WHAT HAS BUDDHISM DERIVED FROM CHRISTIANITY?

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By T. W. RHYS DAVIDS.

Ever since Buddhism has begun to be understood in Europe, the remarkable resemblances between it and Christianity have attracted increasing notice. Father Bury, one of the first of the Roman clergy to be brought into contact with the Lāmaism of Tibet—a system which bears somewhat the relation to early Buddhism that Roman Catholicism does to early Christianity—was struck with horror by the closeness in the resemblance, and thought that the devil had established in those remote regions a grotesque and blasphemous mockery of divine truth,[1] just as Nathaniel Hawthorne suggested that Satan had perpetrated monkeys with the malicious purpose of mocking man, the masterpiece of divine creation. Each of these resemblances is capable, however, of a less theological explanation; and while some are beginning to believe that man's resemblance to the monkey may be better explained by supposing both to be descended from the same or similar ancestors, so others have expressed an opinion that the resemblances between Buddhism and Christianity are too close to have arisen by chance, and that, as these two religions were not both derived from the same earlier faith, Christianity, the later of the two, has borrowed from Buddhism, the earlier.

It will be my object this afternoon to examine the resemblances referred to in order, if possible, to arrive at

[1] In Kerson's *The Cross and the Dragon*, 1854, p. 185.

a definite conclusion as to whether Christianity has indeed borrowed from Buddhism. If so, in what manner, and to what extent? If not, how did the resemblances between them arise?

The resemblances may be classed in three divisions: (1) Those between the Gospels and the Buddhist accounts of the life of Gotama, the founder of Buddhism; (2) those between the Christian and Buddhist monastic systems and public worship; (3) those between Christian and Buddhist moral teachings. Each of these subdivisions would afford ample material for a separate lecture, and it will only be possible now to touch on each of them in the broadest outline. In order to save time I shall also confine myself chiefly to one side of the comparison, laying before you only the Buddhist side, and trusting to you to supply, as we go, the other—that is, the Christian side—from your own memory.

1. With regard to the first division, it should be noticed in passing, that the Buddhist accounts are derived from books which cannot be satisfactorily traced back earlier than about 150 years after the death of the great Teacher whose life they purport to record. But as they were then included in the canon of the Buddhist sacred scriptures as fixed by the Council of Patna held under the auspices of the Emperor Asoka, they must necessarily have existed some time before that, and undoubtedly contain a great deal of older material. You will recollect that though the Christian canon was not finally settled till the Council of Trent in the year 1546, the Gospels, substantially as we now have them, were certainly current and generally received towards the close of the second century after Christ (that is, about 150 years after his death), and that they undoubtedly contain a good deal of older material.

We find in the Buddhist lives of Gotama that his birth is described as having occurred in a supernatural manner. He had no earthly father, and was conceived by his mother some time after she had withdrawn herself into holy meditation and seclusion, and in consequence of a dream

in which she is carried by four archangels to heaven. The holy child lived as a deity in heaven before he descended to earth, which he did of his own accord out of pity for humanity to save men from their sins. The Catholic Father, Jerome (*fl. circa* A.D. 390), says in his treatise against Jovinian that Buddha, the founder of the religion of the Indian Gymnosophists, was said to have been brought forth *by a virgin* from her side. This is, however, so far incorrect that Gotama's mother is nowhere in the oldest Buddhist books represented as a virgin, though the later church of the Mongol Buddhists is said to lay stress upon her virginity. The Buddha was born while his mother had left her usual home and was resting in a garden on her way, and archangels came from heaven to assist at his birth. Though the legend does not make him the actual son of his mother's husband, his apparent father, it takes great pains to prove that that father was of royal lineage; and accordingly, by means of genealogies which are quite unreliable, it derives his descent from the most famous monarchs of old. The holy child is formally presented in the temple of the gods, and an aged saint prophesies with great emotion that, at his bidding, the misery and wretchedness of men would disappear and peace and joy prevail; that by him many would find deliverance from sorrow, and be saved from the consequences of their sins and errors. Wise men, travelling from the south, are attracted to the place where the young child lies, and in verses, whose beauty surprises us in the midst of so absurd a legend, declare that he will provide the Water to extinguish all the sorrows of life; that he is the Light which will illumine the ignorance and darkness of the world; that he is the Way out of the wilderness of care, the Deliverer from the bonds and shackles of existence, and the great Physician who will cure all our diseases and death.

