AUM

> 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*

THE ARYAN PATH

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REGENERATION OF SOCIETY

On the 2nd of this month India will celebrate the 66th birthday of her great and beloved leader—M. K. Gandhi. As coincidence would have it (we prefer the term Karma) we are able to print in this issue two valuable articles dealing with his present work and its influence not on India only but on the world. This gives us the opportunity to offer him our greetings and wishes for many happy returns of the day.

John Middleton Murry's socialistic philosophy somewhat approximates that which was recently propounded by the practical-idealist and reformer of Aryāvarta. We sent Mr. Murry the following article by Gandhiji which appeared in *Harijan* of June 29, 1935. We reprint it in full for the benefit of our readers, especially the occidental ones, who may not be able to see the weekly through which Gandhiji now speaks to his countrymen, that they may be able to appreciate the comments of Mr. Murry. In this connection we may mention that *Harijan* will prove of more than ordinary interest to readers outside of India, not only because it chronicles the great work of social and industrial reformation now going on in this country, but also because thoughtful westerners will find in it many an idea of practical utility which they can adopt in their own work. The second article, by Dr. Kumarappa, treats of the ideology and Soul-religion of Gandhiji which energizes all he does.

The following extracts will help the reader in seeing the inwardness of the contentions of the article of Gandhiji. They are some of the answers given by Dr. J. C. Kumarappa, organizer and secretary, of the All-India Village Industries Association, to a questionnaire submitted by the Editor of *Contemporary India* (Lahore) :—

> Gandhiji's constitutional position is one of Advisor and Guide but he is the heart and soul of the movement which

stands for his ideals of Truth and Love in the economic sphere.

We are up against superstition and tradition in the villagers who are also rendered lethargic by malaria and bad nourishment. Their dire poverty makes them desperate and dries up the fountain of hope. They have not the enterprise to try new methods nor have they the resources to carry out experiments.

DUTY OF BREAD LABOUR

"Brahma created his people with the duty of sacrifice laid upon them and said, 'By this do you flourish. Let it be the fulfiller of all your desires.'... He who eats without performing this sacrifice eats stolen bread"—thus says the Gita. "Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow," says the Bible. Sacrifices may be of many kinds. One of them may well be bread labour. If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, no disease, and no such misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love, for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

This may be an unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it. Even if without fulfilling the whole law of sacrifice, that is, the law of our being, we performed physical labour enough for our daily bread, we should go a long way towards the ideal.

If we did so, our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat. Let anyone who doubts the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread, he will derive the greatest relish from the productions of his labour, improve his health and discover that many things he took were superfluities.

May not men earn their bread by intellectual labour? No. The needs of the body must be supplied by the body. "Render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's," perhaps applies here well.

Mere mental, that is, intellectual labour is for the soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment. In the ideal state, doctors, lawyers and the like will work solely for the benefit of society, not for self. Obedience to the law of bread labour will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society. Man's triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man.

Return to the villages means a definite voluntary recognition of the duty of bread labour and all it connotes. But says the critic, "millions of India's children are to-day living in the villages and yet they are living a life of semi-starvation." This, alas, is but too true. Fortunately we know that theirs is not voluntary obedience. They would perhaps shirk body labour if they could, and even rush to the nearest city if they could be accommodated in it. Compulsory obedience to a master is a state of slavery, willing obedience to one's father is the glory of sonship. Similarly compulsory obedience to the law of bread labour breeds poverty, disease and discontent. It is a state of slavery. Willing obedience to it must bring contentment and health. And it is health which is real wealth, not pieces of silver and gold. The Village Industries Association is an experiment in willing bread labour.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S COMMENT

I am not competent to speak on the practical possibility of M. K. Gandhi's proposal for India; I can write only as one deeply interested in it as a prophylactic against the deep-seated disease of our Western industrial civilization. The difference in the situations of India and England is outwardly great. Western industrialism has, as yet, bitten hardly deeper than the surface of India; and M. K. Gandhi may have good ground for his evident hope to resist its further ravages by summoning the Indian people to an intense moral and spiritual effort to resist it. I imagine that to the great majority of the Indian peoples Gandhi's appeal comes naturally. It is simple and self-evident, in accord with their habits of life and their unspoiled religious instincts. Were I an Indian, I have no doubt I should be found among Gandhi's most ardent supporters and disciples.

But I am not an Indian. I belong to a society which is now completely permeated by industrialism. I am concerned, therefore, not with resisting the advance of machine-production (for that is impossible), but with the effort to establish an order of society which is living enough to bring the machine under humane control. As things are there is no doubt that, in a country like England, the machine controls our humanity, not our humanity the machine. *Not merely does the machine control our humanity; it has so perverted and impoverished it, warped and suffocated it, that we have almost forgotten what it is to be a Man.* Our simple life-instincts are starved; we have lost all native harmony.

I believe that Gandhi utters a profound truth when he says that "Willing obedience to the law of bread-labour must bring contentment and health"; for it is a restoration of the natural rhythm which unites man to the process of the Earth to which he belongs. "A definite *voluntary* recognition of the duty of bread-labour and all it connotes" is, therefore, a spiritual victory of the highest and simplest kind. Nevertheless, I believe it would be mistaken in the actual condition of an industrialised society like the English, to make that appeal directly. The English people are too far removed from the conditions of a pastoral society to be able to make a simple response to such an appeal; and those who made the appeal would immediately be in danger of cutting themselves off from the people at large. By his appeal, I imagine, Gandhi touches the heart and instincts of the Indian people: it would not be so with us.

Nevertheless, in spite of that great difference between the two societies, I feel and have come increasingly to feel, that Gandhi's doctrine and programme is in accord with our English necessities also. We Socialists, who advocate and work for a social revolution in industrialised society, by which the machine shall be subordinated to human needs, not human needs governed by the machine, find ourselves (I believe) driven at the last to a position essentially the same as Gandhi's. Our ideal is a society, in which the machine is so completely subordinated to the *real* necessities of human life, that the vast economy of human efforts which the machine makes possible may be turned to the benefit of every member of the community, to whom (by every right, natural and divine) it manifestly belongs. But what is that liberated human being to *do*? His humanity has been so mutilated by two centuries of machine "civilization" that he would be incapable of using his freedom. He would blink bewildered in the sunshine like a prisoner released from years of captivity in a dark dungeon. But that problem, though it is real, I am inclined to put aside on the principle: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." We are so terribly far from liberating our Western man from his slavery to the machine that we need not worry our heads yet over what he will do with his freedom when he gets it.

But the problem becomes more urgent when we recognise that in one grinding and debased form many Western men already have attained freedom from the machine. Our huge and constant armies of the permanently unemployed are slaves who have been grudgingly liberated from the machine. And straightway it becomes obvious that work—natural and creative work—is a necessity of human life. Without it, our unemployed collapse as human beings. Their spiritual and physical energies depart from them. They become incapable of taking part in the political struggle for a new order of society. They themselves recognise that they were better and stronger men while they were still the active slaves of the machine.

And in yet another form the problem becomes manifest and urgent again. The man who is engaged in Socialist politics comes at the last to recognise that an intense moral and imaginative effort is necessary if the politics of Socialism are to be prevented from degenerating into a mere taking of the line of least resistance, which, though nominally aiming at the regeneration of society, is in fact directed towards a controlled degeneration of society. For what is called Socialist policy to-day tends towards one of two things: either increasing the number of, and the payment to, the unemployed; or employing them at the machine again on works "of national importance." It is inspired by no recognition of the fact that both are evils. Work at the machine is itself an evil; and secure subsistence, just above the poverty line, without creative work is also an evil.

In its final form our problem is this: From whence is the moral and spiritual energy to be derived which will preserve Socialism, in a political democracy, from taking this line of least resistance which leads to human degeneration?

From what source can Socialism be continually inspired with faith in its real mission—to create a new society of regenerated men and women ?

I am driven to the conclusion that this source of inspiration and strength will only be found in communities of men and women who have achieved the equivalent of what Gandhi urges—" the voluntary recognition of the duty of bread-labour and all that it connotes." Our circumstances are different, and we must adapt ourselves to them. Our communities will have to be in the nature of physical and spiritual " retreats " to which the members retire to live, as far as may be, on the product of their own labour for a short period in the year. From those of the unemployed who understand the vital necessity of re-establishing the natural law and rhythm of life we may expect the permanent element in such communities: the rest of us, who are enmeshed in the obligations of capitalist society, and can escape them only for brief periods, must perforce be content with the regular " retreat "—to adopt a term from the monastic tradition. But from this " retreat," I believe, they would derive a renewal of strength, both physical and spiritual, from simple creative work, from frugal living, and above all from the immediate experience of comradeship in simple creative work undertaken in common, which alone will enable them to withstand the innumerable subtle forces which constantly tend to degrade the ideal of socialism.

The likeness between this conception and Gandhi's is manifest; so, I suppose, are the similarities between this proposal and Gandhi's *ashram*, which alas, I know only by name. But the point on which I would insist is that this conclusion of mine has been reached, so far as I am consciously aware, in complete independence of Gandhi's teachings. It is, in my case, the residual outcome of four or five years gruelling experience of political Socialism in England, and of a prolonged process of groping, through trial and error, to some practical conviction. It is my answer—not my personal answer, but the answer which has been impersonally forced upon me—to the unrelenting question: What are we English Socialists to do ?

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

EDUCATING THE MASSES OF INDIA

GANDHIJI'S INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL PROGRAMME

[**Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa** wrote this article at Wardha, the present headquarters of Gandhiji, where he has been working for the Village Industries Movement.—EDS.]

"What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self-realisation, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end."—*My Experiments with Truth*, pp. 4–5.

These words offer a key to the mysterious heart-working of the great man about whom the world never seems to tire of talking. They also explain the so-called inconsistencies of Gandhiji which have baffled both his friends and foes alike.

Even to-day most people look upon Gandhiji as a political leader. His other activities such as popularising hand-spinning, fighting untouchability, creating Hindu-Muslim unity, are regarded as having only political ends. He is however an idealist, relentlessly pursuing his ideals wherever they lead him and a yogi seeking by the practice of truth and non-violence to realise the Spirit.

If such were his aim why did he not become a monk instead of dabbling in politics? This question is commonly asked by Occidentals who somehow believe that religion and politics are incompatible. To the Oriental, steeped in his philosophy, a religion that does not express itself in action is impotent. Faith without works is dead. Moreover, life should not be split up into compartments. A religion which keeps its mouth shut except in the home or in the church is bound to beget insincerity and hypocrisy. Gandhiji's religion floods his whole life and its soul being non-violence it resists injustice and oppression anywhere.

His entry into Indian politics came soon after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Also there was the unredeemed pledge of the Government to the Muslims in the matter of Khilafat. Soon he found himself in the dock before an English Judge; he explained his disaffection on these points but added :—

> I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically...Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever, that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for

this crime against humanity, which is perhaps unequalled in history.

His entry into politics was therefore brought about by his religious devotion to truth and non-violence. This brings him into conflict with any power, foreign or indigenous, which practises untruth and oppression.

Turn in the opposite direction: More than once when the whole country had been worked up to enthusiasm for Civil Disobedience Gandhiji suddenly ordered withdrawal. It was the psychological moment to go on with the movement, and politicians were astounded that instead of taking advantage of it he put an abrupt end to Civil Disobedience. On these occasions the movement was suspended because he found that people in their frenzy were breaking into violence. To him non-violence was of greater importance than political gain; he would not sacrifice his ideal for any political advantage.

Two years ago Gandhiji made Untouchability a live issue. To many of his followers this was a blunder: why distract the attention of the people by raising a domestic issue when it was necessary to focus all available energy on fighting an alien government? Gandhiji diverted the people from Civil Disobedience to Untouchability, because he was a devotee of non-violence. He felt that Untouchability was as grievous a form of violence as foreign oppression. The offence might be British or Indian, political or social, he had to wage war against it.

I should be content to be torn to pieces, rather than disown the suppressed classes. Hindus will certainly never deserve freedom, nor get it, if they allow their noble religion to be disgraced by the retention of the taint of Untouchability.

So also in regard to spinning—to many an enigma and a mystery. Why should a leader of Gandhiji's eminence spend time on spinning and even insist that his political followers do the same? A spinning franchise—only those who were pledged to spin could join the Congress. Was ever such a thing heard of in the history of any political party? He saw the masses were on the verge of death through starvation because they had no industry subsidiary to agriculture. To alleviate their poverty and suffering, he championed hand-spinning which in olden days had kept the villager above want. He thus identified himself with the poorest in the land, for he who practises love must take upon himself the poverty of the masses.

Towards the end of 1934 Gandhiji decided to retire from the Indian Congress. He was looked upon as the Deliverer destined to fulfil his peoples' aspirations. Universal was their disappointment. The country was stirred. Why did he take such an unusual step? If a soldier who deserts is court-martialed, what shall we say of a general who in the thick of the battle withdraws from his high office? Such was the accusation levelled against him. He saw that some of the items on his programme which he held dear were not so held by most Congressmen. He felt that it would lead to tyranny on his part and hypocrisy on theirs if he continued as leader and they paid lip-homage to his ideals but would not whole-heartedly labour for them. He who worships truth cannot lead others into hypocrisy, and he wrote :—

> *Satya,* i. e., Truth is my God. I can only search Him through Non-violence and in no other way .... I cannot suspend this search for anything in this world or another. I have entered political life in pursuit of this search. And if I cannot carry the reason as well as the heart of educated Congressmen—it is plain that I should work single-handed in the implicit faith that what I fail to make clear to my countrymen to-day shall be clear to them some day.... It has appeared to me that there is a growing and vital difference of outlook between many Congressmen and myself. I seem to be going in a direction just the opposite of what many of the most intellectual Congressmen would gladly and enthusiastically take if they were not hampered by their unexampled loyalty to me .... I put the spinning wheel and khadi in the forefront. Hand-spinning by Congress intelligentsia has all but disappeared. The general body of them have no faith in it.... and Congressmen have not been wanting who have reminded me that I am responsible for the hypocrisy and evasion about the working of this Clause.

It was his devotion to Truth and Love that drove him into politics and—out of it. The whole nation seemed to think that in politics lay our salvation, that through self-government we could rise like Japan and become a great people. Gandhiji, however, took a different view: real salvation is not to be found through the external form of government by which we are ruled, but through Soul-ideals which govern our lives. He asked for a change of heart, for a moral transformation :—

> Swaraj does not consist in the change of Government; that would be merely the form. The substance that I am hankering after is a real change of heart on the part of the people ..... The symbol—the transformation of power—is sure to follow, even as the seed truly laid must develop into a tree.

This message is applicable not only to us in India who look upon self-government as the panacea for all our ills, but also to the rest of the world. The League of Nations, the British Democracy, the Soviet Republic, the Fascist Regime have all failed to solve the problems that confront the world. Governments and institutions are man-made, and they are, as Plato realised, the individual writ large. They cannot rise beyond the level of the individual.

This truth is being graphically illustrated in the failure of the League of Nations to either prevent wars or the manufacture of weapons necessary for wars; because its members are militaristic and have not changed their hearts. Can we blame Gandhiji then if he puts little faith in mere political reform, and considers moral transformation as fundamental? That is why he retired from politics.

Retiring from the Congress, however, does not mean retiring from duty. True to his principles, Gandhiji is now directing his energy along two lines of activity —Anti-Untouchability and Village-Reconstruction.

He has sought to secure, through propaganda and through legislation, entry for "untouchables" into temples. He toured the country last year raising funds and establishing centres. He secured tanks and wells, schools and hostels for the "untouchables." He is carrying on incessant propaganda through his weekly, *Harijan*, at the same time giving valuable direction to workers all over the land.

Then for Village-Reconstruction he founded the All India Village Industries Association; its object is "village re-organisation and reconstruction, including the revival, encouragement and improvement of villagers of India." Gandhiji's aim is not solely economic as the name of the Association might suggest; it is also for the moral and physical development of the villager. He is instructing village workers to pay special attention to sanitation, drains, scavenging, street-cleaning, public wells and tanks.

He takes very great interest in research into the nutritive values of grains and vegetables, so as to develop a diet which, while still within the means of the villager, will increase his bodily strength and vitality. Since medical opinion is in favour of wholly unpolished rice and whole-wheat, hand pounded flour, *ghani**, pressed oil, and *guor*† in place of refined cane-sugar, these items form the basis of his food-reform. He is also advocating the cultivation and use of Soya beans, which are said to be rich in vitamin-content, and which are abundantly used in Japan. Realising that food is the first consideration of a starving man, Gandhiji has directed that the primary thing to be done is to educate the villager to eat food that is really sustaining and which can be procured by his scanty means.

Then there is the study of village industries, both those that are perishing as well as flourishing. Industries best suited to local conditions are to be introduced, revived or improved; markets for surplus products are being discovered or created.

The results of research and effort in every department are passed on to the villagers and thus they are being educated. Is this not perhaps the right solution of India's pressing problem—education of the adult masses?

At present Gandhiji does not trouble himself about large-scale production, which in his opinion should be under State control and run entirely in the interests of the people. He confines himself to commodity production by individual effort, with or without machinery. He has no objection to machines as an aid to the worker; but he has no use for machines which fill the pockets of the rich and convert the worker into a slave. He realises that when there is no large-scale commodity production, there can be no question of competition. His plan is to make the villager produce what he immediately needs—grain, oil, guor, vegetables and cloth. The village producer is also the consumer; he sells only the surplus. Once he produces for others, he is dependent on market fluctuations and would be exploited by middle-men, and become a hewer of wood and drawer of water for the foreign exporter.

