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glorified, and that His spirit had come to dwell in them and fill them with new life and power, they may well have learned in some such exalted states of spiritual vision as are indicated by the stories of Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. We keep the different seasons of the Christian Year. We repeat the familiar story to our children. But it may be

well, too, to look back sometimes with the eyes of the Fourth Evangelist and regard these experiences as one. The central truth is the presence of the living Christ with His people. Of this eternal presence all the Gospel stories become symbols. And the purpose of all that they tell is 'that believing ye may have life in his name.'

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## Buddhism and Christianity.

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### IV.

IF Christians and Buddhists are to work together in intelligent co-operation they must study with sympathy and intelligence the religious bases of their ethical ideals. Why, for instance, was Asoka, like the great Christians of the early Church, a pacifist? What is the religious and theological foundation for the pacifism of the Sermon on the Mount? That it is there men as different in their outlook as Mr. Gāndhī and Mr. Kirsopp Lake agree: both find in it one, if not the only original note in the teachings of Jesus. They differ, however, in this—that Mr. Gāndhī believes it will work—that nothing else will: and Mr. Lake maintains that it will not.<sup>1</sup> Why this confidence on the one hand, and this scepticism on the other? The reason is clear. Mr. Lake gives up the *Logos* doctrine as uncongenial to the mind of our time: Mr. Gāndhī clings to it and its Indian equivalent as the very kernel of truth.

Asoka could be a pacifist because he believed in a world governed by the Dharma: and a world where happiness follows goodness as the wheel follows the draught-ox: a world of which the chief characteristic is the Love of an indwelling Reason. And this is the basis also—albeit more personalized—of the pacifism of the early Christian Church.

Good Buddhists then, like good Christians, are called to an immense act of faith—that the world is reasonable, and that it is on the side of goodness and gentleness. It is the meek who are to inherit the earth. It is this Buddhism rather than the world-denying type which has done so much for

<sup>1</sup> E.g. in a recent article in the *Hibbert Journal* and elsewhere.

Asiatic civilization, though Buddhism even more than Christianity has in it world-denying elements; and the monks of both have over-emphasized these.

To appreciate the real inner meaning of Christianity we turn to the Fourth Gospel. It is this that we commend to thoughtful Hindus and Buddhists, and they find it congenial.

'It is,' says Dr. Anesaki, 'the Buddhist form of Christianity.' For it relates the Beloved Hero to the Eternal Order: it frees Him from the local and nationalist trappings of Messianic Judaism: and it offers Christianity as an Eternal Life to all who love Him and do His will. It is, in fact, an eirenical writing intended to bridge the gulf between the Jewish Christians and the thoughtful Greek or Roman. What is there amongst Buddhist Scriptures at all analogous?

The *Saddharma Pundarika*, or 'Lotus of the Good Law,' is called by Dr. Anesaki 'the Johannine form of Buddhism'; and he claims that Buddhists can see the Eternal Christ because they have grown to know the Eternal Buddha.<sup>2</sup>

From the experience of Mr. Kagawa, and from that of some Christian missionaries, comes vindication of this claim. If there are obstacles to the Gospel in the rationalism of schoolmen in the South there are abundant supports for it in the faith and universality of the Mahāyāna of the Far East.

The re-issue of Burnouf's fine edition of the *Saddharma Pundarika*<sup>3</sup> may help to make a brief

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Nichiren*, Introduction; and *Hibbert Journal*, vol. iv.

<sup>3</sup> E. Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, Paris, 1925.

study of it timely. Its eight rolls are on every Buddhist altar in Japan, and no book has done more to universalize the figure and to liberalize the teachings of Sākyamuni. Written in the same century as the Fourth Gospel, it was written for the same general purpose—to identify the Beloved with Eternal Truth, to free him from local trammels and from the misrepresentations of the literalists, and to make a bridge over which the devotees of Krishna and of the gods of other theistic Hindus might pass into the Buddhist fold.

It is, in fact, an answer on the part of devout Buddhists to the claims of the *Bhagavadgītā*, and has been called a Krishnaite form of Buddhism, as it has been called a Johannine form.

I hope soon to publish a monograph on these three great books—the crowning theological and devotional achievements of three great religions which are to-day in active contact and opposition, but which, seen thus in their noblest forms, have much in common. The Hindu and the Buddhist need not be ashamed to accept the Fourth Gospel, which won the assent of the Greek and Roman world; and these Oriental peoples have had an even more wonderful *praeparatio evangelica*.

The *Lotus* begins with an apocalyptic vision of an Eternal Sākyamuni on a Heavenly Vulture Peak; it goes on to claim that he is opening a way of salvation to all, and by many attractive parables brings home the lesson of his pædagogic skill in adapting his Truth to men of varying ability. It is believed by the masses to be his final message given in old age as men were able to bear it; and though the critical scholar cannot accept this, but knows it to be an apologia of five centuries later, yet he may accept the implication that here is a Buddhism truer to the spirit of Sākyamuni than the austere agnosticism of the Theravāda monks. That is the attitude taken by thoughtful Mahāyānists; and they are right at any rate in this, that if Buddhism is to be a religion for the masses, if it is to be universalized and redeemed from local accidents, it must be by such Buddhology as that of the *Lotus*.

Even the Amitābha or Paradise sects, popular as they are, are haunted by the sense that the gracious figures of Amitābha and Kwanyin are myths; that here is a religion which, with all its charm, has no basis in historic fact. The great revivals of Buddhism have come when men like the author of the *Lotus* in north-west India, or like his followers Chikāi in China or Nichiren in Japan, have called men

back to Sākyamuni, and bidden them find in him the Eternal Dharma, adapting his truth by loving strategy to man's needs, just as he himself is an adaptation—an avatāra—another Krishna calling all men to be saved.

