

CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT
OF INDIA

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CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT
OF INDIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INDIA is not a homogeneous country like those whose contemporary thought is dealt with in the other volumes of the series to which this work belongs. Indeed, India is not a country but a continent within which there are several racial stocks which differ from one another in culture and religion far more than the French, for example, differ from the Italians. These different races speak over two hundred different languages, not to mention dialects. Some are the possessors of an ancient and highly developed culture; others are still living in the Stone Age. The total population of India is 319 millions. Of these nearly 217 millions are Hindus and close on 70 millions are Moslems. Other distinct religions enumerated in the census returns are Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Tribal Religions.

The vast majority of India's millions are illiterate. If children under five years of age are excluded, only 139 in every thousand males and 21 in every thousand females are literate in their own vernacular. The standard of literacy is ability to write a letter and to read the reply. The total number of those literate in English is 2,500,000. It is with these two and a half millions who are literate in English that, in the main, we shall be concerned as we try to chart the currents of contemporary thought in India. The bewildering variety of languages makes

any other method of procedure impossible. It is obviously beyond the power of any one writer to register such developments of thought as are indigenous to the different vernaculars. Nor are these developments of any importance compared with those which are fermenting in the minds of those who have received a Western education. Contact with Western civilization has now imposed a real measure of unity upon the varied races and creeds of India. The reaction of the Indian peoples to Western civilization takes many forms and manifests itself in different spheres—in art, religion, ethics, and politics. Wherever the ancient religion or art organizes itself to resist Western influences we have Indian Nationalism. Contact with the West has produced three simultaneous revolutions—political, industrial, and intellectual—and signs are not wanting that a religious revolution will follow. It is almost impossible to disentangle these different sets of problems. Some attempt is made to do so in the following pages, but how indissolubly they are united will often be made clear. Nor should it be forgotten that the Indian Renaissance is part of that general awakening of Asia which has been brought about by her contact with Western thought and scientific progress. Indian Nationalism is part and parcel of the new nationalism which is spreading over all Asia.

At the present time it is political nationalism which engages the attention both of the peoples of India and of her rulers. Interest in political questions tends to eclipse interest in all other problems of

thought and life. No apology should, therefore, be necessary for the amount of space devoted in this volume to the contemporary political thought of India. It is hoped that the fairly full account given in Chapter V of Post-War Indian Politics will be helpful to many in Great Britain and America whose interest in the Indian problem has recently been aroused.

It is much to be regretted that no Indian philosopher is to-day doing creative work. Of living Indian philosophers the one best known to the West is Professor Radhakrishnan of the Calcutta University. But in his published work he does not concern himself so much with the problems of contemporary philosophy as with the history of Hindu thought. Indeed, he himself laments the lethargy which has overcome the philosophic impulse in India during the last three or four centuries and traces it to the Moslem invasion of India and to the propagandist work of Christian missions. In his opinion both these factors have helped to inhibit the philosophical impulse of the Hindu mind and have driven it to seek shelter in the arms of convention and authority.¹

It is often said that it is dangerous to generalize about a land so vast as India. While an attempt has here been made to avoid loose generalizations, an effort has also been made to avoid giving a mere catalogue of names and opinions. It has also been necessary to go back into the nineteenth century and to sketch the historical background of certain movements of contemporary thought, which other-

¹ *Indian Philosophy*, vol. ii, 772 f.

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wise might have been unintelligible to some readers.

An expression of great indebtedness to *The Statesman* (Calcutta) should be added. I owe to it many quotations from the speeches of Indian publicists.

POLITICAL

CHAPTER II

MODERATE NATIONALISM

No claim is made by educated Indians with greater insistence than that the peoples of India together form an Indian nation. Some go so far as to assert that long before their land was brought into contact with Western influences there was an Indian nation free, united, and prosperous. Such a claim cannot be seriously maintained, for the caste system, upon which Hindu society has always been based, militated against the rise of any strong feelings of national solidarity among the different races included within its ample fold. Yet, without doubt, the India of To-day is a nation whose claim to rank as such was recognized when her accredited representative appended his signature to the Treaty of Versailles and to the Covenant of the League of Nations. The process of welding the Indian peoples into a firmly knit nation is far from being complete and, as we shall see, there are some serious fissures in the fabric of her nationhood. Nevertheless, educated Indians everywhere respond with a thrill to the vision of a united Indian nation in spite of the difficulties which religious animosities present to the working out of their ideal. How did this conception of a free, united Indian nation come into being?

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, when Western education was introduced for the first time into India, none of her people had any conception of an Indian nation. The first generations

of Indians to receive a Western education were only too ready to decry anything Indian and had no hesitation in acknowledging the superiority of Western civilization to their own. For a time the tide of Western influence flowed strongly and movements were started for the radical reform of Hinduism. After a time, however, a wave of anti-Western reaction set in, which affected both political and religious thought. A new idea of an Indian nation took shape among educated Indians. They had not studied John Stuart Mill's *Liberty* and the speeches of Burke for nothing. They had read Wordsworth, Herbert Spencer, and Milton. They had studied British history and the British Constitution. They had read the lives of Garibaldi and Mazzini. They knew all about the new German Empire and the Italian *risorgimento*. Inevitably they drew the conclusion that what was good for Great Britain and other European countries was good also for them. In July 1876 Surendranath Banerjea established in Calcutta the Indian Association with a view to inspiring the middle classes with an interest in public affairs. In his autobiography (published under the title *A Nation in Making*) he says that his aim was: "(1) The creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country; (2) the unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations; (3) the promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Mohammedans." ¹ Sir Surendranath is quite explicit as to the influence of Mazzini upon his thought.

¹ Op. cit., p. 42.

