. Christian soteriology is therefore both racial and individual. God acts in such a way in salvation as to alter the status, both of the individual, and of the race.²

Again, as has been seen, the Buddhist regards sorrow as the fundamental evil, whilst for the Christian, sin is the prior cause of sorrow. The Buddhist Dhamma therefore offers release from life itself, for life brings sorrow. The Christian however, is equally convinced that sorrow and death can have no place in the final life of the saint, but his protest against them is not related to existence as such, but to the sin, which has distorted life, and brought sorrow and death into the world. In the Incarnation, God deals not only with the problem of sin, but also with suffering and death. This action is never one of resignation; it is one of protest.³ God, in Christ, takes the initiative, because evil, in all

1. Farker. The oracles of God p. 89.

2. 2. Co. 5. 19.

3. 1k 4. 18.

its forms, does not belong to the true nature of existence. It is the work of the Evil One. The remedy for sorrow is not escape from life itself, but a participation by man in the very life of God Himself, a life in which sorrow and pain are no more, because of what God has done for all men in Jesus Christ. In Faith man knows this to be true.¹

But the real difference lies in the nature of Reality as conceived by the two faiths. Love and Justice are the two principle norms of Christianity and Buddhism respectively. Where deed, kamma, is the important thing, there justice can offer a way out, but when man's sin against the Love of God is the ultimate problem, then only Love can find a way to deal with the sinner. The strange Agape (love) of God, which reaches down to forgive and save man, is the deepest truth of the Christian faith. In Love, God takes the initiative in man's redemption. The Incarnation of God in Christ is the hand of God stretched out in redeeming activity. Man in his sin, is offered pardon and forgiveness. No prior conditions are

1. With this activist approach to human suffering might be contrasted the attitude of the Buddha. Kisagotami has come to him, in agony over the loss of her child. The only comfort he can give her is to remind her that death comes to every man, and that she has lost children many times in her previous existences! Psāms of the Sisters. by Mrs Rhys Davids Intro.

2. "The word "justify" does not mean that we are made just, .. It means that "he accepts and approves us simply by His Goodness while we are sinners"- simul peccator, simul justus. Calvin. The Oracles of God T.H.L. Parker p. 89.

attached to this word, no deed of man or effort on his part is either necessary or even possible. Not because of what he is¹, but because of what God is like², man the sinner is offered forgiveness. The Agape of God loves, not because of anything in the one who is loved, but because it is in the character of God to love thus.³

Because historical existence is real existence, and because humanity is one in sin, the word of forgiveness cannot be lightly uttered. The Cross is a revelation of what it costs God to forgive. This is the final repudiation of the individualistic understanding of the consequence of man's deed, contained in the kamma teaching. Man's sin cannot be restricted or restrained; it affects the whole race, it affects God Himself! The kamma of individual man, and the

1. "The man whom God loves has not any value in himself, his value consists simply in the fact that God loves him" Nygren Agape and Eros vol 1. p.54.

2. "This love is only known where God is revealed as He who does not judge the sinner according to his deserts, but incomprehensibly forgives his sin and so heals the breach in communion" Brunner Justice and the Social Order p.115.

3. "It was the prophet Hosea who first spoke of this incomprehensible, divine, love, his own human experience was for him a parable-indeed, the means of knowing divine love....he had to love the creature that was unworthy of his love...God loves those who have become utterly unworthy of His love. He loves them, not for their goodness, beauty, loveableness, or worth, but in spite of their being what they are, without a reason, and simply and solely because it is His will to love them, because it is His will to bestow his love upon them. That is agape, the love born of the lover, the freely given, incomprehensible love of God" Brunner idem. p.114.

kamma of humanity make the cross a necessity. Man's sin involves God on Calvary. It is there that God has borne the kamma of humanity.¹ Because of God's act on Calvary, the human situation has been altered forever. In Christ, man stands before God, not primarily as a sinner, but as one who has been forgiven, for Christ's sake.

It is here, at the cross, that man makes his last act of defiance, for the cross bears witness to the final, desperate "No" of man to God. It is the ultimate act of refusal of the self, before man's ultimate surrender. Man, in his pride, refuses to accept God's grace and forgiveness. He does not want to be dependent; he tries to assert his independence and to take an active part in his redemption, only to learn that his every effort to vindicate himself leads to more certain condemnation. His every attempt to justify his existence away from the hand of God, ends in tragic failure. He cannot claim forgiveness, he can do nothing to restore the lost imago dei. At the cross, he realizes that all his labours are nothing worth-and the conflict is over! The last vestige of the self disappears before the blazing judgment and love of God-the battle has been won- by God!

1. I Pet. 2. 24. also Nygren idem p. 99 "All is of God, nothing of man. While in other religions it is man who offers sacrifice, and God who receives it, here the sacrifice is made by God Himself; in infinite Agape-love He sends His Son, who freely gives Himself for men, who are weak, ungodly, sinners, and enemies".

In Faith, man appropriates God's forgiveness, which is offered to him at the cross. Through faith, man's heart is opened up to the action of God's love. God's word of forgiveness and reconciliation rings in his ear. He knows he has been forgiven. This act of faith, in which man is restored to fellowship with God, is the act of the whole personality. Faith is passion; it is the decisive moment in the life of every man, when he commits himself to God in Jesus Christ, across the chasm of his guilt and sin, relying only on the unbounded mercy of God.

In this act, man discovers the true meaning of his existence, and the real significance of freedom. He learns that his real, responsible self cannot be found apart from God; it comes from Him. Man finds himself, is truly man, only when he recognises that his whole life originates in, and gains coherence and meaning from, his relationship of obedient love to God in Christ Jesus.

In Christ, the purpose of God for mankind is both revealed and fulfilled. Man is called into Community, into a fellowship of love with God and with his fellowmen. The original purpose of God in creation is re-affirmed and restored by the decisive action of God Himself. The Redemption of the World has been effected by the Christ of God.
1

The Arahāt and Eternal Life or the New Man in Christ.

The Arahāt is the disciple who has journeyed faithfully to the end of the Magga. He has obeyed the injunctions of the Buddha, and has come to know, for himself, that the Dhamma is the truth. He has realised the truths of aniccā (impermanence), dukkha (sorrow), and anatta (no-soul), in his own person. By following the Eightfold Path, the Arahāt has worked his way out of the mesh of karma-samsāra, and the stranglehold of tanhā.¹

"For him who is a wayman, rid of grief,
On every hand set free, all bonds cast off,
Perverishness for him does not exist"

"They abandon home after home, asavas are dried up in them,
holy in deed and speech, every link with life is out,
longing is spewed".²

The Arahāt knows that rebirth is no more. All the conditions which lead to karma-samsāra have been removed. Rebirth is

1. "With the destruction of all these, whether called fetters, depravities, or asavas, the disciple is released. He is released with complete freedom from grasping, knowing that all compounds are impermanent, all compounds are painful, all things are without a self, and that everything which has an origin has also a cessation. This is the emancipation of full knowledge, in which with the destruction of the asavas, all false views are destroyed, and with the knowledge of the Truths, he has come to know things as they are". Thomas p.121. "P.M."

2. Dhammapada S.P.B. Translated by Mrs Rhys Davids. p.90.

"for that which has fuel".

"Destroyed is rebirth, lived is the chaste life,
done is what had to be done, after this present life there
is no beyond". 1

The cry of the Buddha is also the cry of every Arahāt-

"There arose in me insight, the emancipation of my heart
became unshakeable, this is my last birth, there is now
no rebirth for me". 2.

3

The Psalms of the Early Buddhists are full of the joy of
release from rebirth. The consciousness of being delivered from
life bulks large in the message of the Songs. The Arahāt exults in
his newly won freedom from the gamut of existence. This is
4
Nibbāna!

The theme, or motif, which runs all through the psalms of the
Sisters is a very simple one, - "No more do we need to engage in
the affairs of the world, no more do we need to carry out our
domestic duties, we are free". The Arahāt does not engage in

1. Vin. 1.14. Kindred Sayings. 5. p.170.

2. Samyutta 2.171.

3. Psalms of the Early Buddhists. (P.T.S.)

4. Avupadisesanibbānam, the annihilation of everything except the
five khandhas, which will disappear only at death, describes the
condition of the living Arahāt. The final stage, anupadisesanibbānam
annihilation of being, is the end. See Appendix on Nibbāna.

Commenting on the Psalms, Mrs Rhys Davids admits they do not contain
any reference to a future life. Psalms of the Sisters intro p.31.

responsible historical action, for this is the domain of tanha.

"In the East, Buddhist Universalism had remained, for all practical purposes, a counsel of perfection. The Arahāt lived on principle in detachment from the world, and to interest himself in his struggling fellows was a derogation from his spiritual calling. He could show pity for the victim of ignorance and error, and give him help in need, but he could not love. Like the Stoic, he was debarred by his indifference to all desire". 1

Consequently, the Arahāt is a lonely individual, he dwells
 "solitary and secluded". 2 This individualistic outlook is manifested
 in the account of the death of one of the arahats. Godhika, because of
 a physical infirmity, commits suicide. This act, which, if performed
 by an ordinary mortal, would have received severe condemnation, is
 condoned, because Godhika, as Arahāt, had already destroyed all the
 links in the chain of rebirth. 3 The moral is obvious. The life of
 the Arahāt is not integrally connected with the life of the Sangha.