The only incident related of the boyhood of the Buddha is an account of the wonderful precocity of his wisdom, so that he puzzled the teachers who were appointed to teach

him and surpassed them all in knowledge and skill.[1] I had occasion in a former lecture I had the honour to deliver before this Society to point out some curious coincidences between some of the details of this legendary account with those of the corresponding Christian legend.

After his dedication to a religious life, and before he entered on his public mission, he is represented as having retired to a lonely forest and there to have been tempted of the devil, Māra, the arch-enemy of mankind. He sits calm and unmoved during the violent attacks made upon him by a visible tempter and his wicked angels.

After his victory over the tempter, the Buddha begins his public career by proclaiming a *kingdom of righteousness*, and at his first sermon, as at the first preaching of the apostles, crowds of hearers of different races imagine themselves each to be hearing in his own tongue the wonderful words that are said.

After the commencement of Gotama's public teaching, one of his first disciples is a rich young man who comes to him by night from fear of his relations; and who even after his conversion does not openly attach himself to the Society of Mendicants which Gotama founded.

At the close of the first year of his mission Gotama sends out his disciples, then sixty in number, to go two by two into the villages and countries round about and proclaim the new kingdom of righteousness—a mission which seems to have been singularly unsuccessful; as we hear no more of its results than we do of the results of the corresponding mission in the Gospels.[2]

From this time till his death Gotama spent his life wandering up and down through the plains of the Ganges, publishing his new system of salvation, not by sacrifices, or

[1] Long after the date of this lecture, the writer published the older canonical "great legend" of the Seven Buddhas (Dīgha Nikāya, ii., 1 *f.*, 1910). In this the precocity of Gotama (as of each preceding Buddha) is shown to have been manifested in his judicial sagacity, aiding his father, as he sat on the latter's hip, in administering justice. —EDITOR.

[2] *Cf. Vinaya Texts* (S.B.E.), I., p. 114, and Luke x. 17.—EDITOR.

penance, or outward rites, but by self-control and love; and he inculcated these lessons chiefly by parables and stories. He was always accompanied by a few of his more ardent disciples, the leaders of whom are called in the Parinibbāna Sutta the twelve great disciples. It is true that on the whole he seems to have been regarded with favour by the chiefs and the people, and he died peacefully in a grand old age, surrounded by his friends. But he did not escape the enmity of the priests, nor the fickle temper of the mob. There is an interesting analogy to Christ's entry into Jerusalem in Gotama's entry into Rājagriha, the capital of the Buddhist Holy Land. On his second visit to the place the rāja came out to meet him, and he was conducted back into the town in triumph by all the people. They took delight in the new teacher, but when he really began to carry out his views their opinion changed; and a few short weeks afterwards they openly reviled and persecuted him and his followers, so that he was obliged to leave the town.

One of the most constant and faithful of Gotama's followers, named Ānanda, occupies a somewhat similar position, as the beloved disciple, to that occupied in St. John's Gospel by John; while another of his disciples, named Devadatta, who three times tried to have him killed and who succeeded in stirring up dissension in the community or order which Gotama had founded, occupies a similar position to that of Judas in the Christian story.

Now I do not deny that many of these coincidences are striking and instructive, but when they are thus brought together it is evident, I think, that they are not of such a nature as to drive us to the conclusion that the incidents of the one account must necessarily be borrowed from those of the other. They seem to me to amount simply to this, that two teachers—each of whom was a reformer, the leader of a reaction against dependence on formal rites and the ascendancy of a priestly caste—experienced in some respects a similar fate. And further, that two sects of religious dissenters, whose beliefs and hopes were depen-

dent on the teachings of a single man, came each in ages similarly uncritical and under conditions of a similar kind, to believe in the supernatural birth, the marvellous childhood and the miraculous powers of their revered Teacher.