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* Wooden crusher worked by bullocks.

† Uncrystallized, unrefined sugar from which molasses have not been removed.

The peasant depends solely on agriculture for his livelihood, and thus he is unoccupied for a considerable time during the year. Gandhiji, therefore, advocates that the villager should engage in subsidiary industries which should be related to the needs of the village and not of cities. The villager may produce goods for which he himself has no use if the materials necessary are locally available and if it gives employment to several, and provided there is a ready demand. There is no use in villagers producing fountain-pens or watches; the machinery and raw material are not locally available, the demand for them is from townspeople; the West has perfected these industries and the villagers cannot compete. This is not so, for example, in regard to the manufacture of palmyra *gur*, the material for which is found everywhere, the demand for which is great, and which can therefore give occupation to several families in most villages.

Gandhiji insists that the worker shall be assured of a minimum subsistence wage. To illustrate, the spinner must get say one anna per hour as wage instead of the quarter anna which he may be now receiving. But this will double or treble the price of khaddar, and there will be fewer buyers. Gandhiji is not deterred. He would rather that the trade in khaddar perished than that the villager be paid an inhuman wage. To-day, in a world intoxicated with a passion for gain, with ruthless exploitation and cut-throat competition, Gandhiji, adopting the view-point of the villager, asks an amazingly original and arresting question: "Why trade, when my neighbour and I can produce all we want for ourselves and can be self-sufficient?" Like a sulky villager who realises his own importance, Gandhiji says to the trader who wishes him to produce goods for commercial purposes: "I am quite happy and content to produce what I need. If you want me to produce for you, pay me what is fair and equitable. Else I shall not work for you. I will certainly not allow myself to be exploited by you."

The scheme has not only the virtue of freeing the villager from exploitation, it also ensures a close and harmonious relationship in the future development of agriculture and industry in India. In the West, industrialism is not related to agriculture, with the result that the West (as also industrialised Japan) is seeking by fair means or foul, to keep the races over which it has control bound to agriculture, so that they may provide it with necessary material. This is violence and oppression on a very wide scale. In India, industries which once flourished in the villages have died out, people have been thrown entirely on agriculture for their resources and the villager is consequently reduced to abject poverty. To overcome these evils, Gandhiji plans to confine industry to the village, so that like the two lungs of a nation (a metaphor borrowed from him) agriculture and industry will function together in close juxtaposition and grow and develop in unison.

In all this planned economy the villager occupies the central place. Round him revolves Gandhiji's whole plan for the future economic development of India. India is a land of villages, and economic planning without the village as the centre cannot fully succeed. Gandhiji is village-mad; if India follows his guidance, whatever else happens, the country will certainly develop along lines very different from those of the West. More, India will make a unique contribution to the problems now confronting the nations of the world. Large cities in the West are the centres of civilization—producing evils—over-crowding, ill-health, slums, immorality, extremes of poverty and wealth, strife between capital and labour, unemployment, cut-throat competition between nations leading to a race in armaments, and periodical devastation and bloodshed. Overcome by these, the West knows not which way to take. *It would be folly for India to follow the West and find herself in the same ghastly predicament.* Gandhiji wishes to revert to the ancient plan. The hoary civilization of India was essentially rural, free from competition and strife, founded on the principle of Varnashrama Dharma or trades handed down from father to son. Work was not for profit; the skill of a doctor, the art of a sculptor, musician or engraver, the wisdom of a philosopher were offered free and could not be bought; the village was self-sufficient providing all the necessities of life, where none was denied the opportunity of employment and all obtained a subsistence. It is along such lines, where profit is not the prime consideration but where man and the things of the Spirit obtain their rightful place, that Gandhiji wishes to mould the future of India. He does not covet for the villager a multitude of goods but rather scope for initiative, for the unhampered development of his personality, and for self-expression in work—which is impossible in large-scale centralised production be it under Capitalism or under Communism. These can be secured only in decentralised production such as Gandhiji advocates for the Indian villages.

His adherence to Truth and Love has led Gandhiji to shun city-politics and to go to village-action; his work is vital and is already producing results whose ultimate far-reaching effects it is not possible now to forecast.

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

THE DARK AGE OF SCIENCE

[What would a future historian say of our mechanistic civilization? **George Godwin** epitomizes it here. But our author assumes that the western hemisphere is the whole globe. Would not the historian chronicle the strange awakening of the hordes of Asia? And what about the fight which a half-naked little Hindu is putting up against the workings of "the dark age of science?"

In every age the still small voice of truth is drowned in the clamour of falsehood and half-truths. This happened in the nineteenth century and should not the twentieth feel its effects? Again, can there be "abundant living" and "full functioning" for the individual without altruism and sacrifice for all? And can any one nation thrive at the cost of another or one continent advance by exploiting another?—EDS.]

In a world where millions are unemployed, the problem of the right use of leisure may well seem remote. The mechanization of industry has brought about precisely those results long since predicted of it: it has invested man with the productive power of giants. We have a vast leisured class as a result; only, as Bernard Shaw has observed, we call them the unemployed.

What is the explanation of this paradox of enforced idleness without the means of life in a world of plenty? It is to be found in the circumstance that man has mastered the machines before he has mastered the elements of social and economic justice.

Yet the remedy is, paradoxically enough, more of the disease itself. When the world is completely mechanized it will be possible for man to produce all he needs of basic necessities and luxuries in a working day of four or less hours. When the worker's right to share in the product of his labour is recognized, then the problem of leisure will manifest itself and will be seen as one of education for the right use of leisure.

Is leisure so important, then? Yes, it is, for its right use is a large part of the technique of living, and that is something man does not come by instinctively, but must acquire by process of education.

There are three prerequisites for full and abundant living, they are full function on the physical, mental and emotional levels. In the world as it is to-day, full function is the rare exception: for the vast majority of mankind life is an experiment conducted by means of trial and error. We spend our days in painfully acquiring the art of living and, having acquired some measure of it, find our little lease of days expired.

Essential toil performed, man inherits the freedom of an earth-home of infinite delights, yet seldom does he enter in upon this inheritance. That there may be joy in living he is innately aware, but how to secure joy he knows not.

The problem is one of education, of self-understanding, of full function. It is something to have recognized the nature of our problem, to have made a diagnosis of the disease of the modern world, the disease of frustration, unfulfilment. How will the people of the future see this present age? They will look back over the centuries and see it as the Dark Age of Science, as the age of chaos. And the historian of to-morrow, etching a picture of our times, may write something like this:—

" In the twentieth century, the Dark Age of Science, mankind was already possessed of the solution of nearly every material problem of survival. Even then he was armed with machines powerful enough to make him master of a large portion of his time. Greed and social injustice, however, denied to the producers the product of their labour: the powerful few, under cover of barbaric laws, deprived the many of the fruits of their labour.

" As for the nations of the world, they still denied the patent fact that their sum made up a single indivisible organic world: fear and hate cast reason down.

" In such a system, the fulfilment of the individual was not possible. Men and women passed through life, as we know it, unaware of the great and joyous experience. They were mere specialized units degraded to the status of a machine's parts, atrophied, stunted, stultified.

" From such toil all turned again to the machines to fill for them their hours of leisure. Where once men knew the joy of performance and creation, they now resigned themselves to the passive role of machine-fed receptacles. Like empty jars they paid their tolls and received in return a measure of mechanical diversion. The idea of leisure as opportunity for function seems never to have been advocated by the thinkers of that age, or to have come into the numbed minds of the multitude.

" No more did men follow the ancient crafts and through them acquire both skill and a sense of the beautiful. The playing of musical instruments became superfluous when by the mere turning of a switch the melodies of the world's great capitals flowed into every home.

" The art of acting, once practised in every village community, died temporarily, and passed to the numerically insignificant caste of those whose shadows alone were known to their audiences of many millions.

" All forms of leisure were, in a word, divorced from the practice of manual or artistic skill and became completely passive.

" Even so primeval a function as walking in the sunshine passed, for, here again, the machines replaced the man. Why walk at four miles an hour when one may travel by machine at sixty? They asked.

" The Dark Age of Science was a period when the technical genius of the few manufactured the soul-destroying drug of the many."

Thus may the historian of the future write of us. Yet there are few individuals who cannot, if they will but make the effort, recapture something of the joy of life that was man's when his working day was spent in action.

Education for leisure means "bringing forth," it means the self-discovery of latent talents and their practice. It means function and the elimination of the purely passive approach.

There is no joy comparable with creation, for in the act of creation, however humble the thing created, man comes most near to the divine. Indeed, this power, innate in him, is the gift which distinguishes him from the lower animals.

For a while, at least, the machines menace man, the functioning animal, but, one may be sure, only for a while. That so costly a folly can continue unrecognized forever—that is something beyond belief.

GEORGE GODWIN

Wealth and piety will decrease until the world will be wholly depraved. Property alone will confer rank; wealth will be the only source of devotion; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; and women will be objects merely of sensual gratification. External types will be the only distinction of the several orders of life; a man if rich will be reputed pure; dishonesty will be the universal means of subsistence, weakness the cause of dependence, menace and presumption will be substituted for learning; liberality will be devotion; mutual assent, marriage; fine clothes, dignity. He who is the strongest will reign; the people, unable to bear the heavy burthen (the load of taxes) will take refuge among the valleys. Thus, in the Kali age will decay constantly proceed, until the human race approaches its annihilation (*pralaya*).

—*Prophecy about our present Dark Age* (*Kaliyuga*) *made in* VISHNU PURANA.

RELIGIOUS POLICY IN INDIA

I.—EAST INDIA COMPANY AND THE MISSIONARIES

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From ancient times in India, there has always been a close intermingling of religious with social life—an application of religious principles to personal affairs. We see the result even to-day in a peculiar persistence of customs and practices some of which can be traced as far back as the third millennium before Christ. Thus our antiquity is a living presence with us.

In modern India a number of religions like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity live peacefully, cultivating among themselves a mutual understanding and sympathy. This was equally true of ancient India where a multitude of philosophies and religions flourished and unity prevailed. This is indicative of India's special genius for tolerance and appreciation of differing points of view. Realising that the essence of Hindu culture was religious and philosophical and touched the life of the people very intimately, the kings in ancient India made it a rule never to interfere with the social and spiritual practices of the people. Thus it became possible for people of different religious persuasions to live in peace and harmony. A striking example of this was the rule of the great Mauryan Emperor Asoka under whom flourished followers of the Brahmans, the Buddha and the Jina as well as various other sects like the Ajivikas and Nirgranthas.

India has seen countless invasions of alien culture; that Hindu religion has survived these onslaughts is due to an innate vitality and a capacity for assimilating all that is best in other creeds.

On this point the estimate of James Forbes who lived in India for over a decade in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, will be read with great interest :—

> Megasthenes, who was sent ambassador by Seleucus to Sadracottos, king of Practi, whose dominion now forms the fertile provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Oude, wrote an account of his embassy, which Arrian has preserved in his *History of India*; and that narrative, written two thousand years ago, when compared with the modern history of the Hindoos, convinces us how little change they had undergone during that long period; nor have the conquests and cruelties of their Mahomedan invaders, nor their commercial intercourse with the Europeans settled among them, been able to alter the long established manners and customs so deeply interwoven in their religious tenets.

With this as a background let us examine the religious policy adopted by the East India Company, and subsequently by the British Government.

We must begin this by recording the immense debt the Hindus and the world owe to Warren Hastings who was instrumental in introducing the *Bhagavad-Gita* to the western hemisphere. It was Warren Hastings who encouraged and supported Charles Wilkins the first European who translated the Great Song in any western language. In a memorable letter dated 4th October 1784 Warren Hastings wrote to Nathaniel Smith, Chairman of the Board of Directors in England the following, which reveals in a remarkable way the attitude of the Company's administrators :—

> It is not very long since the inhabitants of India were considered by many, as creatures scarce elevated above the degree of savage life ; nor, I fear, is that prejudice yet wholly eradicated, though surely abated. Every instance which brings their real character home to observation will impress us with a more generous sense of feeling for their natural rights, and teach us to estimate them by the measure of our own. But such instances can only be obtained in their writings : and these will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.

How far did the Government promote the cause of social reform and intellectual progress of India ? The policy adopted by it is one of strict non-interference in the religious and social matters of their subjects. This is only a continuation of the policy launched by the Company's Government in early days. In 1793 the Bengal Government passed a resolution, according to which Hindu and Muslim laws were to be applied in all civil cases, and their respective religious and social institutions were to be respected in their integrity. It is said that when Warren Hastings invited Mahāmahopādhyāya Pandit Tarka Pañchānan to make a digest of Hindu Law, he received almost royal honours; and his traditional rendering of Hindu Law became the basis of Halhed's *Gentoo Code.* We can also call attention to the patronage and support accorded by the Company's Government in the shape of "turning out troops and firing salutes on Hindu festivals," and levying the pilgrim taxes and duties for maintaining temples, mosques and tombs. This policy was continued for a long time in spite of the representations of the Christian missionaries. There is every indication that this policy of the Company's Government towards the religious endowments and institutions of their native subjects was unavoidable. In order to infuse a friendly feeling into the minds of their subjects, the Company promised to recognise their long cherished religious and social rights and privileges. It was because of this attitude that in 1801, when he took over the direct administration from the Nawab, Wellesley promised the people of the Carnatic full enjoyment of all civil rights and unfettered liberty to follow all their ancient usages.

Having thus guaranteed security and patronage to the native faiths, as it were, it was but consequential that besides firing salutes civil and military officers represent the Company at the great Hindu and Muhammadan festivals. Arrangements were made to make the pilgrims feel quite comfortable. It is said that even persons professing other faiths were compelled to drag the cars during great festivals like the Ratha Jatrā at Jagannath Puri. Arthur Mayhew who has studied this aspect with care narrates that it is on record that an Indian Christian who refused to join the car festival was punished by a British magistrate.* We are further told that a military salute was fired at the commencement of the Ramzan. What is more interesting is that "Government records were dedicated to Ganesh and government letters were prepared with the Hindu invocation 'Sri'." The budget estimates of this period show pilgrims' tax on the receipts side and donations to temples and mosques on the expenditure side. Again in addition to the endowments which were directly under the Company's management, the Government annually allotted sufficient sums for the support of mosques and temples. Thus the Company's Government continued its patronge of Hindu and Islamic cults. It is said that Collector Place of Chingleput in 1796 induced the Government of Madras to take over the management of Conjeevaram Varadarajaswami temple for the proper conduct of religious ceremonies and festivals, and himself presented valuable jewels to that shrine. According to an official report in 1833, as many as 7600 Hindu shrines were under management of the Government. Records show that in 1837 the Order of British India was bestowed on Kilpauk Chittaldroog for his splendid organization of the procession of Jagannath. There is also evidence that the Madras town temple and the Triplicane temple were managed by the Company's chief Dubashas under the general supervision of the Governor and Council. A moiety of the tolls, levied on goods coming into the city was given towards the support of these shrines.

This "tender dry-nursing" of Hindu and Muhammadan religious institutions evoked resentment among Christian officials and non-officials who submitted a memorial, signed by two hundred persons, to the Madras Government through Bishop Corrie. It was a mild protest against Government patronage of religious institutions other than Christian. Lord Auckland was then Governor-General. As a result of this memorial the Bishop was censured and the Commander-in-Chief of Madras, Peregrine Maitland who refused the usual honours to national festivals was forced to resign. Thus, from the Hindu point of view the Company Government was of a benevolent type, under which they enjoyed perfect religious freedom, and received adequate patronage from Sarkar funds.

Though the immediate effects of the memorial were not encouraging from the Christian standpoint, it evoked much keen criticism. The question was hotly discussed in Parliament and the pressure of Parliament was definitely brought to bear on the Government of India for the first time. This led to the abolition of the pilgrims' tax in 1840. It took a few more years before the British Indian Government relinquished its guarantee of protection and patronage in respect of all religious institutions and their funds. This gradual withdrawal of all responsibility on the part of the Government which had so recently shouldered it with enthusiasm was viewed with suspicion by the natives of India, and contributed to the increasing unpopularity of the Government. It was one of the causes of the outbreak of 1857. Confidence was soon restored, however, by the epoch-making Proclamation of Her Imperial Majesty Queen Victoria the following year.

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* See his *Christianity and Government of India*, pp. 146 ff.

A word may be said of the administrative system as it operated from 1818 to 1858. From the start caste and caste-distinctions were recognised by the Government. The Charter of 1833 reaffirmed Bentinck's principle, *viz.*, "no disabilities in respect of any place, office or employment should be recognised by reason of religion, place of birth, descent or colour." In the period of the Company's Government as some of the Council Consultations will show, whenever disputes between different castes arose in the City of Madras, it was the usual practice for the Governor and Council to effect an amicable settlement between the caste leaders and not to force their own ideas upon them. One marked feature of the administrative policy was a developed educational plan. A purely secular system of education coupled with the influence and activity of Christian missionaries was a challenge to Hinduism, and as Prof. H. H. Dodwell believes, "the Hindu world was bound to react, sharply and convulsively to these external impulses." (*The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 727)

V. R. R. DIKSHITAR

MY LADY POVERTY

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I never consciously have wooed my Lady Poverty, but even without initiation to her inmost circle she has conferred upon me precious gifts. For such favours she must be approached closely; then what various reactions from human nature she reveals!

To the poor is given a secret mirror in which they see reflected many sides of human character hidden from the rich; looking therein few endure the shock without bitterness and resentment. Only the consistent devotee of truth can gaze into it without rancour.