The ideals for which he worked were, he says, "the natural and normal development of the efforts of the great men of the past, under the new conditions created by the closer touch of our best minds with the political thought and activities of the West. Upon my mind the writings of Mazzini had created a profound impression. The purity of his patriotism, the loftiness of his ideals, and his all-embracing love for humanity, expressed with the true eloquence of the heart, moved me as I had never before been moved. . . . I inculcated with all the emphasis that I could command, the enduring lessons of his noble life, lived for the sake of others, his lofty patriotism, his self-abnegation, and his heroic devotion to the interests of humanity. It was Mazzini, the incarnation of the highest moral forces in the political arena—Mazzini, the apostle of Italian unity, the friend of the human race, that I presented to the youth of Bengal. Mazzini had taught Italian unity. We wanted Indian unity." *

The next year the Marquis of Salisbury's orders to reduce the maximum age for the open competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service greatly stirred educated Indians, who saw in them a deliberate attempt to prejudice the prospects of Indian candidates. Mr. Banerjea set to work to unite all the provinces of India through the sense of a common grievance. Writing of his tours in Northern, Western, and Southern India, during which he sought to rouse his countrymen, he says: "For the first time under British rule, India, with its varied races and

* *Ibid.*, p. 43.

religions, had been brought upon the same platform for a common and united effort. Thus was it demonstrated, by an object-lesson of impressive significance, that, whatever might be our differences in respect of race and language, or social and religious institutions, the people of India could combine and unite for the attainment of their common political ends." ¹

By 1881 matters had so far advanced that educated Bengalis formulated a demand for Local Self-government. Sir Surendranath thus summarizes the steady development of national aspiration that had taken place.

In the 'sixties of the last century, and even earlier, the efforts of our national leaders were directed to securing for the people of India an adequate share of the higher offices of trust and responsibility under the Government. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 had stirred their ambitions in this direction, and in season and out of season they pressed for the redemption of the pledges contained in that message. . . . But the ground was now to be shifted. A higher platform appeared in view, and a brighter vision presented itself to the gaze of educated India. . . . The efforts of the last few years had stirred a strange and hitherto-unfelt awakening among our people, and had created new hopes and aspirations. It was not enough that we should have our full share of the higher offices, but we aspired to have a voice in the councils of the nation. . . . We not only wanted to be members of the bureaucracy and to leaven it with the Indian element, but we looked forward to controlling it, shaping and guiding its measures, and eventually bringing the entire administration under complete popular control. It was a new departure hardly noticed at the time, but fraught with immense potentialities. . . . The demand for representative government was not definitely formulated, and it was but the natural and legitimate product of the public activities that had preceded it.²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 66 f.

The Indian Association was afterwards merged in the better-known Indian National Congress, which met for the first time in Bombay in 1885. Its earliest members were by no means antagonistic to British rule. What they pressed for was a redemption of the oft-repeated promise that Indians should be allowed to take a larger share in the Public Services. They belonged to a generation which was fully aware of the benefits which British rule had conferred upon the peoples of India, and did not contemplate severance from it. The veteran Parsee, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, from the chair in 1886, said:

Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government; or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that government? There could be but one answer . . . because we are thoroughly sensible of the numberless blessings conferred upon us, of which the very existence of this Congress is a proof in a nutshell. Were it not for these blessings of British rule I could not have come here to-day, as I have done, without the least hesitation and without the least fear that my children might be robbed and killed during my absence; nor could you have come from every corner of the land, having performed, within a few days, journeys which in former days would have occupied months. . . . But there remain even greater blessings for which we have to be grateful. It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess.¹

Times have changed since such sentiments were uttered from the Presidential Chair at the Indian National Congress, but the changes ought not to blind us to the fact that the establishment of the Congress marks an epoch in the development of political thought in India.

Concessions were gradually made to the growing

¹ Quoted by Sir Valentine Chirol in his *India*, p. 90.

forces of Indian nationalism. In the Indian Councils Act of 1892 larger powers, were given to non-official members of the Legislative Councils and the elective principle was definitely recognized. But Indians chafed under the restrictions which the Act imposed upon them. They were members of the Legislative Councils in a purely advisory capacity. Freedom from the sobering effects of responsibility made them outspoken and often capacious in their criticism of the Government. Then came Japan's victory over Russia which electrified the East and made many educated Indians wonder whether the much-talked-of superiority of the white races was not after all a myth.

Lord Curzon's tenure of office as Viceroy added fuel to the flames. Probably the most efficient Viceroy India ever had, he was singularly lacking in ability to interpret Indian psychology. He sacrificed everything to efficiency. But Indians are not Britishers and do not exalt efficiency to the primacy among the cardinal virtues. With him, says Sir Surendranath Banerjea, "popular sentiment counted for nothing, and in his mad worship of this fetish (efficiency) Lord Curzon set popular opinion at open defiance". "He loved the people of India after a fashion that they did not appreciate, which excited their resentment, and prepared the way for those difficulties and embarrassments from which the Government long suffered."¹

No legislative measure of Lord Curzon's did more to exacerbate Indian feeling than his partition of

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 174 and 156.

Bengal in 1905. The feelings it produced among educated Bengalis are well expressed by Sir Surendranath, than whom no one took a greater share in the work of securing its abolition. "We felt", he says, "that we had been insulted, humiliated, and tricked. We felt that the whole of our future was at stake, that it was a deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of the Bengalee-speaking population . . . and, if allowed to be passed, it would be fatal to our political progress and to that close union between Hindus and Mohammedans upon which the prospects of Indian advancement so largely depended."¹

As a reply to Lord Curzon's proposals the movement to boycott all goods of British manufacture was started and it spread with lightning rapidity throughout Bengal. Shops were picketed. It became dangerous for schoolboys and college students to appear in a class- or lecture-room in foreign-made clothes. At an examination held at the Ripon College, Calcutta, the students refused to set a pen to paper until country-made paper had been substituted for the foreign-made answer-books. October 16, 1905, on which day the Partition took effect, was observed as a day of national mourning. Shops were closed, and all business was suspended. The fire on the domestic hearth was not kindled and no food was cooked except for the sick. All walked barefooted as is the custom of mourners, and the bathing-ghats were crowded with masses of men and women seeking ceremonial purification.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 187 f.

