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ORDINARY MEETING (HELD AT THE HOUSE OF THE
SOCIETY OF ARTS), JANUARY 19, 1874.

THE REV. ROBINSON THORNTON, D.D., VICE-PRESIDENT,
IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed, after which, the following paper was read by the Author :—

BUDDHISM. By THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP P. C. CLAUGHTON, D.D., Archdeacon of London, &c. &c.

IN consequence of the many urgent engagements which I have to fulfil, I have not had time to do more than put down simply what many may think a very superficial account of Buddhism as I have myself met with it in the East. I do not profess that this paper is more than that. What acquaintance I have with Buddhism is not derived from books, but arises simply from my acquaintance with Buddhists themselves. At the same time, I should like to say that it is not simply due to my having lived in the country a certain time and having gone among the people during that residence, but also from the fact that I have had much more knowledge of, and acquaintance with the Buddhist priests than other missionaries, and almost more than any other Englishman, for the time I was among them. In point of fact, I introduced a sort of change of policy with regard to our missions in Ceylon. I found it was the custom of missionaries to avoid the priests and to go only among the people, because they thought the priests were impostors and that the people were deceived. I did not think that was a fair view to take of the case, although it was perhaps natural that it should suggest itself to simple missionaries going out to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I rather reversed the policy, and when I came to a strange part of the country I first inquired for the nearest priest—sometimes a college of them: sometimes only an individual priest—and the nearest temple. In that way I went much among the priests, and I have further to say, that I have great pleasure in bearing testimony to the almost invariable candour and courtesy with which they received me,

I propose on the present occasion to bring before you the state of Buddhism as it exists in Ceylon at the present day, rather than to recur to the earlier traditions of its history, which, however full of interest, are more or less doubtful as to their accuracy; and, besides, are within the reach of any who are willing to investigate them for themselves.

2. It must be kept in mind that Buddhism is rather a system of philosophy than a creed, and whilst it has a priesthood remarkable for their learning and the strictness of their rules of living, it does not profess to set before its followers an object of worship, or encourage them to place reliance on such acts of religious observance as it permits, rather than requires from them. This renders it very difficult to institute a comparison between this religion and others which prevail amongst the various races of mankind, inasmuch as it enables the Buddhist priesthood to deny their responsibility for many of the errors into which their people have fallen. But if worship is (as surely we must consider it to be) the *expression* of our religion as our attitude towards the Deity, we must conclude that a creed stands self-condemned which fails to provide its followers with sufficient guidance in *this* the very *utterance* of the heart's impression in the most serious and solemn of all the ideas it can entertain. But I will give a brief description of the nature of the Buddhist belief, before I consider with you its claim to our attention as a system of moral teaching, based (or professing to be based) on certain opinions, with regard to man's existence and position in the world of which he forms a part.

3. The system, then, which we are considering is *Pantheistic*, *i.e.*, teaches that God is that universal existence or life which pervades everything—not a *person*—not creating and ruling—not therefore capable of exercising moral judgment; but simply—to employ again the same word, however unsatisfactory and vague—*pervading*. I do not think I need discuss this point at length, but I draw a distinction between this feature in Buddhism and another, which, in fact, is a necessary consequence—that it is *Atheistic*, that it denies the existence of God in all the attributes of Deity, with the exception, so far as it is worth anything, of this *universality*, or vague general presence without conscious life and being. Such a theory, of course, at once renders worship impossible. All that such a term implies, or that we signify by such an act, has no meaning if we may address no Being. The Buddhist, accordingly, does not worship, he "*contemplates*"; and so far as contemplation is an act or conscious operation, it is his sole occupation; it is in order to its performance that he discharges the rest of life's duties.

He practises self-denial even to austerity, performs his duties to other men, exercises even some virtues towards them—but these *not as* duties (for how can there be moral obligation when there is no moral governor ?), but as necessary in order to the attainment of a frame of mind favourable to what he has been taught to make his life's end and object—unruffled, inactive, *purposeless contemplation*. Such will be the character, then, of a Buddhist's life. Has he a hope of anything beyond life,—a *future* ? Here, too, we have to deal with the same difficulty, of a theory which is so vague and indefinite that we cannot thoroughly comprehend it for the purposes of criticism. We are obliged to reject it as insufficient and obscure ; but it escapes, from its very obscurity, some portion of our condemnation. The future of the Buddhist is *Nirwāna*—rest, but not conscious rest, *nothingness*, absence of life, the entire merging of the conscious self in the so-called universal existence ; not, it is contended, annihilation, but what else can it be called ? And if we hold that mere contemplation in life was an inadequate result for all our efforts to have won,—surely after death to have escaped consciousness is still more entirely *inadequate* as a result. I admit that in this brief description I am not putting before you the *practical* effect of Buddhist teaching on minds in general, but rather the theory as it is held and taught by priests. I admit, also, that they would have much to say in the defence of their teaching as to the actual moral precepts which their system lays down, but I argue that we require from a religion not only that it shall teach morality, but that such morality shall be based on some sufficient principle or motive. Such a basis the Christian has for his performance of duty in the very declaration, *God spake these words* ; and the entire character of his obedience is seen in the words of the Saviour—“ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that *loveth Me*,” &c. (St. John xiv. 21), whilst its performance is rendered possible in the precept, “ *Abide in Me, and I in you*” (St. John xv. 4) ; in other words, the Christian has not only precepts laid down, rules of life to observe, duties to discharge, but he is *given a motive*, he is promised a *power*. The Buddhist has to enter on his lifelong task without either motive or promise ; nay more, to the one there is the object of obedience, gratitude, love, *trust* ; to the other, *nothing*.

4. I need not do more than point out to you that I bring no charge against the priesthood of the very remarkable creed I am considering, of inconsistency in their lives or of conscious imposture in their teaching. I wish you to judge as favourably as possible, and as fairly as you can of their teaching, and its

results upon their people. I am not anxious to arm you with prejudices against the wonderful system we are examining, as if I were afraid that you might be induced to judge too leniently of its errors, or inclined to rate its points of excellence higher than those of our own faith. I can truly say that I have never felt myself so entirely satisfied with the absolute verity and truth of the gospel as when I could compare it with the best of all other religions, and after I had seen such religions *at their best*. It is nothing to be able to say that by the side of mere idolatry and corrupt superstitions the pure morality and reasonable belief which the gospel teaches shine out clear and bright as the sun in the firmament. I would rather you should compare these with the best possible system of morality and belief that can be found, and then draw your conclusion—which of all these is a revelation from God? which bears the impress of a Divine origin in all it requires you to believe or to do? And in bringing to your notice the Buddhist system, I am strongly of opinion that you will find nothing out of Christianity equal to it, still less *superior*. It may seem strange that I should say this of a religion which I have called *Atheistic*, and I will therefore at once give you my own idea of the character of that negation of Deity, which is the very root of the falsity of the entire system. You must, then, compare the Buddhist creed with that from which it sprang, and of which it was at first the *denial*—Brahminism. In this ancient religion, I need not tell you, a belief in God has a prominent place; it is, in fact, a belief in “Gods many,” in the numerous attributes or names under which it offers its homage to a Supreme Being; its chief corruption is the utterly carnal and evil form which the idea it presents of Deity has assumed. It imputes the worst passions and crimes to the Gods it professes to believe in and to honour. It is, in fact, a more philosophical form of mere Polytheism; but not one whit less corrupt than the Paganism which is familiar to us in the mythology of Greece and Rome, whilst the worship it offers is simply debasing,—the only exception to the terrible corruption of the entire system being at the two extremes, some of the highest priests who live wholly abstracted from life and contact with men, and the few of the simplest peasantry who, with a childlike belief in powers above themselves, offer prayer to a God they know not, but Who in His love hears them, and is not “far from” them. Such, happily, there may be found in every race, in every religion which can be called such; it is these first who, when Christianity is proclaimed, accept it with ready and eager assent, and form its