The word poverty covers a wider field than my Lady Poverty is used to symbolize: Saint Francis did not intend her to imply poverty of thought or feeling, of life or health. Nor did being wed to my Lady generally mean foregoing the necessities of life. Saint Francis had these; if utmost poverty were a virtue in itself he would not have provided others with food and clothing. A symbol is never adequate in all respects: my Lady Poverty as conceived by her religious devotees is the renunciation of personal possessions, of the narrower limited life, to participate in a greater one. However pathological Saint Francis' physical condition may have been, and his attitude toward nature sentimental and egoistic—preaching instead of listening to the birds—yet his gaiety as God's troubadour and his human sympathies were sound, drawing men for many centuries to him. His ideal of my Lady Poverty means to me that spiritual state which corresponds to the highest æsthetic one, where the artist scorns to use excess of line or form or colour, where he sees that the greatest significance lies in the purest form, free from all accretions, superfluities and distractions, with ornament springing from the integral qualities of an object. So my Lady Poverty symbolizes, I would maintain, that natural direct relationship with life itself, depending on the daily contacts and on the generosity of nature and man. Thus Saint Francis lived. No lover of Lady Poverty will hoard treasure which others need; humane feelings will force its circulation. Even regarding our lives only from an æsthetic point of view, how can we feel that it is good taste to keep material wealth for which others are suffering and in which they are asking to share? How on any ground can I justify my superfluities when the man next to me is in want of them? I have no doubt that *the highest morality and the highest æsthetics are one and the same for human action.*

Material means seem very real things, alas the most real to many of us. We feel we know when we possess or command them, and when we do not. Yet even if this outward truth is so simple—which I doubt—it is not that outer aspect which most concerns us. The important thing is how poverty affects us inwardly. The artist or the religious may hardly notice his poverty, taking it for granted and continuing his way serenely, even merrily, where the business-man might commit suicide. My Lady is a tremendous test of character, under whom some fall and others rise—under whom some appear to fall but really rise, under whom some appear to rise but really fall. This effect upon character is determined by our attitude, which subjective state is as much under our control as anything in this world can be. The fact of poverty is serious, but how much more important our subjective reactions to it; in them our happiness or misery lies. To these truths, as to many obvious ones, we do not give adequate consideration.

Modern economists recognize that the problem of poverty is psychological and moral—and therefore spiritual. Some of them teach that to forgive our debtors, and give away all that we have is high economy. But who likes the word economy? She was not Saint Francis' bride! Nor are we venturing here on an economic treatise.

To wed poverty the lover should be very wise, as in all marriage, for my Lady Poverty produces in the ignorant many terrible things. I would consider here the evil which may arise because of the wrong attitude toward poverty, the difficulty of relationship between the poor and rich, the spiritual significance of poverty, and finally the blessings which come with its understanding and voluntary acceptance.

St. Paul wrote (I. *Timothy* VI, 10): " The love of money is the root of all evil." and Jesus Himself said: " Blessed be ye poor for yours is the kingdom of God. " (*Luke* VI, 20) Yet human nature, as in His time, continues to love money as though it could buy all things, including that very kingdom. We continue to quote St. Paul's saying about money as though he had said it were the money itself and not the love of money which caused evil. I wonder who loves money more, the poor or the rich? Alas, the poor too would have and hold and exploit, just as the rich whom they envy and admire. The poor will continue to be exploited by the rich until the poor realize that the power of will and labour, which they themselves embody, is the true source of money and more important than money. Only by their consent has money value. If they would they could organize a form of life without money. Thus ignorance or greed is the weakness of both poor and rich; the weakness which causes their love to turn toward a material power instead of a spiritual one. From such ignorance springs the poisonous crew of hatred, resentment, envy, jealousy and all the rest.

The poor cannot inherit the kingdom of God until this ignorance and stupor are gone, and there is awakened in them a greater awareness of their own vital being—a deeper consciousness both of the inner self and the glory of the earth. Such a state seems farther away from them now than ever. How many—slaves of machines—have almost ceased to exist. They have deserted the earth to stand or sit watching wheels go round: while those left to dig the soil do so with rather stolid resignation. Even in the most rural districts of Europe their feet no longer tread the grape. The ritual which accompanied their work, as well as the song, the pipe, and the dance are gone: the natural festivals are little celebrated. Unmoved they watch vulgar gyrations of colourless pictures, or listen to mechanical music created and executed by others for them.

Once I lived among very poor Italian peasants: on their hills were trees bearing pine-nuts, said to be the most nutritious food in the world, there were also chestnuts of the large Italian variety, and many other products of much food value, but the peasants left these for the pigs and squirrels to eat, believing that they themselves would starve without macaroni. In diseases, for whose cure, sunshine, fresh air and water are the chief requisites, and so easily obtained, these were assiduously excluded. Indeed the poor of the "civilized" world have forsaken the knowledge which once gave them this earth: they look not for the kingdom of God here, but in some future life after death. Ignorance, dulled sensibilities and lack of responsiveness to life (not the lack of money) are the fundamental causes of their suffering,

We have almost ceased to consider what a terrible condition is that in which life itself is measured in terms of money; not only human life but the very sky, sea, rivers and earth are so controlled, as well as their products. The American Indians, the wild tribes of Africa, the South Sea Islanders, and our own savage ancestors, having had free access to the world about them, barely could have known what poverty meant; they possessed vital knowledge because of that freedom, and an æsthetic culture beyond the grasp of our poor. Losing intimate contact with nature, has civilization lost more than has been gained? It is reported that in a certain district of Africa the native inhabitants lived happily without money of any kind until their white rulers, unable to persuade such free ones into their service, imposed a money tax upon them, for the obtaining of which the natives were forced to serve the white man and to forsake their natural mode of life. The want which millions are suffering to-day is because man has forsaken his direct relationship with the land, from which his sustenance comes, to attend the machine.

So long as there is poverty in the world, it might be a good thing if each one of us had to share in it, otherwise we act or speak with presumption about that which requires experience and humility for its understanding. Yet there are important questions we may venture to ask—much to be observed. The hunger for food, the pinch of cold, are these things worse than the fear of them? Is actual beggary more painful than the sinking feeling which comes over one when there is no wherewithal to pay accumulating bills?

If our attitude toward the world were one of brotherhood it would seem that we should as freely ask as we would give. But how difficult to practise—although we know that to receive graciously is often conferring the greater favour! For the spiritually exalted ones like Saint Francis such difficulties do not exist: with childlike purity they either give or beg, while resentment or embarrassment does not arise from either side. History well illustrates the difficulty of brotherly relationship between the poor and rich. We read much about the exploitation of the poor by the rich; indeed the social conscience of our time is largely occupied with this problem, but there also is exploiting of the rich by the poor, though quite properly we hear less about it: and the rich, somewhat like the poor, are resentful and bitter in their grievances. They are tormented by beggars of all kinds, from the simplest to the politely crafty. For the rich most contacts become suspect. Not infrequently they regard the high taxation upon their wealth as exploitation. Brooding over their grievances has poisoned the minds of both rich and poor, and prevented the flow of sympathy between them. The poor can expect understanding only among themselves. The man in similar poverty realizes the need of confidences and co-operation: he cannot remove troubles with the magic of money, but for that very reason he does not ask with suspicion: "Why do my friends bring their troubles to me?" Instead he gives his sympathetic advice and comradeship. Thus the rich man is not only denied the knowledge which arises from feeling many of the natural needs of life, but, also he is kept from experiencing the brotherhood which arises between men having those needs. This is a serious loss for the culture of the rich, and a loss to the world in the establishment of that harmony necessary for progressive life. Such are some of the tragic aspects of poverty arising from the ignorance of spiritual truths. Without class consciousness the elect spirits rise above the hypnotic spell of money standards; when they give it is with an easy generosity unknown to others; they give themselves, which makes a gift vital, transubstantiating the bread of charity into the bread of life.

Consider that aspect of poverty blessed by my Lady's presence. She confers keenness and sport to many circumstances. She is romantic and loves the young, especially the young adventurers. How many of us recall with happiest memories the poverty shared with fellow students! With all such my Lady is in playful mood, leaving precious experiences behind her. Frequently she even allows herself to be defeated: only the wise few continue clinging to her. Just scraping through, surmounting obstacles—such a life is most exciting, most amusing and interesting. Doing one's own work, travelling afoot, sleeping out-of-doors, third class on trains, third class hotels, tramp-steamers on the sea, the aid of pawn-brokers, having to sell some of one's possessions, working one's way, begging—such experiences bring vital knowledge of the world. So much so that some, knowing these ways, wrongly and conceitedly think there are no others.

The richness and complexity of Hindu culture through the centuries, connected with the great poverty of India, yield a vast wisdom of our subject, viewed from many different standpoints. It was the ideal of their highest caste, the Brahmin, to be poor in material wealth. To-day in India, as in no other country, many of all castes cleave to this ancient goal: it is not uncommon there for distinguished persons to renounce their wealth and position. I know of a Brahmin lady of means, who upon the death of her husband—her several children being established in life—immediately entered upon the way of the religious pilgrim, which she has followed for many years, walking through India, carrying a sacred scripture, an extra garment, a bowl for her food, and a few rupees. Once a year she returns to her family for only four or five days. Her sons and daughters adore her, but they cannot persuade her to forego the joy which she finds in the voluntary life of poverty, pilgrimage and meditation.

The sensitiveness of the Hindu's nature is apparent in his attitude toward the making and the receiving of gifts, although his argument about this seems an endless circle. He holds that it is more meritorious to give than to receive, that in accepting a gift he is conferring a greater favour upon the giver than the mere acceptance since the receiver is the means through which the giver obtains merit. Furthermore some quality of the giver is believed to go with the gift, and in some cases it is conceived that power over the receiver is obtained through the gift. For these reasons a gift from a holy man is especially valued, and those from others are very carefully considered before being accepted. The giver resents words of thanks, as he holds that to return even words for a gift detracts from its meritorious quality, reducing it to a mere exchange.

So important is this matter of gifts to the Hindu that the non-receiving of them is placed among the first five requirements of the way to spiritual freedom. The classical authority, Patañjali, thus presents the first stage to *Yoga*:—

> Abstinence from injury, falsehood, theft, incontinence and the acceptance of gifts are the abstentions.

Abstinence from the acceptance of gifts is to be practised "even when one is suffering terribly" says an ancient commentary. The effect of this practice was considered so purifying that we find Patañjali adding in a further aphorism :—

> When he is established in the abstinence from the acceptance of gifts then comes memory of past lives.

When we consider the Hindu cult of Daridra-Nârâyana, the beggar God, then indeed my Lady Poverty almost pales in significance. This cult believing that God dwells in everything, worships and serves Him where he most obviously is to be served, in the needy and suffering. Hindu monks, devoted to this ideal, work as nurses in hospitals, and search city streets for those who are ill and in want. In this case the *receiver* of gifts is regarded as greater than the giver, for the receiver is looked upon as God incarnate.

Many names in Indian history come to mind, from Gotama to Gandhi, as examples of voluntary poverty. Sri Ramakrishna taught that wisdom could only come with the renunciation of possessions, but also that religion should not be offered to a man of empty stomach. Swami Vivekananda's moving words of sympathy for the poor, and his belief that service to them is the surest way to God, have had a profound influence upon modern India. He declared :—

> What vain Gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the God that we see all around us, the *Virat ?* . . . . The first of all worship is the worship of the *Virat*—of those all round us. . . . These are all the manifold forms of Him. There is no other God to seek for! He alone is worshipping God, who serves all beings! Let us throw away all pride of learning and study of the Shastras . . . and all attainment of personal *Mukti*—and going from village to village devote our lives to the service of the poor. Without doubt man is the highest symbol of God and his worship the highest form of worship on earth. . . . It is the poor who have done all the gigantic work of the world. . . . So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! . . . May I be born and reborn again and again and suffer a thousand miseries if only I am able to worship the only God in whom I believe, the sum total of all souls, and above all my God the wicked, My God the afflicted, my God the poor of all races . . .

It may be asked if it is not inconsistent to praise poverty while at the same time trying to relieve it. The answer is found in what I have tried to show, that there are different kinds, conditions and degrees of poverty, and that it is the voluntary, enlightened kind which is upheld. The aim is not to change the poor into the rich, to do away with the poverty which has been embraced, but to enlighten it, to find a way of life in it for all who wish it, which shall "give us this day our daily bread," without the need of personal holdings. Certainly the ideal of these volunteers is not that of jumping into the river to be drowned, but yielding to natural impulse they go into the water to help those who struggle there : those who renounce have no intention of adding to the number of the helpless poor, they enter upon the life of poverty to find a better way of living, free from exploitation, sensuality, indifference and satiety.

Saint Francis' economic programme was Service rendered without stint : livelihood received as a natural right, and no official tie between the two. Poverty to-day is so associated with misery that we have forgotten, almost, that it could be otherwise. Yet if the non-possession of personal property may be called poverty, we shall be able to recall individuals and classes of people, who, while free from such possessions live most happily, even " blessed," as described by Jesus. Both the worldly and the religious apply the words " poor " and " poverty " to such individuals and to such ideals : the words are only applied in their dominant sense of "having little money or property" (*Fowler's Modern English Usage*) but they are not otherwise properly applicable ; on the contrary the belief of those who follow my Lady is that their lives have grown richer because of their participation in a larger mode of living.

The man with any feeling for others, when he sits with them at the table, partakes of the food considering not only his own appetite, but the quantity of food served, and the number of people present. Such is the simple feeling which leads some to renounce personal property. How can I ask in prayer for my daily bread when I see that others have none ? The voluntary following of poverty is made from one of two great ways or from both, the love of man and the love of God.

The first way is inspired by the humanitarian sentiments of social justice and brotherhood, prompted by that simple impulse which makes us wish not to take more than our share from the table, or by the desire to render aid to the afflicted, or by love for that greater life which comes with wider human contacts.

The second way is prompted by the aspiration for spiritual freedom, by the wish to cast aside all those hindrances, superfluities, distractions and over-indulgences which keep us from the deepest spiritual realizations. These two ways are clearly expressed in the life of Buddha, who first renounced wealth that he might be free to find enlightenment : attaining his goal, he passed forty years in the service of man. Also these two ideals are very much marked in Franciscan poverty which " had as its aim the freeing of the soul for God." Such too are the ideals of Tolstoy and Gandhi.

The culture of our day tends to overlook the second purpose of the renunciation of wealth. Stressing the humanitarian aspect, it ignores that subjective importance of renunciation which Jesus declared to the rich young man ; it forgets the God in the beggar and the God in ourselves. Our philanthropists rightly give for the benefit of the oppressed, but they are apt to feel more scepticism regarding the benefits conferred, than any joy in the giving; perhaps they feel a little proud that their charity continues, regardless of satisfaction to themselves. Such people are too isolated from life, and their giving is often like a sop to Cerberus. It seems as hard for them to feel the truth of brotherhood as for the camel to pass through the needle's eye: the widow's mite remains the symbol of the truest gift. More to be regretted is the fact that those people who give the inestimable gift of their lives to social service are often so absorbed in external welfare that they lack the joy which would come to them if they sought not only to aid man externally, but to realize the second purpose of renunciation—spiritual insight.

There are distinguished religious teachers to-day who believe that the renunciation of wealth is a mistake, that wealth is a power which should be wielded by the spiritual man and not left in the hands of the less scrupulous. By such a teacher it is held that when the earthly kingdoms were laid before Jesus, he should not have said: "Get thee behind me Satan," but taking the material power, as well as the spiritual one, unto himself he should have ruled for the welfare of mankind. Such I presume is the attitude of the Roman Catholic church toward wealth and material power, but with a great difference, for it is not the power of the individual which controls but that of its organized body, whose members are often wedded to poverty. The segregation of wealth raises the important question how far the welfare of the people should be left in the hands of individuals, outside the general control. Surely the ideals of freedom and democracy are opposed to it, although the long arguments have been continuing for ages. Apart from those already mentioned there comes to mind, as apropos, the wise Socrates and his words at the end of his life:—

> For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought of your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money . . . Not even the impudence of my accusers dares to say that I have ever exacted or sought pay of anyone . . . my poverty is sufficient witness. . . . When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything more than virtue. (*Apology*)

To-day the world watches a frail little Indian, Mahatma Gandhi—as much dedicated to my Lady Poverty as Saint Francis was—who by the power of truth, or "soul force" (*Satyāgraha*), seeks to gain the freedom of his country. He is proving every day the power of spirit, of non-resistance and love, against physical force: he is proving that a man dedicated to poverty may at the same time exercise a vast influence and take a great active part in world affairs. He has declared:—

> Those who would make individual search after truth as God, must go through several vows, as for instance, the vow of truth, the vow of Brahma-

charya [purity] for you cannot possibly divide your love for Truth and God with anything else—the vow of non-violence, of poverty and non-possession.

Scattered throughout the world are many voluntarily wed to poverty: spiritually inspired, their lives are hidden from view. In America too, such devotees have found a way, even if general custom and the pioneer spirit have not been favourable for their mode of life. Thoreau and Walt Whitman come to mind. Whitman after confessing to have put aside only enough money for his burial, writes:—

> The melancholy prudence of the abandonment of such a great being as man to the toss and pallor of years of money-making with all their scorching days and nights . . . is the great fraud upon modern civilization.

The ways that life may be lived without money are unlimited. We almost forget that money is not an actual necessity, that it has power only because it commands faith. There is no doubt that love and faith, without money, could do all the work of the world. New ways are to be found: surely the list is not to be exhausted by slave, beggar, child, hermit, monk, and the various forms of community life already tried. It is for the pioneers and creators, of to-day and to-morrow, who dream of a richer life for all, to *make* these ways. Here is scope for all their powers!

