

THE ARYAN PATH

**Point out the "Way"—however dimly,
and lost among the host—as does the evening
star to those who tread their path in darkness.**

—The Voice of the Silence

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RELIGIOUS REFORM

At the end of this month Christendom will be celebrating its chief festival. The spirit of jollity will prevail in many homes. Here in India non-Christians will participate in the festivities of their Christian brethren in their own way. But what a mockery it really will be! A spirit of friendliness for a week, forbearance for a week, less hatred of the enemy for a week, and then the world will go its way—business making money, politics pulling wires, society hoping for a good time to come, while the masses everywhere continue to suffer disease, hunger, poverty!

Christmas represents the Birth of Christ—not a historical event but a mystical one. It symbolizes the Second Birth—the awakened soul enlightening the mind to live the life of peace within and of good-will to all creatures. Christianity, like every other organized religion, suffers from materialism of the spirit. It does not help men to live a conscious life in spirit because it calls its votaries away from the quest of Truth to a mere belief in notions and taboos.

A revaluation of religion as an aid to life is overdue. In this issue four religious-minded Indians write

on the subject, two of them dealing with Christianity, the other two with Buddhism. No one can help appreciating the motive of these writers eager to see radical reform introduced in the sphere of religion; but we doubt if a real and lasting spiritual revolution can come from within the sectarian creeds. By leaving them alone, by proclaiming that all religions are at their roots the same, but that each is overgrown with false belief and with superstition, by seeking the one common source of them all can men and women of today find the way to the Higher Life—conscious life in spirit. Instead of trying to reform organized religions run by salaried priests and money-seeking purohiths men should reform themselves and experience the joy of real Christmas—Second Birth. Even a few attempting and succeeding in this task will prove themselves real Servants of their fellow-men, superior to politicians, economists and sociologists.

Meanwhile, we greet our readers with the prayer that they may attain some peace of mind, some inspiration of heart, some feeling of brotherliness for all; for in these alone are to be found the prosperity and happiness which all are seeking.

REVOLUTIONIZE CHRISTIANITY

[Two Indians who belong to Indian Christian families desire to see churchianity metamorphosed into Christianity. The first article by **Shri S. A. Das** deals more with theological ideas, while the second by **Shri S. K. George** has a distinctly social approach.—ED.]

I.—RE-THINKING CHRISTIANITY

The present war is proving every day that Church Christianity is being weighed in the balance and found wanting. If it is to live and to progress it can no longer remain indifferent, in view of modern problems, to the challenge of the thinking Christian and the non-Christian world to justify its claims.

As far as India is concerned, leaving aside other causes which have brought about a lack of appreciation of organised Christianity, the following seem to have contributed largely towards it :—

1. The lack of a careful and sincere examination of its creeds and dogmas in the light of modern thought.
2. The lack of consideration for the complexity of human nature.
3. The lack of sincere appreciation of what is best in the religious thought of non-Christians.
4. The lack of readiness to appreciate and to adjust its technique in the light of the religious experience of non-Christian saints and seers.

Until a few decades ago, Christianity as such took no interest in the psychology of human beings. It had always advocated, and unfortunately is still advocating, that what is good for John is good for James, though the physical, mental and

social outlook of John and of James may differ fundamentally. The message, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," will profit only those who are capable of believing. It will be of no use to one with a scientific or a philosophic turn of mind, who can believe in nothing that his reason cannot accept. To such, the idea of incarnation will also seem unnecessary and futile. In the case of St. Paul, for instance, it is likely that his philosophic mind clamoured for something more tangible than mere faith, and so we find him drawing upon his metaphysical store to formulate a Christian theology to buttress his faith.

One frequently comes across men and women who sincerely make an effort to believe, but cannot do so as deep down in their consciousness there is a disbelief in things that cannot be scientifically verified or intellectually grasped. Of course, to many Westerners, an argument such as the above may seem trivial, but to the Indian mind nothing is trivial when it concerns spiritual matters.

On the other hand, there are a large number of earnest Christians who are beset with doubts and

difficulties but are content to console themselves with the belief that it is life that matters. They seem to overlook that the Christ exhorted his followers to worship God with all their heart, strength and understanding. They seem to lack the courage to investigate with a view to clarifying the issues.

First, let us examine the theory of incarnation. Here again, it is only that type of mind which has the capacity to believe or to love intensely, that is benefited by this aspect of religion, either in Hinduism or in Christianity. Those who lack this capacity can find inspiration and help only in a God who is not subject to limitations or in an immanent God in whom one lives and moves and has his being ; or even in an idea which could infuse into one's Soul the power necessary to sustain it and to develop it to its fullest stature. As far as Jesus is concerned, the theory does not fit in with the last few days of his life. From his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane it is evident that his will was something distinct from God's will, otherwise there would have been no need for him to ask that not his will but God's will be done, and from his cry on the Cross, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " we can only surmise that, as a little of his own will seems to have been lurking somewhere, he felt a touch of despair, which, however, he instantly overcame by surrendering himself fully to the Divine.

Secondly, consider the question of Evil. Emotionalism being the centre of Christianity, that religion strongly emphasises its attitude towards evil. It has no satisfactory explanation to offer as to the origin of evil. It takes up a negative attitude and builds around itself a fence of " Don't's "—a kind of conventional barbed-wire entanglement. It cannot view evil as a necessary element in the mental and spiritual evolution of humanity, as then it would have to admit that sin or evil is a factor in God's plan and, therefore, an incentive to progress and not an agent trying to overthrow God's domain in order to establish a Satanic one in its place.

Someone has said that " If there were no such thing as evil, human beings would have been unmoral." If so, there would have been but little difference between them and the animals, and there would have been no such thing as personality. As a result of experience, man develops the sense of discrimination between right and wrong. His response to either depends partly upon his prenatal and his post-natal acquisitions and handicaps. To the question " Who has sinned, this man or his parents ? " Christianity has no reasonable answer to give.

The Indian mind views sin as a state—a state of ignorance and not a reality. Furthermore, what would be considered sin or evil in one circumstance, might not be considered such in another. This change-

ability is due to evil's being but a stage in the evolution of the mind. The Hindu asserts there is but one reality, unchanging and unchangeable, and that is Deity; all else is unreal, and because man is fundamentally Divine and not a sinner, he craves for the realization of the Divine within himself.

Thirdly, the idea of atonement also requires a thorough examination. Self-sacrifice when it is shorn of its sanctified garb reveals itself in its naked simplicity. We then discover that it is only a high-sounding name for the price one has to pay to achieve something higher. To win the Victoria Cross in battle a soldier has to risk his life. An intense happiness fills his heart when he has saved another's life and won the coveted honour. The price of this happiness is his readiness to risk his life and not to cling to it. In the same manner, Jesus would never have become the Christ if he had shirked the ordeal that awaited him during his last days. Each rung in the ladder of spirituality means the giving up of something dear and costly on a lower plane, and this giving up is the price one has to pay for the growth of one's personality. Christianity unnecessarily dwells far too much on the physical suffering of Jesus in Gethsemane and on the Cross, and does not contemplate enough on his struggle for self-surrender on the Mount and on his complete surrender on the Cross: though, all through his life, Christ had been

feeling his oneness with the Divine, it was not until his Divine consciousness transcended all his other consciousnesses on the Cross that he achieved complete oneness with the Divine.

Fourthly, one very often hears responsible Christian leaders say that, unless Christianity receives a new orientation, it will not appeal to the modern mind and yet conferences and conventions meet and disperse without having accomplished anything worth while in that direction. We are not unmindful of the risks involved in an undertaking of this nature. We can appreciate the difficulties that confront organised Christianity. We realize that foreign missions have to proceed very cautiously lest they lose the sympathy and the support of their constituencies, who can appraise things only from an Occidental point of view.

In the circumstances, there seem to be only two alternatives left: one, that earnest Christian men and women should associate themselves with existing non-Christian religious organisations in India, with a view not to proselytising but to infusing the Spirit of Christ into them by living in their midst, as friends and companions on life's journey towards eternity.

This method of evangelising will not appeal to foreign missions, whose growth and expansion depend so much on facts, figures, reports and snapshots received at home from their mission agents in this

country. Moreover, a venture of this sort would doubtless throw a bombshell amidst people nurtured on time-honoured creeds and dogmas, and it is more than possible that even the so-called progressive Christian may rebel against the idea of reviewing things sacred to him in the light of the spiritual experience of non-Christian sages and saints. The greatest opposition will, of course, come from the custodians of the cloistered Christ who, naturally, would not like to see their religion lose its individuality and its militant spirit. In spite of this, unless Christianity takes a bold step now, it will perhaps be a case of "never" later, for who knows if the future may not usher on to the British, French and American stage a Lenin, a Mussolini, or a Hitler, to play his part in the remaking of the history of the world through these countries?

In an effort to re-think Christianity, a distinction has to be made at the outset between religion and spirituality, for religion hitherto has, unfortunately, been identified with emotionalism; consequently, the God that has been offered in various religions is meant to give a sort of emotional self-satisfaction. Spirituality, on the other hand, puts the emphasis on the divine Spirit or Life and therefore covers the whole gamut of human experience in various shapes and forms. Christ said that he came to give life—and an abundant life. The complex nature of man cannot be satisfied

by conventions, creeds and taboos, but only by the sublimation of things that contribute to his happiness. Religion is not a negative attitude towards life, but a positive one. The Divine is eternal bliss. He expands, so to say, through Anand or enjoyment. The Soul, therefore, has to determine its wants through enjoyment or happiness.

Western activity, we are inclined to think, is the outcome of a psychophysical agitation. One derives a certain amount of pleasure from doing good and kindly acts. This pleasure acts as a sort of intoxication which has to be maintained through further activities. Very often one comes across people who have been doing such acts for years and yet one finds them spiritually where they were when one first met them. People say that there is such a thing as losing one's Soul in good work. This is not exactly true, but if good work becomes a matter of profession the Soul withdraws itself for want of expansiveness.

One often wonders why Jesus, Buddha and Mohammed stand foremost amongst the many great religious teachers of the world, and why none of their followers have attained anywhere near the stature that they attained. In the case of the last two, the answer seems to be simple—they had no personal static ideal to dwarf the expansion of their soul; like the oak of the hills, they grew spiritually tall and strong. Neither the storm of temptations nor the hail of doubts and disbeliefs was able to

hinder their growth. It stands to reason that the man who aims at a pinnacle can never shoot a star, so also, one who imitates another can never grow to the fullest stature of the one whom he idolises.

In the case of Jesus, it is not so easy to answer the question, as some of his reputed sayings are contradictory. However, his definite belief in God being a Spirit, and his clear consciousness that he and God were one in essence, seem to have enabled him to outgrow the human standard and to attain a Divine one—not through inhibitions but through sublimation; not through self-limitation but through love, which is but another word for Ananda or happiness.

The Eastern mind always makes a difference between belief in a God and belief in the idea of a God. With the exception of a few advanced Christian thinkers in the West like John MacMurray, others seem to pay little attention to this most important difference. If there is a God at all, He must be a nucleus of all ideas and, in fact, He alone can be the only Supreme Idea. "In the beginning was the Word." (St. John) This can only refer to the cosmic beginning, for every word presupposes an idea and without an idea there can be no expression. Furthermore, while the idea is always absolute, the expression is always relative and therefore limited.

We appreciate the difficulty in reconciling the absolute Idea with the necessity for expression or, in

other words, the problem of "Being and Becoming." Why should the Idea express itself at all? Why should it subject itself to the limitation of Time? We must admit that these questions cannot be answered. The answer will remain an eternal secret, that which the Hindu calls Maya—so grossly misunderstood by the West.