Government met the rising tide of feeling with repressive measures and forcibly dispersed the Bengal Provincial Congress when it met at Barisal in 1906. Indians who had worked for reform along constitutional lines were driven almost to despair and began to lose faith in such methods. The Revolutionary Movement now raised its head. But before we trace the development of political thought in the Revolutionary party, it is necessary to continue the story of those who to this day have adhered to constitutional methods.

Lord Curzon was succeeded in 1905 by Lord Minto and when the Radicals came back to power at Westminster Lord Morley addressed himself to the task of making the government of India more acceptable to Indian Leaders by a further instalment of constitutional reform. He was careful to tell the House of Lords that he was not aiming at a parliamentary system of government for India, saying that it was "not at all the goal to which I would for a moment aspire". Under the Morley-Minto Scheme (1909) an Indian member was placed in each of the Provincial Executive Councils and an Indian member was for the first time introduced into the Viceroy's Executive Council, that "citadel of British rule", as Sir Valentine Chirol calls it. The Scheme also provided for the appointment of two Indian members to the India Council in London. All the legislative councils were enlarged and all were given an elected element and the provincial legislative councils were also given a non-official majority. Power was also given to non-

official members on the Legislative Councils to move resolutions on public questions. They were thus afforded an opportunity of criticizing the policy and measures of the Government though they were still unable to exercise any real control over them.

The next stage in India's constitutional development came in 1917, when Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, speaking in the House of Commons, made an announcement which marks the end of one epoch and the beginning of a new one. He said:

The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. . . . I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom the new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

Mr. Montagu went out to India to survey the situation and to consult Indian leaders, and in July 1918 the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on the proposed reforms was published. It was met by an angry outcry from the Extremists. Mrs. Besant denounced the scheme as "unworthy to be offered by England or to be accepted by India". Mr. Tilak said that the scheme was "entirely unacceptable".

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A special session of the Indian National Congress was called to consider the Report but the Moderates decided not to attend and held a conference of their own. Though strenuous attempts to devise a compromise were made, the schism between Moderate and Extremist was now complete.¹

The Moderates decided to work for the success of the proposed reforms and made their influence felt in the two committees appointed to deal with details before a Bill was submitted to Parliament at Westminster. What made the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms acceptable to the Moderates was the measure of responsible self-government embodied in them. Speaking in the Imperial Legislative Council as the leader of the Moderates, Sir Surendranath Banerjea said:

Taking the Report as a whole, I think it must be conceded that it affords a striking illustration of a change in the angle of vision on the part of our rulers, and I venture to assert that it ought to be accompanied by a similar transformation in our attitude in regard to the Government of the country. . . . They have now stretched out to us the hand of fellowship and friendship, and I invite my countrymen to grasp it with alacrity and enthusiasm, and in co-operation with British statesmanship to march forward to the accomplishment of those high destinies which, under the providence of God, are reserved for our people.²

In February 1921 the Duke of Connaught in the name of the King-Emperor brought into being India's new constitutional Charter, when he opened

¹ The Moderates formed themselves into the National Liberal Federation, which held its first session in Bombay in 1918, with Sir Surendranath Banerjea as President.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 311.

at Delhi the Chamber of Princes, the Council of State, and the Indian Legislative Assembly. The Royal message read by the Duke included the following words: "For years—it may be for generations—patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamed of *Swaraj* for their Motherland. To-day you have the beginnings of *Swaraj* within my Empire and the widest scope and ample opportunity for progress to the liberty which my other Dominions enjoy."

In the reforms thus inaugurated a gallant attempt was made to devolve on Indians power and responsibility. The Provincial Legislative Councils were enlarged and given a substantial elected majority. Though an official element was retained, the official *bloc* was swept away. In the Government of India (as distinct from the Provincial Governments) two houses were called into being, the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. In both there is a large Indian majority. But it was in the Provincial Executive Councils that the greatest change was made. Power and responsibility were conferred upon Indians by dividing subjects into "transferred" and "reserved". This division afterwards came to be known as "dyarchy". Such subjects as local self-government, public health, education, agriculture, industries, etc., were transferred to Indian Ministers, who were responsible in the parliamentary sense of that term to the Provincial Legislature. Since these Ministers were elected members of the Legislative Council, they held office at the will of their constituents. The "reserved" subjects, however, were retained under the control of the Governor and

his Council. Only in the provinces was this devolution effected. Until experience had shown how the changes in the provinces worked out, there was to be no transference of subjects in the Government of India. In the Viceroy's Executive Council, however, a further Indian member was added, but he was in no way responsible to the Legislative Assembly for his administration. Power was reserved to the Viceroy and to the Provincial governors to "certify" in cases of emergency, i.e. to override the decisions of the Legislative Assembly and Councils when they considered the interests of peace and good order were imperilled. The rapid Indianization of the public services was promised and provision was made for a Commission to consider, after an experimental period of ten years, what changes were desirable in the light of the experience gained.

The basis upon which the electoral franchise should be given was a difficult one to settle. In the end a very modest property qualification was accepted. At the time of the first General Election in the winter of 1920-1 there were over 6,000,000 names on the electoral rolls.¹ The constituencies were not always on a territorial but sometimes on a communal basis. The Mohammedan community would not forgo a principle that had been recognized in the Morley-Minto reforms. In consideration of their valuable war services the same principle was extended to the Sikhs, and for other reasons to the Universities, the Zemindars (large landowners), and the Chambers of Commerce.

¹ I take these figures from Sir Valentine Chirol's *India*, p. 233.