“firstfruits” in the countries; but these, alas! do not attain their piety in consequence but *in spite of* the fearfully corrupt and false traditions in which they have been trained passively to believe. Now it was to escape from such manifest superstition and degradations of belief itself that the founder of Buddhism propounded his comparatively pure system of teaching, denying the deities or forms of deity in successive incarnations which were accepted by the Hindu worshipper, as taught him by his priest, and figured to his sight in the representations on the walls of his temple. I have in my possession a faithful description, by one belonging to the country, of what Brahminism really is, showing what are the views of the Brahmins; but it is a description which I should not like to read to a meeting, so grossly impure are the things which they believe of their Gods. I ought also to mention that what I have said as to the founder of Buddhism endeavouring to escape from such superstitions is simply my own theory of the origin of Buddhism. I have no real historical authority for it, but it is my own explanation of the founder of Buddhism coming forth with the declaration that he did not believe in a God. God, he explained, is everywhere, in everything; but when he went further, denying *creation* or actual government as attributable to a living God, he erred, of course, and the error pervaded all the rest of his teaching. He taught a system of morality in itself very full of excellence; he prepared a body of priests who, living in absolute austerity, should be above the people whom they instructed, escape the corruptions which had disgraced the order in the vast majority of those with whom he had been familiar; and, for the worship which had but served them as an instrument of evil, he substituted what he would fain have thought a harmless abstraction—*isolation of thought*, to which in time was naturally added honour paid to himself. And thus you have the system as it exists at this day—a negative religion—a morality singularly incorrupt, though not free from error even in its ethical principles; and a priesthood, on the whole, very faithful to their traditions, and not without zeal for the teaching those traditions to their people; the first impetus, indeed, of the founder’s zeal sufficing to make them successful in obtaining extension scarcely inferior to that which they displaced, and soon, indeed, numbering millions of followers, as the quiet growth of assent went on in these Eastern minds; and even now, when Christianity has come into the field to dispute their supremacy, not easily or soon yielding before the yet higher precepts of moral teaching, and the far more reasonable require-

ment of duty and belief which Revelation has brought to man ; and, I must add, the very slowness to accept even this, giving a higher value to conviction when it comes, and making converts from Buddhism some of the most satisfactory of the fruits of our missionary labours. I remember speaking, only recently, with a gentleman of considerable experience in the East, and he gave me this information :—“ When I was amongst those who were converts from the Hindoos I rather avoided having converted Christians for my servants, but when I came to Ceylon I was glad to have them—I found they were so much more honest and trustworthy.” I was much struck with that statement, coming, as it did, from a gentleman who, of the two, was rather prejudiced against our missionary labours, and not inclined to give too favourable an account of them.

5. But I must show you more in detail the actual *weakness* of the system of which I speak so highly.

1. It has no belief *in God* for its foundation.
2. It has no *worship*, strictly speaking, to offer to its adherents as the *expression* of such a belief.
3. Its morality is based on a false principle of *merit* as well as in itself abounding in fictitious and *invented* duties.
4. It has no *future*, beyond a few vague fears of possible suffering in a subsequent life, to escape from which is its highest good.

(1.) It has *no God*. I have already shown you that Pantheism, from its very indefiniteness, does not convey the idea of God in the sense in which men use the term, or conceive the idea of a Supreme Being; an idea, you must observe, which is *universal*, or existing in some form in every known race, the supposed exceptions always, after sufficient inquiry, being found to fall under the common rule. The practical Atheism into which the system of Buddha subsided is really the inevitable result of this inability in Pantheism to supply the *want* which man feels, or to meet his innate sense of trust in a higher Power to which he can appeal. It was to escape from the contradictions of what was practically *Polytheism* that the Buddhist founder invented this substitute, to guard which, as he thought, he denied creation and moral supremacy, as the channels through which the worship he wished to uproot might reappear. But Atheism is the necessary consequence of such a denial, as its inevitable result and condition, and accordingly, whether accepting the term or no, the Buddhist teachers are atheistic, and in this fearful error lies the weakness of their entire system. Their worship is a contradiction of their theory of belief, instead

of its expression ; their morality is impossible because baseless, and without an object to whom their responsibility can be referred, and—to us, regarding it as Christians—also impossible, since grace is neither sought nor attainable. I have not said one word of another unquestionable truth and indispensable need in man—the existence of sin and the need of forgiveness, to us brought home in the two precious words *repentance* and *pardon*. I rest here my objection on the one ground of faith being impossible under such a system, with all it implies of *hope*, and *reliance*, and *prayer*. The marvellous questioning of St. Paul (Rom. x. 13, 14) is so directly applicable to what I am saying, that I will conclude with it this head of my argument, “*who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not HEARD.*” It is to this mournful silence of Buddhism on that great want of man that I would for a moment direct your attention.

(2.) I now pass on to consider the Buddhist religion as wanting in *worship*. You may be surprised that I should say this when you know of ancient temples existing, some of them the very oldest in the world, as known and traced in records of the past ; and the *priesthood*, you may ask, what are their functions, if not to conduct the people’s *worship*? I have been in one of those very ancient temples, and I believe I saw there the oldest tree in the world, of which there is any historical record. The old temple was built about the tree, and some of the branches were supported by the brickwork. That tree has existed there for centuries, and it is likely to exist, I might almost say, for centuries more. Enter, then, with me into one of these temples, and your wonder at my assertion will increase, for you will see images, representations of the great Buddha in all of them; in some, numerous and of various size and posture, and, above all, one *gigantic* and commanding—a recumbent figure, with eyes closed as in sleep,—surely, you will say, the idol which is worshipped by those who enter; and when you look, there is something strangely imposing in the deep quietude and repose that reign around. In speaking of the various postures of these figures I may mention one curious fact which I remember pointing out to the priests in one of the temples, and that is, that there is one posture which Buddha is never made to assume, namely, that of kneeling, or the attitude of prayer. The silent priest at your side makes no sign, but looks at you with fixed gaze, as wondering what your thoughts must be; and though there is no

perfection of art in the figure itself, it is in keeping with all that surrounds it—the quaint, rude architecture; the flowers, most of them faded, which have been laid as offerings at the feet; the dim light burning. Yet, if you ask the priest if he worships the figure at which you have been gazing, he will indignantly deny the charge. I do not, indeed, think that the denial is so satisfactory as it is on his part sincere, for it is doubtless true that he does not pray to it. What I do think is that the sort of devotion or frame of mind which such external objects excite is one of the dangers of all corruptions of true worship, which Buddhism has not escaped, just as in Christianity itself, without imputing idolatry to our brethren, we cannot fail to observe an idolatrous tendency as the result of encouraging the use of external objects to excite reverence, or to assist worship by producing a frame of mind consonant with worship. In like manner, the figures of Buddha do, in my opinion, suggest something of a practical idolatry which the system itself denies. I have, however, another and more definite charge to bring against it under this head of worship. We will then leave the temple as we entered it; and on leaving we observe a few people coming and going; each has brought or is leaving a flower and small coin, and a few outside may be observed repeating some words in devotional attitude; they are, if not praying, at least engaged in devotion of some kind; but the *priest* does not notice them either in the way of approval or hindrance. Besides the temples there are certain large buildings without any grace—more like the pyramids of Egypt, except that they are of smaller dimensions—and the worship of the people, so far as I have seen it, is more frequent outside, around the *dagoba*, as these places are called, than in the temple itself. The *system* is not one of worship; but *men will* worship, and if they are taught there is no God, they will still “feel after Him, if haply they might find Him.” It is man’s *nature*—and in the higher and truer sense of the word—to *believe in God*; and in the same sense the poet’s reflection is true:—

“Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.”

I wish I could stop at this point, and add nothing darker to the picture I have drawn, but we must follow the last comers; and not far from us there is another temple—Deywalla, or *Devil Temple*,—into which we cannot enter: and there is the result of this prohibition of prayer, even if it were successful—those who may not pray to a God of mercy and goodness will offer their vain devotion to *evil powers*; if they may not ask for

blessing, they will deprecate curses and malice of cruel demons ; and though the Buddhist priest does not acknowledge, he does not *forbid* the impious rite. He cannot, however, escape responsibility for that which is the natural consequence of his system of teaching, and its fatal denial of the existence of God.