Even truer is it that Christianity has revived and cast off the non-essential in proportion as its followers have looked to the Eternal Christ and sought to worship a god who is like Him. And its greatest scripture, the Fourth Gospel, is always with us to remind us that God is Life and Light and Love, and to correct our baser concepts of Him whom Jesus calls here by no other name than Father.

To the Buddhist, seeking such a God, and hailing Sākyamuni as Eternal Father, gracious to all his children, we are not ashamed to offer the Gospel of Eternal Love made real and near in Christ. Just as this Living Power at once fulfilled and corrected the religious concepts of a Philo, an Epictetus, a Plato; just as it took what it would from Judaism and the mystery-cults and rejected much—so it will prove itself at once fulfilment and judgment of the Asiatic Faiths.

There is much in the *Lotus* Buddhism which it fulfils—much also—charms and superstitions and a false asceticism—which it unhesitatingly rejects.

What is most urgently needed is a religious genius like the Fourth Evangelist who will put the new wine of the Gospel into the old bottles of the Dharma—leaving it to destroy those that are not able to hold it.

If 'Logos' could be redeemed and found a worthy vessel for the New Life, may not 'Dharma' and 'Brahman' be so redeemed? Logos—what did it mean to those who first read the Johannine Prologue? Was it the Logos of the noble Hebrew Philo—who was never clear in his desire to be at once an orthodox Jew and a messenger to Greeks?<sup>1</sup> Or was it the Logos of the semi-materialistic Heraclitus? The Fourth Gospel says in effect, 'Wait and see; read on and you will find a new and worthier philosophy.' So we need not hesitate to say, 'In the beginning was Dharma,' or, 'In the beginning was Brahman.' If these concepts, like the Logos of Philo, are too often impersonal, the radiant Personality of the Incarnate Word will soon correct and fill them with new meaning. This is already happening in China where missionaries have

<sup>1</sup> 'Almost every verse in the Prologue might be paralleled from Philo,' says Dean Inge.

made the plunge of faith, and have used *Tao* to translate *Logos*. Let us say boldly to our Buddhist friends :

The Dharma became flesh and dwelt in our midst ;  
 full of loving-kindness, Reality Itself :  
 Of his abundance we have all received, gift upon  
 gift of Love.

And as the early Church backed up its immense claims by living a better and more loving daily life—incarnating the *Logos* anew—so only can we convince the Buddhist world that our Christ is indeed Reality, and that even Sākya-muni must yield to Him as in the *Lotus* we find a former Buddha acknowledging the New Evangel of universal salvation.

## In the Study.

### *Virginibus Puerisque.*

#### Borrowed Lights.<sup>1</sup>

'Ye are the light of the world.'—Mt 5<sup>14</sup>.

NOT long ago I spoke to you about the sunshine, and how we must let in the ultra-violet rays to keep us fit and well, and how Jesus is the Light of the World, and you and I must keep near Him if we want to keep those horrid germs of sulks and crabbedness and all the rest of them from getting us. But to-day there is something else I want to say about it. It's the sun that heals, but it's not always sunny. And that, not only because we keep making dirty smoke to shut it out, but because there are clouds and dull days and grey weather. And whatever can we do in times like that? Well, in a hospital in London they have found what to do, and they are doing it too. They have made a kind of lamp. I am not clever about these things, and don't quite understand. I think it has something to do with mercury, if I remember. But it may have got all mixed up in my head, as things will do in yours. Anyway, they have a lamp that gives a light almost the same as sunshine. Now you see! You can't sit in the sunshine if the sun isn't shining! No! But on the greyest, coldest, horriddest day you can sit in the light of your lamp. And it does just as well. They have tried it, that lamp of theirs, on poor wee folk in the wards yonder, all ailing and sickly and tired; and it's just grand, they say, to see how quickly they get strong and fit. They carry them into the room where the lamp is, and leave them there. But now they are going one better, and are thinking of fitting up a lamp beside every bed all over the hospital, so that all of them in all the wards can lie there in the sunshine in all kinds of weather,

<sup>1</sup> By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

even if the snow is falling. For the lamp gives light that is almost the same.

Well, here is Jesus saying, 'You are the light of the world,' just what He said about Himself. Whatever can He mean by that? That you can be a wee lamp giving out the very same kind of light that He does. Mother knows what He means. When you girls and boys go off to school again she gets quite dull and dowie, the house seems empty and too quiet, she misses you dreadfully. It is just as if the sun had gone down, and the day grown cold and grey. But when it gets near the time for you to come home for the next holidays, she begins to sing about the house again, and when you really come at last, it is like when winter goes and the flowers come rushing out. For mother's sun is you. And Christ says (isn't it wonderful?), just as that little lamp there can give out light that is real sunshine, can do the work of the huge sun, so in a little way you can, if you like, do what Jesus Himself would do if He were in your house—can help those around you as He would, can make things easier and happier and brighter for them, can be a little light of the world like the great Sun Himself. How? Well, what did Jesus do when He was a small boy like you? Just little bits of things. But they made a huge difference, and His mother was not nearly so tired, and Joseph hadn't to work on so late, and the little ones were far, far happier, and the whole home was a jollier and better place, because He was going about doing these little bits of things that helped them all far more than they knew. He didn't preach as He did later, and He didn't heal folk as He could by and by. No. He was just kind and thoughtful and unselfish and generous and happy-hearted and good-natured about this little thing and that. And they all felt far better because He was there. There He was