

Why I became a Buddhist

<http://www.geocities.ws/Area51/Starship/7077/Aloka/pers1.htm#why>

The text of a lecture delivered by the late Mr. A. E. Buultjens B.A. Cantab. On 25th March 1899 at the Buddhist Headquarters, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Why I, though born and educated as a Christian, gave up my belief in Christianity.
Why I became a Buddhist rather than a Muhammedan or a Hindu?

I was born of Christian parents, amidst Christian surroundings and influences and associations. At that time the Christians of Matara, about 400 in number were divided into denominations, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian or Dutch Reformed Church, Wesleyan and Church of England. Hence at about the age of one year, I was reported to have been duly taken to the Church of England by an admiring circle of relations and their friends and there handed over to the tender mercies of the Rev. Abraham Dias - a gentleman who is Sinhalese by nationality though rejoicing under a Hebrew and Portuguese name.

I am told that at his hands I duly received the rite of Baptism, a sign of the cross on my infant forehead with water, and thus I was stamped with the hallmark or rather the watermark of a Christian. Tradition dose not say whether I objected to this treatment by infant struggles and kicks, but I am inclined to think I protested by setting up a continuous scream and howling.

Till the age of 14 I remember I was under the tuition chiefly of Mr. R. H. Leembruggen, now government Inspector of Schools and of the Rev. J. Stevenson -Lyle. I recall these influences of early life, because the impression of that tender age often follows us through our life. The child is often father of the man.

Now Mr. Leembruggen was not a churchgoer, and was reported, in the family conversations of the time, to be an avowed free thinker and agnostic. He did not, I must say, at any time talk to the boys against the Church. But his example has had a great effect upon my mind - for all his school boys held him in the greatest awe and veneration as a strict disciplinarian of my other tutor, "Father" Lyle as he generally was known, I can recall strict high Churchman or Ritualist, and during the 6 months I was boarding with him, he impressed upon my mind the extreme importance of minutely following the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, of fasting on Saints days, of dully attending "matins" and "evensong" daily in his private chapel.

He was so pleased with my proficiency that on Prize day he presented me with a Book of Common Prayer and an imitation of Christ. "Father" Lyle was a man of strong determination, but somewhat impetuous. He lived a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice. He was suspected at that time as a Jesuit agent of the Pope of Rome. A great controversy was going on in the Diocesan Gazette between the High Church and Low Church parties.

My father was a staunch opponent of the lighted candles, wafers and other innovations of "Father" Lyle and the High Church party. The opposition used to meet in my father's office for discussion and for indicating attacks upon the Ritualists in the Diocesan Gazette.

As a boy I used to listen in silence in a corner of the room to these discussions, and a spectacle of a Church divided against itself must have had a most edifying effect on my mind! Shortly after Father Lyle seceded from his allegiance to the Bishop of Colombo and the Church of England, and "perverted" to the Church of Rome. With Father Lyle went Father Ogilvie and Father Duthy away from the Anglican to the Roman faith.

When I think today of the number of clergymen who helped to mould my mind, I am surprised that I am not occupying the pulpit of a church to defend the faith of the Church. Rev. William Henley took me in hand in conjunction with Father Lyle. He was then fresh from England, and plain Mr. Henley, a schoolmaster. Of religion, he taught me little, but I thank him for making me proficient in Latin Grammar and in the game of chess.

From the age 14 to 19 I was brought under the shadow, and influence of the Cathedral of St. Thomas' College, during the regime of Rev. Warden F. E. Miller and Sub-Wardens Rev. T. F. Faulkner and Rev. H. Meyrick. During these 6 years, besides being thought the subjects required for the Calcutta and Cambridge Local Examinations, we were carefully drilled in an intellectual knowledge of the Book of Common Prayer and the several books of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, together with a critical acquaintance with the commentaries and the original Greek of Gospels.

I devoted myself to these studies and obtained so great a proficiency that the first year I topped the list in the examination for the whole upper school and obtained the much-coveted Bishop's prize. Now, what with having been the first from St. Thomas' to pass the Cambridge Local - both Junior and Senior - and having passed in the Calcutta entrance in the First Class - I became the prime favourite with Warden Miller. During all these 6 years, per the rules of the college for Boarders, every boarder is obliged to attend College chapel morning and evening, every day.