Again, if the Idea is infinite, it cannot admit of any finality of expression. This is where Christianity often stumbles. We have to admit that the whole cosmic process is a reflection of the Divine for, if we do not, it would evidently follow that there was no such thing as the Divine. Although one realizes that there would be discrimination due to the Time factor, one fails to see how there could be any division, unless one is prepared to admit the existence of a multiplicity of divinities.

Just to make the position clear, let us see the Hindu point of view. The Hindu says that there are different levels of consciousness and that God passes through a process of self-limitation. Unfortunately, the Christian doctrine of self-limitation excludes Time from the Divine process, so that the element of ignorance or sin is left unaccounted for. In other words, Christianity offers an ultra-cosmic Deity who let the world turn on its own axis until it was redeemed by the sacrifice of His son on the Cross. The dualities involved in this position should, in all self-consistency, introduce another

competitor in the divine field, thereby opening out the possibility of either party's winning the race.

The Hindu position is decidedly clearer: As Time is included in the Divine through a power which at best we call "Maya Sakti," God had to introduce an element of ignorance or so-called evil. Surely, if self-limitation meant the withdrawal of the Divine, there would be no point in man's seeking the Divine at all, for then man *ipso facto* would become an antagonist to the Divine.

There are Christian thinkers who admit the premises but are afraid to draw the conclusion for reasons best known to themselves. On the other hand, Hindu thinkers have the courage to admit and to appropriate the Logos without fighting over its form and nomenclature. Christ himself had to harmonise Time with Eternity, inasmuch as finally, on the Cross, he had to surrender his will completely to the Divine. This appears to be the logical explanation of the tragedy of the Cross.

From what little we know of the life of saints who have realized the Divine, we find that the Soul of such men has realized its Divine nature after a prolonged period of silence and meditation; and we believe that it was during the forty days and forty nights of fast and meditation that Christ attained his oneness with the Divine. Such a period of quiescence does not mean indolence, but rather an inner growth

in silence and an outer withdrawal of sense activities in order that the lower mind, *i.e.*, the sense mind, may be completely stilled and that the power of the Divine in us may be allowed to spiritualise our other faculties.

If organised Christianity has failed so far it is because it has not recognized that the thinker is only one, even God, and that the only way to allow His thought to percolate into our Subconscious Self is through deep and prolonged meditation which, from the Western point of view, is gross selfishness and a waste of precious time. India, on the other hand, asserts that as long as the West is individualistic in her thought and outlook, it will not be possible for her to surrender herself completely to the Divine and to achieve His purpose in life.

Religion is just the finer quality of life dormant in the natural order. Wherever there is detachment, wherever there is working for ideal ends, there is true religion. Service is but a phase of pseudo-idealism, for, as Jesus says, without Him we can do nothing. The only service we can render is to help to deepen the consciousness in order to discover the finer levels of it. The way to recognize that is to admit the ultimate nature of God's thought—the Divine Logos or the Cosmic power, which is responsible for the Universe and all that is in it.

S. A. DAS

II.—THE RELIGIOUS SANCTION FOR SOCIAL ACTION

In April last the Editor drew attention to the challenge that faces religion, in salvaging a civilisation that seems doomed. I submit that religion does provide the needed dynamic, that it has been and is still the spring of all satisfying social conduct.

Some time ago in an interesting article on "Reactions to Religion in Modern India" the Hon. Mr. Justice Chenchiah of Pudukottah pointed out two current tendencies, which, though contradictory in outlook and intention, agree in certain expressions. These are the Secularist and the Sanatanist attitudes, the one radically materialistic and the other conservatively orthodox. Both see danger in mixing religion with politics. The Secularist sees danger to politics; the Sanatanist, to religion. To the Secularist, to import religious ideals into politics is to confuse issues; religion is a superstition from which man is to be freed. It upholds values that hamper his objectives and render impossible their swift realization.

To the Sanatanist, religion is a precious heritage. To bring it into the market-place, to make it serve the exigencies of the moment, is to corrupt it. Salvation is of the individual, not of Society; it is from this world, not of it. It has little to do with life here which is but the divinely ordained stage on which the embodied self, beyond time and

change, works out its redemption. Hence any preoccupation with this world and its concerns is dangerous to religion.

Both trends of thought unite in opposing a third that would bring religion to bear on all life's concerns, including politics, as symbolised by Mahatma Gandhi. That is why we find a Roy joining hands with a Srinivasa Iyengar in denouncing Gandhiji as a dangerous innovator, seeing in him the one serious obstacle to India's political salvation. The gulf between him and secularist thought is almost unbridgeable. Soon after Mr. Roy's release from long imprisonment he visited Gandhiji at the latter's ashram. They had a long and intimate conversation on political ideals and methods. Both were men with long and varied experience of handling men in the mass. But they couldn't agree and it was time to part. But it was prayer-time in Gandhiji's ashram and the Mahatma asked Mr. Roy whether he would stay for prayers. Mr. Roy coolly replied, "Well, Mr. Gandhi, I don't suffer from neurasthenia." No answer could better express the gulf between the two.

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, though almost a secularist politician like Mr. Roy, is, unlike him, a man of religion as well and that of the Sanatanist variety. He has all along opposed Gandhian politics. But perhaps the opposition from this

quarter is better symbolised by the Sanatanists of South India, who are still agitating against even such desirable social changes as the removal of untouchability or the sanctioning of widow remarriage, with the cry "Hands off religion!"

I unashamedly hold the Gandhian point of view on this and I find the sanction for that attitude in religion. I hold with Gandhiji that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics know not what either is. Some years ago Mr. B. G. Horniman remarked to Gandhiji, "Well, Bapu, I have no religion. Politics is my religion." Swift came Gandhiji's retort: "Religion is my politics." If we take religion seriously it must necessarily involve politics and will inevitably lead to political and social action.

Christianity is the religion I know best. Its teaching is unmistakable that religion demands from man love to God and to his fellow-man. The strength of Christianity lies in its emphasis on this. *It may be philosophically less satisfying than certain other systems and it may have much to learn from them*; but on this topic it speaks with a clarity and provides a dynamic that are distinctive. Jesus summed up the duty of man in the twin commandments, which he placed on an equal footing: Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Christian teaching has overlaid with many excrescences, but it can never hide, this basic demand of the Master or the challenge of his

glorious example. Time and again men and women of insight have returned to this fundamental teaching. Said Abraham Lincoln "I shall enter that Church and none other over whose altar is inscribed those two commandments and nothing else."

This insistence that love to God must express itself in love to man and in service, was not original in Christianity. In the long line of Hebrew prophets we see this teaching crystal clear. Prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Micah taught that God demands righteousness and justice, not rituals and professions. In burning words that have come ringing down the ages they denounced the idle rich and the oppressors of the poor, as well as those who gave a religious sanction to injustice and oppression. This is to bring religion into life. These prophets dared to give advice in God's name to Kings and politicians, to denounce foolish policies and even to initiate revolutions. Every crisis in their nation's history produced some prophet giving God's message, not merely echoing or justifying the leaders of the moment. They dared to advocate unpopular policies because they judged everything in the light of eternal principles.

Jesus stands in the line of succession to these prophets, endorsing and carrying forward their message. The Kingdom that he preached was the realisation of God's will on earth. His teachings were all concerned with the laws of that Kingdom and

the conditions of entry. True, he lived in a less complicated society than ours and like all religious teachers he dealt with principles and conveyed his teachings in parables. It is for those who claim to follow him to apply his spirit to the problems with which they are confronted. In parable after parable he brought home to his disciples that what he demanded was Justice and Mercy and not sacrifice ; fruits and not professions ; doing the will of God and not calling " Lord, Lord."

Religion, wherever it is a reality, is a binding force, an expression of the sense of the community of its followers.

Today the realisation of that ideal demands first the realisation of the One Community of Mankind, the breaking down of all barriers of colour or class or race, and secondly, social justice. Both these come clearly within the scope of religion today.

Mankind has passed, in idea at least, to the One God, whether conceived as personal or as an integrating principle. That conception demands for its social expression the realisation of the Community of Mankind, which is hindered by anachronistic nationalisms and rabid racialisms ; and also by the unseemly and irreligious antagonism of rival religious systems. But the insight of religion that we are each other's keepers is brought home to men everywhere today by the hard facts of economics and of politics. War and depression in any part of the world inevitably affect

every part. There is now, in the words of Mr. H. G. Wells, " No prosperity but a common prosperity ; no peace but a common peace." Religion gives the sanction for the building of this common prosperity and common peace, which are the conditions of our continued survival. But religion must fight for this ideal in these days, when narrow walls, national, racial and even communal, threaten to break up into warring fragments this fair world and to engulf us all in internecine quarrels.

The second demand of modern religion alive to its responsibilities is for social justice. Too often has religion been content with individual charity and acquiescent in public unrighteousness. Justice must express itself in economic independence and security for the common man. The ridding of the world of exploitation of individuals as well as of groups, is the outward task of enlightened religion today. The Communist principle, " To each according to his need ; from each according to his ability," is essentially religious. Such social justice is now demanded as a right and seen by the dispossessed everywhere to be a realizable goal. They have become conscious not only of their dependence, but also of their power to achieve independence and equality.

Religion is at one with revolutionary socialism in this demand for elementary justice. What can be more radical than these words of the Prophet Isaiah :—

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

The realization of this in modern days involves complicated economic and political principles and demands resolute action. It is the glory of Mahatma Gandhi that he has demonstrated how religion can act effectively without sacrificing its basic principles, how love can achieve justice without ceasing to be love.

I have written so far with special reference to Christianity. This sanction is most clearly seen in that religion. But it is certainly not absent in other systems. What is the Hindu concept of Dharma but an organisation of society according to the demands of religion? I shall not go into how far the Varnashrama ideal is a valid ordering of society for all time. But in its conception it was an attempt to order society on the principles of security and prosperity for all. It has broken down under modern conditions but the point I want to make is that Hinduism also gives the sanction for social organisation and the achievement of social justice. What it demands now is the working out

of a new Dharma in consonance with modern life.

I have already referred to Gandhiji as bringing home even to Christians the challenge to apply their religion to every aspect of life. The poet Rabindranath Tagore says, addressing misguided devotees who think they are worshipping God in running away from life—the eternal temptation of false religion:—

Leave this chanting and singing and telling
of beads!

Open thine eyes and look upon thy God!

Whom dost thou worship in this temple with
doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before
thee.

He is where the tiller is tilling the hard
ground,

And where the path-maker is breaking stones,

He is with them in sun and in shower,

And his garment is covered with dust.

Put off thy holy mantle and even like him

Come out on the dusty soil!

For our Master has taken upon him the bonds
of creation,

He is bound with us all for ever.

Come out of thy meditations! Leave aside
thy flowers and incense,

What harm if thy clothes become tattered?

Meet him in toil and in sweat of thy brow;

What harm if thy clothes become stained?

It is to such religious action that we are challenged by the religious situation. Any religion that does not meet that challenge resolutely is not really alive and deserves to be cast out, as Jesus said, like salt that has lost its savour.

S. K. GEORGE

BUDDHISM IN INDIA

[**N. V. Eswar** and **J. M. Ganguli** discuss the present status and the future development of Buddhism in India. Starting with different view-points, they arrive at similar conclusions.

The Spirit of Buddhism is not dead. It is living in the hearts of the Indian people and manifests itself in their aspirations and ideals—unity in diversity of religions, non-violence in morality, freedom in politics. This is Shri Eswar's opinion.

Shri Ganguli sees Buddhism as an inseparable element of Indian thought, springing from the main stream of Vedic philosophy. This philosophy is still a living, vital part of India, and Buddhism, which is not really dead but only dormant, will once more manifest itself as a concrete movement.