MODERATE NATIONALISM

The Moderates among Indian leaders welcomed, as we have seen, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme and did the best in their power to secure its success. The veteran Bengali Nationalist, Sir Surendranath Banerjea, became Minister of Local Self-government in the province of his birth, and other Indians were placed in similar positions of responsibility. But the Extremist party redoubled the insistence with which they cried that the reforms were a sham and a cruel delusion—a huge fraud sprung upon a credulous people. With the development of Extremist opinion and the principles underlying it we shall be occupied in the following chapters. Here we are concerned only with the Moderates. For the student of Indian contemporary thought their significance is plain. Among them we witness the gradual infiltration of constitutional and democratic ideas derived from the study of writers like Burke and Mazzini and from the study of British parliamentary institutions. The primary source of their inspiration was British Liberalism. It is a slow transition from Eastern to Western ideals on the part of a class whose ancestors had long been accustomed to the autocracy of Moghul Emperors and Hindu kings.

CHAPTER III

EXTREMER NATIONALISM

THE Constitutional Nationalists, with whom we have been dealing in the previous chapter, stood for self-government within the Empire to be attained by lawful and constitutional methods. They had learned from their study of Burke that in politics prudence is a sovereign virtue. As their greatest leader, Mr. Gokhale, said at the Benares Congress in 1905: "For better or for worse our destinies are now linked with those of England, and what the Congress fully recognizes is that whatever advance we seek must be within the Empire itself. That advance, however, can only be gradual."

After the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Sir Surendranath Banerjea went much farther and said: "We of the Moderate party believe that the connection of England with India is a divine dispensation ordained for the holiest and highest of ends."¹ The time came, however, when the more ardent members of the Congress felt that more heroic and more extreme ideals and methods were necessary. They were impatient with the apparent failure of constitutional methods. Writhing under disappointment and under many wrongs real and fancied, they determined to make their voices heard. The Congress, they declared, was too placid and humdrum.² When, therefore, it met at Surat

¹ Op. cit., p. 336.

² See Lajpat Rai's *Young India*, pp. 93 f., for a typical criticism of the

in 1907 they decided to propose Mr. B. G. Tilak, who in 1897 had been imprisoned for sedition, for the Presidency instead of Sir Rash Behari Ghose, who was the nominee of the Moderates. The Congress was broken up in disorder. Shoes, slippers, and chairs were flung at the speakers and the platform was rushed. Surat produced a split in the Nationalist ranks and marks the emergence of the Extremist party in Indian politics, and since Surat the Congress has continued to be dominated by the Extremists. Many factors contributed to give them an acute sense of grievance. Among these we may note Lord Curzon's administration, especially his educational policy and the Partition of Bengal; the Press Acts, and the deportation of various seditionist leaders. On the positive side, Japan's victory over Russia in 1904-5 sent a thrill through India and engendered new hopes. "There were Indians to whom it meant even more than a mere humbling of a great European Power by an Asiatic race. It meant also a mighty blow to the autocratic system in Russia, and to that system the Indian extremists never tired of likening a system of Indian Government concentrated in the hands of an all-powerful bureaucracy."¹

Broadly speaking, we may say that the Extremist politicians are imbued with a spirit of revolt against Western civilization. They repudiate with scorn the type of civilization upon which British rule is

Congress, and pp. 99 f. and p. 179 for this writer's feelings with regard to Moderate leaders.

¹ Sir Valentine Chirol, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

based. Time was when, soon after the introduction of Western education, many educated Indians made it their aim to be Europeans in all things.¹ Charmed by its novelty they could see no flaws in Western civilization. Everything English was good. But by the last quarter of the nineteenth century a reaction began to set in. In its earliest stages the counter-movement manifested itself among religious thinkers and leaders, but it soon spread to the politicians. One of the first to be so affected was the Mahratta Brahman, Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In his native city of Poona the religious reform movement known as the Prarthana Samaj² had secured for itself a strong foothold. Mr. Tilak appeared as a fiery leader of the Hindu orthodoxy, when the Samaj gave its support in 1890 to Lord Lansdowne's Age of Consent Bill, which raised to twelve years the age at which a husband could lawfully consummate his marriage with an infant wife. Tilak denounced the Bill as an outrage upon Hindu sentiment. A few years later the outbreak of bubonic plague in Poona and the measures for disinfection taken by the Government were denounced by him as a violation of the sanctity of the Hindu home and an outrage upon the modesty of Hindu women. His appeal to Hindu sentiment and his denunciation of British oppression so worked upon the mind of a young Mahratta Brahman that he murdered two European officials. A week before the murder

¹ See Sir Surendranath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 308, for some of their excesses of imitation.

² See below, p. 136.

Tilak in his vernacular newspaper the *Kesari* had published a casuistical justification of political assassination.

"Did Sivaji", he asked, "commit a sin in killing Afzal Khan or not?" The answer to that question can be found in the *Mahabharata* itself. Srimat Krishna's advice in the *Gita* is to kill even our own teachers and our kinsmen. No blame attaches to any person if he is doing deeds without being actuated by a desire to reap the fruits of his deeds. Sri Sivaji did nothing with a view to fill the void of his own stomach. With benevolent intentions he murdered Afzal Khan for the good of others. If thieves enter our house, we should without hesitation shut them up and burn them alive. God has not conferred upon the foreigners the grant inscribed on a copper-plate of the Kingdom of Hindusthan. The Maharaja (Sivaji) strove to drive them away from the land of his birth. He did not thereby commit the sin of coveting what belonged to others. Do not circumscribe your vision like a frog in a well; get out of the Penal Code and enter the extremely high atmosphere of the *Srimat Bhagavad Gita* and consider the actions of great men.

This outburst, noteworthy for its appeal to the Hindu sacred scriptures, led to his conviction for sedition. Some years later, when the *Swadeshi* movement was at its height, we find him using his position as a Brahman to threaten with a childless marriage all Hindu couples who ventured to use British-made articles at their wedding festivities.