In the Pitakas, the Arahāt life is a present possibility. Gradually however, it ceased to be an actuality. Modern Buddhists do not expect to become arahats in this life. They regard life as a vast expanse of existence, and at best, expect to obtain a

1. De Burgh From Morality to Religion. p.272.

2. Kindred Sayings. vol 3 p.65

3. Warren p. 381

better inheritance in another life, beyond.

The New testament teaching on Eternal Life is closely associated with the conception of the New Creation in Jesus Christ. Eternal life is the gift of God, which man receives, even as he lives his life as a New Man in Christ Jesus. Its real significance is revealed, only in the light of Old Testament thought.

In the Old Testament the fact of death and the fact of sin are connected problems. Fallen man is a creature born to die. Nowhere is it said that man is, or possesses, an immortal soul. On the contrary, the Bible characterises man as one whose days are short, and full of sorrow.¹ In Biblical Religion, there is very little reference to life after death. The Hebrew believed that man, as a psycho-physical unity, really lived only when in communion with God on earth. The inability to conceive of life dualistically, in terms of spirit as distinct from the flesh, made it impossible for Hebrew thinkers to imagine that man could live, apart from the body. It is true that in late Jewish thought, the possibility of an existence in Sheol is reluctantly conceded, but even then, only as an existence apart from God, and therefore not existence!

1. Ps. 90. 10. Also Moore on Judges. p. 263

But in the Inter-Testamental period, Hebrew thought was saturated with the hope of another, resurrection life. Eschatological, and Apocalyptic literature taught that in the Last Days, and with the coming of the Messiah, the resurrection of the dead would take place. In the restoration of all things, and the Judgment, man would be restored to fellowship with God, and this fellowship would in itself be Eternal Life.

In contrast with the reticence of the Old Testament, the New Testament speaks often of Eternal Life. To know Jesus Christ is, according to the New Testament, Eternal Life.¹ This teaching is intimately related to the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If "Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain"², but "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that sleep"³. In the Old Testament, sin and death belong together, in the New, the forgiveness of sin and everlasting life are made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Death, as the inevitable necessity inherent in all life, is rightly understood by Buddhism to be the tragedy of human existence. The

1. John. 17.3.
 2. 1 Cor. 15.14
 3. 1 Cor. 15.20

sheer horror of existence is the fact that the Prince of life has to die! But the message of Easter brings with it the dawn of a New Era. Not death, but Life Eternal, is the final word.

Hinduism believes that its primary task is to arouse men to a realization that they are ātman, immortal souls, by natural right. In Buddhism, the Arahāt comes to know that life, in every form is undesirable. Christianity speaks of Eternal Life, as a gift which is given to man, as he abides in fellowship with God. That this conception of Eternal Life has nothing to do with mere duration in time cannot be too strongly emphasized. Buddhist man, who is conscious of the infinite stretch of life in samsāra, rightly feels the burdensomeness of everlasting successiveness in the chain of Becoming. It is therefore the desire of the Arahāt to attain release from the certainty of perpetuity, which he regards as a present possession. ¹ But Eternal Life is something entirely different. It is a quality of life which one can lay hold of in the present, a life which transcends the weariness of temporal existence. Eternal Life belongs to a man, only when,

1. "To the actual thinker it is really a strange evangel when someone comes and says, "I declare to you eternal life". Of Eternal life, beings assuredly will not fail! What I call a joyful message is when one comes and says, "Behold I show you the path upon which you can win free from eternal life". Dahlke Buddhism p. 224. Dahlke's use of the phrase "Eternal life" is mis-leading in this context. To the Buddhist it would only convey the meaning of "everlasting life", which is not what the Bible means when it speaks of Eternal Life.

in faith, he knows what it is to be a New Creation in Christ Jesus. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" ¹.

This conception of Eternal Life is integrally connected with Justification by faith. The experience of becoming a New Man, and the possession of Eternal Life, are in fact, the concave and the convex sides of one and the same event in the life of the Redeemed man. He receives the gift of Eternal Life, only when he has lost all desire for life, and is prepared to die, and does die, at the Cross of Jesus Christ.

In the light of the Cross, the Buddhist doctrine of anattā is the logical, soteriological solution open to natural man. By implication it teaches the profound truth that, apart from God, the Self cannot save itself. ² And where, as in Buddhism, it is realised that the "ego-centric predicament" ³ is the fundamental problem, there anattā offers the only way out.

1. John. 17.3

2. "What is quite certain is that the self cannot by any effort of its own lift itself off its own self as centre and re-systematise itself about God as its centre. Such radical conversion must be the act of God, and that too by some process other than the gradual self-purification of a self-centred soul assisted by the ever-present influence of God diffused through nature including human nature. It cannot be a process only of enlightenment. Nothing can suffice but a redemptive act. Something impinging upon the self from without must deliver it from the freedom which is perfect bondage to the bondage which is its only perfect freedom" Nature, Man and God Temple. p.397

3. "If my main interest in things eternal is to be with the question

For the Christian however, the way out lies through the cross of Jesus Christ. Here where he dies to self, he is made a new creation and inherits Eternal life. When man discovers that his chief end is God's glory, and has forgotten himself in the open blaze of the love of God, he discovers the truth of the Apostle's cry, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me".¹

what is going to become of me, it might be better that I should have no hope of immortality at all, so that at least as I look forward into the vista of the ages my Self should not be a possible object of primary interest" Temple idem p. 457.

1. Gal 2.20. Temple's remarks are peculiarly apposite here. "The true aim of the soul is not its own salvation; to make that the chief aim is to ensure its perdition; ("Whosoever would save his soul shall lose it"-St Matthew 16.25) for it is to fix the soul on itself as centre. The true aim of the soul is to glorify God; in pursuing that aim it will attain to salvation unawares. No one who is convinced of his own salvation is as yet even safe, let alone "saved". Salvation is the state of him who has ceased to be interested whether he is saved or not, provided that what takes the place of that supreme self-interest is not a lower form of self-interest, but the glory of God".
idem. pp 389-391.

Sangha and Church.

It may appear strange at first, that the final chapter on the Buddhist and Christian conception of man, should deal with the nature of community life in the two faiths. Yet the reasons for this are not far to seek. When a man accepts the tenets of any religious faith, his decision inevitably involves him in association with other members of the faith. These members influence his own life, even as his influences theirs. Every association or community of men and women, organised around a set of beliefs, produces a cultural ethos. Communism in Russia has already created a distinctive Marxist culture, and Mohammedanism has been responsible for a specifically Muslim civilization. Buddhism and Christianity have also helped to build the life of society, wherever their influence has predominated. But our concern is not so much with these external and empirical effects, which any religious system has upon society, but rather with the particular inner principles which govern and condition the members of the Buddhist Sangha and the Christian Church.

The Buddhist Sangha movement was, historically speaking, an unique one in India. Hinduism has never had any real conception of the difference between the Sangha and the State. It is true that the Ashram emphasised the need to draw a line of demarcation

between life in secular society, and life in a religious community, but the Ashram movement has always been a spasmodic and disconcerted effort. In Hinduism, the whole of society belongs, from one point of view, to the secular order, and from another, to the religious. A man is born into the Hindu religion biologically. The stratification of society into the various castes, is justified on the basis of a religious dogma. Normally, to be born in India, and to be a Hindu, are synonymous terms. This is why, perhaps, of the major religions of the world, Hinduism alone has never become a missionary faith. Its main religious convictions are far too strongly rooted in a particular soil and environment.

But, in any case, the principle insight of the Vedanta makes it difficult for one to see how community can ever become a conscious goal of Hinduism. The aim of the devotee is to be absorbed in the Brahman, even as a drop of water is lost in the ocean. Vedanta thought does not envisage the possibility of man and God living in fellowship. There is no tension between the worshipper and the One worshipped; they are One. And, because in Vedanta thought, man and his neighbour are also one, there can be no conscious community between man and man. Paul Deussen's claim that only the teaching of the Vedanta fulfils the commandment of Jesus, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as Thyself", is indicative of a serious confusion of thought. Love implies the prior existence of community. It is possible only

where personal existence is taken seriously. A Community-in-love is a community of real persons, in essential unity. Hindu man loses himself in the being of God and the being of his neighbour, because the Atman of both men are, or is, the one Brahman. Where the Atman-Brahman equation is accepted, it is impossible to speak either of love or community.

The Buddhist Sangha, however, has a continuous and distinctive life of its own. From its inception, Buddhism has been a community movement. A large number of men and women, enthused by the power of the new preaching, and the life of the Buddha, joined the Sangha. This community had definite rules and regulations for the ordering of its life. The Buddhist monk was a clearly defined personage in society. His clothes, his food, and the rules of behaviour to which he conformed, all set him apart from secular society.