Although disfigured and distorted to a certain extent, the Buddhist religion still towers above all others, in that blood has never been shed in its name. We who are so desperately searching for a way to end all wars might do well to apply the simple precepts of Lord Buddha :—

“Let a man conquer anger by absence of anger, wickedness by absence of wickedness, miserliness by liberality and a liar by truth. ”

“ Never in this world can hatred be stilled by hatred; it will be stilled only by non-hatred—this is the Law Eternal. ”—ED.]

I.—IS BUDDHISM DEAD IN INDIA ?

It is—in the eyes of those who search for it within the folds of yellow robes. The world is so obsessed with forms that the indwelling spirit escapes notice. Therefore those who subscribe to the belief that Buddhism found ignominiously its grave in the land of its birth, merely because there is no extraneous evidence to prove it still the motive power that directs and guides the life of the people, are living in a delusion. The rank materialism of the modern world has been subjecting religion incessantly to such tests that persons who had no interest in religion and therethrough in themselves, are now beginning to look

upon themselves as not the nonentities that they were once contented to be. Religion has, by discussion and study, now come within the range of even the poor intellect; people have perceived the light of true religion.

The truth is becoming clearer day by day that through all these strifes we have been definitely on the march towards the realisation of a universal religion, though this trend is prevented by the misty atmosphere from being perceived by all. Of course this universal religion is not the product of any agreed solution or arrangement ; it is being moulded into a reality by individual contributions.

As a natural corollary, all religions are commencing to shed their separate identity; they are merging into one. To render this merging complete and real no vestige of those trappings that once separated one religion from the other can be allowed to remain. Consequently many changes have taken place in all religions, doing away with the glaring and crude practices—the formalities inherent in them. It is therefore quite natural for those who hug formalities to their bosom as constituting the true religion to see the religions of the past as on their death-bed. But logically, therefore, to them, not only Buddhism but all other religions must be dead.

Religion is deathless. Religion is the embodiment in a concrete form of the fundamental and immutable laws of life. Religion is the essence of life. And mankind will perish without a true knowledge of the laws that govern and guide the flow of life. These laws or religion will therefore continue to exist so long as there is life in the universe in one form or another. Therefore if the religions of the past seem to some minds to have suffered death owing to the transition through which they have been passing, such death is only apparent, not real. For in the sprouting forth of a common religion, all religions, not excluding a single one, have undergone the death of a seed. What is a biological truth must remain ideologically true.

A man is treading on dangerous ground when he puts forward the

plea that Buddhism must be treated as dead simply because all Indians do not call themselves Buddhists. And people who are convinced of the death of Buddhism in our land easily forget what Buddha said of religion and what true religion is.

There has been propounded in the world no simpler religion than Buddhism. But its simplicity does not deny it the highest privilege of having proclaimed to the world far greater truths than have been expressed by other religions. Hence it can be no exaggeration to suggest that Buddhism may have exercised a far greater influence in the evolution of a common religion than all the others have.

Again, religion is an indwelling spirit that manifests itself in the activities of man; it is nothing independent of man or of his living. The deeper religion has sunk into the marrow of our existence, the less is it perceivable through the help of extraneous symbols. For garments and other distinguishing features then become quite meaningless. Are we not therefore justified in believing that the spirit of Buddhism has entered deep into and manifests itself in our life today? An analysis of the general outlook on life of an average Indian will reveal to what extent the belief that Buddhism is dead in India contains germs of truth.

No one will deny that Gandhi has given India an ideal to live for. It is not beside the truth to suggest that Indians have, because of Gandhiji's

unflinching devotion to his ideal in the very midst of destruction and death, begun searching their hearts once again and are gradually realising that violence saps life. As a result every thinking Indian now gives expression to his leaning towards non-violence as a principal ingredient in life—if not in practice and action, at least in theory and belief. Of course all have not come out in favour of absolute non-violence. But faith can be established only after considerable wrangling with doubts. Events that have taken place in the world during recent years have unnerved many of these doubters and, as a result, they are losing their faith in violence too. Therefore the alternative is only non-violence, though many would struggle vainly against admitting this fact. The present thus shows the acceptance by India of non-violence as a cardinal principle of life.

Having understood the essentials of religion, the desire to discard all forms and to lead a consciously righteous and just life has grown up in the minds of thinking persons. This has had the effect of a gradually diminishing patronage of temples and of other places of worship. It is not denied that the masses of India are still great observers of form; they are, undoubtedly, and their religiosity shows unmistakable signs of deteriorating into mechanical observances—surely not a development that one would welcome. It is, however, only thinking minds that will help to uphold religion in its

pristine purity. Therefore let us survey the attitude of the thinking section towards religion. That thinking section of India has set its face definitely against all forms. It insists on religion in action. For religion is to be found not in the formalities that one observes, which can be mechanical, but in one's relationship towards one's fellow beings, towards the world at large. This insistence may be faint at the moment. Nevertheless signs are not lacking to give one the hope that it is going to entrench itself in the minds of all.

The fallacy and the irrationality of restricting the omnipresence of Gods to the circle of those whose forbears some thousands of years back, in their seclusion, believed in the existence of such Gods, are dawning on all thinking persons. The indefensibility of the personal God idea has been brought home in the most clear and forceful manner by recent happenings which have administered a rude shock to those who clung to the idea of personal Gods. It is therefore not surprising that many are inclined to place less and less faith in personal Gods.

With that paling of personal Gods into insignificance all human beings have come to occupy the position of thinkers in their own individual sphere. It means that individual freedom is beginning to assert itself. And a recognition of it is not slow in showing itself. Freedom of thought is a greater reality today than it ever was before. Further,

the continual stress upon the need of it for a healthy life only ensures our enjoying more of it in future. So that the day is not far off when complete and unadulterated ideological equality will be the regnant factor in our life, and ideological equality is the root of all other forms of equality, including the achievement of universal brotherhood.

A further development has been the inculcation of the spirit of service to humanity that pervades the Indian atmosphere today. This is undoubtedly the highest religion. It can even be said to be the essence of religion. There is a progressive realisation of the futility of searching for the highest in an individualistic way. And this has resulted in a number of people dedicating their lives for the sake of humanity. With that example before them it is no longer possible for others who stay outside today to keep on moving along the same path on which they accidentally find themselves at present. The call to service is apparently irresistible. Hence it is that we find many more turning their attention and devoting all their time to an effort, however negligible in itself, to improve the condition of the masses. The number of such selfless workers is increasing day by day. And lack of faith in free competition of the Western type is administering a still further effective impetus to swell the ranks of such servants of humanity. Therefore we are justified in looking forward to a future in which all will

have others in mind whenever they embark upon any activity. That is to say: Service of humanity will be the watchword of the future.

The above are the essentials of Buddhism. By no means are they exhaustive. Yet they are useful in showing us whether we have not imbibed more of the spirit of Buddhism than of any other religion. In this sense we are one and all Buddhists. It is not then blasphemy to suggest that Buddhism is dead in our land? I believe it is.

There is of course legitimate ground for asking if these principles are the exclusive monopoly of Buddhism. I admit they are not. All the other religions can lay equal claim to these principles. But against this is the unassailable fact that it was Buddhism that laid the greatest emphasis on these essentials. All other religions have left fairly sufficient room for doubt.

The above answer may not be deemed sufficient to allay doubt. Then, if it is suggested that all religions are agreed on these fundamental laws of life and that they are the common property of all religions, we must pick up the necessary courage to admit that there is practically no distinction between the various faiths. The oneness of all religions must be unreservedly and openly accepted without any qualification. And the mistake of naming religions must be owned and abjured. As a clear proof of this recognition we must stop branding ourselves Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christ-

ians etc. And when this unity of all religions is made a living faith, the question of the death of Buddhism

or of any other religion does not arise at all.

N. V. ESWAR

II.—BRING BACK BUDDHISM WITHIN VEDANTISM !

Buddhism has gone into exile,—out of its homeland, away from the soil, the tradition-laden atmosphere, the divine-afflatus-clad surroundings which had inspired its philosophy and made a Prince restless in his kingdom. The perennial thought-streams flowing over the soil of this land, the inspiring ideas ever floating in its atmosphere, the grandeur of its lofty hills and the murmur of its sacred rivers, the sublimeness of its blue sky, the challenging stillness of its starry nights, the green lustre of its forests,—and the many other thought-arresting manifestations of Nature, as also the association with the vairagya-infected, thoughtful people of the land—all these subtle influences ever working on the mind prepare it for spiritual growth and subtle stimulation.

The spirit of Buddhism was, therefore, not a rare streak of light in the firmament curving over the country; its idea was not a chance ripple on the thought-current flowing down the ages here; nor was the inspiration that struck Siddharta in his palace and drove him out into the wilds of nature to sit in rapt meditation under a lonely tree a sudden bolt from the blue. That spirit was diffused in the Indian sky; that idea was an inseparable element in the thought-flow watering the Indian

soil; that inspiration was in saturation in the atmosphere which Gautama breathed. He imbibed that spirit, caught that idea and inhaled that inspiration which stirred and provoked him.

As the young boy grew into maturity and his eyes opened he looked out and saw misery. The thin sheath of unlasting temporal prosperity, the insensibility coming from luxury and indulgence, the befooling intoxication generated by excited impulses—nothing of those could blind the penetrating vision of the awakened Prince and arrest the searching thoughts of his agitated mind. He saw misery, he saw suffering, he saw unhappiness, he saw unreality; and the spirit of vairagya ever present in the air in which he was born and which was in the blood of his ancestors that flowed in his veins,—these overcame him, and the intensity of the urge to reflect over the why's and the how's and the significance and purpose of things he beheld, which had driven many a sage before him into mountain caves and undisturbed loneliness, and which has been and will be similarly driving many an aroused soul in this land of meditation, made him also walk out of his palace and its gardens and all its attractions, to seek light under the Bodhi tree.

The light came and wisdom dawned; and as he expressed his thoughts and feelings there was but another tide, like so many others in the past, in the current of religious fervour and philosophy that had been sustaining the mass mind of this country. The tide overflowed the banks at places, forming growths and tendencies which gave some distinguishing features to Buddhism. The people were neither bewildered nor disturbed. Ahimsa, universal sympathy and brotherhood, renunciation for higher attainments,—these were no new flashes to them, but the heritage of their land and of their ancestors. The Buddhistic impulse only broke their existing stupor, and they hailed Buddha as another Avatar and flocked to his call. In numbers they went into renunciation, putting on the orange robe and carrying the Buddha's gospel far and wide. Their fervour and devotion attracted pilgrims from beyond, who carried back the message to their home-land.

This manner of the spread of Buddhism through and beyond India was nothing singular. In such a way other waves of religious thought and inspiration had in the past travelled beyond. Saivism, for instance, had reached even the other hemisphere. The singularity, however, which gradually developed within Buddhism was different and was most unfortunate. Uncomprehending the genesis of its birth and growth, the later fanatics cut it out of the main stream of Vedantic philoso-

phy, of which it was but a passing overflow, and in their blind zealotry they even denounced the traditions out of which Buddhism had emanated—it might be in a fresh garb—and persecuted those who held to those traditions. The reaction started and in due course Buddhism became estranged from the land of its birth, from its natural soil and environment. Unfed by the fountain-head its streams dried up, and, as a result, away in foreign places its form and its symbols only could remain; the spirit and the inspiration evaporated.

