

and as belonging to a period several centuries anterior to that of Christ. The relative antiquity of certain of the Buddhist legends has been misdated by third-rate scholars; and accurate scholarship now shows that the quasi-Christian legends referred to are mere accretions to be found in no Buddhist classics earlier than the fifth century. 'It is chiefly the legendary features of Buddha's life,' says Prof. Aiken, 'many of which are found for the first time only in works of later date than the Gospels, that furnish the most striking resemblances to certain incidents related of Christ in the Gospels. If there has been any borrowing here, it is plainly on the side of Buddhism. That Christianity made its way into Northern India in the first two centuries is not only a matter of respectable tradition, but is supported by weighty archaeological evidence. Scholars of recognised ability, beyond the suspicion of undue bias in favor of Christianity—Weber, Goblet d'Alviella, and others—think it very likely that the Gospel stories of Christ circulated by these early Christian communities in India were utilised by the Buddhists to enrich the Buddha legend, just as the Vishnuites built up the legend of Krishna on many striking incidents in the life of Christ.' The fifth-century sculptures of Gospel scenes on the ruined Buddhist Monasteries of Jamalgi, in Northern Panjab, described in the scholarly work of Fergusson and Burgess, *The Cave Temples of India*, offer conclusive evidence that the Buddhists of that time did not scruple to embellish the Buddha legend with adaptations from Christian sources. On the other hand, there is not a particle of evidence that Buddhism was even known—much less that it exerted any influence—in Palestine at the time of the birth of Christianity. 'There is nothing in Buddhist records,' says Prof. Aitken, 'that may be taken as reliable evidence for the spread of Buddhism westward to the Greek world as early as the foundation of the Christian religion. That Buddhist institutions were at that time unknown in the West may be safely inferred from the fact that Buddhism is absolutely ignored in the literary and archaeological remains of Palestine, Egypt, and Greece. There is not a single ruin of a Buddhist monastery or *stupa* in any of these countries; not a single Greek translation of a Buddhist book; not a single reference in all Greek literature to the existence of a Buddhist community in the Greek world. The very name of Buddha is mentioned for the first time only in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (second century).' Prof. J. H. Moulton, M.A., D. Litt., shows conclusively that it was a sheer impossibility that the Gospel writers could have borrowed from Buddhism. As we have shown, there were at that time no Greek translations of the Buddhist writings; and not one of the Gospel writers knew a single word of the language in which Buddhism was enshrined. We quote Prof. Moulton: 'To belittle the supremacy of Christ's teaching because there are some parallels to parts of it scattered over the ancient world is not worthy of one who claims to speak in the name of science. If Jesus had had a set of the *Sacred Books of the East* before Him, translated into His own language by scholars such as we have to-day, it would have demanded profound religious genius to select from the mass of common-place or worthless matter the gems which could take their place in one little corner of the crown of brilliants that sparkles on His Head. Since Jesus—or the committee of geniuses which we must imagine if Jesus never existed—knew no other language than Aramaic, Hebrew, and probably a little Greek, it is obvious that His originality is not affected by any parallels to His teaching which may be found elsewhere.'

Regarding all these alleged parallels or points of resemblance between Christianity and other religions we have to remark: (1) It is now generally recognised by acknowledged authorities on the study of comparative religion that the marking down of similarities proves nothing unless causal connection be traced. Prof. Lods has called the mere notation of similars without proof of "interconnexion" labor lost. Prof. Cumont

bids us discount his own use of modern Christian terminology in description of pagan rites as being at best a mere trick of style intended to bring out a similarity, and vividly to establish an approximate parallel. But an epigram is not a proof, and we must not be in a hurry to conclude from an analogy to an influence.' Mr. Rhys Davids, Professor of Pali and Buddhist Literature at University College, London, emphatically asserts such comparisons to be 'no longer of any service; and they will be of worse than no service if we imagine that likeness is any proof of direct relationship: that similarity of ideas in different countries shows that either the one or the other was necessarily borrowed. It is as illogical to argue that coincidence of beliefs implies a causal connexion between them, as to suppose that chalk cliffs in China are produced by chalk cliffs in the Downs of Sussex.' (2) In comparing two religions in order to decide whether either borrowed from the other, we must take much more account of differences than of resemblances. The latter are, in the vast majority of cases, mere coincidences, but in the former we find the true characteristics of the religion. Applying this test, the transcendent superiority of Christianity is admitted even by the most enthusiastic devotees of comparative religion. Max Muller himself has said, in his introduction to his edition of the *Sacred Books of the East*, that he who seriously puts forward any of these as a rival of the Christian Scriptures lacks scholarship, and has declared that it is sheer futility to assume that the Bible is ever to be dazzled by any other sacred book. And on this point the late Prof. Monier Williams, in a speech delivered in London, bore this remarkable testimony: 'When I began investigating Hinduism and Buddhism, I found many beautiful gems; nay, I met with bright coruscations of true light flashing here and there amid the surrounding darkness. As I prosecuted my researches into these non-Christian systems, I began to foster a fancy that they had been unjustly treated. I began to observe and trace out curious coincidences and comparisons with our own Sacred Book of the East. I began, in short, to be a believer in what is called the evolution and growth of religious thought. "These imperfect systems," I said to myself, "are clearly steps in the development of man's religious instincts and aspirations. They are interesting efforts of the human mind struggling upwards towards Christianity. Nay, it is probable that they were all intended to lead up to the one true religion, and that Christianity is, after all, merely the climax, the complement, the fulfilment of them all." Now there is unquestionably a delightful fascination about such a theory, and, what is more, there are really elements of truth in it. But I am glad of this opportunity of stating publicly that *I am persuaded I was misled by its attractiveness, and that its main idea is quite erroneous.*' After showing in detail the defects of Buddhism as compared with Christianity, he continues: 'What! says the enthusiastic student of the science of religion, do you seriously mean to sweep away as so much worthless waste paper all the stately volumes of Sacred Books of the East just published by the University of Oxford? No—not at all—nothing of the kind. On the contrary, we welcome these books. We ask every missionary to study their contents and thankfully lay hold of whatsoever things are true and of good report in them. But we warn him that there can be no greater mistake than to force these non-Christian bibles into conformity with some scientific theory of development, and then point to the Christians' Holy Bible as the crowning product of religious evolution. So far from this, *these non-Christian bibles are all developments in the wrong direction. They all begin with some flashes of true light and end in utter darkness.* Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table, but place your own Holy Bible on the right side—all by itself—all alone—and with a wide gap between.' Sir Monier Williams, K.C.I.E., D.C.L., M.A., was also Hon. LL.D., Calcutta; Hon. Ph.D., Göttingen; Hon. Member of the Asiatic Societies of Bengal, Bombay, and of the Oriental and Philosophical Societies of America; and Boden Professor of Sanskrit, and Hon. Fellow of University College, Oxford. From

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