(3.) But is the morality of this creed so perfect as, after all, to raise it, if not to an equality, yet to a point of fair comparison with that of the Christian? I shall not enter into details, but I will take care that Buddhism shall not suffer for my brevity. I will admit that the leading virtues are taught, and most of the sins which debase our nature in effect forbidden ; that, in fact, our own ten commandments are found to be the basis of morality as between man and man, if, as we should expect, the duty we owe to God is omitted. The error, however, arises at this very point. To whom, if not to God, are we responsible for moral duties *at all*? The Buddhist is not, indeed, without a reply ; but is it a sufficient reply? He bids us perform good deeds and avoid evil actions—the former for *merit*, the latter under fear of a future loss ;—the one to advance us towards the state of *Nirwāna*, the latter as bringing the consequence of a continued existence, and that, it may be, in the lower form of some *animal*. I do not stop to argue the point, how can there be *merit* where there is no standard of excellence, no judge or rewarder of goodness, I will simply say that, allowing it to be possible to inculcate the practice of virtue on such a ground, *very few* will accept the teaching ; it will not meet the difficulty which besets every man—his *temptations*, his natural inclinations to evil, or his very *inertness* and love of ease. The actual result is that a few do perform good actions, generally such as meet with a present reward of outward respect, and almost all perform some supposed duties, too often such as have no intrinsic goodness, such, for instance, as saving the life of animals, often under circumstances where it might be preferable to act otherwise, as the killing of noxious creatures dangerous to the life of man. I have pointed out to the people themselves how sad it was that, while that was the case, it never occurred to them that it must also be a duty to make the lives of animals happier whilst they existed. I have seen them very cruel indeed to a lame and disabled dog. They would not kill it, but they made its life very intolerable, to say the least of it. I do not enter upon the question of the performance of ordinary duties, or even the practice of the quiet virtue of kindness, obedience to parents, love of children and the like, for the truth is, the nation I am speaking of in these remarks is by no means deficient in these respects. If I *could* I would

gladly connect it with their religion that they possess these natural virtues; but, on the other hand, I cannot deny that they are very deficient in truthfulness and honesty,—that they are covetous to a strong extent, and revengeful;—but I am not desirous of giving a catalogue of their faults. The defect in their morality is this—they are the *slaves* of the impulse of the hour. As they are not taught to resist wrong as wrong, and to do right because it is right and as responsible to a Being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, they yield, each of them, almost without a struggle to their besetting temptation, and great crimes are committed, not, as with us, either by those who love better things, after a struggle and under strong temptation, or by the wilfully depraved who know what they are doing—but by what we might call good and bad alike, without distinction, and almost without *compunction*. That is the great peculiarity of Buddhism: evil deeds are committed by Buddhists whom we should otherwise consider very good men. If they were tempted, they would, without the least compunction, commit the grossest crimes. It is possible, of course, in a Christian country to have such cases, but there they are common. They never seem to have the least idea of resisting a temptation, and I do not think I am uncharitable in saying this. I have lived in the midst of them for a long time, and I have always recognized most gladly all that was good amongst them.

(4.) I now pass to that which I will place last in my sad enumeration of the shortcomings of Buddhism,—its having *no future*, no prospect of a bright *eternity*, no love of a Father who will be then present with us, giving us that which at this season we pray for, “the *fruition* of His glorious Godhead.” But I must not assert that Buddhism in theory presents no future to its followers. It tells them very plainly that death may not be the *end*—that they may find existence still clinging to them after they have laid down the life they now live; nay, that there is an alternative of good or evil. But what are these? Punishment in the one case—the life of a brute, it may be, they will have to experience, if they have failed in the requirements of that strangely inconsistent religion in which they have had no consolation, and can have felt no joy. The punishment, so far as it is such, I have mentioned. The *reward* I also alluded to earlier in my remarks: it is to *cease to exist*—consciously and individually to be lost for ever in the great universal life, absorbed in that which, pervading all things, is to our conception nowhere. I will not say that I can lay before you in adequate terms this strange theory of a

future state. If you can form some conception of it which brings it to your minds in a more tangible shape, I shall be glad that you should do so, for I have no wish to do aught but full justice to the system I am attempting to describe. But what I can say without doubt is this: that the prospect of Nirwana does not influence with *hope* one in a hundred—I might say a thousand—of those amongst whom I have lived, and continually sought to ascertain with what hope they were living, or yet more, *dying*, when death came, as it comes to all of us in turn. The most striking proof I will adduce is this: when death approaches, in some of its exterior signs of approach, the sufferer turns to his friends, and often to the priest for *what*—for *consolation*? Alas! no; for some chance of prolonging life, some charm to stay the disease, or keep the evil spirit who is inflicting it at a distance—it may be for a little space—and that is all; and after death they mourn for the dead, not only without hope, but in fear and trembling. The bird of the air whose voice they hear, the animal that passes by them in the gloom, these may, any of them, be the lost one revisiting in sadness the scenes he has left. Very few, indeed, can die and leave behind them actual hope of even that dim and uncertain future of rest being attained. So time, and time alone, does its work of a partial consolation, and the dead are forgotten, and the survivors live on with no higher motive to incite them to good or to deter them from evil. Such is the system of Buddhism of which, a few weeks ago, one who knows the theory from books, spoke as if it might vie with our own Christianity in excellence. If he had lived amongst its followers as I have done—if he had observed the way in which a national religion shows its effects upon a people, *i. e.* in making better those who follow *it the most sincerely*—he would have, I venture to say, come to a very different conclusion from that to which he seems to have come; and certainly, if he had known the priests of this religion, as I have done, in friendly intercourse and quiet converse, and heard them calmly express their indifference as to the wider extension of their principles, or the success of Christianity itself as a possible event, he would not have ventured to say of Buddhism that it was a missionary religion, seeking to propagate itself by extension, like ours—which bids us “go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

Before I conclude, I should like to refer for a moment to a letter which has been received from a distinguished person,—Professor Chandler, of Oxford—who, having read a proof copy of my paper, very kindly and properly offers his comments

upon it, and to those comments which are not altogether favourable, I should wish to do entire justice. He accuses me—I do not say “accuses” in any unkind sense, but he thinks that I have fallen into, a contradiction on one point. He thinks that in what I say as to the fault of the Buddhists, that they are not taught to do right as right and to avoid wrong as wrong, I am inconsistent, since, on my own showing, right is only right because it is taught us by a higher power—God Himself. But he fails to observe this, that right being right in itself, and being also the will of God, appear to us identical terms. Certainly I should quite allow, what Professor Chandler lays down as a belief, that there is in man—theist, pantheist, atheist, or Christian—an innate sense of right and wrong, and I take that to be, just as I take the sun in the firmament to be, one of the marvellous proofs of the existence of God. I argue from it that there must be One to whom right is His natural law. He is our moral governor, and we, being His creatures, He has implanted in us that innate sense. Professor Chandler says, further, that Christianity would suffer if we were to judge of it in the same way that I judge of these Buddhists when I speak of all their natural virtues, not as emanating from their religion, but as being what I have called them, merely natural virtues. Now I really think that I am not guilty of any such injustice as to fail to impute any point of excellence to Buddhists which comes out of their religion. They are very careful in the performance of certain duties, or what they consider such. The life of a priest, for instance, is a life of mendicancy, self-denial, and austerity, and they carry it out because they are taught to do it, not that I believe it is the best moral state, or that there is any virtue at all in mendicancy. As to natural virtues, I had many conversations with the Buddhist priests, and I always allowed to them that there was by no means a want of many of these natural virtues among the Cingalese people; but I maintain that a religion, if it be worth anything, is not to count as the result of its own efforts what are called the natural virtues. As Christian ministers we do not claim to have produced the natural virtues. All men we say have natural virtues which are the gift of God, and we tell them to make those natural virtues into Christian good works by dealing with them in a better or truer spirit, such as not claiming merit, but rather adding to them humility. In that way they assume a different character in a Christian man. I once said to a Buddhist priest: “I do not blame your religion for all the vices I see among you, nor do I impute to it all the good I see, but I want to ask you how do you deal

with vices? What effect has your teaching on the bad people?" His reply was: "We have nothing to do with them at all. No religion can deal with the bad: it is only the good we have to deal with. The bad must be left to themselves." "But," I said, "I must differ from you altogether. It is the bad people that we always go to first and try to deal with, and if our religion did not make bad people into good ones, I would give it up." The priest replied, "If that is the case, I think your religion is a very superior religion," and he did not say it contemptuously, though I do not think he was very credulous about the matter. I have seen people who seemed utterly lost in hopeless depravity—I am not speaking of England but of what we mean by Christian countries—and by getting them to go in prayer to God and ask for grace, I have seen them entirely changed. I have seen drunkards reclaimed, and people who were leading dissolute lives become good and holy. I have seen it among Christians and in converted heathens, and I can have no doubt, so long as I live, of the power of the Gospel to turn sinners into very saints of God. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN.—I think I shall be expressing the thoughts of every one present, when I say that we are deeply indebted to the right rev. prelate for his kindness in coming here, and giving us so valuable a paper. (Cheers.) I cannot forbear making a remark upon one excellent feature in that paper—namely, its perfectly unprejudiced character. It would have been pardonable for a Christian bishop living among heathenism, to have dilated much on the faults of the system he had seen, and on the excellences of the system of which he is so able a preacher. But Bishop Cloughton has not done so. He has come to us, a scientific and not a religious society, and has most philosophically pointed out where the Buddhist system fails, and has then compared with those points the particular characteristics in which the Christian religion is eminently excellent. Some communications have to be read, after which it will be open for any one to offer remarks upon the paper.