Let us consider in more detail how it is that the voluntary acceptance of poverty may bring peace and joy. Undoubtedly the greatest cause of mental distress is fear, the commonest form of which is anxiety for material sustenance; often this fear is found among those of great material endowment, causing increase in the greed for possession and security, in all cases giving rise to envy, worry, resentment, and to many ingredients of misery. To remove by one act, as it were, so much of our anxious, ugly load, would be in itself such a release, for many of us, that we may well describe that freedom by the words joy and bliss. There can be no doubt that voluntary renunciation of possessions does just this: also the voluntary acceptance of poverty—even when unsought—must give nothing less. Nor is it a matter of renunciation of will: our acceptance of ill health may be as voluntary, but produces no such happiness, physical health being the vital part of our life, while our financial possessions are certainly not that—rather they are incrustations hindering the true flow of life. Given the acceptance of or the will to poverty and its accomplishment, there arises a new life of fresh perceptions and deeper realizations. It must be thus, when so many barriers to life are removed.

What a relief it may be to the tired mind when the financial collapse comes, over which it has spent itself in worry and dread. In these days of financial depression such experiences are probably not rare. I know a man who maintained that he had found the happiest days of his life when that befell him which he had so long dreaded; though living in poverty, life in comparison to that former threatening state seemed simple and happy.

As for our children and others dependent upon us—should we deny them first hand experience of life, or doubt their valour? Do the children of the rich succeed better in life than those of the poor? The qualities which the poor child must develop to meet life may compensate for his hardships, while the rich child may be weakened by his inheritance.

The way of voluntary poverty belongs to that thought which would make a zero of life's denominator, that is, which makes no demands for its own external conditions. Then all experiences which come are accepted as so much clear gain, at full value, just as a sound is more significant which comes in pure silence, or as the affairs of daily life have deeper meaning when felt in relation to Spirit. For long the sages have taught that the increase of happiness is in proportion to the decrease of greed, and though it seems obviously true, still we have taken little heed. He who truly "accepts the universe," cannot consistently complain, or feel discontent with what befalls him. If he does not go forth to seek poverty, at least he must not be cast down by it: he may look upon it, not only with equanimity, but with confidence that he will find therein rare treasure.

To the spiritually minded the world is not mere nothing: it is the outward manifestation of spiritual forces at play.

Somehow the objective world seems to show itself more clearly and intimately to us. Not only has its beauty not failed us, but for that very reason its beauty seems enhanced, and all the more evident: this more than compensates for what is lost, and leads us into an ever higher communion, even to those deepest spiritual experiences. With the removal of that material wall of possession comes the deeper awareness of the mystery underlying all things. We find both the importance and the non-importance of material means. Even when the ideal of poverty has long been held, in its realization it is not without surprise that we find how independent of material means are goodness, beauty, truth, love and life. The claims of religion are justified by her children:—"Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God."

E. H. BREWSTER

Chapter I

THE SONG OF THE HIGHER LIFE

II.—THE DEJECTION OF ARJUNA

[Below we publish the second of a series of essays founded on the great text-book of Practical Occultism, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Each of these will discuss a title of one of the eighteen chapters of the Song Celestial. The writer calls them " Notes on the Chapter Titles of the Gita "—but they are more than notes. They bring a practical message born of study and experience.

Sri Krishna Prem is the name taken in the old traditional manner prevailing in India by a young English gentleman when he resolved to enter the Path of Vairagya, renouncing his all, including the name given to him at birth. He took his tripos at Cambridge in Mental and Moral Sciences and is a deep student of Indian philosophy. Away from the world but serving it with faith he lives in the Himālayas, and is esteemed highly for his sincerity, earnestness and devotion.—EDS.]

Too many readers pass by the first chapter of the *Gita* hurriedly as of no great importance, considering it a mere introduction to which no special significance need be attached. This, however, is a mistake. It is no doubt true that it is an introductory chapter but introductory to what ? Not merely to an historical situation or to a body of philosophic teachings that have been embedded in the epic poem but to the Yoga itself and, if properly understood, it has a great significance for us. Like all the other chapters, it is termed a Yoga and is entitled *Arjuna Vishāda Yoga*, the Yoga of the Dejection of Arjuna.

We have seen that the *Gita* commences at the point where the Soul, like one awakening from sleep, has emerged from the obscurity in which it lay buried. Arjuna as the individual Soul finds himself on the battlefield of Kurukshetra faced by the necessity of a terrible conflict in which all his friends, relatives and former teachers are ranged against him, " eager for battle." On this field, significantly enough termed "dharmakshetra," the field of dharma or duty, the opposing forces of *pravritti* and *nivritti* stand face to face and, from a position to which it has been guided by the Divine Krishna, the Soul Arjuna, stationed between the rival armies, surveys the situation.

As long as the Soul remains hidden in the inner worlds, so long the conflict does not come to a head and the individual passes from one experience to another in an apparently unordered fashion as described in the introductory section. But this cannot last for ever and after the intoxication of the awakening symbolised by the triumphant battle fought on behalf of king Virāt has passed off, the Soul finds itself in a situation which may well engender dejection.

It was easy to sound the war

conches in defiance and to feel the thrill of anticipated battle with the Āsuric forces of *pravritti*. But, suddenly, in a flash of insight which comes while the Soul is poised inactive between the two opposing tendencies, Arjuna realises for the first time all that is involved in the struggle. Relations, friends of his childhood and revered teachers are also entangled amongst his enemies and he realises that his own heart's blood is, as it were, arrayed against him. During the long ages of slumber the soul has contracted all sorts of relationships and has submitted to the guidance of various ideals and only now is it realised that all these relationships must be destroyed and all these ideals, ideals that have often seemed the very goal of life, must be ruthlessly sacrificed on the battlefield since they are now seen to be leagued with the out-going forces of *pravritti* and to be opposing the destined triumph of the Soul.

Up till now the individual has been content to live within the narrow circle of race and family and, bounded by the ties of kinship, he has felt that it was enough if he fulfilled the duties that he owed to his society and nation, if he attempted to live according to the ideals of his gurus, the religious and ethical systems in which, by birth, he has found himself. But societies and races are temporary while the Soul is eternal and, in the end, can rest on no support but Itself. The simple creed of " my country, right or wrong " lies in ruins, destroyed by conflicting loyalties and the ideals which had uplifted him in earlier days are powerless to guide him any longer as they are seen to be mere mental constructions, inadequate to the needs of the Soul.

Nor is the conflict to which the Soul is called merely one with outer ties, established institutions and recognised standards of conduct and belief. In the inner world, too, he is faced with the same situation. Arrayed against him he finds the army of his desires. Not merely those desires that are conventionally considered "evil" but many others besides, the desire for " harmless " enjoyment, the desire to shine in society surrounded by friends and the desire to lead a secure and comfortable life. All these and many more have taken the field against the Soul under the leadership of the various ideals that have been harnessed to their service. The call of the blood, the prestige of habit and established custom, the ideologies which have sufficed in the past are all arrayed against him and perhaps the most bitter fact of all is the knowledge that the glittering ideals of patriotism, of family affection and of devotion to his religion have also " eaten the food of the Kauravas" and, though they served as guides and teachers in the past, are, like Bhishma and Drona, in arms against the Soul and must be slain.

This is the situation with which every aspirant is faced and through which sooner or later, all have to pass. Small wonder is it that Arjuna is overcome with utter dejection and that his bow slips from his nerveless hand as he sinks down overcome by an intolerable sadness, a sadness that is the inevitable experience of those who seek the Path. What will be the worth of victory if "those for whose sake we desire kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures" must first lie dead on the field? If all desire is renounced will not the whole of life become an empty waste, a vast desert in the midst of which the victorious Soul will sit enthroned in desolation, exercising a vain and empty rule? For what purpose are we called to such a sacrifice and, in the end, how shall we benefit by it? "Better to eat beggar's crusts in the world than to partake of such blood-besprinkled feasts." Better, that is, to enjoy what simple enjoyments can be had than to set out on this perilous path, a path to an as yet quite inconceivable goal and of which the only certain thing is that it leads over the dead bodies of all that we hold dear in life.

Moreover, a further doubt arises in the heart. "In the destruction of the family the immemorial traditions perish and in the perishing of traditions lawlessness overcomes the whole community." Will not the destruction of all these desires and, above all, of these ideals cause great confusion in the world? Society depends on the existence of the normal desires of its members and is bound up with the one-sidedness of current ideologies. Can it be right to disturb in the name of the Soul's progress to an unknown Goal an equilibrium which has at least stood the test of time, and will not the aspirant, by his renunciation of desire, unfit himself to participate in the everyday life of the world, to share in the joys and sorrows of his fellow beings?

Such, at least, are the doubts which present themselves in the heart, some of them well-founded, others ill, but all alike having their real though unacknowledged source in the feeling of gloom which invades the heart at the prospect of a life in which all desire for self will have to be renounced and utterly slain.

Nor, at this stage, is the darkness lit by any ray of light, and, although the Divine Teacher is standing beside the Soul, not yet has His Voice been heard. Brought by its past evolution to the field of conflict, poised, as it were, upon the very edge of battle, the Soul loses heart and sinks back terrified at the desolate outlook, an outlook in which victory seems as cheerless as defeat.

The real source of this desolation is, as has been said, the prospect of a life in which all desire and ambition will be dead. We are so used to a life in which all action has its roots in desire that we can conceive of no other and sadly ask what would be the value of such existence. Not yet has the Soul learnt that, having Krishna, it has all; that it is not for their own sakes that parents, wives and children are dear "but for the sake of the Atman."

Nevertheless, this experience of the " vishāda " or sorrow is a very necessary one as we may see from the fact that the Buddha, too, devoted the first of His four Āryan Truths to an exposition of the essential sorrow of life.

The Voice of Krishna can be heard only in silence and, as long as the heart is filled with the clamour of desire, the silver tones of the Voice cannot be heard. It is only when the outer world becomes utterly dark that the Ray of the Divine Star can be seen by us for, although It shines eternally, yet it is only when the glaring sunlight of so-called life is eclipsed that we can at first perceive It.

Later, that Star will shine with such a Light that " if the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky, that might resemble the glory of that Mahātma, " and not all earth's tumult will be able to deafen us to the majestic rhythm of that Voice, that Voice that reverberates throughout the Eternities as the tides of Being thunder upon the beaches of the worlds.

But the time for those glories is not yet. At first the Light is but a dim Star twinkling faintly within and the Voice is but the sound of a nightingale " chanting a song of parting to its mate. " Therefore it is that before the bright Path of the Sun can be trodden, the aspirant must enter the valley of gloom, must close his eyes and ears to the light and laughter of life and must realise in sorrow that all that he is and all that he has is nothing before he can see and know in joy that within his heart is the All.

" Casting away his bows and arrows, Arjuna sank down on the chariot, his mind overborne by grief " and thus, in dejection and sorrow, closes the first chapter of the *Gita* and the first stage of the Path.

SRI KRISHNA PREM

Be still, my heart, and listen,
For sweet and yet acute
I hear the wistful music
Of Khristna and his flute.
Across the cool, blue evenings,
Throughout the burning days,
Persuasive and beguiling,
He plays and plays and plays.

In linked and liquid sequence,
The plaintive notes dissolve
Divinely tender secrets
That none but he can solve.
O Khristna, I am coming,
I can no more delay.
My heart has flown to join thee,
How shall my footsteps stay ?

—LAURENCE HOPE

REINCARNATION IN THE WEST

THE NEED FOR BELIEF

[**John Gould Fletcher's** interest in mysticism was kindled through a long study of William Blake. In this article he comments upon a remark of "Cratylus"* who wrote on "The Concept of Immortality as an Issue for Modern Philosophy." Mr. Fletcher examines the subject more in the light of Church Christianity than in that of modern philosophy. "Cratylus" also wrote:— "There is surely no reason to-day, at a time when philosophers of repute can propound theories of negation whose ultimate implications they often seem to realise imperfectly, why others whose radical faith in the spirituality of the universe remains should not deal frankly with the general idea of what is known as palingenesis."—EDS.]

"Behind this conception of rebirth the wisdom of the East is enthroned, and Western philosophy can only disregard it to its own detriment."

So wrote "Cratylus"* in THE ARYAN PATH for August 1931. And having been myself a student of both Eastern and Western philosophies, it is unquestioned by me that these words are substantially correct. But the reason why Western religious philosophy has disregarded for so long and continues to disregard the plain teaching of the Oriental sages that each individual life-span, each "soul," is not a terminal separate creation but the product of a chain of cause and effect that stretches far back into the past and far forward into the future—the reason why Western philosophy ignores such teaching as this, deserves frankly to be stated.

In the first place, apart altogether from the dogmatic interpretations made by various churches, at the root of Christianity itself lies the concept that we are each in some way unique, each a "son of God," each an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. One can find this concept embedded in all the sayings of the Man who, in His earthly ministry, was known as Jesus of Nazareth. It is embedded in such a sublime passage, for example, as the opening of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, Who art in Heaven." "Our Father"—of whom we are each the unique heir, the separate and individual creation—"Who art in Heaven," that is to say, on high caring for us, pouring forth blessings on us, bestowing upon us not only this pitifully brief life-span, but an immortal hereafter! Such a viewpoint surely stands opposed to the Oriental teaching, which is, that each life-span is the temporary product of a chain of causation, a re-embodiment of personal and impersonal *karma,* and so doomed to go on through the cycle of rebirth till there is finally attained the blissful release of Nirvana!

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* "Cratylus" is the pen-name of a distinguished English scholar who also wrote in our issue of June 1930 on "Greek Philosophy as an Antidote to Materialism."—EDS.

But—and I humbly ask the question—are these two conceptions really so diametrically opposed? How many thoughtful Christians have really asked themselves the question whether they are entitled by their own actions carried through the brief life-span allotted to them, of sharing in the immortal glory of God? Whether we define that glory, as the Roman church would have us define it, as a Judgment Seat bestowing on us Heaven, Purgatory or Hell, or leave the revealment of God's glory purposely indefinite, as do many modern Protestant sects, the situation remains the same. If, after death here on earth, we are to be held responsible throughout eternity, for what we failed to achieve here in a single life, would not most of us prefer to ask that we be given another opportunity to live here, to return in some way to this planet, and to work out some further portion of that responsibility through yet another birth? I do not think there can be any doubt of what the answer would be—nor of the fact that no Christian sect, so far as I know, has faced up to the difficulty of asking its followers to believe in a Judgment Day which cannot be, in reality, a fair Judgment, since the "souls" who have to endure it, have neither known the time nor acquired the experience necessary to release them from its penalties.

On the other hand, a reasoned belief in reincarnation need not interfere with the Christian conception of the uniqueness of the soul. I can remain unique, whether I may have happened to have lived many millions of times before, or whether I may have to live many millions of times hereafter. The fact that I cannot positively say what previous existences I have gone through—though I may surmise how near I am now to the boundless Nirvanic state of self-redemption—does not make any essential difference to my unique situation. That the destiny involved in countless rebirths is put into my hands again to control, to make perfect, to overcome, is surely sufficient. It may well be, and indeed it is most reasonable to suppose, that there is a water of Lethe washing away the personal accidents of memory, after each death, just as there is a water of baptism which we must reassume after each rebirth. In short, there is nothing whatever in the theory of reincarnation which fundamentally conflicts with the central truth of Christianity; it only conflicts with the dogmatic and theological definitions which the churches have striven to make out of Christianity.

So much for the main objection which Western religious philosophy might bring against the essentially Aryan doctrine of rebirth. There is, however, a secondary objection of less weight. It is generally assumed that the reason why the reincarnation belief took such strong hold on India and the Far East generally is in some way due to Oriental indifference and to Oriental fatalism.

Now I have never visited India or the Orient; but I cannot believe that the Oriental is more disposed to fatalism than the Occidental, or that man in the tropics is in any way less man than man in northern latitudes. If the belief in reincarnation is responsible for the fatalistic inertia of India, Ceylon, Burma, Tibet, China and Japan, then the belief in salvation through Christ alone is no less responsible for the slums, prostitution, greed, nationalistic warfares and moral hypocrisies of England, France, Germany, Italy and Americas. Viewing the Western world as it is, and its failure to achieve the "Kingdom of Heaven" which Jesus of Nazareth promised to it as an ideal to strive after, it is small wonder that many of the finest spirits of our age should reject Christianity with contempt. The Oriental belief in rebirth makes it possible for each individual to do something towards his own redemption. The Christian belief that each is the possessor of an unique, God-given "soul" has only led the West to the very brink of such disaster as never has been seen since Rome fell before the Barbarian hosts—a disaster in which all the values of higher civilisation are now openly and frankly threatened. It seems to me, truly, that here too, the East may have the better of the argument.

There is, however, apart altogether from whether East or West is right or is wrong, a final argument on behalf of reincarnation that, to me, seems to clinch the matter. I am, in so far as I exist here at this moment, the product of forces released and guided through the formative years of childhood by my father and my mother. My character is compounded out of theirs, as I now must admit, and therefore it is a destiny transmitted through them that I am at present working upon. But they, in their turn, were each formed by their parents, and I have only to go back fifteen generations (say 350 years) to find that my ancestors then amounted to the number of ninety-six thousand, three hundred and sixty-eight persons; and if I go back five generations further, say five hundred years, I will find that I am literally the descendant of more than two million people! So at the time when Columbus discovered America, no less than two millions of Europeans conspired together to form this lump of sentient matter that is myself.