Some of the resemblances in the lives of the two teachers are real resemblances, the others arise from real resemblances in the mental habits and education of their followers. None of them is so close as to prove, independently of the historical evidence which I shall presently lay before you, that the authors of the Gospels were acquainted with the Buddhist lives of Gotama, or even that their ideas were modified by vague traditions of the great Teacher who lived 600 years before they wrote, in the far-distant East.

But while the consideration of this part of our subject has thus brought us to a negative conclusion, the case is by no means so clear with regard to the monastic systems and the moral teachings of the two religions. In 1850 the Rev. Spence Hardy, a Wesleyan missionary in Ceylon, published an elaborate volume on the Buddhist Order of Mendicants as then existing in that island, and he throughout compares that Order with the different Christian Orders in the West, not concealing his opinion that the latter derived many of their rules and customs from the Buddhists.

The closeness of the resemblance is indeed remarkable. The Buddhists take the vows of celibacy and poverty, they shave the head, they wear long and flowing robes, they have a noviciate and a full membership of the Order, they were originally, and many of them still are, mendicants like the Begging Friars of the West, and the rules they observe with regard to sleeping, residence, and diet are much like those of several of the still existing Catholic Orders. Among the Northern Buddhists, especially among the Lāmas of Tibet, the monks resemble still more closely the brethren in Europe, the resemblance extending even to minute points such as the use of rosaries, holy water, and incense. Nothing will make this clearer than a description of the daily service in the Cathedral at the capital of Tibet

—a description I have already had occasion to give in this hall. It is taken from the travels of Fathers Huc and Gabet.[1]

Mr. Köppen, whose admirable work on Buddhism is an excellent example of the accuracy and thoroughness of German scholarship, thought that we had in these resemblances evidence of the influence of Christian missionaries upon the later Buddhists, and the Rev. Spence Hardy thought that Buddhists must have penetrated to Egypt, where, as is well known, the ascetic Orders of Christianity had their origin, and where they first became numerous and important. Now it will be seen, when we come to the historical question, that it was by no means unlikely that Buddhists from India may have travelled through Persia to Asia Minor, or along the south coasts up to Alexandria during the first and second centuries of our era. And it is well known that Nestorian missionaries had penetrated into Mongolia and China before the ritual of the Lāmas had been developed in Tibet. But we shall return to this question immediately after the discussion of our third point —the resemblances in moral doctrine.

These are much closer than Christian writers have as yet at all clearly recognized. It is not too much to say that almost the whole of the moral teaching of the Gospels, as distinct from the dogmatic teaching, will be found in Buddhist writings several centuries older than the Gospels: that, for instance, of all the moral doctrines collected together in the so-called Sermon on the Mount, all those which can be separated from the Theistic dogmas there maintained are found again in the Piṭakas. In the one religion as in the other we find the same exhortations to boundless and indiscriminate giving, the same hatred of pretence, the same regard paid to the spirit as above the

[1] Given in the writer's *Manual of Buddhism*, S.P.C.K., 1877, twenty-second edition, 1910, chap. ix., p. 248 *f.* In his last years Rhys Davids first insisted on a difference in Eastern and Western monasticism with respect to obedience. No formal vow of obedience, nor injunction to the same, is found in the Buddhist Vinaya, *Dialogues*, iii, 181, *n.* 4.—EDITOR.

letter of the law, the same importance attached to purity, humility, meekness, gentleness, truth, and love. And the coincidence is not only in the matter; it extends to the manner also in which these doctrines are put forward. Like the Christ, the Buddha was wont to teach in parables, and to use homely figures of speech; and many of the sayings attributed to him are strangely like some of those found in the New Testament. And yet, in the midst of all this likeness, there is a difference no less unmistakable arising from the contrast between the Theistic creed which underlies the Christian and the Agnostic creed which underlies the Buddhist doctrines.