1

The rules of Sangha life are contained in the Vinaya Pitaka. Even as in Israel, the religion of the Law produced the mass of

1. In the Pitakas, the authority of the Buddha is cited in support of every regulation. While it is quite impossible now to distinguish between "original Sakya" and later Monk ideology, it is quite clear that all the rules are not of the Buddha's making. On the other hand, it is important to remember that Gotama was the personal director of the Sangha's life for over forty years. A great proportion of the practical issues, for which the Pitakas claim the authority of the Buddha himself, might easily arise in the life time of the Founder.

minute and meticulous instructions on personal conduct, so the original basic precepts of the early Sangha grew into the enormous bulk of rules of conduct for regulating the life of the Buddhist monk.

But, apart from these external laws on behaviour, two important issues require consideration. One of them has to do with the relationship between the monks and the laity, the other with the interior relations between members of the Sangha to each other. The first of these problems is easily solved. There is no real bond between the Sangha and the laity; the boundary between the life of the layman and the monk is clearly defined. Normally, the layman cannot become an arahat. In the exceptional case in which this happens, the rule is that such an one must either join the Sangha immediately, or die. But, while this rare possibility is provided for, the general principle predominates in the Pitakas. The world-negating attitude of Buddhism makes it impossible for a man to reconcile positive and historical action, with the duties required of one who sets out seriously on the road to Nibbana.

"Though it is true that all Priests do not attain Arahatsip in this existence, yet none but a Priest can attain Arahatsip in this existence". 1.

The duty of the Sangha to the laity, is to provide them with

1. Childers Pali Dictionary on Sangha.

instruction in the Dhamma, while the obligations of the laity consist in supplying the Sangha with the materials for their temporal needs. The layman who listens to the Dhamma, and who assists the Sangha, will, by the accumulation of merit, ensure better living conditions for himself in his next existence. But the possibility of final release is not his to seek now. Only members of the Sangha¹ can attain Nibbana in this present life.

The relations between members of the Sangha itself are more complex. The Sangha meets regularly to listen to the Dhamma, and to hear its exposition by one of the Elders. The monks assemble at frequent intervals, for mutual assistance in applying the strict and arduous precepts of the Path to their own lives. They also attend meetings where monks make confession of failure, and accept² the discipline decreed by the Sangha in assembly. Nevertheless,

1. "Your majesty, inferiority is characteristic of the lay state; and it is through this characteristic infirmity and weakness that the householder when he has attained to Saintship (Arahat), on the self-same day either retires from the world, or passes into Nirvana; and this weakness, your majesty, is not the fault of saintship, it is a fault belonging to the lay state". Warren p.420. Milindapanha 264.29. Also Duties of the Layman. Sigalovada Sutta (S.B.B. vol.4.p.169) And Cullavagga 14. (Jennings idem p.126) "A householder's work I will tell you, how a Savaka is to act to be a good one; for that complete Bhikku-dhamma cannot be carried out by one who is taken up by (worldly) occupations".
2. J.G. Jennings idem p.596.

in spite of all this, the Hinayāna Arahāt is essentially an individualist. He is often depicted as a lonely rhinoceros¹, plodding his solitary way through distant jungle streams. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the ideal is different. Instead of restricting the Bodhisattva rôle to the historical Gotama alone, the Mahayanist makes him the first exemplar of many more who are to come, who will practise the bodhisattva life.² For the Bodhisattva is a seeker of men, who has voluntarily entered the stream of history, to rescue mankind. It is true that even in Hinayana Buddhism, the Sangha strives to help humanity, but this action is not a necessary part of the pilgrim way. In the last analysis, man must work out his salvation alone—"Be ye islands to yourselves".

The problem of the neighbour therefore, even within the Sangha itself, is not taken seriously. The Neighbour is not necessarily involved in the salvation of the individual, nor is the community, qua community, part of the total plan of redemption. The Sangha is not a community, which is bound together by bonds of interior necessity; it is a collection of individuals, who help each other to attain Nibbana. The structure of the Sangha is atomistic.

1. J. C. Jennings idem p. 596.

2. "The ultimate goal of an adherent of the Hinayana is to attain his own salvation, whereas the ultimate goal of those who professed the Mahayana creed was not to seek their own salvation, but to seek the salvation of all beings". Das Gupta Indian Philosophy vol 1. p. 126.

In any case, the anatta doctrine, which is the fundamental postulate of Buddhism, makes community life impossible.

"My friend, who has retired from the world and art angry with this man, tell me what it is that you are angry with? Are you angry with the hair of the head?... with the watery element...? What is meant by the venerable N.N. is only the five groups, the six organs of sense, ... with which of these are you angry? Is it with the form-group?..... Or are you angry with... a sense-consciousness?"

"For a person who has made the above analysis, there is no hold for anger, any more than there is for a grain of mustard seed on the point of an awl, or for a painting in the sky". 1.

Here, Buddhaghosa uses the anattā concept to help him prove to a man the folly of his state of anger, but the difficulty is that the same kind of argument can be employed against the positive virtues of compassion and love! If it is true that a man has no cause for anger, because actually there is no person to be angry with, it is equally true that the feelings of love and sympathy can have no basis in reality, if there are no real persons to love! Love is possible only where there are at least two subjects, and when the subjecthood of man is denied, the basis of love is removed. It is significant that, often, when reference is made in the Pitakas to the need for kindness and love, the disciple is urged to occupy his mind with thoughts of good-will, as he dwells in quite seclusion. But love has no meaning where

1. Visuddhi-magga Warren p. 159
 2. Gradual Sayings vol. 1. p. 165.

But why this division?

it is divorced from the concrete encounter of man and man, in the actualities of life. There can be no such encounter where man is anattā.

Although, therefore, the Buddhist Sangha differs from the Hindu religious community, because Buddhism sees the need for distinguishing between community as a natural phenomenon, and community as a religious achievement, it fails to provide the inner structure of personal existence, which, alone, gives life-in-community real meaning. Buddhism understands, as Hinduism does not, that society belongs to the secular order, and that community is only a religious possibility, but its underlying philosophy of anattā, reduces Sangha-life to a mere set of external rules and disciplines.

The problem of a man's responsibility for life in society is raised in an acute form, by the Buddhist's dichotomy of life into secular and sacred areas. While there is no actual religious reconciliation in Hinduism between a man's status as a citizen, and his status as Ātman, the easy identification of "Church and State", tends to obscure the problem, in actual practice. But, in Buddhism these areas are sharply defined. And the reason for the division is evident. If the whole of temporal reality is consigned to "Ill", it is obvious that the earnest seeker cannot allow himself to be entangled in the affairs of the world. Secular society cannot

be "rescued". It belongs to the domain of tanhā, which can be conquered only by the most categorical repudiation of the entire social order. The a-social effects of Buddhism are not made disturbingly apparent, partly because the average member of the Sangha does actually get involved in the affairs of the world, and also because the greater portion of men and women remain outside the fold.¹

Man is saved for life in Community. This is the central teaching of the Christian Faith about the destiny of man. The cry, "Extra ecclesia, nulla salus" is not a dogmatic exclusivism, it expresses the real meaning of the revelation of God's purpose for man in

1. The attitude of the Buddhist to society is similar to that of the Stoic. He too refuses to allow his "holy calm" to be disturbed by the events of life. He is "indifferent" (apatheia). cf B. Russell History of Western Philosophy p. 278. A. Schweitzer brings out the world-negating attitude of Indian thought in "Indian Thought and its development" cf p. 109.

"In friendship of the world anxiety is born,
In household life distraction's dust springs up,
The State set free from home and friendship's ties,
that, and that only, is the recluse's aim".

Muni Sutta. Sutta Nipata. 1.12.

Jesus Christ. In Him, the purpose of God in creation, is both restored and fulfilled. That purpose is the realization of community in love, between man and God, and man and his neighbour. Justification by faith is the way into community¹, for the broken relationships between man and God are restored in forgiveness. To conceive of salvation in any other way is to be false to the essential witness of the New Testament. A desire to be saved in order to live everlastingly, receives condemnation both in Christianity as well as in Buddhism. The search for everlasting life is only an exaggerated form of self-centred egoism², and man can be saved from self-centredness only through self-giving love in community. Eternal life is not a primary but a derivative event! "Man's chief end is to glorify God", and this end is achieved by the fulfillment of His purpose of love and community, in Christ Jesus.

The Christian Community is not a natural historical phenomenon.

1. "Calvin's thinking is collectivist throughout. Its accent falls not so much on the individual as on the company of the Predestined, the Holy People of God, which is the Church" Parker The Oracles of God p.105.
 2. cf Temple's comments quoted on p 146.

The Church is the creation of God, not the product of man. It emerges as a result of God's ingress into history. The Church eventuates where God impinges upon human history, through Jesus Christ. It is the community of those who have heard the voice of the eternal Lord ringing in their ears. Consequently, only the "New Man in Christ" knows what it means to belong to the Body of the Elect, the Community of the Redeemed.