What do these facts imply? They imply, unless we rashly assume that nothing whatever has been achieved by all the generations of mankind that have emerged from the past, that the wisdom and the knowledge and the love I may now possess is a transmittance, a something made for me by the past, and a something that I must now pass on to the future. Or, as the Orientals would put it, it is a *karma* which has attached itself to me personally for this lifetime, and may still attach itself to me for further lifetimes. Now in the human body, mine or yours, there are three great centres of activity.

There is the centre of the head, receptive of impressions, through seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling; and constructive of thought based on those impressions, and also on knowledge whether transmitted or acquired. There is the centre of the breast, in which the blood is pumped back and forth through the heart; the lungs revivify the body with fresh air: this is the centre of the ingoing and outgoing activity common to us all. Finally there is the centre of the digestive and sex organs: assimilative and recreative of life on the animal plane, destructive and constructive simultaneously on the spiritual level. Now what can I do with this body except to direct and control the lower centres from the higher, in accordance with the knowledge and wisdom I have already gained from my rebirths through my own ancestry in the past? The Vedantists long ago discovered a method whereby even the animal nature could be wholly taken up on to the spiritual plane of intellectual activity, and this method necessarily completes and fulfils that twofold Oriental teaching which says, first of all, "Thou art *That*"—and second, "*That* which is this life must be transcended." Thus through the *karma* already laid on me by the past, together with the knowledge that the centuries have already given (and the East more than the West) of how to transcend this *karma*, I too may through striving for self-transcendence attain the path, I too may find my feet set on the way that leads to Nirvana.

If then, as "Cratylus" has said, Western philosophy disregards the wisdom of the East, it not only disregards it to its detriment but it does not actually desire any wisdom at all. For there is no wisdom nor glory, nor truth, anywhere but in man—and the Oriental is man, even as the Occidental. There is no knowledge that is external to us, nothing to which something within us does not respond; or as William Blake said: "All the deities reside in the human breast." Thus whether we think of life as composed of the triad Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, or of the trinity Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the meaning of life is the same, and the same effort must be made to ascend from the lower to the higher. There are those—and I believe their numbers are increasing—who can read the *Bhagavad-Gita* as they read the *Bible*, and can recognize, that though the names of divinities may shift and vanish, only *one revelation* has been given to all.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

HUMAN WIFE AND SNAKE GODDESS

A BENGALI MYTH

[**Ramananda Chatterjee**, an Indian patriot and the talented editor of *Modern Review* writes especially for the benefit of our occidental readers, the story of Behulā—the wife who conquered death by love and fate by exertion.

As the introduction points out the Dragon and Snake Myths are universal and have come down to us from most ancient times. A very exhaustive treatment of the subject is to be found in H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* ; especially we may refer to Vol. I. pp. 403-411, on " Tree, Serpent and Crocodile worship, " Vol. II. pp. 202-26, on " Edens, Serpents and Dragons," and p. 354, on " Serpents and Dragons under different Symbolisms."—EDS.]

The cult of the serpent is common to all religions. It takes many forms—worship of a single serpent or of a species, of a serpent embodying a spirit or a deity, of a real or an imaginary serpent as represented in an image, of a serpent associated with a divinity (a principal god or one of many gods) or of a purely mythical snake.

There is a distinction between the worship of the animal itself and its worship as the embodiment of a god or a spirit. Sometimes a god shows himself as a serpent, or the reptile is the symbol or attendant of a god and is often seen as the guardian of a shrine or a temple.

While the cult of the serpent is to be found in some age or other in all parts of the world, it is of special importance in India. It is not more widely distributed or developed in so many varied and interesting forms elsewhere. India is the only country in the world where all the known species of living snakes exist. Their abundant distribution and the serious loss of life caused by them every year afford an adequate explanation of the fear with which they are regarded and the respect and worship paid to them.

In Bengal, the worship of the goddess Manasā or Visha-bari ("remover of venom") is very prominent. If it is neglected by any family, some member is sure to die of snake-bite. While Manasā may be worshipped every day, the special day reserved in Bengal for her worship is the last of Srāban, which came this year on the 17th of August according to Bengali Almanac. Usually she is worshipped by placing an earthen pot marked with vermilion under a tree, with clay images or snakes arranged round it and a *tri-sula* (or trident) driven into the ground. Sometimes a kind of cactus named after her is taken as her emblem. Sometimes she is believed to dwell in a *pipal* tree. In places where snakes abound a special shrine or a separate room is dedicated to the goddess. On the day set apart her image of clay is worshipped—principally by the Bāgdis of Central and Western Bengal, as also by the Bāuris and Māls of the same regions.

According to the statement of the Bāgdis, Manasā is their favourite deity. Her image is represented with four arms, with a cobra in each hand, and crowned by a tiara of snakes. After the worship her image is taken in procession and finally consigned to a river or a tank. In my native town Bankura, Western Bengal, during boyhood my playmates and I enjoyed the songs about the snake-goddess sung by her devotees ; this occasion is enlivened by *tableaux vivant* or by clay figures either caricaturing or seriously representing events of the year and persons connected with them, carried on the shoulders of men or on bullock carts through the streets.

In Bengal the principal myth of the snake-goddess centres round Behulā, its heroine. There are many poetic versions of the story. More than two dozen have been printed. As in other countries of the world and in other parts of India, so in Bengal there have been rivalries and conflicts of cults. The Manasā myth is reminiscent of such a conflict between the cult of the great god Shiva and that of the snake-goddess Manasā. The following story tells how an *entente cordiale* was arrived at between the two.

Manasā, the Snake-goddess, wished to enjoy the devotion and worship of mankind. But the great god Shiva ordained that until Chānd, the richest merchant of Champak-nagar, worshipped her, she would never receive the recognition of mankind.

Now Chānd was a devotee of Shiva and had no reverence to spare for anyone else. He was prosperous and powerful, had a devoted wife, Sanakā by name, and a large family.

Sanakā observed that some of her neighbours had attained great prosperity by worshipping Manasā, so she too arranged for a similar worship, but dared not take her husband into her confidence. Chānd happened to hear of it, was enraged and used his stout stick of hintāl on the image of the goddess, and scattered the offerings. The cry of the terrified Sanakā filled the house, but Chānd paid no attention.

The rage of the goddess knew no bounds. She determined to revenge the insult and to break the pride of the insolent merchant.

She called forth her evil messengers, the venomous snakes, and despatched them to destroy the sons of Chānd. But Chānd defeated her purpose again and again. He and his friend Dhanvantari knew a charm for bringing back the dead to life; no sooner did his six sons die of snake-bite, than they were brought back to life.

Manasā took away Chānd's power of reviving the dead by a clever ruse, then killed Dhanvantari. Chānd was helpless. One by one his six sons were killed. The bereaved mother and the young widows implored the merchant to acknowledge the power of the irate goddess and make peace with her. But Chānd only struck the earth with his stout hintāl stick and vowed that he would never offer worship to the one-eyed one (Manasā had only one eye, the other being blind). He performed worship of Shiva on a magnificent scale, to show his contempt for Manasā and her vengeful persecutions.

But the lamentations of his wife and his widowed daughters became too much for him. He planned a voyage with his merchant vessels. He filled thirteen ships with rich merchandise and set sail for distant countries. He sailed many rivers and seas and touched at many ports. He amassed a large fortune before beginning his return voyage. The machination of Manasā produced a furious storm and the thirteen vessels went down with all their crew and cargo.

Only Chānd was left alive floating and drifting. Finding him in such an extremity, the vengeful Manasā made a large flowering lotus plant, sacred to her, float on the sea before his eyes. Chānd was tempted to clutch at it, but remembering that the lotus was sacred to her, shrank back in abhorrence. Still Manasā would not allow him to die. If he died before worshipping her, she would not be recognized by men as a goddess, for thus Shiva had ordained. After a desperate struggle he came to land. He was entirely destitute. On foot he wandered tattered and dishevelled and at long last reached home.

Another son had been born to him in the meantime, a very beautiful boy, Lakhindar. As he grew older, his bright face was a little solace to Sanakā's ravaged heart that still palpitated with fear. Chānd had not made peace with the angry goddess and her ire might be directed against this boy the sole stay of her declining years. She implored her husband to propitiate the goddess but she met only stern refusals.

Lakhindar was not only handsome but his manners charmed all. The time came when Sanakā desired a beautiful daughter-in-law. But Chānd was afraid. Might not festivities rouse again the vengeance of the goddess?

Unable to bear the importunity of his wife Chānd consulted an astrologer. His heart turned cold at what he heard. Lakhindar was destined to die of snake-bite on the wedding night.

Chānd kept the dread secret to himself. He had not the heart to shatter poor Sanakā's dream of happiness. But he planned frustration of the coming revenge. Fate there was but there was also human prowess and sometimes it proved the stronger. He would so arrange that the wicked agents of Manasā should be unable to work her fell design. Thus determined he sent his family priest Janārdan to look for a bride.

Janārdan saw many girls, and finally chose Behulā, the daughter of Sai, a rich merchant of Nichhani-nagar. Behulā had fine character and exquisite beauty. People took her for a celestial nymph. She was highly accomplished. Especially was she famous as a dancer.

On hearing from Janārdan, Chānd started for Nichhani-nagar carrying rich presents for the future bride.

He was cordially received by Sai. He saw Behulā and was amazed at her beauty. He tested her and found her to be a girl far above the ordinary. The match was settled, the wedding day fixed, and Chānd returned to Champak-nagar.

Sanakā's joy knew no bounds. She began her preparations. Chānd had his own to make. He ordered a house of iron to be built on the top of a hill. There should not be a single hole in the walls. Chānd intended it for the newly married pair on the wedding night. Thus he would cheat Manasā.

The goddess began to feel anxious. It would never do to be defeated by the proud and insolent merchant. Unless Chānd was brought to his knees, Manasā would never be revered as a goddess by mankind. So, now through threats and then promises of favour she prevailed upon the builder to leave a very small hole in a wall, but to fill it with charcoal dust. The man first refused but eventually yielded through fear.

The marriage of Lakhindar and Behulā was solemnised with great pomp. They loved each other from the first and it was a deep and immortal love.

After the ceremony, Chānd told Behulā's father of the terrible secret. With tears in their eyes and a great fear in their hearts, the parents of Behulā bade her farewell, as she started for her husband's home.

The pair were led into the iron house. All doors were closed. Peacocks and mongooses were let loose on all sides, medicinal herbs were strewn all around and snake-charmers and exorcists were present in large numbers, to watch the snakes. Chānd himself kept guard with his staff of hintāl.

Manasā held a council of war in her celestial abode. She urged the snakes to kill Lakhindar but they were afraid to face the dangers that lay on the way to the iron house. At last Banka Rāj, a venomous snake, volunteered.

Behulā was keeping watch by the side of her sleeping husband. She knew that fate had ordained her widowhood on this very night. But she was determined to fight against this great calamity with all the powers of her soul.

The hours passed. Suddenly Behulā started. A sense of impending calamity descended on her. She looked around. A snake entered the room. She was terror-stricken but did not give way. With a pair of gold pincers, she made Banka Rāj her captive.

Thrice did Manasā send her messengers of death to be thrice foiled by the watchful bride. Dawn was fast approaching. The bridegroom must be killed before sunrise. So Manasā worked a spell on poor Behulā and the bride was overpowered by sleep. Then Kali, the deadly asp, entered the bridal chamber and stung Lakhindar on his little toe.

He cried out: "I am stung, I am stung. Rise Behulā, and see. I am dying."

Behulā rose to find fate's decree fulfilled. Her husband was dying. His body was blue with the deadly venom. She clasped him in her arms and called him, again and yet again. After a few minutes he expired. Behulā wept and moaned but no sound could penetrate through the iron walls of the chamber. She remained alone with her beloved, a widow on her wedding night.

Chānd rushed up to the chamber with the first streak of dawn. A sound of moaning pierced his ears. He entered with trembling heart to find his son dead on his marriage bed.

Chānd disappeared. No one knew where.

People who die of snakebite are not cremated. They are put into a river. As the relatives of Chānd were making preparations to take the body to the riverside, Behulā requested them to build a raft and place the body on it, dressed in its wedding robes. They did.

As they lowered the raft to the river, Behulā mounted it, sitting with her dead husband's head on her lap. Nobody had ever seen the like before. Nobody had ever heard of the living accompanying the dead on the great journey. Everyone implored her to desist. Death was universal. Human beings had to submit. What use fighting against fate? Even Sanakā came to the water's edge and implored Behulā to return. But the young wife was adamant. She and Lakhindar had become one through life and death; she must follow him. If the merciful gods granted her the life of her husband, then only would she return amongst them.

The raft floated slowly downstream. People crowded both banks to see a living wife following her dead husband. The raft reached Nichhani-nagar, her father's home. Her aged parents weeping ran to see her and to dissuade her from this mad venture. All in vain. She and Lakhindar must remain together in death or life.

The raft left all familiar places and travelled to unknown coasts. Many dangers befell, many temptations assailed, but her courage and faith remained unshaken. The body began to decompose; only the bones were left; but to her it was the same. Wherever she saw shrines of Manasā, she prayed for her dead husband's life. The gods rendered her help. Even Manasā began to relent.

The river broadened. The raft reached the ocean. At last it touched a strange shore. Behulā had passed earth's boundary and come to the land of the gods. Here she saw a woman washing clothes. This was Netā, the washerwoman of the gods. She had a little child with her, who gave her much trouble. She killed the child in the presence of the horrified Behulā and went on calmly with her work. In the evening, she sprinkled water over the child's body and it came to life.

Behulā knew her quest to be at an end. She had found one who could bring the dead to life again. She watched and waited for Netā the next day and fell at her feet. She implored her with tears in her eyes to restore her husband to life.

Netā was a friend of Manasā. She knew Behulā's story. She took pity on the poor girl, and led her to the court of Indra.

Behulā stood before the assembled gods and told her sad tale. The gods listened to her story but instead of answering her prayers they requested her to dance before them. What a strange request to make of a sorrow-stricken widow! What else could she do but carry out their behest? So Behulā danced. It was wonderful to behold. Even the gods had not witnessed anything more pure or more exquisite. They wept. They asked Manasā to give back to Lakhindar his life.

Manasā also told her tale. If Chānd agreed to worship her, she was ready to give back everything.

Behulā promised that she would plead with her father-in-law. Not only Lakhindar but all his brothers also would come to life again. They returned to Champak-nagar full of hope.

Chānd was finally persuaded to worship Manasā, partly by the importunities of his wife, sons and daughters-in-law and partly through the behest of Shiva, who ordered him to cast off his pride and submit to the will of the gods.

Thus peace was made between the mortal and divine combatants. Behulā's name rang through the country as the most chaste and devoted wife of the race of mortals.

Rabindranath Tagore has called the story of Behulā "the village epic of Bengal, which has sprung from the heart of our people and has lived in oral traditions and folk-lore, sung and performed by the local operatic troupes of this province." Some fifty-seven years ago, I witnessed as a boy a performance of the story of Behulā in Balarampur, my maternal uncle's village in Bankura. It was held after nightfall by torchlight under the spreading branches of a banyan tree. I was so charmed with the music and by the dancing of the boy dressed as Behulā that next day I went to make friends with him! Everyone who has read this village epic in all its details or seen it performed will agree with the poet: "It gives us the picture of the ideal wife, her heroic sacrifice and continues the atmosphere of home life in its humble majesty, touching simple hearts with the beauty and depth of its sentiments."

RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

If one would have a complete idea of the prestige which the serpent enjoys to our own day, one ought to study the matter in India and learn all that is believed about, and still attributed to, the *Nagas* (Cobras) in that country; one should also visit the Africans of Whydah, the Voodoos of Port-au-Prince and Jamaica, the Nagals of Mexico, and the Pa, or men-serpents of China, etc. But why wonder that the serpent is " adored " and at the same time cursed, since we know that from the beginning it was a symbol ?

There is a notable difference *esoterically* between the words Sarpa and Naga, though they are both used indiscriminately. Sarpa (serpent) is from the root *Srip, serpo* to creep ; and they are called "Ahi," from *Ha*, to abandon. " The sarpa was produced from Brahmâ's hair, which, owing to his fright at beholding the Yakshas, whom he had created horrible to behold, fell off from the head, each hair becoming a serpent. They are called Sarpa from their creeping and *Ahi* because they had deserted the head " (Wilson). But the *Nagas*, their serpent's tail notwithstanding, do not creep, but manage to walk, run and fight in the allegories.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY, *The Secret Doctrine* II. 209, 181–82.

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

THE STRUCTURE OF HINDU SOCIETY*

[**Hugh Ross Williamson,** the son of a Nonconformist minister, was intended for the church and has never lost his interest in theology. He is known chiefly as a playwright and an historian. His most recent play, produced in London this year, is a morality drama, "The Seven Deadly Virtues," and he is now at work on a philosophical play dealing with the Resurrection, entitled, "On the Third Day." As an historian, his period—on which he is a recognised authority—is the religious struggle of seventeenth century England.]

It is difficult always to contemplate calmly the spectacle of organised religion, for the history of the West is written in terms of its atrocities. Its most famous achievement, the crucifixion of Jesus, was a prelude to that more subtle *coup d'état* by which it appropriated his name and taught generations of the ignorant that the Christian church was founded on him instead of on Caiaphas and Pilate, his murderers.

For centuries devout souls have been troubled by the impassable gulf between the individualistic religion of Christ and the ecclesiastical organization of Christianity; nor is this surprising, since the antithesis of personal and official religion is one of the major problems of every creed. What is surprising is the general slowness to realise that any church is not a religious but a political institution whose function is to ensure, by means of supernatural threats, a social regimentation which material power alone could never enforce.