I had already some 3 years previous to 1884 - a year important in my life - received the rite of confirmation, or the laying on of the Bishop of Colombo on my head, as a token of my being confirmed as a member of the Church of England. And right here let me say that I do not acquiesce in the compulsory baptism performed on me "by pastors and masters" when I was a legal "infant". I denounce the practice and rebel against it as an infringement of the rights of the children.

I have started the foregoing by way of introduction, to explain the remote conditions and circumstances, which ultimately led to the position I took up later when I gave up my belief in Christianity. It was at St. Thomas' College itself that I received the first hint, that I entertained the first passing doubt, about the truth of Christianity.

It was to a book found in the library of St. Thomas' College that I attribute the first faint suspicion that what clergymen say, and the church teaches, is open to question. It was by reading this book that my faith in the creation and in a Creator received its first shock. The very foundation of the creed built on Faith was almost shattered by the sledgehammer arguments contained in the materialistic work I refer to - Dr. Buchner's "Matter and Force".

The book was ransacked from the mouldy and dusty shelves of the College library - and given to me by senior fellow student, Mr. J. R. Molligoda, now a distinguished and keen minded

lawyer of Kegalle. We argued long and for several days upon the atheistic and deistic views of the universe.

I was a hot champion of Deism then, but my opponent was ever ready with calm retorts and replies. I was about 19 years old then, and from that time I was naturally opposed to authority and disposed to rebel against what people accept as gospel truth upon mere blind belief. If I was at that time to analyse the state of my mind at the period under review - when I was between 19 and 21 years of age - I should say I still was a Christian, but gradually drifting away - or shall I call it, advancing from Christianity to Materialism.

In 1884 I won the University Scholarship of £ 150 a year tenable for 4 years open to the whole island and thus obtained a triumph for Warden Miller and St. Thomas' College. I left for England and entered St. John's College, Cambridge University. While here, I met men of all shades of opinion, devout and staunch churchmen, Embryo clergymen sowing their wild oats while preparing for the Theological tripos to become full-fledged Ministers of the Word of God, divinity students who were then being thought that the Bible was not an inspired book literally, but a historical account of the Israelites.

This was the advanced school of the Church, which changed its front to meet the onslaughts of Agnostics and Freethinkers. I met also a select number of Englishmen, who were avowed agnostics, and admirers of Huxley and Bradlaugh. The controversy of the former with Gladstone was then being waged in the columns of the exercised over the account of the creation in the Bible.

I had previously read up Physical Geography and Geology and obtained the mark of distinction in the former at the Senior Level. My mind was therefore prepared to accept the Nebular Theory of the formation of the world, and to give up forever the Christian theory of a 6 days' creation. Of course, Christian commentators and apologists of the biblical narrative interpret "day" as a period of time, but this was merely forced upon them in these latter days, after geological scientists proved beyond doubt that the world assumed its present condition after millions of years of natural phenomena.

A study of the strata of the earth, its fossils, the action of the seas, and volcanoes and rivers in moulding and shaping the earth helps greatly in modifying, if not completely altering, a belief in the Genesis of the Bible. Having once become convinced that God did not, as related in the Bible, create the world, I gave up one by one the fond and cherished beliefs of my childhood. It was a serious question to me only those who have experience in their hearts the throes of agony, which must be endured, alone and in silence, when they are compelled upon sincere conviction to give up beliefs, which they have hugged to their bosoms, know the pain when it becomes necessary to wrench those beliefs away from heart and mind. One by one every cherished faith was destroyed. I began to argue to myself: if the world was created by a merciful and infinite Being of tender compassion, why did he create a hell and a Devil. God creates everything. Why did a good God create Evil? Why did he create Pain and Misery?

The hospitals are filled, throughout the world, with disease, with sickening forms of leprosy. Christians say it is a punishment to them. Nonsense! Why should infants be born, some blind, some deaf, others with one leg, or one arm, and others idiotic? Why are thousands slain by a just God by volcanoes, by bubonic plague, by famine? If God were all-powerful and all merciful, he could easily have made the world without a devil, a hell and pain. But I suppose an ignorant

man might say that the devil was made for the special purpose of tempting Mohammedans, Hindus, Agnostics and Buddhists and hell was made to put them in.

I regret to say that there are some Christians so bigoted as to think so. They rely upon the passage in the New Testament, which condemns all disbelievers and heretics for eternal damnation in hell!