The HONORARY SECRETARY then read a letter from Professor Max Müller, in which he expressed his regret at being unable to be present, mentioned that he had read the proof copy of Bishop P. C. Cloughton's paper, and added, "I do not think we differ much in our estimate of Buddhism. He naturally dwells on its dark, I on its bright side; he judges of it by what he has seen of it in Ceylon, I from its own sacred books." Also the following from Professor Chandler:—

"Pembroke College, Oxford, Jan. 15, 1874.

"DEAR SIR,—Allow me to thank you for the kind invitation you have sent me to attend a meeting for the discussion of Buddhism on Monday night. I regret that I cannot come to London, for in Buddhism, as the

creed, or every-day system of the majority* of mankind, I take a great interest, and I would very willingly know more than I do of its practical working. It seems to me that if the bishop (whose fairness I much admire) were to treat us English as he does the Singalese Buddhists—were he, that is, to subtract all of our practice which springs simply and solely from the ‘natural virtues’ of our race—we should hardly be in any better position than the Buddhists, perhaps we should show (all things considered) to considerable disadvantage. In page 146 of his paper he seems to me to fall into something like a contradiction. Near the top of the page he implies (if I do not misapprehend him) that if there were no God there could be no moral duties, nothing that a man *ought* to do. At page 147, he complains that these poor Buddhists have never been taught to do ‘right because it was right.’ This seems to me inconsistent, and—if it be a true exposition of Christianity—to reduce our morals and religion to that purely utilitarian system which Mr. J. S. Mill maintains it is,—I, for one, believe with all my heart and soul that even on the hypothesis of atheism (or the nearest approach to it that an honest man can muddle himself into), 1. That there are distinct moral *duties*; 2. That men have, do, and always will acknowledge the existence and obligation of such duties; and 3. That they have, do, and will approve of all who practise such duties, and will themselves practise them, more and more in proportion as such duties are set before them simply as duties, plain to all rational men, incumbent on all rational men, and not as something which derives all or any of its binding force from present comfort and security, or future happiness in heaven. Religion—rational religion, that is,—so far from being the basis of morals either speculatively or practically, seems to me to be the consequence of that feeling or sense (call it what you will) of right and wrong which all but babies and a few philosophers possess in some degree or other. There seems to me nothing more likely to bring Christianity into contempt with reasonable people than the proof (if proof there could be) that it makes all moral duties depend on the arbitrary will of God. My only wonder is that, after so many years, centuries of pulpit utilitarianism, Englishmen retain even any rays of virtue at all. If Buddhism does teach that there may be—must be right and wrong, even though there be no God—then I no longer wonder at its influence. It is a strong thing to say, but it is, I believe, true, that we are all of us far more certain that there is a binding right, a repellent wrong, than we are that there is a God, and that, had man no distinct sense of right and wrong to begin with, he would never have dreamed of a God, or would have soon awoke from it. So you see it is from no want of interest that I shall be absent. I cannot come, having all sorts of things to do.

“Believe me (in great haste), very truly yours,

“H. W. CHANDLER.”

“Capt. F. Petrie, Hon. Sec.”

* The population of the globe with reference to religious worship, has been estimated as follows:—

	Balbi.		Dieterici.
Jews	4½ millions.	5 millions.
Christians	389 ”	510 ”
Mahometans	155 ”	160 ”
Idolaters	665½ ”	800 ”

Among these last Balbi estimates the Brahmins at 60 and the Buddhists at 170 millions, which is considered an under-estimate.—ED.

Also the following from Professor J. S. Brewer :—

“ King’s College, London, 17th Jan., 1874.

“ DEAR SIR,—Will you be good enough to thank your Council for their kindness in sending me a proof copy of Bishop Claughton’s valuable paper on Buddhism, and their invitation to be present at its discussion. I have been suffering from so severe an attack of bronchitis that I am afraid to venture out in the evening, and therefore I cannot avail myself of the pleasure they propose. I regret this the more, as I think the subject of Bishop Claughton’s paper of the highest importance, especially just now, when Christianity is covertly and openly attacked on all sides, and Pantheism, hitherto a philosophical notion and vague theory confined to the speculative, is now supposed to have assumed in Buddhism a practical shape, to be a formidable rival to Christianity itself, and to have undermined the evidences on which the latter rests. A clear statement of what it is, and its results on the faith and conduct of those who embrace it, by one who, like Bishop Claughton, has had opportunities of seeing it with his own eyes and not deriving his information from books, is, just now, of the utmost importance : for I happen to know cases, in my own personal experience, where the exaggerated notions of Buddhism have tended to shake men’s confidence in Christianity and its *Divine* original. The Victoria Institute has on this, as on other subjects, done useful service by obtaining so much valuable information from one who is so well qualified to give it. But I hope Bishop Claughton may be induced to treat the subject more fully, and draw out the contrast between Christianity and this, its supposed rival, more minutely still. He cannot do a greater service at this time to that Church of which he is so distinguished an ornament. I wish this and some other papers of your Institute could be distributed among the clergy, at a small price, for many of them are really ‘Tracts for the Times,’ and handle questions of very great importance for the clergy to be well acquainted with. I say ‘a small price,’ because the clergy have many books to buy, and, for the most part, little money to buy them with.

“ Yours truly,
“ J. S. BREWER.”

The Rev. H. WACE.—With regard to Professor Chandler’s letter, I am sure that any observations on this subject from the successor of Dean Mansel, who we all know was so distinguished in Christian apologetics, deserve the deepest consideration, from the great interest he takes in the controversy, and from the fact that he has read most profoundly on all these matters.

Bishop CLAUGHTON.—Of course his last remarks I entirely and totally differ from. I take the sense of right and wrong to be one of the strongest and most unanswerable arguments to prove that there is a God or moral governor. He has put that sense of right and wrong in us, and that is why we praise good and blame evil.

The Rev. J. SINCLAIR.—There is one point on which I should like to have a somewhat more distinct statement from the right rev. bishop, and that is as to the actual state of morality among the Buddhist community as compared with our own country—with reference, for instance, to stealing and drunkenness, and such other common vices.

Bishop CLAUGHTON.—I do beg that you will consider that I do not wish to represent them as at all worse than they are. There is a great deal of

dishonesty, and want of truthfulness to a fearful extent ; there is also a want of purity of thought and word, as well as of deed, which is fearfully common.

Mr. SINCLAIR.—As compared with England ?

Bishop CLAUGHTON.—Yes, as compared with England. Do not suppose I do not know that there is a vast amount of evil of that kind in England ; but on these points, I must confess, the amount of evil in Ceylon is terrible. In our own country, no sensible parents will allow their children to be too much with their servants, it is not desirable ; but there it is not simply a matter of caution but a matter of absolute necessity, for otherwise the most improper things are placed before them. But, on the other hand, there is nothing in the religion of these people to teach them differently. In our schools and pulpits here we teach certain morals to old and young, rich and poor, but there there is nothing of the kind. It is true there are certain lessons from the sacred books read out, but few of them contain moral precepts ; they consist rather of telling the people to commit particular things to heart, but they do not answer to our moral teaching at all. But the great comparison that I would make is this : here there are bad men and good men, and sometimes what are called good men are tempted to evil and lapse into badness. There, if a man who is naturally a good, kind-hearted man, and not at all cruel, happen to have the besetting sin of covetousness—which is common enough among all these races, not the Bhuddists in particular—and somebody interferes with his interests, he thinks no more of putting the man out of life than you would think of killing a noxious animal, even if the person he has to deal with be his friend, his relation, even his father. With us, if an infant dies under suspicious circumstances there is a coroner's inquest ; but they cannot understand that human life is so sacred, the very notion is a wonder to them. It is not that they are worse than we as natural men, but things that would horrify us, with all our faults, they are not surprised at. But it is not a part of my argument to make a comparison of this kind, in reference to a people from whom I received much kindness, and to whom I have owed my life. I do not like to stand forth as their accuser, but if you ask me honestly, there is no comparison at all between them and our own people, with all our faults and badness. I should like to say that when I was in Ceylon I was always on the side of those who were the advocates of the native race, and if there was anything that excited my own indignation it was when Englishmen expressed themselves unkindly or harshly of the people among whom they were living ; and the very things we blamed in them were partly our own fault. If you dealt with them like children, or as Dr. Arnold dealt with his boys, and said, "I will trust you," you could teach them anything, if they were not lost to begin with. I do not believe my servants ever robbed me, and I could trust them thoroughly, but I taught them first by showing and telling them that I trusted them. But I want to say again that I wish it to be considered that in anything I have said against these people I am an unwilling witness. I do not wish to bring anything against them,