Its officers, the priests, drawn from the ranks of those unable to cope with the exigencies of everyday life, are ideally suited for the purpose. Not only do they gain personal peace by masking their inferiority under a pretension to supranormal powers but, by segregating themselves, they perform a public service—in the sense that a priesthood or ministry acts as an admirable sewer for draining off the defeatist vitality from a state. Their docile followers are composed of men and women who, neither spiritual enough to understand that religion must be a personal matter, nor honest enough to have the courage of their materialistic convictions, imagine that they can compound with God for the service of Mammon. The result, not unnaturally, is that the Christian church, at least, has always been identified with reaction, tyranny and corruption; that it has been the consistent enemy of progress and the foe of learning; that it has stoned the prophets with monotonous regularity; and that it has committed all its infamies not only with a clear conscience but with an earnest enthusiasm, convinced that it is acting from the highest motives for the highest ends.

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* *Evolution of Hindu Moral Ideals.* By SIR P. S. SIVASWAMY AIYER, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., LL.D. (Calcutta University, Calcutta. Rs. 2. 8 as.)

Yet, since its prestige—and therefore its power—depends on its proclamation of a reasonably high moral code, it has been forced to adapt itself to improving conditions. Thomas Aquinas' teaching that one of the major pleasures of salvation is the privilege of watching the tortures of the damned is not stressed to-day by the most ardent of Thomists. Even High Anglican parsons, who revel in the comminatory nonsense of the Athanasian Creed, are beginning to look askance at the more bloodthirsty details of desert marauding appointed to be read in churches as Old Testament lessons. But every effort to reinterpret dogma so as to bring it into line with contemporary ethical standards meets with frenzied resistance alike from priests and laymen—from the priesthood because it naturally fears anything which might lead to a rational examination of sacerdotal claims; from the laity because, having bargained for its salvation, it resents any suggestion of fallibility in the agreement.

Consequently the vast majority of Christians—all Catholic and most Protestants—are committed to a belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible (known in these latter days as "fundamentalism") which logically makes it necessary for salvation to believe in the historicity of Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale and various cruder anthropomorphic myths; while in Hinduism, the Sanātanists, taking their stand on the immutability of the principles of the Dharma Śāstra, have provided a similar orthodox and reactionary movement.

It is this far-reaching problem which Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer has taken as the subject of his Kamala Lectures. He has set out to show, as against the Sanātanists, that, " as a matter of fact, the rules of the Dharma Sāstras and the Hindu ethical ideals have undergone changes from time to time in accordance with the exigencies of the time." He has also been influenced in his choice of thesis by the recent attacks "made by Christian writers on the principles of Hinduism with the object of showing that the ethical and social progress of India has been retarded by the essential principles of Hinduism."

It may be said at once that he is brilliantly successful. With erudition and careful documentation, Sir Sivaswamy examines the changing attitude of Hinduism towards women, caste, justice, the reciprocal duties of rulers and ruled, sacrifice, penance, and, above all, the doctrine of Karma, noting the modifications and developments which, as men's ethical conceptions have grown finer, have taken place within the strict letter of the law. The vindication of Hinduism as against Christianity is sufficiently pungent, though there may be some doubt as to its necessity. For no educated Occidental—unless he be a professional Christian with a vested interest in falsifying the issue—believes for one moment in the superiority of Christianity to Hinduism as a religious *system*. And for the "popular" reader who may have been deceived by such rubbish as "Mother India," there is—for instance—Norman Douglas's retort, "How about Europe?"

If any criticism can be directed towards Sir Sivaswamy's analysis, it does not concern the lucid competence with which he has proved his thesis; it touches, rather, his occasional failure to distinguish between organised and personal religion, especially with regard to the complicated case of Christianity. "Hinduism," he writes, "was especially concerned with the preservation of the social structure and it enforced conformity in matters of external conduct, but not in matters of opinion or doctrine." Consequently "it is the glory of Hinduism that it has never interfered with or discouraged freedom of thought, speculation or opinion, has never persecuted people for heresy and has never placed a ban upon freedom of discussion." There is no need to do more than mention the appalling record of Christianity on these counts.

But, in point of fact, the matter is not quite so simple as that. "The two institutions upon which the whole structure of civilised society has been based are family and property," writes Sir Sivaswamy. Hinduism, as an organised religion, is their bulwark. So is organized Christianity, the child of the Roman state and the Jewish church. But, paradoxically, this religion adopted, as its figurehead, the revolutionary individualist whom it crucified and has had to spend the rest of its career in trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. Occasionally, as a matter of fact, it has met with quite undeserved success—as when it proved simultaneously the immoral, unscrupulous politician, Pope Innocent III and the Christ-like mendicant, Francis of Assissi—but, in general, the unnatural combination has produced results as odd as they are lamentable.

It is not surprising that non-Christians should find understanding of it difficult. In a recent number of THE ARYAN PATH, Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa called attention to the curious discrepancy between the lives of Christian missionaries in India and the life and teaching of Jesus. But such a discrepancy would never be noticed by an orthodox Christian who would find it odd only if there were any resemblance. Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer is undoubtedly right when he says: "If the ideal is so high that it cannot possibly be attained by anyone or is practically departed from by most members of the community, it cannot be treated as an accepted rule or standard. The maxim 'whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' may safely be assigned to the category of impracticable ideals." But this applies only to the system of organised Christianity; it does not touch in the least the personal religion of Jesus, on whose followers it is still binding. And it is binding, not because it is a "maxim" of a wise saint, but because, in their opinion, it is a command of God Himself.

This, again, is a point on which if one may say so without impertinence, Sir Sivaswamy—in common with many Christian writers—is not altogether clear: "Hinduism," he writes, "represents not merely a set of beliefs, but also a definite social organisation. There is perhaps not more difficulty in defining Hindus or Hinduism than there is in defining Christians or Christianity. There are numberless sects among Christians differing from each other in doctrine and practice, and even among the votaries of any particular sect all of them do not subscribe to all the articles of faith of that sect or conform to all its practices. Nevertheless we are able to form some idea of Christianity as a whole."

Such a definition of Christianity—official or personal—is somewhat misleading. To the modernist, Sir Sivaswamy rightly says: "the personality of Christ is held to be a fountain of righteousness and spiritual life." But the modernist is not a Christian in the sense that the term has been used for nineteen centuries; his curious compromises are of no more account than the eccentricities of the numerous, but negligible sects, which are nothing but modern forms of ancient heresies. The distinguishing mark of Catholic Christianity—Roman, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican—is not in the least that Jesus is "a fountain of righteousness." It is, quite simply, that he is God. Christianity, stands on that one doctrine of the Incarnation, which the sects and the modernists alike deny. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," is thus much more than a counsel of perfection; it is a Divine command, reinforced by a Divine example. When Jesus stood before Caiaphas and Pilate, the world did not see a great spiritual mystic on trial before material authority; it saw church and state on trial before the Eternal and Supreme God.

This is not the place to consider the implications of such a belief. It is mentioned only to suggest the point where Christianity differs essentially from Hinduism; also why it became a persecuting religion. For organized Christianity transferred the divine sanction from the personal code of life to the elaborate social system of the church; it kept the belief that made martyrs but used it to make inquisitors by harnessing it in the service of that very system of church and state which brought about the Crucifixion.

And the future? The religion of Christ remains yet to be tried, and many who crave for a social order to match their personal unselfishness, see some sort of fulfilment in Communism. "The cult of Bolshevism," as Sir Sivaswamy says, "has, in spite of many repellent features, evoked a wonderful spirit of self-sacrifice and enthusiasm from its adherents." That self-sacrifice and enthusiasm are possible only because the movement is in essence religious, and, though one may doubt whether the spirit of personal religion will be able to survive in any system, Communism is certainly a far nearer approximation to the teaching of Jesus than its somewhat hysterical opponent, organized Christianity.

The impact of Communism on Hinduism is in a different category. Its attack on the family and on property—which, of course, Jesus also attacked—menace the very foundations of its creed. Sir Sivaswamy admits that "enormous changes in our moral conceptions are sure to be brought about by changes in the social and economic order." The precise nature of those changes, it is yet too early to predict but whatever they may be, one will agree with the author that "we should look for guidance in the true spirit of the Hindu religion and philosophy." He closes his lectures by a quotation from Washburn Hopkins's *Ethics of India*:—

> It is well for the Hindu to be able to think: This is our spiritual and ethical heritage; here is the word of our own Saint, who says "bless them that curse you"; of our own sage, who declares that "the Vedas do not purifiy an immoral man"; here is the injunction, taught us long ago, to define a nobleman as one who is noble of soul; here is the statement that God is a spirit devoid of all evil and that righteousness is divine; here is the commandment to pity the unfortunate and to seek, not condescendingly but sympathetically, to do good to all.

The follower of Christ speaks in a tone almost identical—and those precepts, which both alike acknowledge, are unchanged by passing events and political systems—because they are unchangeable.

HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON

A Buddhist Bibliography. Compiled by ARTHUR C. MARCH (The Buddhist Lodge, London.)

This is a very useful compilation by the editor of *Buddhism in England.* We are promised that a supplement will be issued in May of each year. It will be an aid to many students of Buddhism and we congratulate our friends of the Buddhist Lodge on their achievement.

This Lodge is rendering excellent service to the Cause of Buddhism in the West. Of all oriental religions Buddhism is most suitable for the western mind, if it requires a formal religion. The presentation of its philosophy and psychology must be free from the taint of materialistic aspects which have been imposed upon Buddhism. It does not teach absence of the individual soul or its annihilation; again Nirvana is a state of existence, not non-existence. The Buddhist Lodge is careful in presenting these ideals and we wish its mission the success it deserves.

W.

NO NEW WORLD YET*

[**Geoffrey West** regards his *Calling All Countries: A Post-War Credo* as "my first, in any sense, individual book—it marks anyway my orientation of myself." This review throws more light on that *Credo*. Examining U. S. A. problems as world problems he offers the remedy: "A total life (not merely a 'religion' locked away in a water-tight compartment) in which the idea of brotherhood *actively* replaces that of the 'survival of the fittest'."—EDS.]

It is a phenomenon perhaps inevitably attached to growth towards comparative maturity that the most widely various aspects of the world about one should seem progressively to acquire not only deepening but ever more coherent and related significance. The nightmare of wilful chaos turns to a vision of a whole (it may be no less dreadful) in which the parts are truly seen *as* parts and take to themselves new meaning as such. The most diverse books, for example, picked at random, are seen to bear upon a single process, and become sometimes the more important thereby than in themselves. The present trio* are not a good example of the extremer workings of such a case, for they have all at a glance a common American reference, yet America, few will dispute, is an almost infinite subject, and these three books are very different in kind—one a purely personal reminiscence of the general conditions of life, social and individual, in a Delaware town forty years ago; the next, three series of reproductions of frescoes by a modern artist; the third an excursion into the sphere of pure economic analysis. Any one of them is well worth reading by itself and for its own sole sake, yet—to return to the beginning—when set in conjunction they have definite mutual relevance, not only each reinforcing the effect of the others but almost creating between them a new and profounder knowledge not to be isolated in any one.

Both Canby's and Rivera's book are in their differing ways artworks, and it is in setting them side by side that we may most swiftly sense what may be called the joint-subject of the three, which manifests itself as a striking change of feeling. Not possibly so much between Canby and Rivera as individuals, but between the worlds they portray, and still more the dominant psychologies of those worlds. Canby sums this up in his title—"The Age of Confidence"—exemplifying it in chapter after chapter of his account of semi-industrial Wilmington in the days of his youth, of a seemingly static middle-class society in which the old more rigid Quaker traditions might be fading but social distinctions were still absolutely assured, and in which the home stood the steady centre about which every other aspect of life unswervingly rotated. A sense of confidence conditioned everything—views on education, religion, art, sex and marriage, the morality (or lack of it) of business and politics, the set relations between parents and children. Canby does not idealize his world. He recognizes frankly its lack of culture, of any true activity of either spiritual or ethical conviction, of fundamental questioning of anything whatsoever. The confidence was, he can see now, based upon illusion. Yet even so, he asserts on almost the last page of this absolutely charming as well as valuable record, "like most illusions it had many of the benefits of a fact," giving to daily life qualities of rhythm, organic unity, serenity, a "real content" in the present and "a complacent yet enviable and sometimes splendid trust in the future."

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* *The Age of Confidence: Life in the Nineties.* By HENRY SEIDEL CANBY (Constable & Co., Ltd., London. 7*s.* 6*d.*)

Portrait of America. By DIEGO RIVERA, with an Explanatory Text by BERTRAM D. WOLFE (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

The Decline of American Capitalism. By LEWIS COREY (John Lane, The Bodley Head, London. 15*s.*)

There we touch the essence of the change. To turn from Canby's calm, nostalgic pages to the brutal awareness of Rivera's typical drawings is like a blow in the face—a blow, though, that but brings one back to acknowledged reality. That is the point. Rivera's harsh but magnificently powerful designs would have been impossible, a nightmare only, in Canby's world; the remote idealizing art of the "Nineties" would have rejected them as the ultimate ugliness. To-day they come simply native to our modern air; the perceptive eye cannot fail to find in them a vigorous if grim and bitter truth. It is not easy to render their essentially pictorial effect in words, but above all it is one which carries one out of the drawing-room into the factory, the market-place, the battlefield social as well as military, into contact with the real forces veritably making and breaking the modern world. There is romanticism nowhere, an intense realism everywhere. The faces of the workers are workers' faces, and the faces of the soldiers are gas-masks. The machine is shown in all its power—its power for good or evil, life or death. And when history is depicted, as in the remarkable series of nineteen panels covering three hundred years of American development, it is in terms not merely of picturesque personalities but of the authentic productive and exploiting forces. It is this insistence upon the real and fundamental, much more than any particular standpoint Rivera may hold, which marks him as contemporary. He questions everything, in his very style of drawing. He does not deny the fact of ugliness, even as he incorporates it in a total vision positive and dynamic. He shows conflict as the essence, the increasingly destructive essence, of our existing civilization. He demands that we be complacent about nothing.

And we are not, we cannot be, we realize as we turn the pages and recognize their inherent truth of feeling. There has been in these last decades an absolute change of mood. The Age of Confidence has utterly gone; ours is an age rather of Doubt and, too often, Fear. What has created this change, brought it about? Rivera and his "explanatory" collaborater Bertram Wolfe will give us their Marxist account, but it is to Corey that we turn for a more detailed and detached and abstract analysis of its causes. The clue is to be found immediately in his title: "The Decline of . . . Capitalism." Yes, the adjective may be omitted. Throughout this article the assertion of universal relevance has been implicit. The change has been identical in Europe. It has been practically world-wide. We are all in the same boat. Corey's analysis is in purely American terms and figures, but the evolution and devolution he describes is in its outline applicable everywhere, or at least everywhere where Western—that is, capitalist—economics are dominant. It appears, though, in his chosen field, with a special clarity. America has always been, in a certain sense, the capitalist world's laboratory. First settled as it was almost in the birth-hour of capitalism, capitalism was there born free when everywhere else it inherited the chains of earlier feudal forms of society. The American Revolution marked the final rejection of feudalism; the Civil War was the decisive victory of the capitalist way of life over the challenge of a pre-capitalist slave economy: and thenceforward America has been *nakedly* capitalist as no other country. Enormous internal development delayed there the common European quest for foreign markets, but since the War of 1914-18 America has become as imperialist as any. It may be said to-day that what is *obviously* true of America is *basically* true of every other capitalist country.

To read Corey, therefore, is to understand not only the change which has taken place from Canby's America to Rivera's, but the identical change which has taken place the world over in greater or lesser degree. He brings innumerable arguments and still more innumerable statistics to demonstrate the outstanding fact that while fifty, forty, even thirty years ago capitalism was still a developing force to-day it has passed its climacteric and can move forward only to increasing decay and disaster. It was originally a liberating force, and under its impulse the world has experienced the greatest material enrichment known to history. But the simple conditions of sustained profit-making demand inexorably an ever-expanding market, an ultimate impossibility upon what is, materially at least, a finite sphere. In Canby's blind illusory Age of Confidence people, content in their well-being to stop short of a truly penetrating analysis, saw no reason why their "progress" should not go on for ever. Yet even then the world was almost entirely shared out, and the War brought no release but rather further constriction through accelerated industrial development, a vast increase of production-power in relation to available markets.

There were depressions before the War, but always some new absorbent area could be opened to bring relief. Now there is none, and the result is unprecedented depression that does not and cannot lift save locally, and—ever-intensifying national rivalries evidenced in the actuality of ever increasing armaments. Capitalism is in the last resort self-strangling, and we have since the War reached the phase wherein breathing grows difficult and the convulsions of the dreadful process can only become plainer and plainer. The Age of Confidence, as Canby draws it, will never return; the necessity lies upon us, these three books seem to say with a single voice, to move forward to something wholly new, if we would find our way to confindence and serenity again.

Forward!—but whither and how? Both Corey and Rivera would speak to us of socialization, of communism, not perhaps to be attained without shedding of "the blood of tyrants." Yet for the latter at least most of those who read these present pages will scarcely be prepared. Nevertheless it does seem that a system wherein the purpose of production is not profit-making but consumption, and the means not competition but co-operation is no less economically necessary than morally desirable. A total life (not merely a "religion" locked away in a water-tight compartment) in which the idea of brotherhood *actively* replaces that of "the survival of the fittest" is essential not only ethically and spiritually but plainly and simply to salve world-civilization from the plunge into the depths which seem to confront it. No truly religious person need regret the compulsion which is laid upon us; if the spirit cannot triumph what use for the further pilgrimage of the flesh towards desolation? Still, when we do indeed turn to the world about us, scan it in the large, what can be our hope? The world brawls everywhere: the demons of hate and bitterness seemed never so free and powerful. What use to talk of brotherhood in a wilderness of fascism, race-persecution and re-armament?