While on subject of the creator, I may say that I received yesterday a letter evidently written by a Christian, requesting me to refute certain arguments against Buddhism contained in 8 pamphlets written some in English and rest in Sinhala, which he sent me. I replied that I would not have time today to reply to anti-Buddhist tracts which I had not yet read but that I hope at a future opportunity to give a lecture on "A reply to attack on Buddhism by Christian pamphleteers.

Today I shall touch upon one point mentioned in one pamphlet issued by the Christian Literature Society. The anonymous pamphleteer of "Buddha and his Religion" says at page 23: The existence of a Creator may be shown in the following way: Whenever we see order and means intended to accomplish some end, we are certain that they must have originated by the action of an intelligent being, and construction that we infer that it must have had a maker, who knew what it was for and designed its use. The different parts could not have formed themselves and come together. If the watch could have been so wonderfully constructed that it would produce other watches, this would duly increase our idea of the wisdom of its maker. The world we live is far more wonderfully formed than any watch – Therefore, it had a Creator.

I am familiar with this argument. It is known among Freethinkers as Paley's Watch Argument of Design in nature. If a watchmaker makes bad watches, we call him a bad watchmaker. There is in this world on every side monstrosities, evil things, wild beasts, in the animal world, thorns and brambles in the vegetable world and poison, disease and insanity, misery and pain - A bad watch has a bad watchmaker, for no good person will create evil things.

Moreover, the watchmaker makes his watch of wheels, hairspring, dial, hands and case; he puts together previously existing materials. He does not act in the manner of a prestidigitator making the world out of nothing, for as the phrase goes *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing, nothing is made. Even supposing the possibility of a creation of the universe out of nothing, simply by an act of volition by an Omnipotent Being, it is a reasonable query to put: what was the creator doing before he made the sun and the moon and stars, birds in the air, and the fishes of the sea? He must have been existing in chaos doing nothing.

To proceed from this digression. Having given up my belief in a Personal Creator - an anthropomorphic God - I gave up prayer and belief in the Immaculate Conception of Christ - whom I regard as a divine and holy man. I refused to believe in the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, which teaches that through the death of Christ we must receive pardon.

I also gave up belief in the doctrine of forgiveness of sins; for if there be no God, who will forgive sins? I would no longer believe in the abominable doctrine of eternal damnation in hell where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Having thus given up intellectual assent to the teachings of Christianity, I considered whether I was to remain as many do, a nominal and outward Christian, or whether it was not more honourable not to act a lie? Was I to say that I was no longer a Christian, or was I to remain silent? I preferred to speak out. I was not alone in

my agnostic views - several university men, Englishmen, especially those who were studying for the Moral Science and Natural Science Triposes, and some who were going in for the Law thought as I did.

I therefore determined to bring matters to a crisis, there was a rule in Cambridge that man should attend College Chapel at least five times a week. I gave up attending Chapel, and I was sent for by the Dean of the College. I believe his name was Dean Maitland - a liberal minded, tolerant and sympathetic man. I had an hour's talk with him. The following is the purport of his conversation:

"Good morning!"

"Good morning Sir".

"I hope you will be more regular at Chapel in future. Good morning!"

And with this he was going to dismiss me, as other men who cut Chapel were waiting to see the Dean. But I was determined to continue the interview.

"If you please Sir, I wish to talk with you about Chapel".

"Yes, what is it. Sit down".

I took a set.

"I don't like to attend compulsory Chapel. It dose me no good".

"Very well, I excuse you in future from doing so".

Having obtained leave keep away from chapel, on the ground that compulsory attendance at a Christian worship did me no good, I was willing to terminate the interview.

Not so the good Dean, who next addressed me not as Dean, exercising disciplinary authority over a college student, but a minister of Christ's church sympathetically endeavouring to guide back into the fold sheep which, in his view, was wondering astray.

"Now tell me if you have any further reasons why you do not wish to attend chapel".

"I would gladly speak out my mind, if in my position at College I would not suffer thereby".

"No I assure you that whatever you say will not go beyond me".

"Then Sir, I do not wish to shock your mind with my infidel and agnostic views".

"However much it may grieve me, it is my duty to hear your doubts, and try to set them at rest. In the course of a Clergymen's life, he has to meet with men with varying opinions, and it is his duty to guide them aright to God".