There was no thought emanation from its dried-up source to sustain and to inspire the real Buddhism in those lands, the soil and the air of which were not naturally congenial to it. Left thus parched in exile on foreign soil it had to derive its life maintenance from its environment. And so it did. It imbibed the spirit of the place, it conformed gradually to the mentality and the outlook of the people there, it followed the ideas and the traditions native to the land. And what a change came over it! Go out and see if you can recognise the Buddhism of China and Japan, for instance, as the philosophy of the great Buddha. Has that Buddhism grown, flowered and produced anything to add to and adorn the original? Rather, has it not been stunted, decayed, developed false notions and imbibed contrary ideas?

Happily, however, a realisation of this is appearing to dawn on some

ardent Buddhists, who are unhappy at the fall and the disfigurement of a great teaching, a great moving feeling, a great inspiration. But the way to revive that doctrine and to infuse life into its skeleton is probably not clear to them. They may think of following European organisation and propaganda methods, but these will not avail, for they depend for success on tickling human weaknesses only, but are incapable of touching and overwhelming the human heart. A moral principle or a theological doctrine has to be otherwise spread, not by speeches, meetings and press publicity, but by sincerity, devotion, faith and practice. To resuscitate Buddhism, raise it to its former spiritual plane; cleanse it of the shallow and destructive rationalism of the West, which has sucked out devotionism, ardent faith and spirituality from it; idealise the lives of its preachers and bikhus; and insist on its teachings being actually applied in life by its followers.

And, what is more—undo the great wrong and damage perpetrated by those in the past, who in their small wisdom and narrow comprehension estranged it from the all-embracing philosophy of the Vedanta, which filled the Indian air, soaked the Indian soil and permeated the Indian mass mind. Doctrines of the past, which had come like rising waves on the ever-flowing current of this philosophy, were never so detached from the stream. Saivaism, Vaisnavism, Sankhyaism

and the rest, how smoothly they were all reconciled to the mother-stream! Buddhism has also likewise to be reconciled in order that it may regain vitality, as a drying branch river does when it is rejoined to and re-fed at its source by the main stream. It was so originally, and Buddha, in fact, was readily accepted as another Avatar come to help and comfort the miserable and to redeem the fallen. An Avatar always appears whenever the need for such help and guidance is crying. Has not such a moment arrived, and is not such a cry rending the atmosphere in this land and in other lands of ancient Buddhism?

Reunite Buddhism to the undying spirit and the ever true and all-embracing, immemorial philosophy of Vedantism, of which it was only a passing phase and an efflux. Spread that message far and wide in China, Japan, Thailand, Indo-China, the Far-Eastern lands, Burma, Ceylon, Tibet and wherever Buddhism had spread and left its mark. Let the people in those countries realise that, whatever the form and the denomination of the doctrine they and their ancestors have been following, in essence and in reality they, with their brethren in India, the Saivas, the Vaisnavas, the Jainas, the Zoroastrians, the Sankhyaites, the Tantriks and others, have all been within the great fold of Vedantism. That realisation has to be awakened in them all so that a deep feeling of religious and cultural kinship may develop among the peoples of all

those countries. Such a feeling will bring them together in the urgent task not only of helping one another in refinding their soul through an awakened consciousness of their great religious and spiritual heritage, but also of spreading light in a benighted world that is apparently more and more sinking into animalism and alluring materialism, and that is becoming deadened in sensibility to the subtle, inner, divine urgings in man.

To fulfil that task, as I have already said, two things are necessary. On the one hand, the great harm and evil done by some zealous sectarians in the past and also at present, who, unable to comprehend the all-embracing significance of Vedantism, have sought to cut off their doctrines from it, have to be mended ; and, on the other hand, the misleading expositions of Oriental thought and culture by Europeans, who because of their prejudices and outlook are incompetent to appreciate and to appraise them, and who seek to justify their conclusions by presenting what are at the best hasty and insufficiently investigated historical data, have to be

cast off. And also the speculative methods of European propaganda have to be discarded.

The torch-bearers of light must have inhaled soul-moving inspiration through a life of strict piety and virtue, of careful self-discipline and unhalting renunciation, of intense devotion and synthetic outlook. It is such sanyasis and bikhus, who have borne the torch before and can bear it again, who can win back people to the message they carry, the message of peace, love, ahimsa, contentment, and universal brotherhood. It is they who can effectively impress them, who can idealise their life and fill it with thoughtfulness, devotion, faith and reverence to things of spiritual value and significance. The great moment for carrying that message has come with urgency—for, see, the world is heading towards ruin, humanity is forgetting its own real self and is looking upon itself as no more than a moving figure of flesh and bone, and the outward glamour of European materialism and of the European mode of living is maddening and debasing the people of education and intelligence.

J. M. GANGULI

ROBERT BROWNING, VEDANTIST

[Mr. C. N. Zutshi pointed out in THE ARYAN PATH for September 1939 the importance for our time of Browning's courageous and constructive lead. Here he shows Browning's affinities with the philosophy of ancient India.—ED.]

“ God's gift was just that man conceive of truth
And yearn to gain it.”—Robert Browning.

Of all the nineteenth-century poets in the English tongue, Robert Browning appears to be the most highly endowed with wisdom, and his poetry saturated with the spirit of Vedanta. In his boyhood days Browning was first under the influence of Byron and then under the inspiration of Shelley. At the age of twenty Browning produced his *Pauline*, which bears the stamp of Shelley's influence and contains a definite germ of Browning's mature outlook on life :—

Sun-treader, I believe in God and Truth
And love ; and as one just escaped from death
Would bind himself in bands of friends to feel
He lives indeed, so, I would lean on Thee !

Browning had drunk deep at the Shelleyan fount ; the influence of Shelley was, however, but a passing phase in the early development of his own genius and was in the nature of stock-taking. The most potent and abiding influence on the development of Browning's genius to maturity was that of his wife. Mrs. Browning's criticism and advice were an unerring light and influenced him to write his best and most vital poems. *The Ring and the Book*, published seven years after her death, was written by Robert Browning with the afterglow of her

influence full upon him. It marks the climax of his art, his search for truth by his elaborate method of sifting the grain from the chaff, his dissection of the universe in its multifarious manifestations in individuals and his apotheosis of individuals as replicas of the universe. Browning saw with clear vision unity in diversity and diversity in unity—a vision which lifts man to the Godhead. The cardinal point of his philosophy of life lies in taking the human soul as the unit of humanity ; life to him was the training of the soul in the school of self-realization, or in perceiving the Spark Divine in man. He says in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* :—

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage
Life's struggle having so far reached its term :
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for eye removed
From the developed brute ; a God though in
the germ.

Now in determining how far Browning's poems breathe the spirit of Vedanta, we must first consider some fundamental spiritual axioms which give us a key to his success in the art of interpreting, on the lines of Vedantic thought, the human life and soul in their manifestation in the universe.

To begin with, Truth is one and spirit transcends all boundaries. Truth is the common property of all who have the right vision; and he who sees it can belong neither to the East nor to the West; he is of God. What is that which impels men to that Supreme Vision, wherein God and Truth appear to them as one? It is self-realization, when the soul of man, tossed on the turbid and tempestuous ocean of dualism, seeing always two lights of good and evil, triumphs over evil and sees the wonder of God's glory in its full effulgence. It was at this moment of self-realization that Browning came to awaken mankind to its true "Self." In his *Fool's Paradise* he says:—

Paul
I am made of intenses life,
Of a most clear idea of consciousness
Of self, distinct from all its qualities,
From all affections, passions, feelings, powers.

The condition essential for the realization of Truth is that there must be a yearning heart searching after truth, an illumined soul which shrinks from all racial and provincial animosities and antipathies—a heart which is always ready to break through human crystallization to realize man's divine nature. In other words, only those who have touched God-being are God-men themselves, and they alone are fitted to refresh, to regenerate and to enlighten mankind. Browning declares in *Cleon*:—

Those divine men of old time
Have reached, thou sayest well, each at one
point

The outside verge that rounds our faculty,
And where they reached, who can do more
than reach.

It was this divine vision that illumined the hearts of the ancient Rishis of India to pour down from the silvan silent heights of the Himalayas the lofty revelations set forth in the Vedas; it was this vision that made it possible for Buddha to conquer Asia by giving to the world the greatest ideal of love, and to be called the Enlightened; it was this divine vision that made it possible for Mohemet to emerge from the dark caves of Arabia, the Messenger of God; and it was this very Divine Vision that made Christ the Saviour of Christendom, and the Scribes pause and listen to his words for enlightenment, lost in the wonder of God's glory. Vedanta invariably proclaims that there can be no boundary line in the realm of thought to attain the highest truth. The aim of the Vedantic philosophy is to bring all into one universal fold, yet to let each follow his own particular form of faith. This is because Truth is one but the methods of expressing it are different. It was this Supreme Vision of the oneness of Truth that made the Indo-Aryan sages realize that there is but one life, one cosmic principle, one conscience, permeating the universe.

With these basic thoughts it is interesting to turn to an examination of Browning's poems in some detail.

The first and foremost teaching of

Fool ! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall ;
Earth changes, but the soul and God stand
sure :

What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be ;
Time's wheel runs back or stops ; Potter and
clay³ endure.

However fleeting the nature of
the universe may be, men should
not be deluded into a feeling of
morbid nothingness about the things
of this world. Again in *Rabbi Ben
Ezra* Browning says :—

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the
whole !"

As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, " All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now,
than flesh helps soul !"

These lines also give us the great-
est proof of Browning's genius, his
response to the higher vision which
lies in balancing between the divine
and the human, or between flesh
and spirit. It is exactly the basis of
the Vedic system of the spiritual
development which is the secret of
spiritual illumination through medi-
tation. This doctrine of balance is
also the main teaching of the *Gita*⁴ ;
and it is that state of equipoise
which enables a man to see things
in their true perspective. It is, in
other words, the Yoga Philosophy⁵

or the science of the control of one's
senses, so essential for spiritual dis-
cipline and perfection. Browning
says in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* :—

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive !
A spark disturbs our clod ;
Nearer we hold of God

Since the soul is immortal and all
material things are perishable, a
question naturally arises—What is
death ? This Browning answers
quite clearly in *At the Mermaid* :—

Must in death our daylight finish ?
My sun sets to rise again.

He says, " New life comes in the
old life's stead," and " My feet are
on the threshold of boundless life."

Death is thus merely a change
from one life to another : such is
the doctrine of rebirth, or of the
transmigration of soul.⁶ It is a
Vedic doctrine which Browning also
holds as true. He makes his belief
in reincarnation quite clear in *Evelyn
Hope* when he says :—

Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few :
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

The following lines in *Sordello*
vividly and in modern manner voice
his belief :—

³ Scientists may call this doctrine of the Potter and the Clay the doctrine of the continuity of energy.

⁴ " Yoga is hard to attain, methinks, by a self that is uncontrolled ; but by the soul controlled it is attainable by properly directed energy. "—*The Bhagawad Gita*.

⁵ One of the six systems of Indian Philosophy ; it deals with meditation, as the Sankhya of the same system deals with evolution.

⁶ " As a man casting off worn-out garments, taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, entereth into others that are new. "—*The Bhagawad Gita*.

We die: which means to say, the whole's
 removed,
 Dismounted wheel by wheel, this complex
 gin,—
 To be set up anew elsewhere, begin
 A task indeed, but with a clearer clime
 Than the murk lodgment of our building-time.

These lines indisputably show that Browning, like all Vedantists, believed in reincarnation. This belief is not, however, peculiar to Browning alone among Western poets.

Lastly, the *Taittiriya-Upanishad* lays down that the Absolute Truth is bliss itself; on attaining it the soul feels joy. Browning answers in *Paracelsus* thus:—

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
 From outward things, whatever you may
 believe,
 There is an inmost centre in us all,
 Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
 Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
 This perfect, clear conception which is truth
 A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
 Binds it, and makes all error; and to know
 Rather consists in opening out a way
 Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
 Than in effecting entry for a light
 Supposed to be without.....
 Therefore set free the soul alike in all,
 Discovering the true laws by which the flesh
 Accloys the Spirit.