Yet these, we must remember, are the very symptoms of the disease we would cure. Hate springs above all from fear, fear from insecurity—how many of us are not apt to be, in a shaking world, their victims? It is useless to scan life in the large, where most of us can never touch it. Let us rather see it in its detail, in the hearts and minds of those we know, above all of ourselves. In 1848 that great American, Emerson, was visiting London. It was a year for Europe of civil fighting, bloodshed and unrest. He wrote in his journal:—

> People here expect a revolution. There will be no revolution, none that deserves to be called so. There may be a scramble for money. But as all the people we see want the things we now have, and not better things, it is very certain that they will, under whatever change of forms, keep the old system. *When I see changed men, I shall look for a changed world.*

The words touch the root of the matter, and can scarcely be too often repeated. Most religious, most honest, persons do in their heart of hearts want a changed world, economic, political, social. In these three books, taken together, they will find the statement of its need. Yet however objective the need the means remain the same—"changed men." Unless we can achieve that in ourselves we have not made a beginning. While if we do achieve it in ourselves it is likely that we shall have less concern, or at any rate less selfish concern, for the end!

GEOFFREY WEST

PATRIOTISMS: MORE THAN ONE KIND*

[**Clifford Bax** is a cosmopolitan because he is a lover of the Beautiful. He sees patriotism as an evolving quality and the present world-problems as a clash of patriotisms.—EDS.]

The editor of this book has assembled essays upon patriotism from twenty-one contributors. His own "editorial" is a jeremiad in which, without attempting to support his thesis, he tearfully compares the present age with some period, existent only in his fancy, when "each state was able to see good in its neighbour; to appreciate if not concur in its national aims; and to subscribe to the same ideals, albeit in differing forms." He proceeds to lament that there is not now "that international appreciation of the art and music of other countries that there once was, an appreciation which was not without effect upon international politics." My studies in history do not enable me to recognise this Golden Age. On the contrary, they lead me to suppose that a foreigner in any country to-day will fare better than he would have fared at any period in the past. It is high time for our intellectuals to appreciate the age in which they are living: but they will not do so. They cannot be happy unless they are in a small minority.

The religious contributors, with one exception, confine themselves to platitudes of which many are "remainder biscuits." Bishop Welldon seems still to be offering moral exhortation to the young men of Harrow School: and from a Jesuit we expect subtle thinking and better English than we find in an essay which Father Martindale must, presumably, have dictated when he was fatigued. Miss Royden, on the other hand, writes well and talks sense. She says:—

> Internationalism is not so dangerous [as patriotism], and therefore cannot do so much harm; for the same reason it cannot do much good .... It teaches a man to think but not to feel .... A man may be, or think himself to be, thoroughly convinced that he ought to love all countries alike, but such an attitude of mind is

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* *What is Patriotism?* Edited by N. P. MACDONALD (Thornton Butterworth, London. 7s. 6d.)

highly intellectual and because it defies one of the deepest instincts of our nature, it remains without effect upon our conduct. Patriotism, on the other hand, is always dangerous because it is always moving to action.

Mr. Joad and Lord Allen of Hurtwood, the socialistic contributors to this symposium, might profit if they could absorb the wisdom of Miss Royden's essay.

All these writers are conscious that patriotism is a word which is under a heavy cloud. It is under a cloud, in England, because we associate it with jingoism and national aggression. We associate the word with empire-builders, with such men as Clive, Nelson and Rhodes, men who regarded all foreigners as "lesser breeds without the Law." Few of these contributors realise that this old form of patriotism was, in its day, one of the highest emotions of which people were capable: because it led them to live, and often to die, for something which transcended their personal interests. This fourth-form conception of patriotism exists to-day in many countries. It remained with us, in England, until half-way through the Great War; and if we could return to the London society of Palmerstone's time we should be disgusted—most of us—by the crudity of our countrymen. The world does not realise that within fifty years the British temperament has profoundly changed: nor does it perceive that this change is due, above all, to the emancipation of our women. The influence of women, exercised "every day and in every way," has substituted for the hearty practical-joker of the "Eighties" a very much more sensitive type of Englishman. Germans, who seem still to be at the schoolboy stage, may once more imagine that we are effete. They, of all peoples, ought to appreciate the parallel of the Athenians and the Spartans.

The general burden of these essays is the expression of a hope that the old imperialistic patriotism may give way to a patriotism which shall excite the patriot's country to contribute more than other countries to the welfare of mankind. This, when addressed to English readers, is preaching to the converted. The fancy that unscrupulous devils control our affairs is a specimen of Bloomsbury childishness. The effective majority of persons in the British Empire, the United States and the Scandinavian countries has outgrown the war stage; just as at different times people outgrew the hallowed idea of slavery and the notion that a man's "honour" could only be vindicated by a duel. Indeed, the Rev. Costley-White quotes the remark of a foreigner—"You English are the only idealists." Yes, and it is because we are idealists that we are so often charged with hypocrisy. It is easy not to be hypocritical if you are not attempting to live up to an ideal.

Nurse Cavell—who, by contemporary standards, was rightly executed—announced a new epoch when she said: "I know now that patriotism is not enough; one must love all men and hate none." She was, of course, right; but our hasty internationalists cannot realise that it is foolish to leave your front-door unbarred because you have no desire to become a burglar. Local patriotism can exist together with a wider allegiance. Two hundred years ago England and Scotland were enemies. A war between the two countries is now unthinkable; but in 1735 no man would have dared to prophecy so much. In less than two hundred years—by reason of radio, of aviation and of intermarriage—war between any two countries of Europe may have become equally unimaginable: for remember, the world is now changing faster than at any other time in history. Many contributors to this book are aware of the extreme peril which aviation has brought. Few of them perceive that air-flight may prove to be the salvation of the world.

The patriot of the future, as several of these writers recognise, will hope that his country may excel all others in whatsoever is honourable to mankind. To think, talk or write as though the greater part of the world had outgrown the old conception of patriotism is not only to be foolish but also to do a disservice to our country or our empire. The school-bully will never be reformed by fair words alone.

CLIFFORD BAX

INDUSTRIALISM AND MYSTICISM*

[**G. R. Malkani,** Managing Editor of *The Philosophical Quarterly* and head of the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner, examines the strictures of the great French Philosopher on Hindu Mysticism and his view on God, and shows how both of them are non-convincing.—EDS.]

The author of *Creative Evolution* takes a further step. Here he examines the sources of morality and of religion. One source of moral obligation he finds in our relations to society. On the surface of life, we resemble other men, and are " united to them by a discipline which creates between them and us a relation of interdependence. " Thus moral obligation arises from the pressure which society exerts on the individual, the pressure of custom and convention.

The second source of morality is aspiration. The life of another individual somehow affects us; it has the effect of an appeal. We aspire to be like him, and act like him. He stands before us as a unique personality, above the level of all other men, a standing personal inspiration. While social pressure is naturally impersonal and is " closer to those natural forces which we call habit or even instinct," aspiration is " the more powerful according as it is more obviously aroused in us by definite persons, and the more it apparently triumphs over nature."

The same argument is carried over in the sphere of religion. There is a static religion and there is a dynamic religion. Religion in general is defined as a defensive reaction of nature against a discouragement whose source is to be found in intelligence. We are discouraged by the inevitability of death and by the depressing margin of failure in all our efforts of life. There is thus possible for all beings endowed with intelligence, and therefore with reflection and prevision, a certain slackening of attachment to life which is not possible to beings endowed with mere instinct. Further, intelligence tends towards selfishness and anti-socialism. Religion is a defensive reaction against this dissolvent power of intelligence. It has thus a biological value. Natural religion Bergson identifies with the myth-making function. This latter fashions out gods or even forces which retain the property of not being purely mechanical, and of complying with our wishes, of bending to our will. We thus have natural religion and magic.

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* *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion.* By HENRI BERGSON (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 10s.)

As dynamic morality replaces love of family, love of clan and love of country by love of humanity, so dynamic religion or mysticism replaces worship of different personifications of natural forces, clan-deities and tribal gods by worship of the source of all life which is personified in the idea of Love. God is Love.

> The ultimate end of mysticism is the establishment of a contact, consequently of a partial coincidence, with the creative effort of which life is the manifestation. This effort is of God, if not God himself.

He compares Hindoo mysticism, with the mysticism of Christian saints. Hindoo mysticism, according to him, arises in pessimism and inaction. Complete mysticism is action.

> It was industrialism, it was our Western civilisation which liberated the mysticism of a Ramakrishna or a Vivekananda. This burning, active mysticism could never have been kindled in the days when the Hindoo felt he was crushed by nature and when no human intervention was of any avail.

Mysticism in India, he thinks, was thwarted by material conditions or by too narrow an intellectual frame.

It will naturally be asked, what is true and complete mysticism? Bergson thinks that true mysticism does not consist in mere ecstasy though the soul may become, in thought and feeling, absorbed in God, something of it remains outside; that something is the will. Its life then is not yet divine. The will itself has to find its way back to God. Till it has done this, the soul finds itself alone and sometimes desolate. It is when our will becomes the will of God, and God acts through us, that the union is total and therefore final. The visions are then left behind: the divinity could not manifest itself from without to a soul henceforth replete with its essence.

Bergson is an optimist. The ground for optimism, according to him, is two-fold. Firstly, humanity finds life, on the whole, good, since it clings to it. And secondly, there is an unmixed joy, lying beyond pleasure and pain, which is the final state of the mystic soul. This naturally raises the question of pain, and of the compatibility of pain with a God of Love. Bergson's answer is that pain is not willed by God. The whole (content of life) as indivisible alone is willed by God. We naturally ask then why the whole is not different so that pain has no place in it? Bergson argues that this does not reflect on God's omnipotence. By "omni" or "everything" we may mean the sum-total of the real or we may mean the totality of the possible. In the former sense, God is omnipotent. In the latter sense, "everything" is a pseudo-idea like the idea of "nothing." It is therefore illegitimate. We learn of the nature of God not from the idea of God, but from the mystics who have known God. They mean by omnipotence an energy to which no limit can be assigned, and a power of creating and loving which surpasses all imagination.

It is evident that this answer is only a make-shift. Either there is really no pain, or we must assume that God who created all the good things of life also created pain. But was it worth his while to have created pain? Is pain a good thing? If it is not, how can an essentially good God create it ? Is there not a contradiction here in our notion of God ?

Bergson is a philosopher of life. While there is much that is original and instructive in what he says, his views lack the definiteness and the clearness of the true metaphysician. He somehow identifies the creative effort of life with an original divine emotion or Love. We do not see any connection between the two ideas which seem to us to be as far apart as nature and spirit.

Again, God may be pure Love ; but there is no analogy by which we can understand how this pure Love can bring into being individuals who love and can be loved. We can only understand love that is directed to what already exists. We do not understand love that creates its own object.

Bergson's views on the relation of mysticism and mechanism are far from being correct. He says :—

> Man will only rise above earthly things if a powerful equipment supplies him with the requisite fulcrum. He must use matter as a support if he wants to get away from matter. In other words, the mystical summons up the mechanical

Now man has without doubt a body as well as a soul. And since he has a body, he cannot completely ignore it. But should we therefore go in for industrialism ? We see no reason. There are dangers in that direction. The only advantage of a powerful equipment is the ease with which we can produce articles for human use and the saving which we make thereby of human lahour. But if this is not to lead to multiplication of human wants and the production of articles of luxury, it can only lead to work for the few and idleness for the many. Is it not more conducive to the spiritual health of a society, if every-one has work to do and just enough for the satisfaction of the simplest needs of his body ? Handicraft has from this point of view a far higher spiritual value than mechanisation in its modern form. Bergson's idea in this conection that it is Western industrialism which has rendered possible the mysticism of a Ramakrishna appears to us to be ridiculous. Ramakrishna does not herald a new form of mysticism in Hindoo religion. This mystcism is as old as Hindooism itself. The real requirement for mysticism is a true hunger of the soul. A pessimistic view of things is not wholly incompatible with this. If kept within proper limits, it is a powerful incentive to it. That mysticism must indeed be skin-deep that does not take note of the awful realities of life, its pain, its suffering, and finally death.

We agree with Bergson that in complete mysticism, the will, no less than thought and feeling, must find its way back to Deity. We think however, that this can only be achieved, when we have risen to a spiritual perception of things. If we have seen God and felt God, if He is a reality to us, we can hold our will back from Him no longer. Ecstasy may cover many forms of emotion. It may be pure sentimentalism or subjectivism. But that has no spiritual value. Hindooism has never commended it. But if by ecstasy we mean a supernormal perception or a higher form of intuition in which we find our self to be one with the self of the universe or God, there can be no part of our being such as the will that can hold itself outside. Bergson is a voluntarist, and can only see reality in the outward manifestations of will. The Hindoo rates spiritual perception above everything else.

The book is interesting as is everything from the pen of this well-known thinker. But naturally we do not see eye to eye with him on some of the fundamental points of his main thesis.

G. R. MALKANI

Coleridge and S. T. C. By STEPHEN POTTER (Jonathan Cape, 8*s.* 6*d.*)

Mr. Potter is a clever and amusing portrayer of character: but this book from beginning to end is imbued with the spirit of reverence for its subject, a deliberate assent to the greatness of Coleridge. I mention this at once because it is the most accurate way of saying that this important book belongs to the latest and finest development in biography. Biographers to-day, having learnt what our few great psychologists have to tell us, now see that while exposing the weaknesses of great men they are not therefore called upon to despise them. This may not sound a very tremendous advance after all these years. But there is more in it than that. Until very recently it has been thought an essential thing to possess a "strong character." It has been overlooked that strength has its drawbacks, while weakness opens up opportunities for spiritual advance. Havelock Ellis has often shown that "weakness is the very hall-mark of genius"; for it provides the point of least resistance in human nature through which the force of Nature may enter the human world. Moreover, as Keats insisted in those letters in which he spoke of the poetic character, the man of hard, determined character has little chance of spiritual development.

If we bear these things in mind we shall be in a better position to accept great men without wishing they might have been different in various particulars. We shall not wish that Coleridge had had some of William Cobbett's "guts" and Cobbett some of Coleridge's imagination. We shall realise that Cobbett was able to perform his own magnificent task to perfection because he was "a strong character"; but for the same reason could never hope to see with the spiritual eye, to gather the fruits of humility, and to look into the streets of heaven. We shall realise that Coleridge was able to shed the light of a supreme vision upon philosophical problems because he was so un-determined a character that Life could use and inspire him. We shall see that his faults were the defects of his virtues: that had he been less horribly effusive he should not have possessed such marvellous sensibilities; had he not been such an extremist in self-abnegation he might have lacked the supreme gift of humility; had he been more practical he could never have been so genuinely unworldly.

In order to make this clear Mr. Potter has analysed the poet from two separate standpoints—Coleridge and S. T. C. By so doing he enables us to gaze upon Coleridge's faults impassionately and without detraction from the great Coleridge whom they clothed. This procedure is undoubtedly attended by grave dangers; but provided that the book is handled by unflippant readers, it will be found justified because in dealing with this extremely human man no other method has ever been able to throw so much light, from so many angles, upon him. If the "de-bunking" school has led by slow degrees to this realistic but reverent approach to the great, it is an agreeable sign of the times.

J. S. COLLIS

The Frustration of Science. Foreword by FREDERICK SODDY (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London.)

This work contains a foreword and seven essays each dealing with a special dppartment of scientific research and attempting with more or less success to show how much more quickly Science might progress were it not for lack of funds on the one hand, and on the other, the counteracting influence of the human failings and prejudices of the non-scientific mass of mankind. In the present state of the world, the authors complain—and there will be general agreement with them—the dedication of so vast an amount of scientific research to the purposes of war is a hindrance to progress; but when it is suggested that we might obtain larger returns from agriculture by abolishing—"liquidating"—the great and socially valuable class of independent farmers and peasant cultivators, many of us may think that the advantage would be paid for at too high a price.

In a paper on "The Invention of Sterility" Dr. Enid Charles deals with population problems and quotes figures to show that the birthrate among all the highly civilised Weastern peoples has dropped to such an extent that given a continuance of existing conditions, the European nations will decline in numbers to vanishing point in a very few centuries. No doubt, as Dr. Charles points out, economic causes have much to do with this decline: but there are also moral and psychological sides to it. More children involve less luxury for the parents; and in a materialist age when ethics are no longer reinforced by the sanction of even the crudest spiritual convictions, duty will naturally play second fiddle to pleasure. To restore the balance we need, not only drastic economic and political reforms, but also a great moral and spiritual revival. This most vital point, however, is largely ignored by Sir Daniel Hall and his colleagues, whose outlook is frankly external and materialist. They appear to think that, given what Prof. Blackett calls "complete Socialism," science would advance triumphantly without any of its present frustrations; and under its fostering care, mankind would rapidly become healthier, wealthier and happier. In effect, the book is a pronouncement in favour of the economic materialism of Marx and against the great anti-Marxian movement of Fascism.

With the exception, however, of Prof. Blackett's contribution, which is purely political and the occasional political references of some of his colleagues, *The Frustration of Science* may be commended as containing a large amount of extremely useful and interesting information as to the present position of scientific research, from which the discriminating reader will be able to draw his own conclusions.