Let me read to you the Buddhist parable of the treasure laid up where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break not through to steal.[1] . . .

These simple verses will, I hope, convey to you a true impression of the kind of resemblance between the moral teachings of the two religions. Had I confined myself *entirely* to the passages where the similes used or the turns of expression in the words of the Piṭakas might remind us of the New Testament, I might have made the resemblance seem somewhat closer, but in so doing I should not have been laying the facts of the case fairly before you. *No passages* have yet been found where the resemblance is stronger than in those which have been read, and you will probably be of opinion that in none of the passages quoted is the resemblance strong enough to drive us to the conclusion that there has necessarily been borrowing from either side. Very interesting the comparison may be, and very instructive in many ways, but surely it only proves that some of the noblest of those moral lessons usually supposed to be characteristic of Christianity are not characteristic of it alone; that in those lessons Christianity has been anticipated several hundred years by Buddhism, a

[1] The passage is from the Khuddaka Pāṭha, VIII.: "The stored portion," and resembles, with greater detail, the passage of Matt. vi. 19, 20: "Lay not up for yourselves treasure where . . ." The poem had recently been edited by R. C. Childers.—EDITOR.

religion which denies the existence of the soul and openly confesses its ignorance of God, and therefore implies that such morality at least can exist without, and is altogether independent of dogma, not only of dogmas constituting the elaborate systems of Rome or Moscow or Tibet, but also of the simpler theistic creeds which have satisfied more enlightened minds.

I am afraid that this may disappoint some. There are freethinkers who realize so fully the evil effects resulting from the dogmatic systems which have usurped the name of Christianity, who so dislike the bonds in which public opinion has been held by powerful Christian ecclesiastical organizations, who so resent the wrong done to themselves by the arrogant way in which some professing Christians explain free thought by moral depravity, that they would be delighted to satisfy an old grudge by any distinct proof that Christianity's finest feathers were after all only borrowed plumes.

Of course it cannot for a moment be supposed that anyone here present to-day would so allow his judgment to be warped, but if anyone here present should have an acquaintance on whom the word Christianity, or the word priest, acts at all like a red flag upon a bull, he might perhaps with advantage tell him the following story from the Buddhist scriptures:

Gotama the Buddha entered once a public hall at Ambalaṭṭhika and found some of his disciples talking of a Brahmin who had just been accusing Gotama of impiety, and finding fault with the Order of Mendicants he had founded. "Brethren," said Gotama, "if others speak against me, or against my religion, or against the Order, that is no reason why you should be angry, discontented, or displeased with them. If you are so, you will not only bring yourselves into danger of spiritual loss, but you will not be *able to judge* whether what they say is correct or not correct"—a sentiment surely most enlightened. St. Paul's Anathema on those who differed from him sounds very weak beside it.

But to return to our subject. If our comparisons hitherto have brought us to a negative conclusion, or at least not confined us to a positive one, what does the external evidence say, the evidence that is outside the sacred books of the two religions? Does history record that any Buddhist came to Europe or Palestine, and that anyone travelled hence to India and brought back Buddhist teaching? Does any Christian or pre-Christian author mention Buddhism, or refer to any Buddhist book, or any Buddhist saying? Well, there is a vague idea that there was a very great traffic between East and West. The Greeks had a tradition that Pythagoras, the Christians that St. Thomas, went to India; and Pliny tells us of an embassy from Ceylon to Rome. A rigorous criticism has left very little of these stories; but we know that Alexander penetrated to the Indus in the fourth century B.C., and that Megasthenes wrote his celebrated work, *Ta Indika*, in the first years of the third century B.C. This writer, Megasthenes, was sent by Seleukos Nikator as ambassador to Chandragupta, king at that time of the valley of the Ganges, whose capital, the modern Patna, was in the very centre of Buddhism. He divides the Indian philosophers into two classes: the Brahmins and the Sarmānai. Now in the inscriptions we owe to Chandragupta's grandson, the Buddhist Emperor Asoka, the religious teachers, whom the people are repeatedly exhorted to respect, are called "Samaṇā" and "Brahmaṇā." Of these the first word "Samaṇā" is the name of the Buddhist monks. But Megasthenes tells us little about the Buddhists besides the name and a few details of their daily life, and as his work was almost the only source from which the Greeks and Romans for many generations derived their knowledge of Indian affairs, it is not surprising that we find no other mention of the Buddhists till long after.