This community is a community in which God is Father, and men are brothers. God's Fatherhood is not a truth which is common to all the religions of the world. The secret of the Divine Fatherhood is revealed in Jesus Christ alone. Man knows God as Father only at the place where he knows himself to be son—at the place where the imago dei is restored. In this act of reconciliation, he recognises his fellow man, whom he meets at the cross of Christ, as "brother". He becomes man, when he says, "Abba", Father, and he discovers the meaning of the word "brother", when he realizes that the same God is Father of his neighbour also. "The Brotherhood of Man" is not a simple, natural, and biological fact. Men become brothers, only when they are made sons of God, through Christ Jesus. Whenever this happens, there is the Church.

Two New Testament words, koinonia and agape describe the life of this Redeemed Community. The Church is a fellowship. Because

personal existence is recognised, fellowship between those, who have become real persons in Christ, is the central feature of the New Community. This meeting of persons takes place, and is made possible, because the Personal God has encountered man in Jesus Christ. The spirit which dominates the fellowship is agape (love). This is God's gift to His People at Pentecost. Instead of the tragedy of Babel, and the resultant misunderstanding and hatred between man and man, race and race, God gives His Holy Spirit to man. And men are brought to-gether again, because once more they speak a common language - the language of the Holy Spirit. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, Agape-love becomes a human possibility. God's Agape, effectively at work in the heart of the believer, enables him to respond to God in faith, and to live with his neighbour in love.

The Church knows that in the true conception of Community, the principle both of the equality, and the inequality, of all men must be recognised. True community implies unity and inter-dependence. All men are equal because they are all called to be sons, in Jesus Christ. All men are not equal, because they are called of God to fulfil their vocation, as sons, in ways that are functionally different. The Buddhist doctrine of kamma attempts to give a rationalistic explanation of the fact of inequality in human life. Each individual is where he is, and what he is, because of

his own kamma. When life is explained in terms of this principle, the reality of community is discounted. The predilection for a principle, which teaches the simple mathematical equality of men, results in the fragmentation of life. Instead of community, there is only the idea of collectivity. In the Christian doctrine of vocation, however, true community is preserved. It affirms the supreme worth of the individual. God's Call comes to every man-¹ "I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine". It comes to each man, even as it comes to all men. It is a personal Call- the Call of the Personal God to the individual man. In the place where he is, God calls him to be son. This meaning of vocation is the fundamental one. But the other is also important. To be called thus, by God, is to be called into community; it is to be given responsibility, and a place, in the life of the whole fellowship. The Kingdom of God is a cosmos of callings, where each man fulfils his task, in obedience to his call. Each man is called to play his particular part, within the community. No one else can fill it for him. And because it is a living community, the functions of men within it are not the same. There are a variety of gifts². Men receive different talents, and have to perform diverse duties. These differences between man and man are a necessary part of life in a true

1. Is. 43.1.

2. Eph. 4.1-16.

community. When the fact of dependence is recognised, the question, and the problem, of "superior" tasks disappear. And when all members know that they are, at best, unprofitable servants, continually in need of God's forgiveness, all pride in human achievement becomes meaningless folly.

The relationship between "Sangha and laity" is not a problem for the Christian, as it is for the Buddhist, because of the doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers. In the Church, there is no real division of men into priest and layman. The separation of the community into bishop, priest, and deacon, on the one hand, and congregation and laity, on the other, is a purely functional division. All men are called to be sons, and each man fulfills his calling in ways that are functionally different. The conception of the Priesthood of all believers has important implications for the Church, as a Community, in society.

In the first place, because salvation is not dependent on man's character or moral efforts, but on the readiness of God to forgive, man is free and able to accept God's forgiveness, just where he is and as he is. As forgiven man, he enjoys a new status, as son, in the eyes of God. And, as a result of this new relationship, his life in society is a continual thank-offering to God, for His infinite grace and mercy. Man knows, as one who has been redeemed, that

he is called to love and obey God, as a member of society. For him, there can be no escape from the responsibilities of historical life. Despite the agony of moral tension, for one who endeavours to reconcile the Absolute Will of God with the relativities of all historical action, man is not allowed to "contract out" of his social obligations. God must be loved and served within the secular orders of life, and nowhere else¹. His sovereignty must be declared, and affirmed, in the political, social, and economic orders. There is, in truth, no specifically secular area, because no area, alone, is sacred. All life must be claimed for God. This unequivocal acceptance of responsibility in history, reveals the Christian evaluation of life. The Christian accepts responsibility for the life of society, because he knows that history is the result of God's creative purpose, and the area of His redemptive activity in Jesus Christ. The Buddhist diagnosis of the whole of life in terms of "Ill", makes such responsible behaviour meaningless. The layman accepts historical responsibility only as a necessary evil, while the monk repudiates it as being futile and void.

1. cf The Church and its function in Society. by Visser 't Hooft and Oldham. p.232.

But, secondly, Redeemed man enjoys the liberty of the sons of God. He is one who has been justified by faith, and he undertakes responsible, historical, action as a "free" man. He is not burdened by the desire to fulfil the law of God absolutely, for this he knows he cannot do. Even as a sinner, who has been justified, he continues to be a justified sinner. Redeemed man has none of the haunting fears of those who strive to live up to an impossible ethical standard. He seeks to obey God's Will, through the power of the Holy Spirit, but he knows that, in actual historical action, when he fails to implement God's command, his status, as son, is not affected by his failure. His status does not depend on his own deed, but always on the gracious willingness of God to forgive him, in love. This is the freedom of which Paul speaks². He enjoyed the glorious liberty of the sons of God, in Christ. For those who are called to obey Him know, even in their failure, that His grace is sufficient for their every need. This experience is possible, only where persons supersede law, and when Love transcends Justice.

At the point where he fails to obey the command of God, man is reminded of the fact that the world continues to lie in the power

1. "Thus a Christian man is both righteous and a sinner, holy and profane, an enemy of God and yet a child of God" Luther Speaks essays by Lutheran pastors (Lutterworth) p 65.
2. Gal.

of the evil one. The Church, as the community of the Redeemed, lives "between the times" of Christ's resurrection and the Final Judgment. In principle, the Devil has been overcome, for the resurrection of Christ is the promise of the eventual overthrow of the kingdom of darkness, but the final hour of victory and triumph is not yet! Man, as man, lives both as a member of the Redeemed community, and as a member of a Fallen society. He is both the New man in Christ and the Old Adam. In Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female"¹, but all these remain facts in this present life.

And because these things are so, the Church lives in the confident expectation that the resolution of life's tragedy and sorrow will take place at the Last Judgment. It is no accident that the book of Revelation, which is the last book in the Bible, sees beyond this world, to the life of the world to come. The City of God will descend from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband². History contains the guarantee of the victory of God

1. Gal. 3.28. In this connection, Pascal's remark is peculiarly apposite, and has all the marks of Christian realism—"Man is neither angel nor brute, and the unfortunate thing is that he who would act the angel acts the brute" (Pensées p.99. Everyman)

2. Rev 21.2.

but its ultimate meaning will be revealed in the coming of that City, in which all history will be judged and fulfilled. Then the last mystery of creation will be resolved, and God will be all in all.

In faith, Christians are already citizens of this Eternal Kingdom. That is why, for the Christian, the last word must always be one of Hope—the confident hope of those who know that the Kingdom will come. The Kingdom, which, though rooted in history, and giving meaning to it, has, as its ultimate reference, the Triune God, who is Lord forever!

*

Conclusion.

The quest for the Buddhist and Christian conceptions of man is over. It has revealed the fact that the assessments of the nature and destiny of man, according to the two faiths, are fundamentally divergent.

Buddhist man is placed in the context of a Reality, which is understood to consist of change. The Hindu proclaims the Reality of the atman, which transcends the empirical and transient. The Buddhist affirms soullessness, anattā. In the light of the Christian analysis however, both these statements appear to be oversimplifications of man's true character. Natural man is not atman. This insight is preserved, in a fragmentary manner, in the Buddhist anattā doctrine. But, according to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, man can become "atman".

The Hindu attitude to History destroys the meaningfulness of existence by making māyā its cause. Buddhism, on the other hand, identifies man completely with the process of temporal history. The Christian recognises the existence of a principle of meaningless irrationality in history, but nevertheless asserts that man can realise his destiny only in, and through, the arena of history.

*Note - In this brief summary the words "Dhamma", "Atman", and "anattā", have been used to describe both Indian and Christian concepts, in order to facilitate the argument of contrasts.

The achievement of this destiny is made possible through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. In Him, man learns that no "Dhamma" can span the gulf between the Holy God and man the sinner. He learns also, that the chasm between man and God has been spanned in the Person of the God-Man. Hinduism, by equating the ātman and the Brahman, ignores the fact of sin. But without ignoring man's responsibility for sin, the Gospel offers man forgiveness through the cross of Jesus Christ. In Buddhism, forgiveness has no place, for it is a term which cannot possibly be applied to man's relationship to Dhamma. But the Buddhist emphasis on Dhamma legitimately criticizes the Hindu denial of the validity of moral law. The over-emphasis however of the idea of Dhamma (justice) in Buddhism, leads to the dissolution of man himself, who is sacrificed on the altar of inexorable law. The Buddhist scheme of salvation is possible, only because man himself disappears in the process of being saved. Buddhism realises that to accept the reality of God, is to indicate man's dependence on the attitude of a power outside the control of man. The consequence of its refusal to adopt an attitude of dependence on another, is the doctrine of anattā.