R. A. V. M

Spiridonova. By I. STEINBERG, Commissar for Justice in the First Soviet Cabinet (Methuen, London. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

Compared with the fate of Spiridonova's peers in Nazi Germany, one is inclined to find her exile to the Ural Mountains quite a benevolent action towards such a doughty opponent!

Once oppressed Spiridonova returns to her former position of power and becomes oppressor in turn. What is true in an individual's life is also true in that of a nation or a race. The lesson is clear: political mass movements do not produce permanent results to the benefit of mankind. The masses of Russia freed from the Czar find themselves regimented under the equally iron-handed Soviet. Political murder, even though such assassination be undertaken with high motives and as an act of personal self-sacrifice bears but evil fruit.

Spiridonova, Russian Terrorist, assassin at 21, prisoner, exile, successful and powerful political leader, opponent of the Bolsheviks, and again an exile—this is a tragic and an unhappy career. The brotherhood of mankind is a fact and fortunately it is not necessary that we should all go through the same experiences. Her life is therefore of value to each one of us. In the very tragedy of this uncompleted life, the opportunity of learning its lessons remains. The very power of self-sacrifice, of the will to live and strive for that which one believes to be right and true, though meeting with present frustration will give birth some time to clear perception of what is true as a means to transform the prison-house of earth into a temple worthy for free-souls.

B. T.

Anna Berger. By George Godwin (Jarrolds, London. 7*s*. 6*d*.)

Peekover. By J. D. Beresford (William Heinemann, Ltd., London. 7*s*. 6*d*.)

Here are two novels founded on occult themes. The first deals with the little understood phenomenon of stigmata ; the second with the lapse of memory, a phenomenon equally puzzling to modern scientists. Both the stories are founded upon actual case-records : Mr. Godwin wrote in THE ARYAN PATH for April, 1934 about Teresa Neumann, at the time the much-talked of stigmatist of Kounersreath ; Mr. Beresford makes good use of *I Lost My Memory* reviewed in THE ARYAN PATH for November, 1932.

In the first Mr. Godwin presents both the theological and scientific points of view on stigmata; Father Schumann, the Roman Catholic padre, tries to win over to his blind belief in divinely inspired miracle the doctor who is versed in up-to-date psychological and psycho-analytical theories ; of course the priest fails. The Roman church, because of its dogmatic traditions, must trace stigmata to either the grace of god or the machination of the devil, and so the modern scientist deservedly wins. Mr. Godwin uncovers well the tactics of the Roman church face to face with the stigmatist and also shows what science thinks of the phenomenon. But for all that, the scientific explanations are really not convincing. The final word is—" science has not yet found out."

As there are no miracles and as Mr. Godwin's doctor and modern science are not able to enlighten us, let us see what occult science has to offer ? Looking upon stigmata, of St. Francis or any body else, as a result of a disease of the imagination, Occultism puts stigmata in the same group of abnormal phenomena as birth-marks. Occult science, while rejecting the supernatural, recognises the formidable potency of human will and imagination, exercised consciously or otherwise. Stigmata are an outcome of this potency of the mind over the body. Even in normal individuals, the power of imagination unconsciously exercised by such violent emotions as intense grief or fear, has been known to actually turn the hair white over night, derange and even kill the body. What knife or acid are to the material body, that will and imagination can become to what is known as the astral body, effects upon which will ultimately manifest in the physical.

Gilbert Peckover, an ordinary individual, continually snubbed and despised by his wife and only son, bore things with outer meekness and inward rebellion until one evening, he walked out of the house " in a state of great mental disturbance, and forgot all that had happened to him in the past sixteen years. That little lapse did not affect his intelligence or his business capacity. He was as sane as he had ever been." After some adventurous months of happiness, he is arrested for bigamy (committed unknowingly). Placed before the magistrate, he cannot remember anything whatever that has elapsed since he left his house on that fateful night, six months ago. Later on, under medical guidance and care, he recalls the whole chain of events.

Explaining the phenomena, the doctor frankly admits :—

> We psychologists know precious little, as yet, about the human mind and spirit . . . . You see, my friend, we really have no idea as to what part the actual physical brain plays in the human economy. Nevertheless, a few of us are becoming continually more certain that the brain is not a recording or a motivating mechanism, but just an immensely complicated apparatus for the transmission of sensations, emotions, and memories.

Such is also the teaching of occult science which states :—

> There are cells in our brain that receive and convey sensations and impressions, but this once done, their mission is accomplished. These cells of the supposed "organ of memory" are the *receivers* and *conveyers* of all the pictures and impressions of the past, not their *retainers* . . . . When it is said that one has lost his memory, or that it is weakened, it is only a *facon de parler* ; it is our memory cells alone that are enfeebled or destroyed.

(*Memory in the Dying*, H. P. Blavatsky, *U. L. T. Pamphlet No. 25.*)

What, then, is the real seat of memory? Says Madame Blavatsky :—

> Memory—the despair of the materialist, the enigma of the psychologist, the sphinx of science—is to the student of old philosophies merely a name to express that power which man unconsciously exerts, and shares with many of the inferior animals—to look with inner sight into the astral light, and there behold the images of past sensations and incidents. Instead of searching the cerebral ganglia for "micrographs of the living and the dead, of scenes that we have visited, of incidents in which we have borne a part," they went to the vast repository where the records of every man's life as well as every pulsation of the visible cosmos are stored up for all Eternity! (*Isis Unveiled* I. 178-9)

To really understand Stigmata, Remembrance and Loss of Memory, and numerous other psychic and abnormal phenomena one must know about the powers and functions of that which is known as the Astral Body. Writes H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 149) :—

> *The whole issue of the quarrel between the profane and the esoteric sciences depends upon the belief in, and demonstration of, an astral body within the physical, the former independent of the latter.*

N. K. K.

A Pageant of Asia: A Study of Three Civilizations. By KENNETH SAUNDERS (Milford, Oxford University Press. 21*s.*)

The book is well named. For a pageant fills the eye with its moving groups that crowd the history of an age into a brief hour's space. To be sure, strict accuracy may often yield first place to popular notions, while time and space allow for outline treatment only; so with this book—a pageant for the mind—of India, China and Japan, compressing religion, science, philosophy, art, social custom and political history into some 430 pages, with, in addition, about 50 plates of photographs. This includes extracts from the various writers and the first thought is one of admiration for the labour of the work. Next the reaction of the average reader in the West, for whom the book is apparently prepared would perhaps be one of shame that, even with some pretensions to culture, he should know so little of these civilizations, these personages, these philosophies paged in swift succession before his eyes.

If he is wise he will not stop at that, but will use the book as a stepping stone to deeper comprehension. From the mind pageant he must find his way to the soul understanding. He will be well advised not to pay overmuch attention to the—admittedly tentative—chronology given, nor to the various popular notions taken over as a legacy from the Orientalists of the last century—such notions as the conception of the Vedas as naive productions of infant humanity, or the idea that the allegories of all three countries were mainly nature and fertility cults. Again, though the standard naturally varies, the translated extracts do not always let through the spirit of the original. The rendition, not by Mr. Saunders, of the *Bhagavad-Gita* into a jog-trot nursery rhythm that kills the strength and much of the meaning of the poem is a case in point. Nevertheless, if the reader will start with the general sympathy shown by the author for the subject and will add to it the basis by which he can correct any errors and can see the causal relationship of each phase of these civilizations, he will gain something of value.

Let the reader use the data scattered through the pages of *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky as a commentary and guide by which to read this book. The pageant will then be seen to be not merely an interesting kaleidoscopic sequence, but, as it were, a living organic growth. This will mean double work for him, but it will be worth it.

W. E. W.

Dhammapada. (1) Translated from the original Pali by S. W. WIJATILAKE (G. A. Natesan & Co, Madras.) (2) Text in Devanagari with English translation by Prof. N. K. BHAGWAT (The Buddha Society, Bombay.)

The Dhammapada, or "Way (Religion, or Word) of Truth " is the standard book of moral proverbs (logia) of the Buddhists in all countries. This collection of verses (over 400) is culled from the Buddhist Canon as well as from similar secular literature and represents the teaching of a religion far wider than is denoted by " Buddhist" in the specific sense of the word. It coincides more or less with what in India is called the religion of the Aryans, or of the " Santah," i.e the Noble (minded) or the Good. Many of the verses recur in Hindu ethical literature, e.g., in the Hitopadesa and Manu. It is significant that the Buddhists themselves are in the Pali Canon designated as Aryans.

As the anthology is in its essence ethical, its sections do not bear sectarian or dogmatic labels, but are grouped under headings either indicating the virtues praised or vices condemned in that particular portion, or representing similes referring to the " pure in heart" as flowers etc. Being non-sectarian, even the two sections entitled Buddha-vagga and Brahmana-vagga are not specifically " Buddhist, " but while the first one speaks of the " awakened ones " in a general way as the " Buddhas, " the latter designates as Brahmins those who are " true god-like men " who live an unselfish life in this world of unrest, hatred and pride. And thus it is not surprising that the Brahmana receives the epithet of Buddha (v. 298).

On account of its variety and universality of out-look on life and life's goal the Dhammapada has since the days of its compilation (perhaps the second or early first century B. C.) been a great favourite among Buddhists and similar-minded communities. Proof of this is the multitude of translations of it into various languages and its edition in different alphabets. Anyone achieving the latter deserves credit for spreading the knowledge of the noble Indian dialect called Pali, and anyone who undertakes a translation renders a service to the dissemination of the *true* Aryan culture among those whose language is not akin to Pali.

Prof. Bhagwat with his edition has thus acquired a double merit. In his preface he voices the happy thought that " the Dhammapada deserves to be as popular as the Gītā." The Gītā has long since found a place in the minds (and sporadically the hearts) of the European people, but the Dhammapada is not yet as popular as it deserves to be. The unstable ethics (which cannot be divorced from true politics) of the West is sorely in need of a stabilisation infinitely more vital than that of currency and exchange.

In this sense we also welcome the translation of the Dhammapada by S. W. Wijatilake. His English, like that of Prof. Bhagwat's, is lucid and true to the sense of the original. Here we must bear in mind that the Dhammapada is difficult to translate: it is by no means an easy textbook (to give it as a " set book " at our University Intermediate examinations I consider as unwise) on account of the conciseness in the expression of deep philosophical thoughts, the technical terms for which cannot be squared in any foreign language. The Dhammapada moreover contains like the Gītā many very subtle allusions and plays upon words, such as in the very word of the title "pada" (which occurs again in a pun at v. 180). Under these circumstances both translators will be readily pardoned for little inaccuracies and occasional heaviness of diction. The two little books are handy and can be procured at very low cost.

W. STEDE

Religious Thought in France in the Nineteenth Century. By SPARROW SIMPSON (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London. 5*s.*)

The author—a Canon of the Church of England—does not make of his book an extensive work or a thorough criticism of the religious thought of France during the nineteenth century, nor does he attempt it. Its very size—180 small pages—would prevent this, but the result is an excellent popular hand-book.

After having described positivism—a kind of religious excrescence, created by Auguste Comte in the middle of the last century—the author devotes a few brief pages to the spiritualistic and theistic school or rather schools which flourished at the time. Then come four long chapters on dogmatic protestantism and modern protestantism, on the conceptions of the Divinity of Christ and of Redemption.

The catholic critique grew side by side with the protestant critique and the modernistic movement began to weaken the infallible authority and the dogmas of the church. The history of the changes which were taking place in the very bosom of the church and of the struggle of the papal authority against this by means of encyclical letters and excommunications is a fascinating one. The new tendency was to follow out its course to the bitter end, until the coming generations doubted the very fundamental bases of religious feelings—witness the well-known book of Guyau: *L'Irreligion de l'Avenir*, which counterbalances the last of Bergson's works, *Less Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, an ardent and moving defence of spirituality.

To return once more to the fold of catholicism, symbolised in the first half of the century by the great figure of Lacordaire, and then by a brilliant constellation of exegetists and preachers. One of the later chapters is devoted to that remarkable phenomenon which, towards the end of the nineteenth century, brought about a considerable number of celebrated conversions among well-known writers; these writers, however, were more disgusted by the aridness of determinism than smitten by the ideal of mortification; they were attracted more by the æsthetics of the catholic ritual than by its formidable dogmas. Canon Simpson criticises these conversions, and rightly too. He feels that a conversion which is not based on the fundamental tenets of a religion is silly and absurd. But in general he abstains with strict impartiality from judging either the opinions that he describes or their champions and defenders. He is doing the work of an historian and he wishes to remain only an historian. Even so would it spell bias to give a few broad conclusions in a study which is so deeply interesting to human thought? Canon Simpson in each chapter plunges abruptly into the history of the movement he is going to describe, and the chapter ends with the last statement of fact. There is nowhere a general synthesis, never an attempt to view the movement as a whole, nor is there ever a clear link between the various parts of the book. This, in our opinion is regrettable omission.

This treatment, however, lends a great swiftness to the book, and gives a sense of ease, surprising when we think of the abstract ideas with which it deals. Canon Simpson's style is clear. He has the peculiar gift of making the "dramas of conscience" live; the various stages in their break with authority; their struggle with opposing ideas. Thanks to this volume there is not a reader who may not be initiated easily into the dramatic episodes of the eternal religious adventure.

CLAUDINE CHONEZ

[Translated from French.]

ENDS AND SAYINGS

"__________*ends of verse*
And sayings of philosophers"

HUDIBRAS.

An excellent example of how spiritual ideas and pure practices degenerate into religious beliefs and undesirable ceremonials is to be found in "Pirism (Corrupted Sufism)," an article by Professor Syed Muzaffar-ud-din Nadvi in the July *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad, Deccan).

> Islam has two sides—external and internal, and the two sides are interdependent. . . . . . The early Sufis to all intents and purposes, made no difference between the esoteric and exoteric sides of the religion. . . . . The degeneration of Sufism began when the Muslims of the later times separated the two halves of the Faith. . . . . Another innovation . . . . was the institution of separate bodies under various chiefs. . . . . In India, Muslim Saints came in touch with Pandits and Sadhus . . . . . Sufism, the essence of all that is pure and holy, was dethroned by Pirism, the Devil of all the Devils . . . . . Tomb-worship and Urs ceremonies were introduced. . . . . Offering sweets, showering flowers, kneeling down before tombs, praying for the favour of a child from or through the inmates of tombs are some of the many innovations that have crept into Muslim Society. . . . . . The corrupted Pirs of India were further influenced by the priestly system of Christianity. Priests both Catholic and Protestant, regard themselves as above the general run of Christians. They reserve to themselves certain privileges. . . . . They undertake to plead the cause of their followers before God in the next world. . . . . . I do not think that this self-aggrandising spirit of the priests is warranted by the Christian religion. Anyhow this spirit, suiting as it did the degenerated Pirs, was accepted by them, and propagated as an article of Faith among their illiterate disciples. The above is no exaggerated charge against present-day Pirism. . . . . . . The similarity between the so-called spiritual ceremonies of Pirs and Pandits is so remarkable that a number of Hindus are found visiting Darghas. . . . . . The early Sufis generally retained the democratic spirit of Islam intact; but the Pirs have crushed and butchered it. . . . . A large section of the Muslim community in India is ensnared by the self-styled Pirs, and so long as this state of affairs continues, there can be no hope for the emancipation of the Muslims in India.

We have quoted at length this indictment, as righteous as it is vigorous. The writer refers to some Hindus having gone to the Darghas; we have known some Parsis to do the same; again we know of Muslims, Hindus and Parsis who make offerings at the Romish altars. The priest—padre or pir, mobed or purohit—cannot be consistently faithful to his own profession and also be a friend of pure religion and spiritual life. The esoteric side of Islam is to be found in pure Sufism on which subject we have published several important essays from time to time. One of the chief difficulties in the study of Sufism, as in that of other old world mysticisms, is the language of allegory, of metaphor and of personification in which they abound. But we fully agree with the conclusion of the Professor that Muslims in India will not be emancipated if "this state of affairs continues." And that holds equally true for every priest-ridden community without exception.

The practical difficulty which the religious reformer has to guard against in purifying his faith is that he shall not proselytize the orthodox into atheism. We have known many who in giving up the superstitions of religion hug to their bosoms those of science! The only eternally doomed are the mentally lazy—those who will not enquire and study but desire only to believe.

Then there is the widely prevailing notion that adequate knowledge about Soul and Spirit, pre-natal and post-mortem conditions of the human being, and so on, is not available. The records left behind by the long line of Mystics and Sages in every land and era possess truths which are verifiable; but they are looked upon as childish superstitions or vague speculations. A study of religious myths and mystical philosophy will reveal that we are not altogether devoid of reliable knowledge which would kill sectarianism in religion and produce a broadening influence in favour of the Universal Religion of Life.

Talking of priests—it is but rarely that we have an opportunity of commending the advice of one of that group. But here is one. The high-priest of the Parsis of the Deccan, Sardar Dastur Noshirvan is reported by *Jam-e-Jamshed* (Bombay) as saying:—

> Are the gates of heaven to open for a man who goes on committing sins and goes on employing priests to perform ceremonies because he possesses wealth? Certainly not. You have to gain the blessings of heaven by your own good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

This is a true spiritual doctrine. But the high-priest also claims that the privilege of advising and helping the laity belongs to the priest-class. Why? Cannot any Parsi—the community claims to be well-educated—determine for himself in what his own moral goodness lies? And how many Parsi *mobeds* and *dasturs* are there of pure life, clean habits, and sufficient insight who can discharge such a duty as Dastur Noshervan speaks of? The priests themselves need self-effort to secure spiritual salvation; they have to free themselves from the sins of greed for lucre and ignorance of Soul-Science. Dastur Noshervan's advice quoted above is needed by the priest-class as much as by the laity.