Another Extremist was Mr. Lala Lajpat Rai, who was a member of the Arya Samaj.¹ His little book, *Young India*, is a remarkable index of his mind. It reveals his inability to see any good in anything British and a readiness to attribute sinister

¹ See below, p. 137.

motives to Britishers that amounts to moral astigmatism. When proposals were first mooted to found the Indian National Congress, Lord Dufferin, who was then Viceroy, looked upon the idea with favour. Indeed, he was approached to allow Lord Reay, then Governor of Bombay, to preside at its first session. Lord Dufferin is reported to have said to Mr. Hume (who greatly helped the Congress in its early stages) that "as head of the Government he had found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people; and that for purposes of administration it would be a public benefit if there existed some responsible organization through which the Government might be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion". But Mr. Lajpat Rai can find only the most sinister motives for Lord Dufferin's sympathies. He roundly avers that the Viceroy's only motive was to render innocuous the rising public opinion by guiding it in such a way as not to arouse the suspicions of those who were to be his tools. "So this is the genesis of the Congress", he remarks, "and this is sufficient to condemn it in the eyes of the advanced Nationalists. There is no parallel to this in the history of the world. Who has ever heard of a movement for political liberty being initiated by a despotic Government, which is foreign in its agency and foreign in its methods?"¹

When it is pointed out that British rule has brought to India established peace and order, education, trade, railways, canals, postal and tele-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 67 f.

graph systems, justice, Mr. Lajpat Rai replies, "Let us assume for the moment that all this is wholly true, but can it compensate for the loss of manhood which is involved in political bondage? Chains are chains, no matter if gilded. Can the wealth of the whole world be put in the scales over against liberty and honour? A subject people has no soul, just as a slave can have none."¹

Intense dislike of Western civilization has been the chief motive inspiring the methods by which the Extremists have sustained their propaganda. The *Swadeshi* movement did not, indeed, begin with them (*Swadeshi* means country-made). The spirit of *Swadeshi* had been abroad before the boycott was employed by Bengali politicians in their agitation against the partition of Bengal. They hoped that, by using exclusively country-made goods and by boycotting British-made goods, they would exert sufficient pressure upon British manufacturers to make them join in their cry for the reversal of the partition. "The *Swadeshi* movement was the positive, and the boycott the negative, expression of the same purpose." From the first, however, the movement had a religious colouring. "The sentiment of religion," says Sir Surendranath Banerjea,² "is with us so all-pervading as to colour and dominate our activities even beyond its legitimate sphere."

The same writer claims that he was the author of the *Swadeshi* vow. He was speaking at a *Swadeshi* meeting in the courtyard of a village temple:

¹ *Young India*, p. 23.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

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As I spoke and had my eyes fixed upon the temple and the image, and my mind was full of the associations of the place, in a moment of sudden impulse I appealed to the audience to stand up and to take a solemn vow in the presence of the god of their worship. I administered the vow and the whole audience, standing, repeated the words after me . . . "Invoking God Almighty to be our Witness, and standing in the presence of after-generations, we take this solemn vow that, so far as practicable, we shall use home-made articles and abstain from the use of foreign articles. So help us, God."

The early supporters of the *Swadeshi* programme intended to use the boycott as an economic and political weapon, but it may be doubted whether they intended it as a permanent policy for the Indian peoples. The boycott was to last until the partition of their province was reversed. Sir Surendranath Banerjea, who was the moving spirit of the campaign, expressly declares that "the movement was not anti-British in its origin".¹ The Extremists, however, soon realized that the *Swadeshi* movement could easily be used for stirring anti-British feelings in the minds of their countrymen, and they did not hesitate so to use it. "In the boycott", declared one of them, "the enemies of the Raj (Government) have found a most effective weapon for injuring British interests in the country."²

The *Swadeshi* movement failed as a political weapon in the hands of the extremists, but it gave an impetus to the establishment of native factories, mills, banks, and insurance companies. Many of these were not long before they crashed to ruin,

¹ Op. cit., p. 191.

² Lajpat Rai, op. cit., p. 121.

brought on by want of business experience and practical training in manufacture and commerce.¹

In more recent years the *Swadeshi* cry has been taken up and revised by Mr. Gandhi, with whom we shall be concerned in a later chapter. More recently still the cry has been translated by some of the Swarajists into a demand for protection for Indian manufactures.

Allied to the *Swadeshi* movement was the passive resistance movement, which was originated by Mr. Tilak, when he was trying to "ginger up" the Congress. The employment of passive resistance as a political weapon never found great favour with the Moderates, who, says Sir Surendranath Banerjea,² "knew the difficulties that surrounded a movement of defiance of authority culminating in the violation of official orders, legal or illegal". But the movement received a distinct fillip when the Government interned Mrs. Besant in 1916. It was later changed by Mr. Gandhi into the cult of Non-Co-operation, though it did not lose its colouring as a phase of the revolt against Western politics and culture.

The Extremist policy of political and industrial boycott has its ultimate basis in race-hatred. It must be admitted that in this matter Englishmen in India have sometimes been the aggressors, while the disabilities suffered by Indians on account of their race have naturally encouraged the rise of racial feeling among them. The Indian peoples are

¹ See Sir Surendranath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, ch. xxi, for a frank recognition of the failure.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 240.

It would be fatal to the Empire." Mr. Shastri, however, had the mortification of seeing the representatives of South Africa refuse their assent to the resolution just quoted.