These lines in *Paracelsus* while furnishing an answer to the question "What is the purpose of life when it is fettered by rebirth?" also show Browning's belief in the Vedic doctrine of Free-Will, and therefore these lines support the Law of Karma which means that man is the architect of his own fate.

We may now sum up our argu-

ment that Browning was a true Vedantist: he believed in the doctrine of Maya, as also in reincarnation and in Karma; he was also keenly alive to the spiritual discipline which goes by the name of Yoga; he believed in the mutability of all material things and in the immortality of the soul; he held that God is the Absolute Truth—God is Truth and Truth is God. Lastly, he believed that perfect happiness lies in realizing one's own "Self," in seeking out the Illumined One, and that, knowing the Divine Spirit, man can escape from the cycle of rebirths, in other words, can attain Nirvana or everlasting bliss.⁷

What God is, what we are;
 What life is—how God tastes an infinite joy
 In infinite way—one everlasting bliss,
 From whom all emanates, all power
 Proceeds, in whom is life for ever more
 Yet whom, existence in lowest form
 Includes....

All this divine knowledge dawned upon him because he was a genuine seeker after truth, which is the secret of all mysticism and the foundation of all religion, and because, like all other prophets, Browning, walking with Greatheart in the Valley Perilous, saw a rift in the clouds and caught a few gleams of the Light which flooded his heart and soul with Divine Vision. Browning was a genius: his inspired voice is the trumpet-call to the world today.

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing
 That's Spirit.

C. N. ZUTSHI

⁷ "The Absolute, though one, is conceived as many. He abides equally in the soul of all existing things; He is the inner Self of all beings; He is the ruler of all creatures, and all beings become one in Him."—*The Yajur Veda*.

THE EVOLUTION OF INDIAN MYSTICISM

VII.—NORTH INDIAN MYSTICISM IN THE MIDDLE AGES: SUFISM

[**Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri**, District and Sessions Judge (Retired), brings to this series of studies of the evolution of mysticism on the congenial soil of India—the seventh instalment of which we publish here—a wide acquaintance with this country's mystical lore and an understanding sympathy with its varying expressions.—ED.]

The innate mysticism of the Indian people has found expression through the Hindus as well as through the Mahomedans and the Christians and through non-Brahmans as well as Brahmans among the Hindus, through the apparently ignorant as well as the apparently learned, through the young as well as the old, and through women as well as men. Rabindranath Tagore has said well :—

Its spring is within the innermost heart of the people whence it has gushed forth in its spontaneity and broken through the barriers of rules, prescriptive as well as proscriptive. Most of the persons from whose heart this spring has come forth belong to the masses and whatever they have realised and expressed was “not by means of intellect or much learning of sacred lore” (*na medhayā no bahunā srutena*).

That is why the declarations of Indian mystics are so natural and even *naïve* and have a wonderful directness and freshness, spontaneity and multiform loveliness and charm.

Nor must we forget the place of Islam in the evocation and direction of Indian mysticism. There were

many conversions to Islam by force or by greed. But the sweet, subtle and gentle influence of Sufi mysticism was more noteworthy because it went into the warp and the woof of the mind of the people. Further, the great doctrines of the unity and majesty and glory of God and of the brotherhood of man—which are the most vital doctrines of Islam—indelibly impressed Hindu religious thought. Further, the innate strength and sweetness of the Hindu culture, thwarted in its political self-expression, suddenly broke into bloom in the realm of religion. All these three factors must be understood and assessed properly if we are to evaluate mediæval Indian mysticism correctly.

Fanā is the Sufi word for mystical realisation of union with God. It means dying alive or the sublimation of the ego by annihilating it. Poverty, discipline, uttering mantras, rhythmic and controlled breathing, silence, meditation, introspection, etc. are the means by which the animal in man is transformed into the angel by divine grace. He has no sense of possessiveness; his egoism

is no more ; he is perfectly passionless and enjoys perfect equipoise. One of the early Sufi mystics said :—

For him who prays four things are needful : the annihilation of the carnal soul, the passing away of the natural qualities, the purification of the inmost self, and perfect contemplation. By him who is intent on prayer, annihilation can only be obtained by concentration of thought, by which he secures control of the lower soul ; the passing away of the human nature is attained only by the affirmation of the Divine Majesty, for the Divine Majesty is eternal ; purity of the inmost self is obtained only by love, and perfect contemplation only by purity of the inmost self.

The Sufi sought to behold God and yet to remain in the service of Man. His aim was to be with the world but not of it. The Persian mystic Jami said :—

Life is a whisper of dreams, it awakens the young and the old to the reality of service, to the purpose of help of all that is and will be.

Tasawwuf (Sufism) thus combines ecstasy and service. The ecstasy aspect is well brought out in the following poem of Rumi :—

Oh ! hear the flute's sad tale again,
Of separation I complain ;
E'er since it was my fate to be
Thus cut off from the parent tree,
Sweet moan I've made with pensive sigh
While men and women join my cry.

Man's life is like this hollow rod :
One end is in the lips of God,
And from the other sweet notes fall
That to the mind the spirit call,
And join us with the All in All.

The Sufi language of ecstasy refers

to the divine experience in many ways, calling it perfume, sweetness, intoxication, sleep, death, etc. Rumi describes also how man is ascending, from clod to God :—

Low in the earth
I lived in realms of ore and stone ;
And then I smiled in many-tinted flowers ;
Then roving with the wild and wandering
hours,
O'er earth and air and ocean's zone,
In a new birth
I dived and flew,
And crept and ran,
And all the secret of my essence drew
Within a form that brought them all to view—
And lo, a Man !
And then my goal,
Beyond the clouds, beyond the sky,
In realms where none may change or die—
In angel form ; and then away
Beyond the bounds of night and day,
And Life and Death, unseen or seen,
Where all that is hath ever been,
As one and whole.

Sufism searched for the All and found that the whole is whole in every part. Gulshani-Raz says : “ If you cleave the heart of one drop of water, a hundred pure oceans emerge from it. ” Sufism thus brought the sweet note of God's Immanence into the majestic note of God's Transcendence. It is thus clear that perfection and immortality and ecstasy and service are all blended into a harmonious whole in Sufi thought and experience. Gulshani Raz says : “ He is the perfect man who, with his perfection and in spite of his mastery, does the work of a slave. ” The mystic sees the All in the all and finds new life after dying to self. There is a profound spiritual truth in the Sufi

story of the Lover who went to the house of the Beloved, knocked at the door and answered " I " when the question came from within " Who is there ? " The door did not open to him until, when the query was repeated, he replied " Thou. " The Sufi calls the human heart "the palace of the Beloved." He does not care for dogmas or doctrines, creeds or sects. He dives into his own being, realises his higher self and surrenders his lower self to it. Shah Latif says :—

Be thou as a child. Give up individuality. They that are thus absorbed, they neither stand in prayer nor do they bend ; they enter into absolute Being, when they enter into non-being.

In Sufism all duality is melted into Unity in the fires of introspection. Beauty leads to Love and Love to Bliss. The Sufi's search is for Absolute Beauty, Absolute Love and Absolute Bliss. Sufism says that the individual Soul's duty is to be pure and to love God and that union with God is solely due to Divine Grace.

Very possibly the word Sufi is connected with the word Suf (wool) or with the Greek word Sophia (wisdom). Sufism aims at Divine Wisdom by seeking the ultimate truth. The Sufi method combines the Indian methods of Jnana and Bhakti. Both Sufism and Vedantism affirm the existence of one God and say that He is the Soul and friend and Lord of all individual souls. Both are full of toleration. The Sufi respects all scriptures while he pre-

fers the Book of Nature to all of them. The *Gita* says that men in all times and climes seek God in diverse ways and reach Him by diverse means. Saadi says : "Every Soul is born for a certain purpose and the light of that purpose is kindled in his soul." The Sufi says : " I saw Thee in the Sacred Kaba and in the temple of the idol also Thee I saw. " No sectarian would hold such a view. Both Sufism and Vedantism seek the Divine Light and yearn for Divine Union. Both affirm God as having form and as being formless. Both advocate practising meditation, obedience to a Guru (called a *Pir* in Sufism), fasts, penances, *Japa* or recitation of the sacred word (called *Zikr* in Sufism), the use of the rosary, and universal non-injury and love based on detachment and dispassion and self-control. Both affirm the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Both command the sublimation of the false ego into the real self. The only important difference between them is that Sufism, like Islamic thought in general, does not accept the Vedantic doctrine of Divine Incarnation (*Avatāra*).

Indian Sufism is a blend of Persian Sufism and Hindu mysticism. It attracted the Hindu mind in North India to a large extent. The great Akbar gave encouragement to it but his great-grandson Aurangzeb put it down as far as he could because it offended his rigid orthodoxy. The ancestors of Faizi and Abul Fazl, who were Akbar's minis-

ters, came from Arabia and settled in Sind and then migrated to Nagore in Jodhpur. Mubarak was the father of Faizi and Abul Fazl. Faizi translated the *Ramayana* and the *Mahābhārata* and some Vedantic texts into Persian for the benefit of Akbar. Abul Fazl helped his elder brother Faizi in the translation of the Sanskrit epics. It is well known that Akbar's theology was of the most liberal description. The following lines in Tennyson's great poem *Akbar's Dream* give us a perfect description of Akbar's spiritual passion and vision :—

There is light in all,
And light, with more or less of shade, in all
Man-modes of worship.

I can but lift the torch
Of Reason in the dusky cave of Life,
And gaze on this great miracle, the World,
Adoring That who made, and makes, and is,
And is not, what I gaze on—all else, Form,
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.

A silken cord let down from Paradise,
When fine philosophies would fail, to draw
The crowd from wallowing in the mire of earth.

Abdul Rahim Khan Khānān (1553-1629) was a minister of Akbar and was a scholar in Sanskrit and Hindi as well as in Persian and Arabic. He was also a Hindi poet and wrote a poem called *Rahim Sat Sai*. He was a devoted admirer of Tulsi Das's *Ramayana* and loved the poet sincerely. It is said also that he collected and preserved most of Sur Das's devotional songs about Sri Krishna. Shah Jahan's eldest son, Prince Dārā Shukoh had the same liberal outlook as Akbar and was a profound scholar in Hindi and in Sanskrit. In his *Najmual-Bahrain* (The

Junction of Two Seas), he synthesised the Hindu mystical doctrine and the Sufi doctrine. He translated some *Upanishads* into Persian and got his friends to translate other *Upanishads*. These translations were entitled *Sirri-Akbar*. His sister Princess Jahanara and Aurangzeb's son Prince Azam Shah carried forward his tradition and inspiration. The latter edited Bihari's *Sat-Sai* and patronised the Vaishnava poet Dev who was the author of *Ras Vilas* and *Premchandrika*.

It is in Sind, Gujarat, the Punjab and some other places in North India that we meet the most noteworthy examples of the blending of Hindu and Sufi mysticism. There are even today some sects which exhibit such a blend in beliefs as well as in customs. Some of them say that Nishkalanha (Nakalanki), *i.e.*, the Spotless One, who is the tenth of the Avatars of Vishnu, is their Messiah. In the seventeenth century a Mussulman lady named Taj composed devotional songs on Sri Krishna. Saiyad Ibrahim and his disciple Qādir Bakhsh became Vaishnavites and wrote songs on Krishna. Malik Muhammad Jayasi's poem *Padumabati* and Nur Muhammad's poem *Indrābati* are allegorical poems full of a similar spirit. Some persons wrote works on Yoga and the Tantra form of worship and became adepts in it. We have thus many unmistakable examples of the meeting of the two faiths and their doctrines and practices. Yāri Shah taught that the dust of the *guru's*

(teacher's) feet was to be applied as the collyrium to clear our eyes. He calls God Allah as well as Hari and Ram. He says :—

Creation is a writing on the scroll of the infinite *space* with the pen of Grace. He who has not perceived this *rasa* (sweetness) in his heart cannot be made to realise it by ratiocination. Man is but a bubble in the ocean of infinity.