for I fully and thankfully acknowledge that there is a great deal of good in them. I have received a great deal of kindness from them, and I should be really sorry to think that I had stood before a Christian meeting as their accuser. I will say that there is no class of converts with whom I have had to deal—and I have had a great deal to do with that happiest of all works, the work of a missionary—there is no class of converts whom I have found so valuable as those from Buddhism, which is, I think, a great testimony to Buddhism itself. I have had the happiness and privilege of ordaining some twenty of the natives of Ceylon, and, out of those twenty, I assure you that not more than two ever disappointed me, and those disappointed me not by becoming anything scandalous or vile, but by becoming indolent, and puffed up with the idea that they were admitted to something higher than they had been before. I could declare, when I left that island, that there were converts working in that mission there who were as faithful ministers of Jesus Christ as I ever knew in my life.

The Rev. C. A. Row.—I want to get an additional amount of information on the question of Buddhism, which is a very practical one. I am not unfrequently called upon to deal with it in Bradlaugh's Hall of Science, where I am told that the morality of Buddhism will bear comparison with that of Christianity. There is also a very wide-spread belief among these unbelievers that the story of Jesus Christ is actually borrowed from the Hindoo story of Krishna,*—one of the most surprising things which can be asserted by rational men. I should like to hear Bishop Claughton's opinion as to the real difference between Pantheism as taught in Strauss's recent work, and as taught in the leading precepts of Buddha; and also his opinion as to the value of Sir John Bowering's work on Ceylon, which treats largely of Buddhism. The bishop, no doubt, has also read another book—the travels of the Abbé Huc in Tartary,—and I should like to ask him whether that work faithfully depicts the theology as well as the practice of Buddhism in the countries which it describes. There is nothing that we want more than an English book to which we can appeal, in reference to the origin and character of Buddhism, with as much confidence as we can to Sir George Cornewall Lewis's work on the credibility of Roman history. I own that I am ignorant of the real historical value of the common views which are popularly placed before the public on the subject. I want to know the values of the authorities on which the original history of Buddha professes to rest, and whether they rest on an historical foundation. I know that the authorities are not contemporary, but I wish to know whether there is any reason for believing that the real history of Buddha has been handed down by a faithful tradition during the centuries that it remained unwritten. I am not acquainted with any work in England which thoroughly investigates

* Mr. W. R. Cooper, of the Society of Biblical Archæology, has drawn my attention to Mr. Hardy's statement in his "Manual of Buddhism," that recent investigations point to the fact that certain travesties of the Christian religion first appeared as a part of the Buddhist faith in the second century of the Christian era.—ED.

this important question. I will now offer a few observations on the subject itself. First of all, it seems to me that the principles of Pantheism, so far as their moral value is concerned, are plainly undistinguishable from those of Atheism. Both are equally wanting in moral power capable of influencing mankind. This is deeply impressed upon me by Strauss's late work. So far as any moral obligation, derived from any external source, is concerned, that work thoroughly saps it to the foundation. I do not deny that there is an internal sense of right and wrong in the human mind, whether a man be atheist, pantheist, or theist, and I think that the existence of this is one of the proofs upon which Theism rests. No doubt rules of correct morality are important, but the all-important point is, by what moral force can we put those moral precepts into execution. We may go to the ancient philosophers of Greece, and find in the long run a pure set of moral precepts, but they themselves most fully confess their positive and absolute powerlessness to make those precepts become actualities. No man has read the Ethics of Aristotle without feeling most deeply the powerlessness of that philosophy. The philosopher investigates the foundation of morals, but he feels himself absolutely powerless when dealing with human passions. "Do this thing because it is morally beautiful : do not do that thing because it is the contrary" ; but all these precepts are mere chaff before the violence of human passions. This is the essential difficulty to be urged against the morality of Buddhism, that, denying as it does any external obligation or any external power which can be brought to bear on the moral nature of man, it leaves him helplessly irreformable. This is exemplified in the morality taught by Strauss. Read his book carefully through, and you will find that he is entirely without any possible moral power to bring to bear on the human mind. I am not much concerned when I am told that there are many sound moral precepts to be found in Buddhism. This is unquestionably the case in the philosophy of utilitarianism as taught by Mill. The highest point to which he can come is that one is bound to act for the greatest happiness of the greatest number ; but how is this to be enforced ? Christianity asserts that it possesses such a power as we want, and concentrates it in Our Lord's person, not a mere system of moral precepts which rest upon no distinctive moral power to enforce them. The right rev. bishop has brought out the fact that Buddhism has no real future for man. I apprehend that Buddhism is in this point of view superior to modern atheism and pantheism. According to Strauss, when death takes place there is nothing hereafter—we are absorbed at once into the infinite universe. The evil and the good alike will sleep the sleep of unconsciousness. It is quite obvious that, supposing the moral teaching of atheism and pantheism to be good, Christianity must have a great additional moral power when it is able to enforce moral obligation by the prospect of a future state and a future judge. We Christians have this advantage over our opponents : we have all the principles which they can bring to bear upon us, and we have others in addition. The principles of Buddhism must be preferable to those of Strauss, because Buddhism teaches that if a man lives a wretched life, instead of sinking

into unconsciousness, he must go through a set of transmigrations. This is a moral force which the system of Strauss is positively wanting in, for he teaches us that it is exactly the same with the evil and the good—that the greatest villain and the best of all men meet with the same end, a painless and everlasting sleep. I wish to add one further observation. I apprehend that Max Müller, in his recent work, did not intend to assert that Buddhism, *as it now exists*, is a Missionary religion; but that it was so in its origin, and in the original impulse through which it spread; in one word, that there are three religions only in the world, which can claim the character of Missionary ones, Christianity, Mahomedanism, and Buddhism; these have been propagated mainly by persuasion and preaching—the two former, the second especially, having been aided by the sword: these three religions have spread from a well-known historical beginning in a single person, until they have embraced millions of our race.—This is what I apprehend Max Müller intended in saying that Buddhism is a Missionary religion. To affirm that it is so at the present moment, no one would do who has the smallest regard for facts. But it is an equally patent fact, that it was so at its first commencement, and until it had spread over a third of our race. The Greek Church is a Church from which the Missionary spirit is gone. A person who knew only of this Church, might affirm that Christianity was not a Missionary religion. The fact that the whole life and Missionary spirit of Buddhism has passed away, by no means hinders that at its commencement it was one of the great Missionary religions of the earth. Buddhism, though now effete, was Missionary in its origin, and in the conditions of its first existence; and on this account took rank with the Christians and Mahomedans, which together with it, formed the only three religions of mankind which have been animated by a Missionary spirit.