When the Imperial Conference met again in 1923 India was represented by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who put Indian opinion pithily enough when he said: "I fight as a subject of King George, for a place in his household, and I will not be content with a place in his stables". But again South Africa "shut and banged the door". Few Europeans have any conceptions of the extent to which South Africa's action rankled in the minds of Indians of all parties. A Moderate like Sir Surendranath Banerjea could say: "South Africa stinks in the nostrils of every patriotic Indian for its anti-Indian policy."¹

But by 1923 the situation in Kenya had complicated the problem and made feeling in India infinitely more bitter. The white settlers in Kenya are outnumbered by Indian settlers by about three to one. The former refused to accept an arrangement arrived at by the Secretaries of State for India and for the Colonies by which a certain proportion of Indians were admitted to the franchise. The situation in Kenya became so acute that a conference was called to meet in London in 1923. British and Indian delegations from the Colony were present and also an official delegation from India, of which Mr. Shastri was a member. After hearing all parties, the British Cabinet announced its decision. Indians

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 323.

were to be given the franchise but only on a communal basis, each community electing its representatives separately. The decision was fiercely resented in India, for "throughout the controversy Indians have contended that if there was to be election there should be a common electoral roll, Europeans and Indians voting in the same constituencies for the same candidates, who might be either Europeans or Indians."¹

Extremists in India naturally made much capital out of the situation thus created, for to raise the racial issue was with them a matter of principle. What was the worth, they asked, of declarations such as Mr. Lloyd George's in 1921? Whitehall, in spite of all its protestations to the contrary, was every bit as determined as the Indian bureaucracy to stamp upon Indians the badge of racial inferiority. Kenya was not a self-coverning dominion like South Africa, but a Crown Colony controlled by the British Parliament. In a Crown Colony there was no obstacle, such as existed in South Africa, in the way of British politicians implementing their repeated promises of racial equality within the Dominions of the Crown. It was easy for Extremists to raise the cry, "If there is no room for Indians in Kenya then there is no room for the white man in India." A member of the Swarajist party roundly declared in the Legislative Assembly, "The sooner you go, the better for the country."

¹ Oldham's *Christianity and the Race Problem*, p. 183.

CHAPTER IV

REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM

No account of Indian Political Thought would be complete without some reference to a small revolutionary party, which believes that the way to national independence lies through anarchical crime. Their methods are secret conspiracy and violence; their weapons the revolver and the bomb. They constitute a fraction of the population, but at times they have been a determined and dangerous section. The movement has failed because of the repressive methods of the Government, and also because the appeal to violence is uncongenial to the Hindu mind. "We Hindus", said Sir Surendranath Banerjea, "abhor revolution and even the semblance of it."¹

The first indications of a revolutionary movement appeared in the Poona District in 1897. Here Mr. B. G. Tilak's glorification of political murder had led to the assassination of two Government officers.² In Bengal, which afterwards became the chief centre of the Revolutionaries, the first shot was fired in December 1907, and the first bomb was thrown in April 1908. The bomb was intended for an unpopular magistrate, but caused the deaths of Mrs. Kennedy and her sixteen-year-old daughter. This is not the place to give a detailed account of the crimes of the Revolutionary party. Such an account may be found in the *Report of the Sedition*

¹ *A Nation in Making*, p. 402.

² Cf. p. 28 above.

Committee, 1918. What concerns the student of Indian thought and psychology is the arguments by which the Revolutionaries commended to themselves and their countrymen their policy of cold-blooded murder. Their movement has been aptly described in the above Report as the outcome of "perverted religion and equally perverted patriotism".

The best-known revolutionary leaders in Bengal were the two brothers, Barindra Kumar Ghose and Arabinda Ghose. The latter had been educated in England, had taken a First Class in the Classical Tripos at Cambridge, had passed for the Indian Civil Service, but had been rejected at the final examination owing to his inability to ride. A word or two may be said about their methods before attempting to speak of their ideals. Barindra came from Baroda to Bengal in 1902 to organize a secret conspiracy among the educated classes of that province. Little came of his efforts. In 1904 he returned to Calcutta to reopen his campaign and determined to utilize to the full the feeling aroused among his countrymen by the Partition of Bengal. His appeal was mainly addressed to the youth of the Province. The seed he sowed found fertile ground in the minds of these uncritical and emotional youths, whose feelings had already been worked up to a fever-pitch of excitement. It was not difficult at such a time for Barindra to convince many of the English-educated youths of Bengal that the British Government was founded on fraud and oppression and that Hindu religion and history demanded the expulsion of the British from the Motherland. He advocated

the establishment of a fanatical organization, which would draw its inspiration from the murder of Government officials, British and Indian, and finance itself by the robbery of peaceable Indians. Arms were to be obtained by stealing or smuggling them and bombs were to be manufactured in secret. To achieve their ends the brothers Ghose and their associates founded societies for the promotion of culture and physical training (*Anusilan Samitis*) at which seditious principles were disseminated. Those admitted to membership of the *Samiti* were bound by a series of vows, which "disclose a remarkable system for the progressive enthrallment of the initiated". The vows were taken before an idol (usually the goddess Kali) and were accompanied by religious ritual. One of these vows may be quoted:

In the presence of God, fire, Mother, preceptor, and leader (making them my witnesses) I swear that I will do all the work of the circle for the development of the samiti, staking my life and everything that I possess. I will carry out all the commands and will act in opposition to those who act in opposition to the aforesaid circle, and do injury to them to the utmost of my power. . . . If I fail to keep this vow or act in opposition to it, may the curse of the Brahmins and of the Mother and of the great patriots of every country speedily destroy me.¹

Sets of rules were drawn up to be observed by the members of the *Samitis*. Among other things, they were to be diligent in gymnastics and drill, and to bring into a common stock all money and commodities obtained by them. One set of rules provides

¹ *Report of Sedition Committee, 1918, p. 94.*

“capital punishment for being treacherous”. In point of fact more than one approver was ruthlessly shot by his former associates.