It is said that he taught the Ajapā Mantra to his disciple Kesavadas and others.

In the Province of Sind there was a mixture of many races and religions and hence it was a favourable soil for the religious blends known as Sufism and Sikhism. The Sufi mystics in Sind were Lal Shahbaz, Sachal, Rohal, Dalpat, Shah Inayet, Shah Latif and others. They express the purest essence of Sufism. They were sick of the endless wranglings of Hindu and Muslim theologians. Sachal says : " Love forgives all religion. The Lover never entangles himself in either Islam or Hinduism. " He says further : " So long as these mosques, these so-called holy places, these raised towers, do not crumble into

dust, so long the path of Spirit cannot be clear. "

Bedil says : " The lover is sick of religion. "

Dalpat, the Hindu Sufi, says : " In the Mosque and the Monastery shines the one resplendent light. Oh ! Dalpat, I know not how this disharmony entered into men ! " What they mean is a caveat against the unhappy and unenlightened wrangles of theologies and theologians.

This mystical note has triumphantly persisted in Islam to this date. Sir Muhammad Iqbal says in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* :—

The mystic state brings us into contact with the total passage of reality in which all the diverse *stimuli* merge into one another and form a single unanalysable unity in which the ordinary distinction of subject and object does not exist.

When the smoke and din of modern communal political controversy in India have disappeared, the new synthesis of Indian life and culture will be broad-based on the mystic elements in Hinduism and Islam and Christianity.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

“ A THEOLOGIZING OF THE UNCONSCIOUS ” *

Fashion governs theology as everything else. If you doubt it, dig into any theological work produced during the past four centuries and, if you know your way about, you will track it down almost unerringly to its approximate date, for not only its style and format but its contents—the manner of its approach to fundamental problems—will give it away.

Dr. Shepherd's book could not have been written before 1918. It is through and through a contemporary work, a theologizing of the Unconscious, a signal justification of the claim that the centre of gravity in religion has shifted from the authority of external institutions to human experience—from attempts to solve metaphysical problems by the logic of intellect alone to efforts to find their solution within man's own being. That the Archbishop of York commends this book as likely to carry traffic across the chasm from Time to Eternity is evidence that psychological studies are bearing fruit in prelatical palaces where once the webs of theology were spun industriously with little regard for the inner nature of man.

Dr. Shepherd begins, and ends, with experience. The visible, physical world, he says, is a necessity, the sole means by which we become real selves fitted for eternal life; but our life in this physical world is only a part of our existence, which consists not merely of

our immediate self-consciousness but also of our total past built out of the mental-constructs we have ourselves made in our reactions to the external world. Personality includes the sub-marginal self, the unconscious which he defines as the “whole manifold of the past experiences of the individual, existing as one articulated and organic whole within the content of the personality.” The experiences of the self are its eternal possessions. Thus the past is an inherent *surviving* past, never destroyed, never “over and done with,” and capable after death of endless re-experience as even now it can be re-experienced under hypnosis. A man's apparent (self-conscious) and hidden (unconscious) life provides the causal link between Time and Eternity. Eternity thus conceived is not a fixed, unchanging order but the matrix of the deeper self, including within it every possible variation of the experience though “in complete freedom from Time's inescapable necessities as we know them.”

It follows that, since man's life is self-conditioned by his own experience in the material world, his most urgent need is for integration, the achievement of a unified personality. The Christian's insistence on Divine Judgment has its psychological counterpart, “the unquenchable self-judgment of the enlightened self.” “Sooner or later,” says Dr. Shepherd, “a man must face

* *The Eternity of Time*. By A. P. SHEPHERD, D. D. (Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., London. 8s. 6d.)

up to his past and unify his whole being, and it is of the utmost urgency and importance that he should do this during his temporal existence."

This may well be, but is there no second chance, in the eternal or any other world? Is the nature and destiny of the self determined irrevocably and for ever by the lessons it learns in a single temporal life? That would scarcely be concordant with the beneficent activity of the Eternal Mind.

Yet this is what the author seems to suggest. On the doctrine of a plurality of lives the unconscious is the "substrate" not of one temporal life but of many, a theory which at least equally accords with his fundamental Time-Eternity postulate as the author's own. Nor does he touch on the higher Yoga as a means of mastering the unconscious. But the book is a worthy and illuminating attempt to lay surer foundations for the science of man.

LESLIE BELTON

INNER GRACE AND OUTER SERVICE *

Faced with the terrible tragedy of man ruthlessly slaying his fellow-man, our author turns to Christ to see what message he has to redeem erring man from self-destruction. Naturally he hopes to find it in the few lines of prayer which Jesus taught to his disciples. Prayer Jesus constantly resorted to and at times he came from it so transformed that once his disciples thought that he was a ghost and at another time that his face was on fire. One with such intense experience of vivifying prayer and with intimate knowledge of sinful man may be expected to know precisely what the human soul requires to change itself till it becomes the perfect image of the Divine. Accordingly, our author contends, Jesus compressed into the few terse dynamic sentences of prayer which he taught his disciples a plan or a mode of discipline whereby, step by step, even the lowliest of them might be transformed and attain perfect union with the Deity, such as he himself had known.

Each term, each petition, opens out of the one before. You cannot release each successive charge until you have discharged the one that precedes it.

With remarkable spiritual insight the author interprets each sentence of the Prayer which for most of us has lost all meaning through constant repetition, and he leaves us feeling that here we are after all face-to-face with the innermost secret of Jesus's communion with God translated into a form suited to the needs of the humblest of his followers.

The stages through which the individual must pass before he can attain perfection are, according to our author, clearly indicated in the Prayer. First comes the acknowledgment of God's reality, the recognition of basic truth; then the wish for God's will to rule on earth, and a feeling of our own helplessness to align ourselves with His will. Hence the petition for daily spiritual sustenance. We are bound by our sins, the sins of our predecessors and of those around us. So the need for

* *The Creed of Christ: An Interpretation of the Lord's Prayer.* By GERALD HEARD. Cassell and Co., Ltd., London. 6s.)

mutual forgiveness. We seem to be held down by a power for evil much greater than we can grapple with. So in spite of daily watchfulness and discipline on our part we require the help of a spiritual force greater than we possess to rescue us from temptation and the dead weight of this evil. When thus, through daily effort on our part and aided by power from on high, the life of the Divine flows freely into our lives, then is established full and free fellowship with the Father and with one's neighbours. The feeling of separateness from the Deity and from one's neighbours which is at the bottom of all irreligion and sin gives way to a sense of at-one-ment, and the life of the Eternal possesses the individual completely, consuming all his egoism and self-will and establishing God's kingdom, power and glory.

It is usual for Western interpreters of Jesus to lay emphasis on his life of service, as though that were in essence his religion. The East has, however, always regarded the core of religion as

the breaking of the illusion of separateness of the finite from the Infinite and the consummation of the union of the individual with the Divine. Our author, though of the West, sees that service of fellow-men is only the outer expression of this inner realisation of oneness with God and man. Without this inner grace the outward is a mere crust, lacking power and substance and without true worth. We miss everything when we identify Jesus's religion with mere service. His religion, as revealed in germ in the Lord's Prayer and as expounded with true insight and force by our author, was something much deeper and much more fundamental. It was nothing other than the casting off of finite selfhood in order to be possessed by the Infinite. Not only professed Christians but all who care for the things of the spirit owe a debt of gratitude to the author for this masterly interpretation of Jesus's way of redeeming mankind to a new life of union with the Divine.

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

Honest Religion : By JOHN OMAN.
(Cambridge University Press. 7s. 6d.)

This book is the last work—a posthumous publication—of Professor Oman, the famous author of those outstanding works of Christian theology: *Grace and Personality* and *The Natural and the Supernatural*. It is a fitting conclusion to the whole of his work, both as teacher and thinker, which was characterised by a searching integrity and a deep reverence for God. Oman's theology has been described as the theology of "reverence, freedom and sincerity."

In this book Dr. Oman shows how honest conviction, genuine religious

experience, can be held in complete freedom of thought.

He says in religion, we must be as bold, as free, as honest, as prepared to face all realities as in science or philosophy. Slavery to tradition, fear of inquiry, submission to institutions are not religion, but the want of it, not faith but unbelief.—Religion has ever been the creative force in history and man's central interest must ever be in reaching forward and upward toward a world not yet realised.

Wise words which creed-bound and exclusive Christian Churches need to take to heart. The author himself makes no claim to finality for his position. The title, *Honest Religion*, he says,

sets forth an aspiration after what has no limit or finality, of which the essence is humility towards God and charity towards man, an ideal for all, but not an attainment by any, and certainly not by the author. Rather it speaks of what, had I been patient enough I might have found, wise enough I might have valued, humble enough I might have possessed, kind enough I might have used to higher service.

The book ranges through the whole

Asramas—Past and Present. By P. CHENCHIAH, V. CHAKKARAI and A. N. SUDARISANAM. (Indian Christian Book Club, Kilpauk, Madras. Rs. 2/-)

This is the first publication of the newly started Indian Christian Book Club, formed to stimulate Indian Christian talent for the task of re-thinking Christianity in India, in the light both of India's religious heritage and of the demand for the new World-Order. It is a welcome sign of the coming of age of the Christian Community in India, its getting free from the leading-strings of foreign missionary control.

It is inevitable that Christianity in India, once rid of the incubus of foreign control, should find its links with Indian thought and seek Indian ways of expression. One such expression is the springing up of Christian asramas in different parts of the country. The book under review sets out to present an account, historical, critical and descriptive, of asramas past and present in India. It is a comprehensive study; but the composite authorship is responsible for a certain looseness of structure and for a good deal of repetition.

The authors examine the concepts of Varna and Asrama in Hinduism and come to the conclusion that "it was a national calamity, a sure sign of failing vision, that in the day of degeneracy Hinduism clung to varna and let go asrama." And they advocate strongly "the renunciation of caste and the

gamut of Christian beliefs and seeks to interpret Christian experience so as not to offend the demands of reason and the intellect.

Two memoirs by friends and colleagues of the author add value to this concluding work of a great Christian scholar and theologian.

S. K. GEORGE

restoration of asrama." The essential plea of the book, addressed alike to Christians and to Hindus, is that society should be planned on the basis of asrama dharma, with the vanaprastha asramas serving as laboratories for experiments in spiritual and cultural realms, as in Upanishadic days.

Innocent as this appeal may sound, its acceptance will be fraught with startling consequences to Christian orthodoxy. For it is not only the Catholic in Christianity who upholds the ultimate validity of the idea of the Church. Our authors take the Hindu attitude towards institutionalism in religion when they say "The Church stands for the lowest common measure of Christianity" and hold that the spiritual adept must pass beyond it. This transcendence of the idea of the church and the identification of Christianity with the way of life known as the Kingdom of God will make the message of Jesus more acceptable to the Hindus in general. But, as the authors say, it is too much to expect the traditional church to give up its claims and the prospect is not very encouraging, as even the Christian asramas that have come into being serve more the purpose of propagandist evangelism than of spiritual adventure and leadership.