"I do not believe in everything written in the Bible, I do not believe in an eternal damnation in Hell and most of all I cannot believe in a Creator".

"You have been reading Huxley and Bradlaugh?"

"Yes Sir, and I no longer believe in the Inspirations of the Bible, nor the Immaculate Conception, nor in the vicarious atonement nor even in the Divinity of Christ".

"I am grieved to hear this, have you tried Prayer? God helps those who pray to him with faith and sincerity".

"Yes, I have been earnestly praying, but for some time since my belief in God is lost, reason mocks at my faith and says that prayer in a non-existent Creator is useless".

"Then I would ask you to consider the Christian family, what peace, what happiness is in the Christian Home! Have you not looked at it in the light?"

"Yes Sir, I can quite conceive that there is happiness in the Christian Home, where the moral teachings of Christ are followed. But I come from a Buddhist country, where Buddhist home would be just as happy, if the moral precepts of Buddha were observed. It would be same in a Hindu or Mohammedan Home, if the believers in those faiths followed the rules of their religion". The above was, as far as I remember the gist of our conversation. The kind Dean talked with me for nearly an hour and at the end gave me book by Dr. Wace to read over carefully and to come to him again. I read the book, but it was unsatisfactory, for it started with the assumption of an Omniscient Creative God - which was just the very difficulty I felt of conception. In returning the book I stated that it did not meet my case, and so that matter dropped.

Henceforth I was an avowed Agnostic. But this made no difference to me socially in England, and though I had some agnostic friends especially among the Moral Nature Science men, yet the theological men who, knew my infidel views, did not "cut" me, and some of my best friends are now clergymen of the Church of England.

An amusing incident followed when it got about that the Dean excused me from chapel in future. A man of another college went up to the Dean and asked leave to keep away from chapel, because he did not believe in God. Said the Dean: "I will give you 24 hours either to find your God, or to find another college".

In common with many Christians in Ceylon, I had been brought up in the belief that wickedness and crimes prevailed only, or especially, among the Buddhist or other "heathens", but that in Christian England crime was comparatively absent. This was an argument from the practical aspect to Christianity. I do not know whether this impression prevalent in Ceylon was created by Missionaries, but I saw practical effects of Christianity among Christians in Christian lands.

I need not dilate the extreme wealth side by side with the grovelling debasement, poverty and misery with the East end of London. The object lesson of nightly debaucheries of hopeless drunkenness in the gin places, of the homeless and starving thousands, of the piteous cries of government, and the public demonstrations of dissatisfied socialists, all this was a picture I shall never forget.

Thousands of men, women and children have been huddled together at night, homeless, roofless, making their beds on the bare, grass-less snow-covered ground, with none to help them.

Could such things be in Christian England? The Bible says, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor". But amidst the squalor, misery and poverty of the Christian fellowmen, I saw the great body of the Christian Bishops and clergy complacently enjoying the luxuries of life. Immense wealth was also spent upon grand churches, like the Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's, while there was no money to feed starving poor. I witnessed the public send-off young, zealous and enthusiastic preachers of the Gospel to China, to Africa and to India, in the midst of

the plaudits and prayers of righteous Christian assemblies convoked by the Missionary Societies.

It seemed to me that practical Christianity was a mockery, for with the export of missionaries and Bibles, there was a far larger export of bottles and bullets, the one to kill the mind, the other the body. And all this from a town where, more than in any other place in the world, thousands of Christian women nightly sold themselves in open street prostitution.

I remember one occasion, when one of our leading Ceylon's lawyers, then on a visit to the modern Babylon, could scarcely believe his eyes when he first saw the stream of well-dressed streetwalkers opposite the theatre at midnight. He wept to find that such things could be in Christian England.

The social evil is not confined to London alone, but is rampant and shows no signs of abatement in all larger Christian towns, notably at Liverpool, Paris, Berlin, Vienna and New York. Universal love, friendliness, loving kindness, or however we choose to call it, is a firm ethical basis for human life beyond the confines of any religion, though.

Just as a misunderstanding prevails in the East as to the vileness of man in "heathen" lands alone, and his virtue in Christian countries of the west, so is there a misunderstanding in the West as to the trials and troubles of missionaries sent to the "heathen". I had to frequently assure educated and intelligent people in English that it was not considered a delicacy here when a roast missionary was served at dinner!

