

**THE DAWN AND THE
DAY, OR, THE BUDDHA
AND THE CHRIST: PART I.**

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The Dawn and the Day, or, the Buddha and the Christ: Part I. by Henry T. Niles

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Henry J. Miles

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PART I

BY
HENRY T. NILES

J. H. S.
1894

PREFACE.

WHEN Humboldt first ascended the Andes and saw the trees, shrubs and flora he had long before studied on the Alps, he had only to look at his barometer, or at the sea of mountains and hills below, the rocks and soil around, and the sun above, to understand this seeming marvel of creation; while those who knew less of the laws of order and universal harmony might be lost in conjectures about pollen floating in the upper air, or seeds carried by birds across seas, forgetting that preservation is perpetual creation, and that it takes no more power to clothe a mountain just risen from the sea in appropriate verdure than to renew the beauty and the bloom of spring.

Max Mueller, who looks through antiquity with the same clear vision with which Humboldt examined the physical world, when he found the most ancient Hindoos bowing in worship before Dyaus Pitar, the exact equivalent of the Zeus Pater of the Greeks and the Jupiter of the Romans, and of "Our Father who art in the heavens" in our own divinely taught prayer, instead of indulging in wild speculations about the chance belief of some ancient

chief or patriarch, transmitted across continents and seas and even across the great gulf that has always divided the Aryan from the Semitic civilization and preserved through ages of darkness and unbelief, saw in it the common yearning of the human soul to find rest on a loving Father's almighty arm; yet when our oriental missionaries and scholars found such fundamental truths of their own religion as the common brotherhood of man, and that love is the vital force of all religion, which consists not in blood-oblations or in forms and creeds, but in shunning evil and doing good, and that we must overcome evil by good and hatred by love, and that there is a spiritual world and life after death embodied in the teachings of Buddha — instead of finding in this great fact new proof of the common Father's love for all His children, they immediately began to indulge in conjectures as to how these truths might have been derived from the early Christians who visited the East, while those who were disposed to reject the claims of Christianity have exhausted research and conjecture to find something looking as if Christianity itself might have been derived from the Buddhist missionaries to Palestine and Egypt, both overlooking the remarkable fact that it is only in fundamental truths that the two religions agree, while in the dogmas, legends, creeds and speculations which form the wall of separation between them they are as wide asunder as the poles.

How comes it on the one theory that the Nesto-

rians, whose peculiar creed had already separated them from the balance of the Christian church, taught their Buddhist disciples no part of that creed to which they have adhered with such tenacity through the ages? And on the other theory, how comes it, if the Divine Master was, as some modern writers claim, an Essene, that is, a Buddhist monk, that there is not in all his teachings a trace of the speculations and legends which had already buried the fundamental truths of Buddhism almost out of sight?

How sad to hear a distinguished Christian scholar like Sir Monier Williams cautioning his readers against giving a Christian meaning to the Christian expressions he constantly met with in Buddhism, and yet informing them that a learned and distinguished Japanese gentleman told him it was a source of great delight to him to find so many of his most cherished religious beliefs in the New Testament; and to see an earnest Christian missionary like good Father Huc, when in the busy city of Lha-ssa, on the approach of evening, at the sound of a bell the whole population sunk on their knees in a concert of prayer, only finding in it an attempt of Satan to counterfeit Christian worship; and on the other hand to see ancient and modern learning ransacked to prove that the brightest and clearest light that ever burst upon a sinful and benighted world was but the reflected rays of another faith.

And yet this same Sir Monier Williams says : " We shall not be far wrong in attempting an outline of the Buddha's life if we begin by assuming that intense individuality, fervid earnestness and severe simplicity, combined with singular beauty of countenance, calm dignity of bearing, and almost superhuman persuasiveness of speech, were conspicuous in the great teacher." To believe that such a character was the product of a false religion, or that he was given over to believe a lie, savors too much of that worst agnosticism which would in effect deny the universality of God's love and would limit His care to some favored locality or age or race.

How much more in harmony with the broad philosophy of such men as Humboldt and Mueller, and with the character of a loving Father, to believe that at all times and in all countries He has been watching over all His children and giving them all the light they were capable of receiving.

This narrow view is especially out of place in treating of Buddhism and Christianity, as Buddha himself predicted that his Dharma would last but five hundred years, when he would be succeeded by Matreya, that is, Love incarnate, on which account the whole Buddhist world was on tiptoe of expectation at the time of the coming of our Lord, so that the wise men of the East were not only following their guiding-star but the prediction of their own great prophet in seeking Bethlehem.

Had the Christian missionaries to the East left behind them their creeds, which have only served to divide Christians into hostile sects and sometimes into hostile camps, and which so far as I can see, after years of patient study, have no necessary connection with the simple, living truths taught by our Saviour, and had taken only their New Testaments and their earnest desire to do good, the history of missions would have been widely different.

How of the earth earthy seemed the walls that divided the delegates to the world's great Congress of Religions, recently held in Chicago, and how altogether divine

The love which like an endless golden chain
Joined all in one.

Whatever others may think, it is my firm belief that Buddhism and Christianity, which we cannot doubt have influenced for good such vast masses the human family, both descended from heaven clothed in robes of celestial purity which have become sadly stained by their contact with the selfishness of a sinful world, except for which belief the following pages would never have been written, which are now sent forth in the hope that they may do something to enable Buddhists and Christians to see eye to eye and something to promote peace and good-will among men.

While following my own conceptions and even fancies in many things, I believe the leading char-