The Buddhist doctrine of Dhamma shows man his ability to extricate himself from the tragic predicament of existence. Hinduism recognises the pragmatic validity of Dhamma, but it fails to

*It is not so
 certain. The use
 of the word
 Dhamma is
 not the same as
 the word Dharma
 in the Vedas
 and the Upanishads
 as it is used in
 the Buddhist
 texts.*

integrate the Dhamma- life of man, and the transcendental Ātman. In the end, in order to preserve the reality of the Ātman, Dhamma is consigned to māyā. In the Christian doctrine of Justification by faith, justice is done to both the reality of "Dhamma", and the Persons of God and Man. Yet because the ultimate fact is God, not "Dhamma", the necessary pre-condition of man's "Dhamma" life, (sanctification) is the restoration of Fellowship between man and God, based on forgiveness.

The anattā teaching of Buddhism finally, results in the failure to recognise the need of man for community. This is the reason for the Buddhist "mystery" concerning the content of Nibbāna¹. The Christian understands the final end of life to be the realization of community. A Community in which man lives as man, forever distinct from all other men, and yet bound to all other men forever, by the bonds of love and fellowship. Man created and redeemed by God, is called to be a member of the Kingdom of God.

1. See Appendix for a separate consideration of Nibbāna.

Appendix A.Buddhism and Reality.

An interesting comparison might be made of the attitude of Buddhism and Modern Thought on the subject of Reality. In the twenty-first chapter of the Visuddhi-Magga, Buddhaghosa writes,

"He grasps the fourfold emptiness disclosed in the words: "I am nowhere a somewhatness for anyone"

and proceeds to explain this somewhat cryptic statement—Man sees that he has no Ego(atta); that he has no Self to oppose to another; he sees that no one has got a Self, and that therefore no one can offer "resistance" to him.—

"Thus, inasmuch as he sees that there is no Ego anywhere, and that he has none to bring forward to be a somewhatness for anyone else, and that no one else has an Ego to bring forward a somewhatness to himself, he has grasped the fourfold emptiness"

In other words, Buddhaghosa maintains that there is no attā or "reality" either in man, or in the world.

In contradiction to this conclusion of Buddhaghosa, Dr John Baillie, in his book, "Our Knowledge of God", argues that the four realities in human experience are the realities of the world, the self, the neighbour, and God. He contends that, while it is not possible to prove the existence of either God, or

neighbour, both solipsism and atheism alike are artificial conclusions. Modern thinkers like Grisebach, Karl Heim, and Martin Buber, define Reality in terms of "resistance". Man does not encounter "resistance" when he comes up against the external physical world, but he does, when he meets another man. Each man's subjectivity is limited by the subjectivity of his fellowman, for this is a centre of Reality other than his own. The "I" comes into contact with the "thou" of the neighbour, and this meeting of persons is the true essence of Reality.

This argument also receives support from modern Psychology, which teaches that the self-consciousness of man cannot arise were a man to exist without any association with other men. The consciousness of self is a community product. "I-consciousness" eventuates simultaneously with the awareness of the existence of the "other-than-I-consciousness". This realization is not a deduction from experience, but an essential pre-requisite of the experience itself. The knowledge of the "thou" is part of the given data of life. Man becomes man, only in relationship with other men, the meeting of "I" and "thou". Dr Baillie argues that there is another "Thou", who challenges man all the time—the "Thou", who is God. Man can escape occasionally from the presence of the "thou" of his neighbour, but he can never escape from the "Thou" of God. Reality is determined by this ever-present confronta-

tion of man by the Eternal God, the Omnipresent Thou.

In contemporary discussions between psychologists, philosophers, and theologians, there is general agreement on the need to begin all argumentation on the nature of Reality, by assuming the reality of the "I" and "thou", whether it be between man and man, or between man and God. Solipsism, which questions the reality of other centres of consciousness, is a theoretical possibility, but in actual life is meaningless. Dr Baillie maintains that atheism is a similar ideology. No argument from design or causation will bring God back into an universe from which he has been initially excluded. But to begin without God is to make a false start, for the reality of God, like the reality of the neighbour, is one of the given factors of the life-situation.

The Buddhist answer to these modern apologetics would probably be that Buddhism does not deny the reality of the empirical world of experience, and that consequently the essential anatta doctrine remains untouched by them. Buddhism concedes reality to the world, but maintains that a belief in attā is a false deduction from experience. The Buddhist contention can be countered only on the basis of the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ. For then the reality of man is made to depend on a relationship to God—a God altogether without the cosmos. A God, who is not involved in the natural sankhāra reality of the universe.

Appendix B.The Buddha and the Upanishads.

The question on the relation between the teaching of the Upanishads, and the Buddha, is an exceedingly difficult one to answer. The Buddha lived after the main doctrines of the Upanishads, as taught by men like Yajnavalkya, had been clearly stated. How far is his own message derived from, or affected by, the tenets of Upanishadic faith?

In his book, "Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus", Oldenberg suggests that Gotama did have some knowledge of the Upanishads, and that the Brahma of the Tripitakas is a debased form of the Brahman of the Upanishads. Mrs Rhys Davids substantiates her theory by claiming that the Buddha develops a minor strain of the Upanishads. Coomaraswamy assumes throughout his book, "Hinduism and Buddhism", that the Buddha was well acquainted with the main features of Vedanta thought. J. G. Jennings also makes this assumption.¹ On the whole, the earlier Buddhist scholars do not face up to the necessity to provide an answer to this question. Rhys Davids is content to suggest that Gotama inveighed against the animistic soul-conception prevalent in his day-but this primitive idea of "soul" has nothing whatever to do with the Atman of the Vedanta.²

J. G. Jennings Intro p. 110.
2. S. B. B. Vol 2. Intro.

Yet the problem is one of crucial importance. Until the nature of the relationship between Gotama and the Upanishads is known, no one can even begin to evaluate the Buddha's own teaching on anattā, or determine his attitude to the Brahman of Vedanta thought. E.J. Thomas rightly points out that merely to say that the Buddha taught the doctrine of anattā, without defining the attā concept which he condemns, is to say nothing at all.

If, as Rhys Davids and others suggest, he was merely condemning the false, semi-physical, "soul" (atman) of early Indian thinkers, then the entire Vedanta is with him. On the other hand, if he did know the fundamental tenets of Vedanta thought, his doctrine of anattā takes on quite a different significance. Unfortunately, in this matter, one receives little, or no assistance, from the texts. Though it is important to remember that, in the Tripitakas, the Nirguna Brahman of the Vedanta is not directly mentioned. The Brahma referred to is one of the deities of the Hindu Pantheon. Does this mean

1. Thomas History of Buddhist Thought p.99.

2. "the brahmin view is refuted only in the sense that it must be false if the Buddhist conception is true. But all this, whether understood according to brahmin or Buddhist theories, has nothing to do with the Upanishadic teaching about union with the Brahma (neuter) even the name is not the same, for the Buddhist Brahmā (masculine) is a personal god, who is also recognised by the brahmins. But he, like the other Vedic gods, is only a manifestation of the ultimate Reality, Brahma. This neuter Brahma is never mentioned by the Buddhists, nor do they even discuss the Upanishadic doctrine of attaining to this Brahma or becoming identified with it. Salvation for the teachers

that the Buddha himself did not have any knowledge of the principle teaching of the Upanishads? Is his protest only a protest against polytheism and animism? In the absence of any reliable historical evidence, the answer must continue to be ambiguous for the present.

Those who are anxious to find a positive note in original Buddhism, normally assume that the Buddha was acquainted with the teachings of the Vedanta. Here too, E.J. Thomas has a wise word to say.

"But if we translate "na m'eso attā" (this is not my Self) as "This is not my soul" there is the possibility of supposing that Buddha implied that there was a permanent soul somewhere else, even if not in the Skhandhas. Such a translation is perfectly arbitrary, and that sense would only have plausibility if we could suppose that the later community had suppressed the ātman doctrine so effectively from the rest of his forty-five years of teaching that no one remembered anything of it. Yet although at his death his teaching was preserved in the minds of thousands of his disciples, we find no trace of it even as a heresy among the Buddhists". 1

The position of the Orthodox is largely unaffected by the discussion. They can say that, either the Buddha consciously repudiated Vedanta thought, or else that, although he remained in complete ignorance of it, his actual message does, in fact, deny the fundamental Vedanta assumption.

of the Upanishads consisted in knowing that the individual Self was identical with Brahma. This doctrine, though utterly opposed to Buddhist teaching, is never referred to in the Scriptures, though if it had been known it would have been the one most in need of refutation." Thomas History of Buddhist Thought. p.87.
1. Thomas idem p.102.

Appendix C.The meaning of the word Anatta.