The Rev. W. J. IRONS, D.D.—I rise to say very little indeed on this subject, because I am aware how little is yet known, and have taken pains to ascertain as much as is yet knowable by an Englishman who cannot read Sanskrit. I have not the advantage which Bishop Claughton has had of living among these people, and therefore I am anxious to hear from him more than he has yet brought before us this evening. Probably, in his lordship's concluding observations, when he comes to reply, he will enlighten us somewhat further. We want to learn how, practically, to deal with this great system of Buddhism, which is the religion of so large a part of the human race, submitted, by a mysterious providence, to the government of this country. We have to govern the believers in Buddhism and the Brahminism out of which Buddhism sprang. We have great duties towards them, and we have very few sources open to us as Englishmen which will help us to understand those duties. There is an excellent work by Mr. Spence Hardy on "Eastern Monachism," which I read some fifteen years ago. Mr. Hardy was a Nonconformist missionary, and his book gave me a clearer idea of the Buddhist system, as a whole, than I should have obtained from any other source. Professor Max Müller's books are too mysterious, vague, and unhistorical to satisfy me. I have read them with attention, but I got very little

out of them : it is better to speak the plain truth on a subject where there is a great deal of unreality. There is a capital book which goes into the subject in some detail, and compares Christianity with Hindooism in many of its phases in a very forcible way ; its title is " Parameswara Inyana Goshthi," and it is a series of discussions put out by the late Mr. Rowland Williams, one of the celebrated " Essayists,"—a man gravely misunderstood in his time, and who certainly has left behind him a reputation which will survive. I say this, of course, without at all endorsing his opinions. His book will give, to any one who desires it, a tolerably clear view of the subject, or that which more nearly approaches to a clear view than anything else which, as far as I know, exists at present in the English language. I could not recommend any one who wishes to have a usable outline of the subject to rest in the translations of the " Hymns of the Vedas," by Professor Max Müller ; nor in his book on " Science and Religion " ; and yet the question which Professor Max Müller could answer better than most men, and which I should like to hear Bishop Claughton speak about, is, what is the historical value of the Vedas ? As to the Shasters, I suppose there is no historical value in them, and I doubt very much whether there is any in the Vedas. Their antiquity is most difficult to ascertain. I greatly doubt whether we can find earlier than, say the Macedonian conquest of Persia, any worthy historical basis for the Vedas ; and it seems rather gratuitous to call upon Christian people to compare these writings with the venerable writings of Moses and the prophets. The sublimity and the grandeur of our ancient Hebrew books have been felt by millions from the time of Isaiah and Moses ; while these Vedas are brought forward but yesterday, and but for the efforts of our own countrymen, they would have remained, in all probability, unknown to the rest of the world to this day. So great is the contrast between the two sets of books—the Jewish and the Indian—that one can only be surprised at the remarkable mental constitution which can regard them for a single instant as in any sense parallel books of religion—parallel authorities in divine truth. That they have indeed been spoken of as in some degree parallel we all of us know, but the fact that they have been so mentioned will, I venture to say, be hereafter regarded as a curiosity in the history of the human mind. But we are concerned, no doubt, with another question closely connected with this which I am glancing at, namely, what is the historical importance of the Vedas in connection with the languages of the world's ancient races. I believe it is admitted that languages were so imperfect in primitive ages as not to have been able to give utterance at all to the higher ideas of theology and morals ; and yet they somehow reached the wonderful perfection of Sanskrit, and found expression in it, in pre-historic times, and attained a metaphysical perfection so great that there is no kind of controversy among Christians to which you may not find some parallel in that ancient literature of India. Here surely is a wonderful subject for the investigation of our *savans* ; they should aim to explain to us how that extraordinary civilization had arisen. We cannot indeed find the history, but we ought at least, one would think, to have a theory founded upon some

evidence. Now, I do not think the theories shadowed out by Max Müller are much better than those of Jacob Bryant. They appear to me to be vague and obscure in the highest degree, and the fact remains, and has to be grappled with, that here is a high and ancient civilization the origin of which is entirely unknown—unknown, I mean, to us : let those who can find out anything about it, tells us.* Until we know something of the origin of these Vedas, we shall not be able to make anything like a “science of religion” in the sense of Professor Max Müller. In our actual dealings with Buddhism, we have to take a series of wonderful leaps through very dark centuries, and then come suddenly at last into the blaze of finished speculations which would have appalled Kant. I cannot bridge over the gulf which separates the religion as now existing from the religion as it must have existed some 600, or even 300, years before Christ. That is a matter on which I should be glad if to-night we could have the opinion of Bishop Claughton. Sooner or later, certainly we shall have to deal with this subject in a practical way. The visit of Chunder Sen to this country a year or two ago brought us in close contact with the last development of the Indian mind. His disciples are now forming a religion which is called Brahmoism, in which they regard Christ as a moral teacher, just as they would Brahma as another moral teacher. They are endeavouring to form a sort of religion in some sense apart from Christianity, and I understand they have had a success larger than that given to some of our missionaries. The Brahmo theory is intelligible certainly to those who carefully study it ; but the theory put before us in “Science of Religion” within the last few years does not seem to be even intelligible, though some of us have tried earnestly to master it. There are many who do know Sanskrit, and some who speak with an air of authority ; and they ought to tell us the theories they deduce from their facts, and examine the origin of that Indian system of religious philosophy, the working of which we are now seeing, and the condition of which we are obliged to deal with. The Archbishop of Canterbury said not long ago, that if we do not undertake in real earnest the conversion of these heathen to Christ, there are some among them who will soon undertake the conversion of some of us to heathenism. We had therefore better grapple with the subject in time, and I would now ask your lordship to enlighten us further upon it. (Cheers.)

* We are reminded by these remarks of the discoveries of Dr. Schliemann at the hill of Hassarlik : a shaft pierced five strata—each considered as indicating the presence of different peoples :—The first, 6 feet thick, “was that of the later Ilium” ; the second, of 7 feet, indicated a people living in wooden houses, and using bronze implements ; the third, 10 feet thick, people using flint implements, such as are now referred to the stone age ; the fourth a very thick layer, showed a people in an advanced stage of civilization, living in houses built of unbaked bricks ; the fifth, at a depth of 46 feet, was 6 feet thick, indicated a people living in hewn stone houses and using pottery of superior quality, and of much elegance of form.—Ed.

Mr. GIBSON.—There is just one question which I wish to ask the Bishop, and that is whether he was struck in any way by the missionary spirit or operations of the Buddhists. He is quite aware that a very strong statement has been made by Professor Max Müller, placing Buddhism on a par with Christianity in regard to its missionary machinery. I should like to know whether Bishop Claughton saw any exhibition of that machinery. A very bold statement has been made, and I must say that I am a little doubtful concerning its correctness, and I do not know any one better able to answer the question than Bishop Claughton.

Dr. IRONS.—May I be permitted to say that the passage in the paper which has been commented on by Professor Chandler, happens to be a passage which I myself marked as it was read in the sense of Professor Chandler, and not in the sense of Bishop Claughton.

Mr. WACE.—I am happy to hear that observation from Dr. Irons. Professor Chandler's remarks seem to me to touch so closely our interest in this question, that I should like to draw more attention to them. The question that interests us is not, I think, principally that of the relative excellences of Christianity and of Buddhism. That is, indeed, out of the question in this room ; for it is a foregone conclusion, and I do not think it can be otherwise even with those to whom Mr. Row has referred. What we want to understand is, how we are to deal with this extraordinary manifestation of human nature which we call Buddhism ; because, although in what we call the civilized world—the countries of Europe and other western countries—these heathen religions appear comparatively insignificant, yet we must do justice to the stupendous fact that they form the religions of by far the greatest part of the human race. Buddhism is the religion of far more human beings than Christianity,* and people who want to understand human nature cannot leave out of the account such an important fact. We want to know what Buddhism means, and what are its excellences ; and, as Dr. Irons has led the way, I will venture to say that the essential principle of Buddhism concerns us now most intimately, not so much in the direction of Strauss's "Old and New Faith," which is, no doubt, pure Pantheism, but much more in those speculations to which great currency has been given in a book to which I refer with the utmost respect for its author and for its motive,—I mean Mr. Matthew Arnold's "Literature and Dogma," a book which seems to me to advocate a kind of semi-Christian Buddhism. The author's view is that the essential part of the Bible is the bringing to light "the Eternal, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness" ; that you cannot verify a personal God, but you can verify a stream of tendency which makes for righteousness. Now is not that the principle of Buddhism as explained by Bishop Claughton ? In what way can we deal with it ? There are two ways. One is to go to the Indian, or to the English Buddhists, and start from the principle of having a revelation from God ; and the other is to see whether we may, in arguing with them, start from the principle of right and wrong, which they all acknowledge, and

* See note at commencement of discussion.—Ed.

point out, that this leads them to the acknowledgment of a personal God, and then build up the superstructure of a subsequent revelation of God in Christianity.* On that point, I think, Bishop Claughton misunderstood Professor Chandler's letter. Bishop Claughton says, "I believe the sense of right and wrong is the strongest evidence we can have of the existence of a God." But that is what Professor Chandler says. Professor Chandler says that, taking the relative probability of evidence, there is more certainty of a distinction between right and wrong than there is of the existence of God ; and, therefore, if you are to begin on a sound and solid basis, you must accept the basis of right and wrong as admitted by Buddhism, and proceed from that with your superstructure, and not begin with the assumption of God and of revelation. This is a very important and difficult question, and deserves patient consideration. If, however, you take Professor Chandler's basis, remember that you start with this advantage : you may acknowledge that Buddhism, which obtains the assent of a majority of the human race, has obtained it on a just and right basis, and that, so far as it goes without revelation, so far it is good and true. You are not going to attempt to overthrow this element in it ; quite the contrary ; but you say these people have advanced, by their own unaided light, to a very great degree of excellence, and you are able, by the special assistance of a revelation, to lead them on further. That offers a very powerful position for us to take up, and I hope it will be carefully considered in any society like this, or by any body of men who have to deal with the heathens. (Cheers.)