Another weapon employed by the Bengal revolutionaries was the Press. They started several newspapers, written in fluent, vernacular Bengali. The chief of these was the *Jugantar* (*New Era*), which achieved a large circulation before it was suppressed. Its character and teaching were thus characterized by the Chief Justice, Sir Lawrence Jenkins: “They exhibit a burning hatred of the British race, they breathe revolution in every line. . . . No calumny and no artifice is left out which is likely to instil the people of the country with the same idea or to catch the impressionable mind of youth.” Thousands of leaflets were distributed. As an example of their fanatical spirit the following paragraph from one of them may be quoted:

But first and last spread terror. Make this unholy Government impossible. Hide like invisible shadows of doom and rain death upon the alien bureaucracy. Remember your brothers who are perishing in jails and rotting in swamps. Remember those who have died or have gone mad. Remember, watch and work.¹

The above sketch of the methods employed by the Revolutionaries will have given some hint of the religious feelings underlying their movement. We may get the Indian point of view by noting that Lala Lajpat Rai speaks of the Revolutionaries as men “who are extremely religious and spiritual. . . . They believe that they owe their lives to the Mother-

¹ *Report of Sedition Committee, 1918*, p. 108.

land, whom they worship as the means of enabling them to be worthy of the worship of the Supreme Mother of the Universe.”¹ This quotation will serve to introduce us to one strand in the religious thought of the Revolutionaries—the worship of the Hindu goddess Kali, a grim goddess usually represented as wearing a garland of human heads and as dancing upon the prostrate body of Siva. Few things will better bring out the association of the Bengal Revolutionaries with the Kali cult than the following description of his initiation into an Anusilam Samiti by a boy recruited at Comilla in 1914.

On Kali Puja day of that year I was summoned from my home by Purna, and under his instructions myself and the following men did fast for the whole day. . . . After nightfall Purna took all four of us to the cremation-ground. There Purna had arranged for the image of Kali and at the feet of the image he had placed two revolvers. We were all of us made to touch the image and take a vow to remain faithful to the Samiti. On this occasion we received our Samiti names.²

By some members of the Revolutionary party the words “*Mayer Lila*” (the inscrutable ways of the Mother) were used to describe their anarchical outrages as if they were deeds sanctioned by the Great Mother of the Universe.

This prominence given to Kali, the Great Mother, becomes intelligible when we remember that in some of her manifestations (e.g. Bhawani) she is regarded as the embodiment of the infinite Energy

¹ *Young India*, p. 143 f.

² *Report of Sedition Committee, 1918*, p. 95.

or Strength (*sakti*). The doctrine was worked out in a pamphlet published in 1905 by the Bengal Revolutionaries and probably written by Arabinda Ghose. It was entitled *Bhawani Mandir*, which means Temple of Bhawani. The pamphlet attributes the success of Japan over Russia to the strength she drew from religion and insists that Indians must worship Bhawani, the Mother of Strength, if they are to win freedom from the foreign yoke. From her alone can they acquire the mental, physical, moral, and spiritual strength they need. All this, and much more, is set forth in moving and powerful language.

Another strand in the religious thought of the Revolutionaries was drawn from the Vedanta. Bengal had been greatly influenced by the ascetic Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his disciple, the better-known Swami Vivekananda (died 1902), who had established societies for teaching Neo-Vedantism. According to the Neo-Vedantism of Vivekananda all deities and all human beings are manifestations of the impersonal Supreme; all religions are true because in their essence they are identical. Everything in Hinduism is valuable and must be retained. "Ramakrishna's indiscriminate acceptance and uncritical defence of everything Hindu expanded in his disciple into unbounded laudation of everything Indian . . . and unjust condemnation of everything Western."¹ It may be doubted whether Vivekananda foresaw the political consequences which flowed from his religious teaching, though his brother, Bhupendra Nath Dutt,

¹ Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 205.

was an influential anarchist journalist. But the Bengal Revolutionaries were not slow to draw out the logical conclusions of such premises.¹ If everything Indian is pure, spiritual, and lofty, and everything Western is materialistic, sensual, and devilish, then the sooner India is rid of all Europeans and all Western influence the better it will be, for her. The *Bhawani Mandir* declared:

"India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the eternal religion, which is to harmonize all religion, science, and philosophies, and make mankind one soul. . . . It was to initiate this great work, the greatest and most wonderful work ever given to a race, that Bhagavan Ramkrishna came and Vivekananda preached."²

The use made of the *Gita* by the Revolutionaries is not without melancholy interest. As is well known, the chief *dramatis personae* of the *Gita* are Arjuna, the warrior prince, and Krishna, who appears as his charioteer. The scene is set on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Arjuna is overcome with remorse

¹ *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 358.

² Quoted by Lord Ronaldshay in his *Heart of Aryavarta*, p. 129. In chaps. viii to xi of this work, Lord Ronaldshay has an excellent and sympathetic study of the ideas of the Revolutionary party. Anent the above quotation, he remarks, "Upon the warm and emotional temperament of the young Bengali such appeals had the effect of deep draughts of intoxicating nectar."

at the prospect of slaying his relatives in the opposing army. He appeals to Krishna for advice. Krishna talks a great deal of philosophy, but his answer may be reduced to this. Every man must do the duties which his caste imposes on him. Arjuna is a warrior and must do his duty. It is not difficult to see how the Revolutionaries could pervert such teaching into a justification of cold-blooded murder. It is not surprising that the *Gita* was a book much studied in the Anusilan Samitis. Soon after the attempt on Lord Hardinge's life was made in Delhi in December 1912, a leaflet was circulated among the students and others extolling the would-be assassins and saying, "The *Gita*, the *Vedas*, and the *Koran* all enjoin us to kill all the enemies of our Motherland, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. . . . Leaving other great and small things, the special manifestation of the Divine force at Delhi in December last has proved beyond doubt that the destiny of India is being moulded by God Himself."¹

To meet the situation created by the Revolutionaries, two acts, known as the Rowlatt Acts, were passed, which conferred upon the Executive powers to deal with the campaign of organized violence. The Revolutionary movement was broken and for some years anarchical crime was suppressed. Its recrudescence in the post-war period is dealt with below.²

¹ *Report of Sedition Committee, 1918*, p. 144.

² See p. 92.