In the main argument of the thesis, the orthodox Hinayana understanding of the nature and destiny of man has been accepted, and it has been assumed that the Theravada interpretation of the message of the Buddha-aniccā, dukkhā, anattā- was the correct one. To have refused to do this would have been impossible, for the alternative was to get involved in an almost bewildering and endless consideration of various and contradictory "Buddhisms". And in the end, the "genuine" Buddhism discovered in the Pitakas would, inevitably, have appeared to be the result of personal predilection, as any interpretation other than the traditional one, must seem to be.

The reason for this is obvious. Unfortunately, there is no normative or selective principle by means of which the exact connotation of the word "Anatta" (which is the most important word in this connection) can be determined finally. Nor is there the necessary critical apparatus for a scientific analysis of the actual text. Consequently, scholars have a field to be explored, which offers unlimited scope for speculation and tentative hypothesis. But because the field is so unrestricted, the results

so far have proved to be entirely inconclusive. There have been no "final conclusions", or "generally accepted solutions", on any of the major problems connected with historical Buddhism. In this respect, Buddhist scholarship is considerably behind Biblical scholarship, for to-day, the latter is able to speak with a certain definiteness, and sense of conclusion, on many vexed, and at one time debatable, problems. The result of this uncertainty, and the absence of critical tools for the task, is that any interpretation, other than the orthodox Hinayana one, appears to be quite arbitrary. There are as many theories as there are scholars, and what, for one scholar, is undoubtedly historical, for another is equally certainly to be relegated to fable, or later "Monk-development".

Generally speaking, however, if the orthodox meaning is discarded, there are just two possible interpretations of the word "anattā". The first of these, maintains that, essentially, there is no difference between Vedanta Hindu thought, and original "Sakya" Buddhism. The other asserts that, in contrast with the conception of static Being in Vedanta thought, the Buddha adopted a positive and life-affirming idea of the attā, with an emphasis on growth and development. According to both, anattā, is a denial of the empirical attā, and not a repudiation of the inner Self.

A.K.Coomaraswamy in his book, "Hinduism and Buddhism" ,is one of the more recent exponents of the first of these views.Of the meaning of "attā"(The Self) in Buddhism, he writes,

"It is of course true that Buddha denied the existence of a soul or self, in the narrow sense of the word, but this is not what our writers mean to say....what they mean to say is that Buddha denied the immortal and Supreme Self of the Upanishads. And that is palpably false. For he frequently speaks of this self or spirit, and nowhere more explicitly than in the repeated formula "na me so attā" ("That is not myself), excluding body and components of empirical consciousness, a statement to which the words of Sankara are peculiarly apposite, "Whenever we deny something unreal, it is with reference to something real". 1
 "In Brahmanical terms, "ignorance is of who we are; in Buddhist language ,of "what we are not".2.

In support of this contention, Coomaraswamy cites the incident in which young men ask the Buddha whether he can help them to find a young woman, and the Buddha replies,

"What now, young men, do you think? Which were the better, for you to go tracking the woman, or to go tracking the Self? (ātmanam gavis)" 3

Coomaraswamy maintains that, in this context, the only possible meaning for the word Self, is the meaning given it by Vedanta scholars. This Self is the Ātman of the Vedanta.

1. Coomaraswamy Hinduism and Buddhism p.76.

2. idem p. 62.

3. Vinaya 1.25.

But while these positive injunctions, urging men to search for the Self, are similar to the exhortations of the Upanishads, the more usual Buddhist technique is the negative one. The Buddha prefers the "via negativa" by which to bring home to his disciples the Vedanta truth, that the real Self cannot be identified with any temporal form.

"Our constitution and that of the world is repeatedly analysed and as each of the five physical and mental factors of transient personality, with which the untaught many folk identify themselves, is listed, the pronouncement follows "That is not myself" ". 1.

The Buddha has seen things

"as they have become, causally arising and disappearing, and has distinguished himself from all of them, it is not for him, but only for an ignoramus to ask, such questions as, "am I?", "what was I once?", "Whence did I come?", "Whither am I going?". 2

If the Arahant is permitted to say "I" it is only for convenience, for he has long outgrown belief in a personality of his own.

"But this does not mean, nor is it anywhere asserted "There is no Self". 3.

and again,

"The Vedanta and Buddhism are in complete agreement that while there is Transmigration, there are no individual transmigrants. All that we can see is the operation of causes, and so much the worse for us if we see in this fatally determined nexus our "Self". 4.

1. idem p.58.
2. idem p.59.
3. idem p.59.
4. idem p. 60.

The main contention of Coomaraswamy therefore, is that the teaching of Buddhism, and of Vedanta Hinduism, are alike. Sankhara and Buddha say the same thing, but in different ways! Many other scholars tend to support this view.

"there is a good deal in favour of the view that Buddha, without explicitly stating his position, implicitly admitted an ultimate Reality. The difficulty of distinguishing between pure Being and pure Non-Being is one that is constantly re-appearing in Indian thought, and it is not easy to say dogmatically that a teacher who asserts pure Non-Being is not at the same time affirming his belief in an absolute but indescribable Reality". 1.

The alternative interpretation has been repeatedly championed by Mrs Rhys Davids. She is quite convinced that the bulk of the Tripitakas is the result of later work by the Sangha, and that it does not reflect the teaching of Gotama himself. The burden of sutta after sutta is-

"that mind and body should be held up for inspection and for the creating of disgust in order that man may be liberated from an interest in either mind or body". 2

This attitude to life gradually darkened the minds of the Sangha, and led to a denial and repudiation of the more positive teaching of the Buddha himself. The spirit of "Ill" influenced their estimate of the attā concept, although

"it took them long to settle down to the belief,

1. The Vedanta and Modern Thought by W.S. Urquhart p.94
2. The Book of the Kindred Sayings pt 5. Mahāvagga. by F.L. Woodward. Introduction by Mrs Rhys Davids p.8.

not that man's body and mind were not Divine Spirit,
not that man's Self was not body or mind, but that man
was just body and mind and nothing else". 1.

But this does not mean that Mrs Rhys Davids agrees with Coomaraswamy. On the contrary, she maintains that the Buddha adopted a positive life-affirming attitude, which is at variance with the world-negating ideas of the Vedanta. The Buddha objected to the Brahman of the Vedanta, because it was a conception totally removed from all historical reality. She suggests that in translation, the words "God" or "Brahman", would more correctly interpret the Upanishadic Ātman,² than the usual word Self. The latter, it is suggested, should only be used where a more positive, and activistic, idea is present, and when the identification of the ātman-Brahman is being opposed. Mrs Rhys Davids contends that this opposition, which she calls the "minor strain", is present in the Upanishads, and that it was this strand of Upanishadic thought which the Buddha developed. For him, the word "attā" had the sense of immanent deity—the God in man.

"The self in Thee, O man, knows what is true and false,
Surely, a noble witness, Sir, the Self,
You do misjudge, in that when sin is there,
You do conceal the Self within the Self". 3

1. idem. p.88.

2. idem. Introduction p.12.

3. Gradual Sayings Vol 1. Introduction by Mrs Rhys Davids. p. 132.

The Texts repeatedly urge man to prize the Self above all else.

The Buddha says,

"The whole wide world would we traverse with our thought and nothing find to man more dear than (the) soul". 1

Original Buddhism was conscious of the worthfulness of life.

Life is a bhava, a constant movement and growth of the Self towards the good. It is a bhava, which gets better and better from day to day, and from life to life.

"The new Mandate, which we call Gospel, was not revealed to Monk-worlds. Man's salvation lies in his nature being a bhava, Becoming, sense and mind are the means thereto. The worlds beyond the grave of any one span of life are the means thereto. Not to his hope of ultimate perfect becomings belongs the shrivelled cosmic and human outlook superimposed upon the Founder's teaching by the influence of its monastic vehicle". 2

To accept either of these rival interpretations is to alter radically the entire Tripitaka; to leave it a torso, and to reject the Theravada tradition in its entirety. Buddhism then becomes Hinduism in disguise, or is an anticipation of Couéism.³ It is not possible, here, to pass final judgment on these theories, nor is it intended to offer yet another new viewpoint! It is

1. Kindred Sayings pt 1. p. 101.
2. Kindred Sayings pt 4. Intro. p. 7.
3. Kindred Sayings pt 5. p. 373.

a fact that the Hinayana interpretation has the main support of the Text, though it is very difficult to resist the temptation to notice "under-tones" of what appears to be Upanishadic thought, in many isolated passages in the Buddhist Tripitakas! And the Orthodox explanation that attā, in these instances, means the empirical person, or else directs the attention of man to the transitory character of the attā, is a rather laboured one. Certainly, in many cases, it is not the obvious sense of the text.

Appendix DA note on the work of Mrs Rhys Davids

My only explanation for trying, very briefly, to state these reactions to the "hypotheses" of Mrs C.A.F. Rhys Davids is that, because so many of her books have been made available in English, she has become the chief "medium" of the transmission of Buddhism to many people. Consequently, a consideration of her views are of some importance.