Mr. SINCLAIR.—I think it is a matter for regret that we have no representatives of Buddhism, or at least of Pantheism, here to-night. It strikes me that there is very little of real substantial difference between Pantheism as we find it in Buddhism, and as it exists and prevails very extensively, I think, in modern Europe. Without undertaking to represent that system as one who believes in it, it seems to me obvious that a system of belief which has obtained such extensive acceptance amongst the human race, and decidedly also amongst men of intellect and of learning, must contain some elements of truth ; some things which it would be well for Christians to know and to understand. If I am right in supposing that there are in it elements of truth, it seems to me obvious that in order to refute the errors of Pantheism, and put our Christianity in a proper position for having a paramount claim on man's faith, we must understand and assimilate those elements of truth and goodness which I assume Pantheism to contain. I will not define clearly what those elements of truth in Pantheism are, but I will indicate vaguely some of the things it seems to contain, which have a kind of fascination for the human mind, and account for its acceptance by so many men of intelligence and learning. There is something very charming in the view of nature which it gives as pervaded in an especial sense by Divinity. I cannot enlarge upon it, I simply have a slight sense of fascination and of poetry in contemplating that point of

* Acts xvii. 23.

Pantheism. Then, on metaphysical grounds, it seems to me that the common mode of conceiving the relationship of the Deity to the external universe is somewhat defective. A great philosopher, Sir William Hamilton, lays it down as a self-evident proposition, that the complement of being cannot be increased. We cannot believe that anything can actually come into existence in the sense that the complement of existence is thereby increased and consequently the universe must have existed in the Deity before it existed in its present form, in some real, though it might be unintelligible, sense. Besides that, Pantheism, as it is embodied in Buddhism, has this recommendation, that it is a very great improvement on the system which it superseded. That has been admitted very expressly by the Right Rev. Bishop in his paper, and I think we can sympathize with the author of the Buddhist system, and understand him to have been of pure and lofty moral aspirations, and actuated by those aspirations in his dislike to the prevailing Brahminism. The result of his cogitations was that system which has obtained such extensive credence, and which continues to exert so mighty influence over the minds of the East. These are some of the things which seem to account for the fact to which I have referred. But there are some insuperable objections, to the intelligent Christian mind, to the acceptance of any form of Pantheism as propounded by Strauss or Arnold, or in the rather different form contained in Picton's book. One of the insuperable objections to my mind is that, according to Pantheism, there can be no such thing as moral evil. Every action of every being is simply a development according to its nature. It does not recognize any independent created will, having the power to disobey the will of the Creator. Thus it undermines the very foundation of morality, as I understand it, and certainly in the Christian sense of the word, there can be no such thing as a God with such a belief, and consequently the whole superstructure of Christian doctrine which rests on that assumption is overturned. Then, again, with respect to the wants of human nature. Professor Huxley asserts in one of the lectures contained in his "Lay Sermons and Addresses," that modern science has discovered the true way of satisfying the cravings of man's spiritual nature, which is the most astounding utterance I ever heard. I think the deepest and most ineradicable desire of human nature is for communion with a personal God—a Being morally perfect, as well as possessed of the other attributes which we regard as essential to a Deity to whom we can look up with reverence, whom we can trust with implicit confidence, to whom we can give the most fervent love of our hearts, and from whom we may hope to receive that love of which the infinite heart is capable. In that essentially and pre-eminently the dignity and happiness of human nature consists, and there is no element in our nature which is so unmistakable and undeniable. If a man can give me a religion which meets those requirements and those demands of my nature for a real morality which implies evil and moral good, and an essential distinction between the two, together with a God who is worthy of the most profound homage of which my heart is capable, and from whom I may hope to receive that love

which we regard as the proper attribute of an infinite Father ; if any one, I say, can give me a religion, from whatever source, which has rational foundations sufficient to secure my belief, and which possesses these characteristics, then I feel that that is what my nature wants ; but I feel at the same time that Pantheism, in whatever form, is utterly incapable of this. (Cheers.) Just one word more. We must make our own human nature the starting-point of all our reasonings with respect to religion, and I think there is no essential difference of opinion between the views contained in the letter of Professor Chandler and the sentiments embodied in this paper. I think there is perfect and substantial agreement between them, on the point that our own nature is a moral nature, containing within it the essence of the eternal distinction between right and wrong, and of the obligation to do right as a starting-point, and consequently conceptions of morality and moral principles and rules are possible without religion, but what we want is the moral sanction which the paper describes and the communication of power to enable us to act upon these rules and discharge those obligations ; and here Christianity seems to me to have the most undeniable advantages over any other system, whether of philosophy or religion, that has ever been founded. (Cheers.)

Rev. J. W. BUCKLEY.—I wish to say a few words with regard to the question of right and wrong, in reference to God's will. I was startled at the statement as to right and wrong being independent of the will of God. I see, indeed, a difference between right and wrong ; but is not that difference measured by each man's individual conscience ? I cannot myself conceive any morality independent of the will of the Supreme Being : I cannot understand how otherwise we are to get a rule of right and wrong, because any man's rule may be different from the rule of almost everybody else. My natural rule, for instance, would be different from the natural rule of a Buddhist. Then I want to know what are the natural virtues of which we have been talking ? Will any one undertake to define distinctly what they are ? I take it that the estimation of them must differ immensely in different individuals, so that I cannot understand what is called an abstract rule of right and wrong. For let us suppose that we should all account to one another as to our actions being right or wrong. But one man might argue : "It is a right thing, in my view, to take away the life, in a certain state of things, of A, B, or C : therefore, I may kill C if I think it right." That would be according to his rule. I do not see, then, how we can have a rule of right and wrong without a reference to some Power supreme over us all, in whose wisdom it has lain to decide what is to be right and what is wrong in this world, between the creations of His own hand. I argue thus, irrespectively of Christianity and of Buddhism, as a matter of evident truth. I believe there is no such thing as an abstract rule of right and wrong amongst mankind apart from the rule of God. You must first know whether there is any power to lay down such a rule ; and we cannot get any further, without, first of all, doing that. I conceive, that if we went

among the Buddhists, we should find that some of the actions which they have no compunction in committing are very far removed indeed from what would be permitted under our rule of right and wrong. So that where we compare Buddhism and Christianity, on the ground of the mere doing of what we call right or wrong, not taking God's will into our reckoning, I think we fail to lay any foundation from which we can judge which is the better form of religion. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. IRONS.—But the question is, has the Supreme Power any character at all? To say the Creator does as He wills and that is right, simply on that ground, would be to destroy the whole character of Deity.

Mr. BUCKLEY.—I deny that inference *in toto*. I say we are placed here with certain relations to ourselves and everything around us. We must first of all ascertain what those relations are.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am afraid we are diverging into the question between William Occam and his opponents.

Mr. WACE.—Mr. Buckley seemed to refer to me as having said that a rule of right and wrong was inconsistent with the will of God, what I meant to say was that the sense of right and wrong does involve a God as the founder of it. But the question is whether you get at the knowledge of God through right and wrong, or at the knowledge of right and wrong through God.

The Rev. T. M. GORMAN.—With regard to one speaker's question, "How are we to deal with Buddhism?" I should oppose to it the Bible and its teaching—in fact, the truth, preached with boldness and charity, as done by the Apostles. I must say I am not satisfied with the tone of Professor Chandler's letter, nor as to the way in which he would propose to settle the difficulty. With regard to what another speaker has said, I consider it is self-evident that God is the unique source of all goodness and truth, with a will, not arbitrary, but absolute in all Divine perfection.