There were people still who believed that Ceylon was a cannibal island, and that missionaries have hard time from tigers, elephants, crocodiles and snakes. Evidently these stories were circulated to magnify the self-sacrifice of missionaries and help to fill the coffers of the Gospel Societies.

I pass on now to the time of my return to Ceylon. I had not been to a church for two years for devotional purposes. The University Sermons I occasionally listened to, when preachers of note came to Cambridge, and their discourses were eloquent and interesting, and being unaccompanied by ceremonial ritual were attended by men of all shades of Ceylonese. For two years, I had not attended a church except some in Holland and the Notre Dame in Paris for architectural beauty. Therefore when a few Sundays had passed in Matara without my accompanying my brothers and sisters to church, my mother enquired the reason of ungodliness in thus keeping away from the House of God.

I replied that the whole world was the house of God, and not only a particular building with four walls and roof. I was then looked upon as peculiar and strange, and she judged that something was evidently wrong with my upper storey, a doctor should be sent for to cure me - not as a medical doctor - but a doctor of divinity.

Accordingly, one morning, the Rev. F.D. Edirisinghe came to see me. After preliminaries, the following conversation ensued:

"How is it that I did not see you in church after your arrival?"

"May I inquire whether church going is essential for salvation?"

"Yes, you take part in the services, in prayers and in hearing sermons".

"I prefer to read sermons in stones and good in everything".

"But your father and all your people have been going to church".

"Yes, so have I at the rate of twice a day, every day for six years at St. Thomas' College Cathedral. That would make a total, leaving off holidays of nearly 3600 church goings. Plus, five times a week for one year at Cambridge, about 200. Grand Total 3800. If church going was sufficient I consider I have done my share to qualify for Heaven and I may be excused for the rest of my life".

"But surely are you not a Christian?"

"Well, if you ask my opinion, I am not. Do you want me to believe in Noah's Ark and Jonah in the Whale's belly and several other fables?"

At this stage my mother, who was present at the interview, retired in disgust leaving the reverend gentleman and myself to a nice discussion, and so that interview terminated soon after.

It became noised about that an infidel was let loose on society at Matara, and I became a marked man-mod some said. Then some Buddhist friends met me, and enquired whether I would see a Bhikkhu on the subject of Buddhism. I consented and so in the company of Mohandiram De Saram Siriwardene and others I had a long talk with Bedigam Ratnapala Unnanse at Weliveriya Pansala.

I learnt from him that Buddhism agreed with the agnostic view I held on the subjects of the Creator and creation, and that Buddhism does not want belief in Personal God. I learnt that the Christian doctrine of Soul was replaced by the doctrine of the Five *Skandas*, and that I need no longer believe in new souls being created by an omnipotent God for new-born infants, some of which were to suffer eternal damnation in a hell created by the self-same God. I learnt from him the doctrine of karma, which, while contradicting the Christian theory of forgiveness of sins, satisfactorily explains the inequalities of life. The Doctrine of karma which, while contradicting the Christian theory of forgiveness of sins, satisfactorily explains the inequalities of life. The doctrine of karma, while doing away with the belief in the efficacy of prayer, teaches that man reaps the consequences of his own deeds, and must work out his own salvation.

In explaining what Christianity could not satisfactorily tell me, how the lunatic asylums are filled with the insane, how leper asylums and hospitals are filled with the diseased. Karma explained in a reasonable manner that every cause must have an effect, and that this great law rules in the moral world. I had several interviews with the monks and the more I learnt about Buddhism, the more did- I remain convinced of its truth. Why should we suffer at Adam's sin?

Karma teaches we suffer for our own mistakes. Why should we get pardoned by Christ's atonement? We must ourselves step by step, life after life, strive to reach the goal. Why should we believe in a soul manufacturer above, we are what we make ourselves to be. How could a God, who is merciful and just, and who taught "forgive your enemies" have created a Hell and Devil? We make ourselves god or devils, and we make for ourselves a hell upon earth.

Buddhism agreed with Science in that force and matter are eternal and indestructible and taught law and order without a God, and transformation without creation. Especially was I stuck with

the truth of the simple but profound teachings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, change, suffering, and non-ego.

Christianity is faith religion, Agnosticism a negation, Buddhism goes beyond Agnosticism in the affirmation of the Law of Karma, of Reincarnation and of Nirvana. Christianity in the ages past disgraced the teachings of Christ by wars, especially the Crusades, and by the tortures of the Inquisition, the rack thumbscrew and the flames.