Alexander Polyhistor, who wrote about 60 B.C., mentions in a similar way both the Buddhist and naked philosophers, or the Jains, but says nothing about their philosophy, or their ethics. About A.D. 160 an embassy from India was

sent to Antoninus Pius, and from the members of that embassy the Gnostic writer Bardesanes drew his account, of which a few extracts have been preserved for us in the Fourth Book of Porphyry's treatise in favour of vegetarianism, *De abstinentia ab esu animalium*. He says of the Buddhist monks that they lived in groups of houses built by the kings close to the temples, and spent the whole day in talking of divine things. Stewards or treasurers were appointed by the kings to see that the *samanaivi*—that is, the monks—were duly fed. They were fed on rice, bread, apples, and vegetables. When they assembled in the eating-hall a bell was rung, after which they said their prayers. On the bell ringing a second time the steward gave to each monk a separate dish. The dishes contained usually rice; but if any monk desired a change, vegetables or a dish of apples was added. The monks ate very fast.

This can scarcely be regarded as a complete and adequate account of Buddhism, and yet it is the *longest account* which appears in any writer till nearly a thousand years afterwards.

We next come to a Christian Father, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote the Miscellanies about A.D. 200. In the first book, § 15, he says: "Thus philosophy, a thing of the highest utility, flourished in antiquity among the barbarians, shedding its lights over the nations. . . . First in its ranks were the prophets of the Ægyptians, and the Chaldæans among the Assyrians, and the Druids among the Gauls, and the Sarmanaivi among the Bactrians." Now by Bactria we are to understand the northern valley of the Indus, and the numerous Buddhist ruins still existing there show that Clement was quite right in putting the Buddhist monks in that country. Passing to India proper, he divides the philosophers there into Sarmanas and Brahmins, and continues: "Some also of the Indians obey the precepts of Buddha, whom, on account of his extraordinary sanctity, they have raised to divine honours." Clement is quite unaware, you will notice, that the Bactrian monks and the Indian philosophers he has just mentioned

also obeyed the precepts of Buddha, and it is evident that he knows as little about them as he does about the Druids, whom he mentions with them.

Jerome also, writing about A.D. 430, probably following Clement, divides Indian Gymnosophists or philosophers into two classes, Brahmins and Samanaioi; and in another passage, to which I have already referred, *Contra Jovinianum*, I., 42, in the midst of a panegyric on virginity, he says incidentally that among the Indian Gymnosophists the tradition was handed down that Buddha, the founder of their system, was born from a virgin's side.

There is one other passage where Buddha is mentioned: it is in a work called the *Acta disputationis Archelai*, the author of which is unknown, but which must have been written about the commencement of the fourth century. This work, of which we have only a Latin translation, is a controversial tract against the Manichæans, and gives a most curious account of the origin of that heresy. It says, Skythianus, a Saracen, lived in Egypt, and afterwards came to Judæa and taught. He had a slave named Terebinth, who wrote out at his dictation four books. After the death of Skythianus, Terebinth fled to Babylon, and there gave out that he was full of all the wisdom of the Ægyptians, that his name was no longer Terebinth, but Buddha, that he had been born of a virgin, and had been nourished in the mountains by an angel. While at Babylon he went up on to a high roof to invoke his deities, and whilst he was doing so the most just God sent an angel to push him off the roof, and thus "the second wild beast was cut off." His books afterwards came into the hands of Manes, the founder of the Manichæans. The same story is repeated by Cyril and Epiphanius, who lived at the end of the fourth century, by Socrates, who wrote his *Ecc. Hist.* towards the end of the fifth century, and is referred to by later writers against Manichæism. This extraordinary legend seems so clearly to connect Buddha with the origin of the Manichæan heresy that I hoped, when first I read it, that we should certainly find some

clear traces of Buddhism in Manichæism at least, but I have been unable to find any confirmation whatever of the tradition. (*Cf. Ency. Religion and Eth.* "Manichæism."—EDITOR.)