The scientific study of the Pali text has followed a line of development very similar to that of the Bible. The early discoverers of the Pitakas assumed the almost verbal accuracy of the texts which they examined, but recent scholars have been more cautious in the assessment of their historicity. Mrs Rhys Davids states that she changed over from the first group only after many years of study. In her more recent books on Buddhism, she declares that almost the entire Tripitaka is "non-Sakyan", and that only a few "fragments" belong to the original teaching of Gotama himself. Unfortunately, these "fragments", which Mrs Rhys Davids accepts, are not texts which have been "rescued" as a result of a scientific use of critical textual apparatus. But, they are, as she frankly admits, "fragments" which she regards as genuine only in the interests of her own theory about original Buddhism!

Her main contention, which has already been examined, is that both Hinayanists and Mahayanists are mistaken. Original Buddhism, according to her, does not urge men to seek a static, unchanging entity behind the universe of change, nor does it define the whole of Reality in terms of "Ill". She maintains that Gotama was the herald of a Gospel of the "Well". He developed a minor strain of Upanishadic thought, which stressed the value of life, and he urged men to appreciate the inherent possibilities for good of bhava.¹

Whatever one may think of this theory, credit must be given to Mrs Rhys Davids for reminding scholars of two important, and immediate tasks, which confront the serious student of Buddhism. The first is the need for a close examination of the actual texts of the Tripitaka with far greater critical judgment than has been customary. The second is the necessity to relate Buddhist thought, particularly in its early stages of development, to the Indian Hindu background.

In her book "Sakya", in which she develops her theory in great detail, Mrs Rhys Davids begins her task by making a comparison

1. "there are unemphasised terms, phrases, sentences, surviving in them (The Pitakas), left as it were, which are on a different plane, a plane which is in line with the immanent Theism or Atmanism of the Brahman teaching". Dhammapada Intro p.16. "Avasa (mansions) in time gave way to the word bhava, becomings; the growth, for which each avasa was a fresh opportunity, was substituted for the means itself. And as the attitude prompting the three-fold shibboleth

between the simple, ethical teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Christology of the Church, thereby suggesting that a somewhat similar "deviation" might also be present in Buddhism. Unfortunately, her understanding of genuine Christianity is one that no serious Christian scholar would accept. Scholarship is more and more agreed that, in the New Testament, there is a substantial amount of unanimity on fundamental concerns; and that the separation of the Christ, from Jesus, and the Gospel writers from Paul, which was at one time suggested, is not supported by any unbiased examination of the Biblical texts. It is true that Mrs Rhys Davids gave much more of her time to the study of Buddhist sources, yet her facile evaluation of original Christianity makes one feel suspicious of the accuracy of her verdict on original Buddhism.

It must be admitted however, that on the ground of pure Text, one has naturally to be more critical of the Tripitaka than of the New Testament. The bulk of the New Testament writings appeared within fifty years after the death of Jesus, and some of the epistles were probably written within the first decade of His death. (Galatians?)

-impermanant, ill, not self-gained ground, the new avasa was held to be, not so much a new-born opportunity for bhava, as a disaster. Thus we get the monstrous volte-face in Buddhist history, that the very thing in man's nature symbolised by the Way becomes the best abused word in its Scriptures. No monkist word of abuse is too bad to fling at bhava." Khuddaka-Patha Intro p.59.

On the other hand, the Tripitakas, according to the Ceylon tradition, were committed to writing only in the first century before Christ; so that there is a gap of more than three centuries between the work of Gotama himself, and the written record of his work. One has therefore to be more suspicious of the authenticity of the records. But one must be careful not to give this fact undue importance.

All the important Hindu Scriptures were originally handed down in an oral tradition. And even a cursory examination of the Buddhist texts, in Pali and Sanskrit, appears to show that there is a fair measure of common understanding of the more basic Buddhist principles. Even more significant is the fact that a comparison of text with text, and passage with passage, in the Tripitaka itself, reveals a fundamental harmony and unity.

Mrs Rhys Davids fails to give adequate recognition to the fact that Gotama himself shaped the life of the Sangha for several years, for he directed its activities for over forty years. If Mrs Rhys Davids' theory is correct, then it must mean that his disciples completely mis-understood his teaching, for nowhere - even as a heresy- is her idea of Buddhism even considered by the members of the Sangha. It is possible to argue that Gotama's own teaching was originally a Gospel of the "Well", and that later, it was influenced by a growing "scholasticism" within the mind of the Master himself.

But this would be pure conjecture.

In any case, one cannot resist the feeling, when reading the text, that there is the presence of a great historical personage behind most of the recorded incidents. Although it is certain that large sections of the text are not the work of Gotama himself, it is equally certain that a great deal of the subject-matter was inspired by the teaching of the Buddha. We should otherwise be forced to conclude that some other great, but historically unknown person, was responsible for the founding of the Sangha.

Mrs Rhys Davids is quite right in maintaining that, to discover the historic origins of Buddhism, a study of the Hindu background is essential. Buddhist thought cannot be isolated from its roots in the soil of Hindu India, and a great deal of new light may be thrown on the subject by the attempt to understand the India of Buddha's day. In this connection, her statement that the Buddha developed a "minor strain" of Upanishadic thought would have to be carefully examined.

But in spite of all this, and although a great deal of research still remains to be done, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Mrs Rhys Davids tries to read into Buddhism the dominant philosophy of the early twentieth century. She is undoubtedly influenced by evolution, Bergson, and Coué. Her conception of bhava has all the marks of the spirit of modern evolutionary progress. But Couéism and karma-samsāra are strange bed-fellows!

Appendix E.The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha by J.G.Jennings.

This recent publication raises certain questions of importance, connected with the subject of this thesis. Dr Jennings contends that original, or Vedantic, Buddhism is exclusively a system of ethical altruism. He maintains that Gotama ignored metaphysical questions, and concentrated on ethical living. This contention in itself, is not an original one. Several scholars have suggested that the explanation of original Buddhism must be sought in its emphasis on ethics.

But what is different, is Dr Jennings' claim that Vedantic Buddhism repudiated the Hindu teaching of karma-samsāra in its entirety! ¹ Hinayana Buddhists readily agree that Gotama altered the Hindu doctrine of samsāra, but Dr Jennings believes that karma-samsāra itself is incompatible with the Buddha's doctrine of anattā. He suggests that later Buddhism re-introduced the conception of rebirth, under pressure from Hinduism, and that, consequently, contemporary Buddhism contains an interior contradiction between the doctrines of anattā and samsāra, which cannot be resolved. Accordingly, Dr Jennings proceeds to delete from the text of the Pitakas all references to becoming and rebirth, as being late additions to the original.

1. Jennings Intro p.24.

Instead of the Orthodox Buddhism, Dr Jennings substitutes a system of ethical behaviour, which is inspired by a sense of collective responsibility. He argues that the Buddhist doctrine of anattā is concerned to emphasise the absurdity of selfish conduct- for man as anattā, has no self! Nevertheless, man cannot become a materialist (Carvaka), but must act in a responsible way, because of his realization of the unity of life. Instead of an individualistic understanding of kamma, Jennings suggests a "collective" one. Man's deeds, for good or ill, have abiding effects on the whole of human life. Any man who realizes this inescapable bond between man and man must feel compelled to act in the most unselfish way possible. According to Dr Jennings, Gotama was almost a modern Humanist.

Quite apart from the radical manner in which the text is expunged in the interests of theory, the ethical solution offered ignores several important issues. The hypothesis does not take sufficient cognizance of the fact that every moral system is based upon implicit or explicit philosophical principles. Every system of ethics has a weltanschauung. The ethics of Buddhism pre-

1. "If the world is to be made a better place it will be by a steady adherence to the simple ethical rules derived from the religious experience of mankind"- commenting on this-"But this is to fall over backwards. Religious experience, experience of any kind, needs interpretation, and you cannot arrive at ethical conclusions by the interpretation of experience unless you have some Philosophy of interpretation. And no philosophy of interpretation that is worth its salt can avoid such ultimate questions, as the nature of man, his destiny, and his place in the universe". Alderton Pink-The Challenge of Democracy. a review in the Hibbert Journal January 1947.

suppose such a world-view, and are a consequence of this evaluation of the world. Without such a background, Buddhism loses its inner dynamic, and its relevance to man's need for an answer to the supreme problems of his existence.

In fairness to Dr Jennings, it must be admitted that he appears to be aware of the need for a metaphysical background, despite the fact that the subject does not receive much attention in his book. He assumes that the Buddha accepted the main tenets of Vedanta thought. Man, at death, is re-absorbed into the Eternal, Amata. But this is not a satisfactory eschatology, for it ignores the problem raised by those who refuse to live altruistically. Can it be that they, too, are absorbed, together with the Arhats, into the all-inclusive Brahman? Where samsāra is denied, no other possibility remains.

Appendix. F.The Brahman and the Dhamma.

Professor Radhakrishnan has been responsible for the attractive suggestion, that, in the mind of Gautama, the Dhamma takes the place of the Upanishadic Brahman. He writes "

"(the Buddha) implies the reality of what the Upanishads call Brahman, though he takes the liberty of giving it another name, Dhamma, to indicate its essentially ethical value for us on the empirical plane".