Agnosticism was unorganised and until recently did not carry out in its name a philanthropic programme. It is only within recent years that agnostics have become propagandists, and taken active steps for the sake of humanity.

Buddhism has on the whole been free from leading and encouraging a wholesome persecution, and in the light of past centuries we know its only weapon has been appeal to reason and argument. Moreover, Christianity is fetishism and unphilosophical. Agnosticism is destructive of Christianity without being mainly constructive. But Buddhism is analytic and philosophical while being humanitarian and practical. Christianity merely teaches a form of morality, without touching the domain of mental science.

But Buddhism besides being a moral, is in its higher aspect essentially a mental and spiritual philosophy. I felt that Agnosticism -as a mere negation - was unsatisfactory not only on who moral plane as guide in life, but also on the mental plane in the explanation of the problems whence we come, whither are we going?

The reasons stated above explain why I became a Buddhist. It was because I was conscientiously convincing of the truth of Buddhism. I asked myself reverently in the silence on the heart whether I was to declare myself a Buddhist or not.

At the time, in 1888, Buddhists were looked down upon, even more than they are now, by the more enlightened, or rather more civilised, society people who were Christians. The Buddhists were numbered among the more ignorant and lower classes. I know that social ostracism would follow, as it did.

So, one day in 1888, I went with the above-named Buddhist gentleman and others to the temple on the full moon day, and publicly declared myself a Buddhist by reciting the *Tisarana* and the *Panca Sila*.

If I was a Freethinker, I had been tolerated in Christian Society which merely regarded me as an eccentric, but When in 1888 I became an avowed Buddhist, I was looked upon as worse than a lunatic. And this was not strange, for Christianity was respectability and Buddhism was the religion of the "ignorant natives".

Christian parents and Christian College had educated me to defend the Church, to learn its respective arguments against other sectarian schismatic. Hence my lapsing to Buddhism was a "wretched fall"

God made man, it is said and gave him brains to think, and when he thinks and reasons and becomes a Buddhist, then God damns him for thinking with the brains he gave him. But it was when, at the end of 1889, I was offered and accepted the headmastership of the Colombo

Buddhist School, that the vials of wrath were poured on my head by Christians, and particularly by Christian ministers of the Church of England.

I had braved the Church, and so every Christian door was shut, every slander was open for social ostracism. I was, in their eyes, a viper and a scorpion. The first arrow of malice was shot at me by the Rev. E. F. Miller, Warden of St. Thomas' College, my old and respected tutor. The two letters from him that follow show his attitude towards me before and after I became publicly a Buddhist.

Letter A

St. Thomas' College
Colombo
6th February 1888.

My dear Buultjens,

I am sorry I missed you this morning, We shall be glad to see you tomorrow afternoon at 4.30, if you care to come up to the gathering of Old Boys.

Yours affectionately,
Sgd. E. F. Miller

Letter B was in reply to a polite request enquiring for the reason who the Warden had removed my name from the panels of the Library of the College - as it was special distinction in secular school subjects that had justified the college ID putting up my name first in more than one panel.

Letter B

St Thomas' College
Colombo
February 19, 1890.

My dear Buultjens,

It is, alas easy to answer your question. Your name has been removed from the panels of the Library, because you have apologised from the faith of Christ. The College was founded to maintain and spread the faith and you, having been baptised into that faith have now deserted to its enemies. Would you have me retain the name of a traitor among those whom the College delights to honour?

Yours sorrowfully,
Sgd. E. F. Miller

The characteristic Missionary- Christian act of the Warden in removing my name from the panels was approved by the Bishop of Colombo to whom I appealed. They thought to dishonour me, but they have only given public exhibition of Christian hatred and intolerance of which I hope they are proud.

In conclusion, I would like to mention a personal anecdote to illustrate how certain clegymen of the Church of England regard Buddhists. It was in connection with the Rev. Abraham Dias, the minister who baptised me in my infancy. I met him one day, after many years, at the Pettah Library, and wished him a good afternoon. He recognised me and the following dialogue ensued:

"How are you getting on?"

"Quite well Sir, thanks".

"I hear you are at the Buddhist School".

"Yes".



"Are you a Buddhist?"

"Then you will go down straight to Hell".

"My dear Sir, are you so very cock sure of Heaven?"