I have now laid before you *all* the passages in which the Christian fathers and other Western writers mention, or refer to, Buddhism, or its founder. It is evident that their knowledge of Gotama himself and of his Order was most meagre, vague, and incorrect, and that they were completely ignorant alike of his moral and of his philosophical teachings.

I had intended to consider here the passages in Indian books in which reference is sometimes supposed to have been made to Christianity and to the visits of the Nestorian missionaries, and even of the Apostle Thomas to India. The subject is, however, a very intricate one, and I see that my time is almost gone. I will only state, therefore, generally that in no instance have the supposed references to Christianity in the earlier books been made out, though it is clear that the Nestorians did make converts in India as early as the ninth century of our era. Dr. Lorinser, of the Breslau University, has published a volume of great learning and acuteness to prove that the Bhagavad Gītā, one of the most sacred of the Sanskrit books, contains quotations and adaptations from the New Testament, but he has not as yet found anyone to support him.

You will now anticipate the answer we shall have to give to our question stated at the commencement of this lecture. Our question was: Did Christianity borrow from Buddhism? If so, how and how much? If not, how did the resemblances between them arise?

The answer must be, that of direct borrowing there is absolutely no evidence whatever, but that on the contrary there is sufficient proof that such knowledge of Buddhism as the early Christians did actually possess only reached to a few details of the outward life of the Buddhist monks and of the legends about the Buddha; and that, even as

regards these points, it was vague and uncertain in the extreme.

This first part of our answer is, I venture to think, exactly what we might have expected if we had followed the very safe method of judging of past events in the light of the present. Take, for instance, our relations with China. Our commerce with that country is more extensive and closer than the commerce of Alexandria or Rome ever was with the East. Many more of us have visited China, and we know much more of China than the ancients did of India. Yet how much influence has Chinese thought—the common sense and calm reason of the great Confucius, the mystic Pantheism of Lao Tse, or the moral philosophy of Chinese Buddhism—had upon any of the religious sects which occupy the same position in England to-day as the Christians did in the early Roman Empire?

And, secondly, the answer to the last part of our question must be that the very curious resemblances which have been discovered by scholars between the two religions are due to one or other of three causes.

Firstly, and least of all, and as regards only the monastic systems, it is possible, although it is not as yet at all proved, that the vague knowledge of the outward life of Brahmin and Buddhist ascetics, which we have seen to have existed in Alexandria just about the time when the Christian monastic system arose in Egypt, may have contributed to a movement which that knowledge alone could never have brought about, and may have influenced some of its details.

Secondly, that the similar characters of the Buddha and the Christ, the similarities of their conflict against the doctors of divinity of their day, the fact that both addressed themselves openly to the people, that both endeavoured to found a kingdom of righteousness in which an inward change of heart should take the place of outward rites and formal observances—all this naturally and inevitably produced a certain resemblance, occasionally almost an identity, between the matter and even the style and form of some of

the most general, and, if I may so say, the most humanitarian, of their moral teachings.

And, thirdly, that the similarity of the stage to which culture had reached, the like absence of the critical faculty among the early adherents of the two faiths, the like presence of a noble hero-worship and of a fresh enthusiasm —all this produced, naturally and inevitably, a close resemblance in the kind of things which Christians and Buddhists gradually came to believe regarding their revered Teachers: their miraculous birth, their wonderful infancy, and their supernatural powers.