Short descriptions are given of leading Hindu and Christian asramas existing now, which will be very useful to those who want to study further this very promising movement in modern India.

S. K. GEORGE

Mind and Deity. By JOHN LAIRD, LL. D., F. B. A. (Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London. 10s. 6d.)

This book is the second series of a course of Gifford Lectures delivered by Professor Laird on the general subject of "Metaphysics and Theism." But though complementary to the first series already published under the title "Theism and Cosmology," it is self-sufficient, while Professor Laird has himself supplied, where necessary, links with his earlier arguments. In the earlier lectures on "The Nature of Mind" and the later ones on "Value and Existence" in this series he adopts generally an austere abstract type of metaphysical argument and he does not always avoid, as he desires, such pedantic verbalism as "trans-essentiated" or "omnitude." But he is a clear and reassuringly honest thinker and some of his lectures, notably those which treat of "Omniscience," "Divine Personality," "Providence" and, to a less degree, "Pantheism," are as human in their argument as they are searching in their philosophy. He confesses towards the end of his enquiry that he did not appreciate the force of theism when he began it. He dislikes both pulpit theism and soap-box atheism and while he gives good reasons finally for accepting theism as an ultimate hypothesis, the theism which he himself is led to favour is very different from that which Western theology has often propounded. A good example of his disinterested approach is found in his treatment of the personal or impersonal nature of the Godhead. While admitting that at a

first or even a fourth glance it may seem abundantly clear that, whatever the dangers of humanizing the deity may be, they are enormously smaller than the dangers of dehumanizing the deity and that to attempt to impersonalize all the divinity we can discern is simply to de-value and to discredit divinity, he yet confesses that, in spite of all Western theologians may say, he is not convinced, since the axiological evidence seems to him "to be not less consistent with an impersonal than with a personal type of theism." He is equally critical of those who speak about "the cosmic Christ." "The man Jesus of Nazareth," he writes, "was born of Mary and not pre-mundane; he was not omniscient; he was not omnipotent. Similarly he was not cosmic. If it be said that even in his humanity Jesus of Nazareth gathered into himself the entire essence of God's tenderness and love and so was, very imprecisely, its 'microcosm,' the same could not be said without absurdity of dia-cosmic attributes. Jesus of Nazareth was not the universe."

So it is not surprising that so truly sceptical a thinker in the few references he makes to Eastern thought, notably in his comments on *Karma* and more generally on pantheism, is exceptionally fair and understanding. He suffers neither from an Eastern nor a Western bias, but has done what he set out to do, to present some great issues squarely, marshalling all the evidence he can and basing his conclusions not on what he wants to believe but on what dispassionate reason must accept.

H. I'A. FAUSSET

The Sayings of Muhammad. By ALLAMA SIR ABDULLAH AL-MAMUN ALSUHRAWARDY. Foreword by Mahatma Gandhi. (John Murray, London. 3s. 6d.)

To one used to the Christian terminology the reading of any of the great non-Christian teachers—the Buddha, Lao-Tzu, Confucius, Muhammad—is always notable for the sense of familiarity it brings. “But,” says the innocent Christian reader, “here is this Buddha, this Muhammad, saying exactly what Jesus said, and often in precisely the same words.” Yet it is so with poetry, with music, with the recorded experiences of the mystics: the essential vision is always the same, whether Blake or Keats, Beethoven or Sibelius, St. John of the Cross or the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, makes the actual record of it. And surprise (or even resentment) on finding that Jesus and Muhammad taught the same things is merely the indication of the reader’s own lack of vision. Is not truth one and indivisible? There is, ultimately, only One Thing to record; what confuses us is the varying degree of visionary power in the recorder. Mendelssohn is trying to say the same thing as Beethoven, but because he lacks Beethoven’s power of imaginative vision (or genius) we fail to realize the fact. So the most notable thing about the sayings of Muhammad is not the peculiar familiarity which many of them bring to the Christian intelligence (e. g., Sayings 143 and 280; 132, 157, 164, 172, 192, 350 in the present volume), but rather the extreme commonsensical clarity with which in this case the unchanging truth is stated. Muhammad demonstrates the fact that the man of vision is essentially the man of practical affairs (which is only what

Shelley meant when he said that poets were the unacknowledged legislators of the world); his exposition of religion is that of a rational, possible, and even popular, method of living wisely and well. And there perhaps it does appear to differ from our general understanding of the teaching of Jesus. Jesus seems harder to follow; he appears to make profounder demands for inward change, to ask a wider divergence from the values and methods of “this world.” Yet it remains to be questioned whether this appearance would have arisen had the sayings of Jesus been recorded as faithfully and as promptly as Muhammad’s were. Valid in themselves, the accretions of poets and mystics have done much to make the teaching of Jesus seem a practical impossibility except for the very few. But even if, as is probable, Jesus was Beethoven to Muhammad’s Mendelssohn, that is in fact only further proof of his ability to legislate, to expound a strictly practical way of life. True, there are certain points of deep difference between the Muslim’s belief and the Christian’s: the Christian is certain that God dwells in men and men in God, while the Muslim is equally certain that God and men exist in a perpetual dualism; but these are differences proving the rule of the common foundations of all religions, if only because difference is one of the attributes of unity.

It will be difficult for Christians who read this little book (one might almost say, who dare to read it) not to consider afresh some of the aspects of their own religion: the condition of its Church, its claims to essential superiority over other faiths, certain of its manifestations in past history. At a time when religion, which is the truth about how to live, is lost, and man lost in that loss, the Holy Writ of other faiths is apt to urge one to cease being a Christian and begin to be a follower of Christ.

R. H. WARD

I Am Persuaded. By Julian Duguid. (Jonathan Cape, Ltd., London. 10s. 6d.)

It is to be feared this adventure into religious realms will be anathema to the theologically inclined! Mr. Duguid is the author of some South American studies of an exciting character. He now turns his attention to the profound subjects of the nature of God, human immortality and the power of healing, and he brings to all of them a zest and direct approach that will probably have a wide appeal for those minds that are not usually to be found exploring contemporary religious ideas. His closing sentence in this volume is superb in its assurance: "And the way to God is through the thalamus!" Certainly by the time the reader has got as far as Mr. Duguid's closing paragraph, he will know the author's reactions to many important issues, even if he be not altogether clear in his own mind as to the particular path pursued by Mr. Duguid in his quest.

There are some things in Mr. Duguid's fresh outlook which will receive wide-spread agreement. Writing of the end of the war he suggests: "There are two pressing dangers—that Churchmen should imagine themselves Christians, and that agnostics should judge Christianity by the state of the Church today." That is well said. In his chapter on "The Doubter's Path," he mentions that one of his first important discoveries in South America "was the thinness of the civilized crust." "Hunger and thirst,"

he adds, "were the rulers, and they deposed many admirable scruples." From that point to his later statement of the faith within him, we are spectators of Mr. Duguid's mental and emotional processes. "If this book has meant anything at all," he emphasizes, "if it is more than the arid wind which blows across the Gobi desert, it has established a reasonable certainty that we are thoughts in the mind of God. It has shown that God is a Spirit, manifesting in electromagnetism, and that the cortex is simply an instrument for discovering the truth about our origin." We may feel that he has not quite succeeded in demonstrating anything so marvelous; but, at least, we may appreciate his sincerity and earnestness.

There is a reference to Reincarnation (p. 278), as "the essence of justice and logic." But it is doubtful if Mr. Duguid realizes all the implications of the practice of self-hypnotism, hypnotism and mediumship. Mr. Duguid may find a more fruitful field for further search in a hint dropped by H. P. Blavatsky as long ago as 1888: "The whole issue of the quarrel between the profane and the esoteric sciences depends upon the belief in, and demonstration of, the existence of an astral body within the physical, the former independent of the latter."

There is a misspelling of *akasic* at p. 277, and it is to be regretted that the work was published without an index.

B. P. HOWELL

CORRESPONDENCE

THE LEAVEN OF BUDDHISM

Mr. Ganguli's article in *THE ARYAN PATH* for May has much interested me. But it makes me wonder if he has been in England recently—reading “England” instead of Europe in his indictment. Without the label of Buddhism perhaps, though also with it in some instances, there is a leaven working in certain strata of society in this country, filtering its way with an ideal of Universal Brotherhood through such isms as socialism, pacifism, agnosticism, mysticism, that is distinctly Buddhistic in conception. The responsibility for this is undoubtedly on the teaching given to the West by H. P. Blavatsky under the name of Theosophy, she being a professed Buddhist, as were her Masters, “devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice... the man of men, Gautama Buddha.”

It is true that mere intellectual appreciations of Buddhism do not reach the heart of the Buddha, and may materialise the doctrine to such an extent as to sterilise its fundamental tenets. But I should like to call his attention to a statement in *Letters of the Masters to A. P. Sinnett* (p. 247), “All you can do is to prepare the intellect: the impulse toward ‘soul-culture’ must be furnished by the individual. So, “preparing the intellect” has its place in work for Buddhism.

It is also too true that the real beauty of Buddhism is overlaid and distorted by those who regard it as “a philosophical curio to be comparatively studied with theological trends in other countries.” The miasmatic effects of anthropomorphic Christianity bind down all but those thinkers who can “rise above the vapours.” It is amazing to see how its shackles tie down some so-called Theosophical literature in America and elsewhere, trying

to make out its merely derived ethical and other teachings as a new revelation of Divine Wisdom suitable to the West. Ignorance of the early history of the Christian church and its fetich the Bible, is partly to blame, and the very powerful hold of the Roman Church over the imagination of lazy and bewildered thinkers with their fear of death.

No student of the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, especially *Isis Unveiled*, can be deceived on this question. Compromise with Christianity will bring no recruits to Buddhism. The doctrines of an extra-cosmic “God,” and vicarious atonement are too ingrained in the church's teachings to admit of any but a complete discard, and those who try to effect such a compromise slander both the Buddha and the greatest modern exponent of His teaching, H. P. Blavatsky. Let us be very definite about this. Looking at the state of Europe in this year of “enlightened civilisation” we may well attribute its sadistic materialism to the anthropomorphic conception of Deity; to the separation thus created of our selves from the SELF, a putting of “God” outside ourselves, an entity to be believed in or to be set aside as non-existent.

Perhaps the approach to the true conception set before the world by the Buddha may be on somewhat different lines in the West from those suggested by Mr. Ganguli. It would not be easy here to “sit before a stone image of Him . . . and meditate”, though it is not necessary to take the injunction too literally. But the easier teaching of the Brotherhood of Humanity, if dwelt on, opens up a vista to His Heart without risk of deifying the Master.

Vann Water,
Ockley, Surrey.

A. A. MORTON

ENDS AND SAYINGS

“ _____ ends of verse
And sayings of philosophers.”

HUDIBRAS

Two of the messages received for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Mahabodhi Society, which are being held at Calcutta in December, bear eloquent witness to both the unhappy confusion which prevails today and the growing interest of the West in the spiritual philosophy of the East and especially in the teachings of Gautama, as valid now as the day they were uttered, two and a half millennia ago. Prof. William Ernest Hocking of Harvard University writes :—

When the present period of strife has passed, Buddhism will contribute not a little to the bonds which will reunite the fragments of the spirit of Asia and therewith of the reborn brotherhood of the world.

A joint message from the President and the Secretary of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Messrs. J. L. Magnes and H. Bergmann, refers to hearing “at a time when the nobler forces of the soul and of the spirit everywhere in the world seem to be at the mercy of the more brutal forces, . . . the voice of the great Buddha, mightily ringing forth from your country” and declares that the Celebrations “will make the world realise that even today the path is still prepared and that even today the lore of the sage of the Sakyas (Sakya Muni) like a lighthouse in high seas, sends forth its beams.”