The suggestion is an interesting one. The Buddha was certainly in revolt against the priestcraft and the sacrificial system of his times. Hinduism had degenerated into a seeming magic, with the teaching of the efficacy of the sacrificial rites, ex opere operato. The Buddha sought to emphasise the need for ethical conduct in opposition to the prevailing religious ritualism, and the arid, sterile, and non-ethical conception of the atman. Consequently, he was concerned to teach Dhamma, instead of the Brahman of the Upanishads. Radhakrishnan believes that the Buddha developed the idea of Rta, which is present in the Vedas, in order to affirm the supremacy of moral law in the empirical life.

Mahatma Gandhi appears to lend support to this argument of

1. Gautama the Buddha by S. Radhakrishnan.

Radhakrishnan. He often said that he preferred to assert that he believed in Truth, rather than that he believed in God. Man, according to Gandhi, might argue about God, but Truth they must accept. A similar reason may have induced the Buddha to choose the word Dhamma, instead of the more controversial word Brahman, in order to impress on men the need for right moral conduct.

When a principle, Truth, or Dhamma, is made the ultimate standard, then, for all practical purposes, it has the "value" of God. For empirically, God is that principle, in terms of which the whole of life is explained and understood. For the Buddha, Dhamma was just such a principle. Understood as the ultimate fact of the Universe, it may be claimed that it is an ethical version of the Brahman of the Upanishads.

Appendix G.The Brahma-jala- Sutta.

(Sacred Books of the Buddhists .vol 2)

Orthodox Hinayana Buddhists give this sutta considerable importance, because they believe that in it, the Buddha answers questions, which on previous occasions he had abstained from discussing. The sutta commences with a consideration of the Buddha's attitude to various moral rules and monastic precepts, regarding which there had been some mis-understanding. It then proceeds to discuss important philosophical questions, which were engaging the attention of thinkers of the time. Altogether sixty-two "theories" about the beginning of things, and the nature of the Self or Soul are enumerated and then repudiated as being erroneous.

The Buddha says that men believe in the existence of a "soul", and try to justify this belief by claiming to be able to recall their previous "lives". On this empirical foundation, they confidently assert that man has an abiding and eternal soul. The Buddha also offers an explanation for the origin of the idea of God. At the end of each world-cycle, he says, one of the Devas arrives first on the stage of the new cosmos. Later on, others join him, and seeing the first arrival, mistakenly assume that he is their Lord and Creator! The irony is obvious.

Basically, the Buddha's answer to all these philosophical

problems is exactly the same. These ideas which haunt the imaginations of men are the product of perfectly natural and psychological causes. They are all epiphenomena, conditioned by sankhāra Reality, and therefore mere fantasies.

"They, all of them, receive these sensations through continual contact with the spheres of touch. To them on account of the sensations arises craving, on account of craving arises the fuel, from the fuel results becoming, from the tendency to become arises rebirth, and from rebirth comes death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow and despair. It is, brethren, when a brother understands, as they really are, the origin and end, the attraction, the danger, and the way of escape from the six realms of contact, that he gets to know what is above, beyond, them all".¹

But even in this sutta, there is no dogmatic atheism. All these questions are the result of "a false manner of envisaging things, according to which the world is a conceptually determined thing".² The questions are wrongly put and require no other answer save proper instruction.

1. In this connection-Citta asks the Elder-"As to these diverse views that arise in the world such as, "Eternal is the world, not eternal is the world, finite is the world, not finite is the world, ..the Taḥhagatha exists after death, he exists not, he both exists and exists not, he neither exists nor exists not, also as to the sixty-two heretical views set forth in the Brahmajāla-owing to the existence of what, Lord, do these views prevail, owing to the non-existence of what do these views not prevail?"-"It is owing to the person-pack view that they arise, and if the person-pack view exists not, they do not arise". Kindred Sayings vol 4. p. 194.

2. Dahlke Buddhism p. 241. Also Warren's comment that the Buddha refrained from answering these questions for the same reason that we might be excused from replying to the question "When did you leave off beating your mother?" Warren p. 112.

Appendix H.Nibbāna.

At some point, any writer on Buddhism is compelled to take cognisance of the final crux and enigma of Buddhism—the problem of Nibbāna. What do Buddhists mean when they use the word? Perhaps, in the final analysis, the question is an unreal one, as the Pitakas often maintain. Nibbāna is the "realised eschatology" of the Buddhist schema of salvation; it is the reward given to those who walk the Way of the arahats. He who has started on the road which leads to Nibbāna, knows that to try to express its inner meaning, is to attempt the impossible. Nibbāna belongs to the "edge of history", and the Beyond! Nevertheless, every serious student of Buddhism has been compelled to try to assess its meaning. The reason for this is obvious. The evaluation of this term affects the connotation of associated words like Tathāgatha, Arahata, and even anatta itself, although this relationship has not always been appreciated.

R.C. Childers, one of the pioneers of Pali research, and the author of the Pali Dictionary, discusses the matter when writing on Nibbāna. His conclusion, supported by numerous citations from the Pitakas, is that Nibbāna does, in fact, mean "annihilation". He argues that a great deal of confusion would be avoided if scholars remembered

the distinction, which the Pitakas make, between the two stages of the Arahāt's life. Savupadisesanibbānam is the word used to describe the life of the Arahāt, and means the annihilation of everything except the five khandhās. Anupadisesanibbanam refers to the condition of the Arahāt at death, and means the extinction of being.

On the other hand, the authors of the Dictionary of the Pali Text Society appear to be of the opinion that Nibbāna is "purely and solely an ethical state, to be reached in this life by ethical practices, contemplation, and insight". Other scholars have contended that it is a mystical term for the undefinable. F. Heiler writes "Nibbana is the untranslatable expression for the unspeakable, of that for which in the Buddha's own saying there is no word, which cannot be grasped in terms of reasoning and cool logic, the nameless, the undefinable. The Arahāt pass into that state for which there is "no measure". Yet it is Reality". And R. Otto in The Idea of the Holy says, "Only by its concept is Nibbāna something negative, by its sentiment, however, a positive term in the most pronounced form".

Yet, even an ardent disciple like Mrs Rhys Davids admits that the Psalms of the Sisters contain no expression of hope in a life beyond. Their joy is the joy of those who know that rebirth is

no more."Their verses do not seem to betray anything that can be constructed as a consciousness that hidden glories, more wonderful than the brief span of the "cool" and calm they now know as Arahats, are awaiting them".¹

If the Nibbana of Buddhism is not annihilation, or an ethical state, or a mystical rapture, is there some other meaning that can be given to it? There are those who suggest that Nibbāna is actually the Buddhist word for the Nirguna Brahman of Hindu Vedanta thought. A Modern Ceylon Buddhist writes "Nibbana is neither mere nothingness nor a state of annihilation, but what it is no words can adequately describe. Nibbana is a Dhamma, which is unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, and unformed". "Hence it is eternal(dhuva), desirable(subha), and happy(sukha)".² If this is the goal of the Arahata, then, it can be argued, it is not really different from the objective of the Vedantist. Any Vedanta disciple would subscribe to these words, substituting Brahman for Nibbana.

The meaning of Nibbana is intimately connected with the concepts of Arahata-ship and anattā. For if Nibbāna is real, then the Arahata

1. Psalm of the Sisters p.31
2. Buddhism in a Nutshell p.35.

shares in the nature of this reality, and if this is the case, then the doctrine of anatta loses its seriousness. For it is obvious that once the reality of Nibbana is conceded, the antagonism of Buddhism to the atta doctrines of other faiths has no real significance. No serious student of either Hinduism or Christianity believes in the animistic "atta" of primitive thought- a semi-coporeal, tenuous substance, which resides in the body, and leaves it at death. If the Buddhist doctrine of anatta intends only to condemn this "atta", both faiths could readily co-operate with Buddhism, without any prejudice to their particular atta doctrines! Tathagatha, Arahata, anatta, and Nibbana, are ultimately, aspects of one and the same problem. If Nibbana is real, then man, whether Tathagatha or Arahata, as the inheritor of Nibbana, is real too!

But one is reminded that it is not permitted to the Buddhist to make these logical deductions,

"There is no measuring of men
 Won to the goal, whereby they'll say
 His measure's so, that's not for him,
 When all conditions are removed,
 All ways of talking are removed" 1

The reticence of Buddhists, when describing Nibbana, stands out in commendable contrast with the naïve and credulous ways in which Christian people often describe Heaven! As Jesus warns his disciples, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not,

1, Woven Cadences. 1073.

how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"¹ Nevertheless, while one can respect this silence of Buddhism, the reason for the refusal to speak on these matters has to be taken into account too. Both Hindus and Buddhists believe that the final state of release is utterly unrelated to the conditions of life on earth—life on this planet is not a "vale of soul-making". But the Christian attempts to depict "heavenly realities" because he believes that there is a genuine and meaningful relationship between man's earthly existence, and the life beyond. The danger of the Christian position is that sometimes man is tempted to make over-confident assertions about the exact nature and significance of this relationship!

1. John 3.12

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