And I cannot but venture to think that these results are full of instruction, full of much-needed help, to a right solution of another question now increasingly pressed upon our attention: the question, namely, of the true history, the true meaning of Christianity. How difficult, how impossible it seems for those brought up as Christians, for those whose religious feelings and moral aspirations have found satisfaction in the current views of Christianity, to look at it in the cold light of reason, even to listen without indignation to any argument which seems to imperil their belief in its divine origin and its supernatural growth! Must this not so continue as long as those arguments run round and round in the circle they now so diligently tread, deriving the rules of true historical criticism from the history of early Christianity only, while the converse is the truth—namely, what is true of early Christianity depends on the rules of historical criticism?

When we say that Christ did not call Himself divine, we are referred to passages in the Gospel of John. We reply that the gospel is not by "St." John, and our principal argument is, that it puts statements into the mouth of Christ inconsistent with the simplicity and ingenuousness of the Christ of the earlier Gospels.

But as the mist of the ages rolls away from the history of Buddhism we have revealed to us on the other side of the world a religion whose development runs entirely parallel with that of Christianity, every episode, every line

of whose history seems almost as if it might be created for the very purpose of throwing the clearest light on the most difficult and disputed questions of the origin of the European faith.

Born, like Christianity, from a reaction against the worst features of a system of formalism and priestcraft, which had in both cases arisen from the development of a more ancient worship of the powers of nature, and especially of the sun and moon, Buddhism, like Christianity, owed its origin to the insight and earnestness and prophetic zeal of a single man—one of those few heroes of humanity who have made epochs in the history of our race, the nobility of whose character, the grandeur of whose individuality, were already dimly revealed to those with whom they lived, whose true greatness stands out clearer and brighter as the ages pass, and at whose feet all the races of mankind will one day come to lay their reverence and their love with a more real appreciation and a truer worship than those teachers have ever yet received.

Need we be surprised that they were only half understood, that succeeding generations failed to learn the lessons of simplicity they had taught, and that the old errors of formalism and ritualism soon corrupted the pure doctrines of their religions of humanity?

Need we be surprised that in each case the deep impression of their personal superiority gave rise to those legends and stories which are, as it were, the modes of expression in which an uncritical age *tried to say true things*—stories miraculous and incredible, occasionally even absurd, but not without a beauty of their own to those who could read between the lines of these first endeavours at reproducing in words the effect produced on others by noble qualities of mind and heart?

And so Jesus, who recalled man from formalism to the worship of God, His Father and their Father, became the Christ, the only begotten Son of God Most High, while Gotama, the Apostle of Self-control and Wisdom and Love, became the Buddha, the Perfectly Enlightened, Omniscient

One, the Saviour of the World. True or half true at first, these great words contained too much. As disputes arise and sects are formed, those who hold to the simpler faith are always called heretics, infidels, dissenters; the powerful church, the numerous church, becomes in each case the orthodox one. The creed of this orthodox church becomes so full of new dogmas, even of new deities, that the earlier teachings are smothered at last, and give place to elaborate creeds, to the gorgeous rituals, the powerful hierarchies of modern Christianity and of modern Buddhism.

But if the one religion had borrowed from the other, all this would be lost. The resemblances would no longer be due to the same laws acting under similar conditions. As it is, the arguments which prove the miracles of the Christ prove also the miracles of the Buddha, the arguments which prove the miracles of the Catholic saints prove the miracles of the Buddhist arahats. The same questions arise about the canon of the Piṭakas as arise about the canon of the Bible, and the answers given in the one case depend on the reasons which must guide us to the answer to be given in the other.

The alchymists sought for the philosopher's stone and they found the first-fruits of the science of chemistry. If we seek in Buddhism for the historical origin of Christianity we shall be looking for what is not, for a philosopher's stone. But we shall find the rudiments of a science of religions, and we shall realize as we never realized before the real significance, the real causes of the growth of the beliefs now current, not in Asia only, but in Europe and in England too; we shall see how the thoughts of men have been widened by the suns, and be enabled to look forward with clearer view and with calmer faith to the great changes which are now being prepared, and which will be fully revealed in the ages yet to come.