Shri Manu Subedar, M. L. A. (Central), has laid hold of a great truth of vital importance to the world and is proclaiming it fearlessly. It is not a new

truth—is any truth ever new?—but a surprising number of otherwise intelligent people and groups of people have overlooked it. It is nothing more or less than perceiving in the sufferings of present-day Europe the operation of the ancient and unerring Karmic Law.

In articles contributed to *Rozenameh* for October 20th and *The Free Press Journal* for October 21st, he elaborates his thesis that

It is the revenge of Nature and nemesis of Providence that the bulk of Europe is today a victim to every description of coercion and cruelty, which the history of the last three centuries of the conduct of Europe with other continents discloses. . . . The butcheries and the cruelties in the field and in the concentration camps, in aerial warfare and in naval warfare, in the bombing of open towns and in the massacre of the populace, are the reflexes and the echoes of the misdeeds all over the globe in more facile surroundings where the physical resistance was not at the moment equal to the violence imposed.

This cataclysm, he insists, has arisen automatically “from the use of the same codes and the same habits which were formed, recklessly bereft of common humanity—in the conduct of Europe with the populations of five continents.”

If this is a universe of law, and ordinary science reveals it to be such, how is it possible that the decimation, almost the extermination, of the aboriginal populations of North America and of Australia, the brutal heartlessness of the slave traffic in Africa, the

looting and the oppression of Asiatic races, could go on century after century and no reaction set in? The pendulum cannot travel for ever in the same direction, or the tide for ever ebb. Sooner or later the swing-back must come; the tide must rise.

There is deprivation of liberty, there are cruelty and injustice and exploitation in the German-occupied territories, yes, but Shri Subedar demands :—

Is it not Nemesis...? Germany has only adopted the concentrated quintessence of all the tricks of enslavement and raised it to a fine art. It is now calling it a New Order.

German aggression is admittedly "a sinister menace to the welfare of humanity" but German aggression "did not come till the ground had been definitely tested by Japanese aggression in Manchukuo and the Italian aggression in Abyssinia. Now there is aggression everywhere."

Shri Subedar denies that behind the talk of the New Order, whether from the Nazis or from their foes, is "a real awakening of the human conscience and of the idea of common humanity." "The votaries of the New Order from London and Washington," he declares, are not willing to acknowledge, even in words, the fact of Human Brotherhood.

They are not contrite and do not profess that the wrongs done to humanity should be atoned and that aggression must be righted. What they want is the world as it was before Germany started the war. In other words, deprivation and piracy and the fruits thereof in the hands of one set of Europeans are right, but when another set of Europeans acts on the same principle, they become wrong. This is the logic, to which no Indian will agree.

Not only no Indian, but no human being of just and open mind should find it convincing.

Shri Subedar indicates, as the solid path out of the morass in which Europe seems to be sinking, the directing of the thoughts of men and women to the desirability of establishing non-violence between rival and conflicting groups. True, it is not so many years since the great nations, as signatories to the Kellogg Pacts, solemnly renounced "war as an instrument of national policy," but it was a lip renunciation, without relaxation of their grip upon ill-gotten loot. Suffering offers the opportunity to learn. Are the people of Europe ready to recognize that what Europeans have done to the inhabitants of other continents is as bad, as morally indefensible, as what they are doing to one another today, to feel a shame for European nations' past treatment of other peoples as keen as their horror at present-day happenings? If so, there is still hope that depths of misery yet unplumbed may be avoided. Will the awakening come in time?

National Conferences of cultural bodies perform a function comparable to that of a cold current which, coming in contact with warmer, moisture-laden air, brings about the precipitation that, held in suspension in the atmosphere, was valueless to the thirsty fields. Without such an occasion as a Conference, many valuable ideas and ideals existing, as it were, in a nebulous state in the mental atmosphere might never be formulated.

We analysed in these columns in our November issue the admirable Presidential Address of Shri Amaranatha Jha at the Seventeenth All-India Educational Conference held at Srinagar at the end of September. Another valuable contribution on that occasion was

the address of Mr. K. G. Saiyidain, Director of Education, Jammu and Kashmir, who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. He dwelt upon the paramountcy of cultural values—"greater than all the wars ever waged in the history of mankind and their imposing paraphernalia"—and upon the responsibility of the educationist to guard those values with intelligence and responsibility. Indian educationists especially have an important rôle today in helping to restore mutual tolerance and sympathy.

No doubt the entire trend of our history has been towards fusion and a synthesis of varying groups and cultures, but the last few decades have embittered and poisoned mutual relations to such an extent that only a radical, comprehensive and uncompromising crusade against intolerance and stupidity can produce any appreciable results.

He recognizes that educationists alone cannot bring about the necessary psychological revolution but certainly, as he says, those who supervise youth during their most impressionable years can do much to help it on.

Facts, however valuable as tools, are only by-products of the educational process. Its most important, its primary function, in so far as it goes beyond the drawing out and the development of latent capacities, the awakening of dormant powers, is the imparting of a point of view, an attitude to life and to one's fellow-men.

Unless, Mr. Saiyidain declares, a healthy and permanent understanding between cultural and communal groups could be brought about, our educational effort would shatter itself against those forces of suspicion, prejudice and misunderstanding which arrest the free expression of man's real humanity and turn his spirit into stone.

Mr. Saiyidain did well to bring out

also the importance of "training of the hand...in close correlation with the training of the mind." The ancients recognized that "Skill in action is Yoga"; our education factories, which flood the market with such a tragic superfluity of men fit only for "white-collar" jobs, need truly to

be made to realise that while theoretical knowledge and its repository, the book, are no doubt of incalculable value, intelligently directed and purposeful activity is an even more integral part of the play of life.

It is cause for gratification to every friend of Indian unity that the sentiment against communal games is spreading. Not only have Dr. P. Subbaroyan, President of the Cricket Control Board for India and Prince Duleepsinhji come out against them, but also Professor Deodhar, Skipper of the Maharashtra Cricket Team, in an interview special to *The Hindu* which appeared on October 24th, voices his opposition to communal cricket.

Gandhiji expressed his views plainly last year to the Hindu Gymkhana Deputation, and the Hindus withdrew from the Pentangular Cricket Tournament. The Press on 14th October quotes his recent statement: "I retain the same opinion as before. I am utterly opposed to communalism in everything, but much more so in sport."

Professor Deodhar's belief that "the time has come for communal cricket to go" is based not only on political but on sporting considerations. He claims that the requiring of membership in a particular community as a qualification for cricket results too often in one-sided matches, but he declares also:—

In principle, communal cricket cannot be defended. It is unnecessary to have these

communal matches if we want to forget all differences of caste and creed.

Regional cricket, which Professor Deodhar suggests, is the obvious substitute, but either a provincial or a linguistic-area basis has its dangers for unity, in the face of the present strong fissiparous tendency. Anything that would strengthen the existing divisions should be avoided. Better arbitrarily drawn cricket zones, cutting deliberately across the present lines of cleavage. The inter-district tournaments which Professor Deodhar mentions are planned for Maharashtra may represent the germ of an idea worth expanding.

It was Shri Manu Subedar, it will be remembered, who in our January 1940 issue pleaded for the formation of an Anti-Communal League. A correspondent in the April 1940 ARYAN PATH proposed a positive alternative—an "All-India League" which would ignore communal barriers.

A move in the same direction inaugurated by Mr. M. S. Abdul Sathar Sahib of Dindigul seems to hold promise as a model for other towns and cities to follow. At his instance and with the hearty co-operation, *The Hindu* reports, of all the prominent men of Dindigul—Hindus, Muslims and Christians—an Inter-Communal Unity Board has been formed. If the new Board is to be really effective, however, the announced object of preventing communal discord must be broadened to include positive efforts to promote communal amity.

Munshi Iswar Saran brings out in "The Harijan Problem," contributed to *The National Herald* for 14th October, that doing away with untouch-

ability is no academic desideratum but an immediate and pressing need. Untouchability, with all that its maintenance stands for, from smug complacency to rank cruelty, has to go. Naturally, the spread of political consciousness among the masses has fanned and will increasingly fan the smouldering resentment of the suppressed classes—a juster designation than "the depressed classes" with its emphasis on supine acquiescence in degradation rather than on the guilt of those responsible for their condition.

Increasing tension and friction are inevitable as long as justice is denied by the privileged groups. Injustice works like quicksand under the foundations of any society which tolerates it. Breaking the harmony which is the law of life, injustice carries its inevitable reaction for the confounding of its perpetrators. If only because untouchability involves injustice it will ultimately have to go if Indian society is to survive.

Most serious from the psychological point of view is the effect which untouchability has had in undermining the sense of the innate dignity of man *qua* man. To look upon either oneself or another as a natural object of scorn is to deny the basic teaching of all genuine religion—the presence of the Divine in every human being. It is not only the caste Hindus who need to experience the change of heart to which Gandhiji has pointed as the crux of the problem; it is equally the Harijans themselves, who must be encouraged to shake off their centuries-old sense of inferiority and, adopting the highest standards of life and of conduct, to walk upright and self-respecting among their fellows.

Munshi Iswar Saran warns that unless the Harijan problem is solved within a reasonable period it threatens to become as troublesome as the Hindu-Muslim one. Its solution calls for more than Government fiat opening the temples, commendable as those are; and even such devoted labours as those of the Harijan Sevak Sangh require to be sustained by public approbation and strengthened by the attitude and the action of every right-thinking Indian.

Gandhiji, Munshi Iswar Saran recalls, has applied the term "mute constructive work" to labours on behalf of Harijans and to similar self-forgetting efforts which, in Carlyle's words, are "like a vein of water flowing hidden underground, secretly making the ground green." It will demand countless numbers of such mute workers to finally lift the curse of untouchability from our country, but every individual who takes the right attitude towards himself and towards his fellow-men and makes justice and fair play his watch-word can have the satisfaction of knowing that he is pulling his weight in the effort.

Shri S. Satyamurti told a Madras audience on the 23rd of October, *The Hindu* reports, that "they in this country had certain values in life which were very different from those held in other countries." Thanks to their great spiritual heritage, Indians are readier than most peoples in the mass to accept the validity of ideals as guides to conduct.

Shri Satyamurti dwelt particularly on the high esteem in which the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians of this country had always held self-sacrifice.

He ascribed the tremendous influence of Gandhiji to the general recognition that there was nothing that he would not sacrifice for his ideals. But we need to recognize the gulf between that readiness to sacrifice oneself for a great cause and the blind self-immolation which is sometimes dignified by the same name. Self-sacrifice requires to be practised with discrimination. We have a feeling that Indians generally need to be reminded of that as much as of the nobility of self-sacrifice at its best. There is little virtue in sacrificing oneself for the empty glory of the abstract virtue. In fact, blind self-abandonment without regard to its results may prove not only vain but harmful—a crime of folly.

There is no more merit in allowing oneself to be exploited than in acquiescing in injustice to another. We fall into the "deadly heresy of separateness" when we accept without protest for ourselves treatment that we would condemn if accorded to other units of collective humanity. There is no merit, for example, in accepting supinely a differential scale of payment on race or colour lines; higher salaries to white workers for equal services is absolutely indefensible. The differences in India may be less shocking than in the Copper Belt where, *The Hindu* of 30th October mentions, though African workers are doing as skilled work as the Europeans, the average monthly wage of the former is 22s. 6d. with housing and food and of the latter, £ 40 with a house. But it is an affront to individual and to national dignity that there should be any discrepancy at all, and especially in the Government Services. Not self-sacrifice but a firm, courageous stand, non-violent but uncompromising, is needed against flagrant injustice.

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