The CHAIRMAN.—I should like to say one or two words before calling on the Right Rev. Bishop for his reply. We have had our attention called to the extreme interest of Buddhism as being the religion of one-third of the human race, and also as being a religion which is now attracting to itself the affections of a great many sceptics. Buddhism is looked upon as a superior sort of Theism recommended by historical antiquity or *prestige*; in point of fact, as a Theism consecrated by long standing. But Bishop Claughton has, I think, clearly shown us that it is not a system of Theism, but of Pantheism. We can understand the inclination of the human mind towards Pantheism. No doubt it is a natural thing to endeavour to find everywhere traces of an all-pervading Power of Good; Malebranche (who, as it is said of him, saw God everywhere) tells us, I think, that on reading some book in which he found his views on this point clearly set forth, his delight caused so violent a palpitation that he was compelled to close the volume. But the doctrine is not a new one; it was taught in the West ages ago; surely we all remember reading in Virgil:—

“ Deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum.”

(Georg. lib. iv.)

But I should like to ask a number of questions. I want to ask Bishop Claughton to tell us in his reply something about the connection of the Vedic literature with Buddhism; and of what importance to the Buddhists, historically, are the Rig-Veda and the other three; or I should more correctly say two, since I suppose the Atharva-Veda is of no great account. I would also ask him to tell us whether there are not several forms of Buddhism—the Cingalese, the Chinese or religion of Fo, the Tartar, and the Thibetan, which is, I presume, the most genuine of all. Lastly, I would ask whether it is not correct to say of Buddhism that it is, like every other religion, an exhibition to the world of that primitive truth which was revealed to man in the first instance, and has been retained by the Jews and by the Christian Church in its purity, but which is only shown in a distorted and degraded form in other religions? I find in Buddhism much that I find in Christianity;* but it is strangely distorted. I find the Omnipotent, but not as a personal Deity. I find that great truth of religion, the Incarnation, but where is the God to be incarnate? There is resignation to God's will, but no God whose will one may be resigned to; and the resignation itself is contemplation until you lose your individual personalty, and are absorbed into Nirwána, or annihilation. (Cheers.)

Bishop CLAUGHTON.—I am afraid my answer must be very unsatisfactory; but first let me say that I have listened with a great deal of interest to all those who have spoken upon this important and interesting question. I feel that in their minds Buddhism does command an absorbing interest, and I am not surprised. As to the question which Dr. Irons has put to me, you must understand that what I know of Buddhism I know from what I have gathered with my own ears, and from the lips of others rather than from books. There will be many in this room who know more from books than I do. With regard to the value of the antiquities and chronology of Buddhism, my own idea is that we are in the same position as with regard to Roman history, when we find that Livy handed down a great deal that was legendary, and that a great portion of this had been lost altogether, and we were called on to believe a great deal of what was purely conjectural and much that was altogether wrong until a Niebuhr arose and put things somewhat into shape again. The same thing has occurred with regard to the history of Buddhism. The Buddhists themselves believe that a great portion of their early religious writings are missing, and that those we have now are very imperfect indeed. My own knowledge of them, I may tell you, simply amounts to this, that I have gone through the pages read and translated to me when I was learning the language, but since then I have been too busy to go through the various writings which English or European authors have composed to throw light upon the subject. I remember the writings of my

* See note to Mr. Row's remarks, *ante*.

friend Mr. Spence Hardy, but I know more of them from his own lips than from his book. But I may tell you this much, that it seems to me that in Europe we are accustomed to speak very positively about those things which, in the East, people who understand them speak very doubtfully about. We are accustomed to suppose here that this or that person has come to a clear understanding of what my teachers in the East told me they knew very little indeed about. On subjects concerning which the Eastern people confess they knew so little, I was surprised to find people in England so positive. But there is no doubt that there are two or three quite distinct sorts of Buddhism. I do not want you to suppose that the Ceylon Buddhism is the only correct form: I believe the Buddhisms of Siam and Burmah are considered to be the most orthodox. The Chinese Buddhism is a spurious form, and so is the Thibetan and Tartar Buddhism; indeed, it is scarcely the Buddhism at all of which I have been speaking, so you must allow for these very great varieties. I remember once taking part in an interesting conversation between the present Bishop of Calcutta and one of the most learned of the Siamese priests, on this very subject, as to the difference between the Buddhism of Siam, that of Burmah, and that of Ceylon. I was much struck by this, that the Siamese priest, who acknowledged our Cingalese Buddhism, refused to acknowledge what the bishop brought forward as Burmese Buddhism. That shows that there is a very great difference. But we do know the main features of this interesting religion, and the vast extent of the races who are subject to its influence. Now as to the point about right and wrong. When I went out to Ceylon I was well versed in one book—Aristotle,—which served me in good stead in my experiences amongst the various races I met with, and I have seen more of them than Englishmen commonly do, because, in my capacity as a missionary bishop I have lived a great deal among them, and have talked on this interesting question of right and wrong again and again. This is what I always found: there are certain things which we may call right and wrong which there are races of men who are quite ignorant of, but they all agree in this, that there are some things which are right and some things which are wrong, no matter whence we have derived our notions of these terms. But if you put before a man who never heard it before that which we Christians believe and know to be right, they recognize it. Right, truth, God—wherever you proclaim these things they leave an echo in the heart of man, provided he has sufficient intellect to understand them. There is the difficulty in the less enlightened races that you have to teach them; but I speak of races who are quite our equals in philosophy and education, and with them I have always been struck by one thing, that, when you are going over different topics, directly you bring to their minds the great truths of religion, they recognize them: the idea seems to come back to them, not as a new discovery, but as something they had known before and lost. I have preached to heathen men by interpretation, and also in their own language, and I have always been struck by what I now speak of. A certain chord was touched, and it went through all at once, and that was one of the things, among many, that convinced me of the absolute truth of Christianity.

I do not wish to be severe on Buddhism. The reason why I think it a failure in reference to the view of right and wrong is, not because the people have vices and do not always practise virtue, but because the very things which they are told are virtues and vices you cannot succeed in making them practise or avoid. Their priest tells them they need not worship, and they go to the devil temple in spite of his teaching in order to worship. He tells them not to practise certain things, and half of them go and practise them without the least compunction. They do not care for Nirwana—it is not practical enough for them—and they will endure the loss of it rather than resist a temptation. When a Christian does wrong he knows it is wrong: it is a clear case: and we try to cure him. But the Buddhist priest never goes near such men, he simply contents himself with himself leading an ascetic recluse life. If the people care to listen to his recitation of the same books, they may; if not, he is simply indifferent. As to the Buddhists being missionary, it is a vain idea: I do not think there is anything of the sort among them. It is a common thing for both priests and people to say, "It may be that your Christianity will be the religion of our children, and you may teach it to them. If our children like to believe in Christianity they may do so, but as for ourselves we are too old to change. We have been brought up in this other religion, and we do not mean to change." Once there was a feeling among the priests that they ought to stop us, and they organized a sort of mission for the purpose; but they tried, and tried in vain, to get back some of our Christian converts, and then it all ended. There is, as I have said, much natural virtue among them: I mean that many of them practise those things which we call virtues—kindness, love, courtesy, and so on,—but they have not learnt them from their priests; they possess them because they are deep in the heart of man. That is part of the meaning of what we are told, that man was created in the image of God. There is something in the countenance and in the heart of man which is like his God. Often, when I have been waiting for people to come round me to listen to my teaching, and as I saw their countenances before a single question was asked or a word passed between us, and before they had seen me—often have I been able to tell from their countenances whether they were heathens or whether they were Christians. Christian hope, love, and peace stamp themselves upon the faces of men; and when I have seen those who were not Christians draw near, I could not help feeling deep pain and sorrow, for there was a whole history written upon their countenances—every expression told of a certain hopeless subservience to vice, passion, revenge, and fear. I was a believer before I went among these people, but I came back a far more deeply convinced believer, and I would ask those who play with infidelity, and talk about it, and persuade themselves into Atheism, to go out and see what Atheism is, and what Pantheism and Heathenism of every sort are, and then come back and see what we are trying to do,—and by God's help succeed in the main in doing. (Loud cheers.)

The Meeting was then adjourned.