CHAPTER V

POST-WAR POLITICS

THE racial pride of the Indian peoples was naturally enhanced by the achievements of Indian troops during the Great War; and at its close Indian politicians were looking for a liberal reward for the services rendered by their country to the cause of the Allies. They expected to receive a large measure of self-government. To them it seemed that the Government replied with a slap in the face when it passed the Rowlatt Acts which gave the Executive powers to intern without public trial all suspected of being implicated in the Revolutionary movement. Indians had expected that all such drastic measures would be withdrawn when peace was signed. The Rowlatt Acts, therefore, provoked widespread resentment with their suggestion that the anarchist movement was nation-wide. The Government pointed out that the Acts would interfere with the liberty of none save those engaged in revolutionary conspiracies; but in a country where the police stand very low in the public confidence such a plea fell on deaf ears. Mr. Gandhi denounced the Bill and set on foot the *Satyagraha* movement to prevent it passing. In February 1919 Mr. Gandhi started his campaign and it soon spread through India like a prairie fire. He travelled throughout the country preaching his doctrine and administering the *Satyagraha* vow to the many thousands who flocked to hear him. This vow ran as follows:

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Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills . . . are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws . . . and further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person, or property.

But it was easier to inflame the passions of the ignorant multitudes than to restrain them from violence. During April riots broke out in Delhi, Bombay, and in the Punjab on the days when *hartals* (abstention from all ordinary business) were proclaimed. Five Englishmen were murdered at Amritsar in the riots which preceded General Dyer's deplorable action at Jallianwala Bagh in that city. By these outbreaks of violence Mr. Gandhi was deeply grieved. To atone for the sins of his followers he fasted for three days and asked them to fast for twenty-four hours. On April 18, 1919, the Mahatma announced a temporary suspension of the *Satyagraha* movement.

At Christmas 1919 the Indian National Congress met at Amritsar. The delegates were smarting under the passing of the Rowlatt Acts and the blunder of General Dyer in the city where they met. The main topic for discussion was whether or not they were to co-operate with the Government to make the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms a success. The leaders of the Congress were divided. Some wanted to stand as candidates for the Reformed Councils; others would take no gift "from blood-stained hands".

Mr. Gandhi stood firmly for co-operation, but in a few months he changed his mind. The Treaty of Sèvres inflamed Moslem feeling in India and the Mahatma threw in his lot with the Ali brothers. Fraternization between Hindu and Moslem became the order of the day and on August 1, 1920, the Non-Co-operation movement was launched. Its object was three-fold: redress of the Khalifate grievance, the punishment of the leading officials of the Punjab for their complicity in the Amritsar massacre, the attainment of *Swaraj* as the only effectual means of preventing a repetition of similar wrongs. A special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September 1920 accepted Mr. Gandhi's lead and enthusiastically adopted his Non-Co-operation programme. The official resolution declared: "The Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation until the said wrongs are righted and *Swaraj* is established." The details of the programme were thus worked out by the Congress, which "earnestly advised"

- (a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;
- (b) Refusal to attend Government levees, durbars, and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour;
- (c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided, or controlled by Government and in place of such schools and colleges the establishment of National schools and colleges in the various provinces;
- (d) Gradual boycott of British Courts by lawyers and litigants

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- and the establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes;
- (e) Refusal on the part of the military, clerical, and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;
 - (f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress' advice, offer himself for election; and
 - (g) The boycott of foreign goods.

The Congress went on to advise the "immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand-spinning in every home and hand-weaving on the part of millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement."

An intensive campaign throughout the country followed these decisions, which were reaffirmed when the Congress met at Christmas 1920 at Nagpur. Mr. Gandhi declared that the key to the economic salvation of India lay in a return to the spinning-wheel (*charka*) and the hand-loom. He promised *Swaraj* by these methods in nine months. On August 1, 1921, foreign goods owned by Indians were collected on the sea-shore at Bombay and burnt in a huge bonfire, which the Mahatma himself lighted. September came and went but no *Swaraj* came; and Mr. Gandhi did not carry out his threat to retire to the Himalayas if his prophecy failed to come true. The Government of India looked on the movement with something akin to disdain. The Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, declared it was "the most foolish of all foolish schemes". But it was

clear to every Britisher in India that, if the Non-Co-operation movement had succeeded, it would have meant the setting up of a state within the State. Indeed, at the Congress of 1920 Mr. Gandhi had proposed and carried a change in the statement of the aims of that body. Hitherto the declared object of the Congress had been defined as "the attainment of self-government within the British Empire by the people of India by all legal, constitutional methods". Mr. Gandhi's amendment ran: "The attainment of *Swaraj* by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means." The amendment was purposely designed to leave it open to Congress to decide whether or not India desired to retain her connection with the British Empire.

During 1921 the Mahatma's influence was at its height. By all he was regarded as a great saint (*mahatma*) and by not a few as an incarnation of the divine. In December 1921 he was given almost unlimited political power, for the Congress took the extraordinary step of delegating to him all its powers and authorising him to appoint his successor. As the Non-Co-operation movement spread among the masses the Moslem element, always more militant, urged more heroic methods. Time and time again the Committee of the Congress seemed on the point of passing from its policy of non-violent non-co-operation to that of civil disobedience, but it refrained. What actually precipitated matters was the arrest of the Ali brothers and their imprisonment. Thereupon the Committee of the Congress under Mr. Gandhi's lead authorized every province, on its

own responsibility, to proclaim civil disobedience and to make a beginning by refusing to pay taxes. Then followed the boycott of the Prince of Wales's tour. On December 24th, when the Prince passed through Calcutta, he passed through a silent and deserted city. The riots which usually accompany a *hartal* broke out in various places. Many Indian leaders were arrested, but as yet Government laid no hands upon the Mahatma, who, wherever he went, promised *Swaraj* by January 1, 1922. Everywhere his word was received as the word of a god. Coolies and others employed at a distance from their homes began to flock back to be ready to greet the great day. Many thousands of people sat up all night and watched for the sunrise, but nothing happened. *Swaraj* did not come. Perhaps it would come the next day. The promised miracle was only delayed. Again they were doomed to disappointment. Then at last, when ample time had elapsed to demonstrate to the whole of India the hollowness of the Mahatma's promises, the Government of India caused Mr. Gandhi to be arrested on March 10, 1922. In the meantime Mr. Gandhi had made a desperate effort to recover his lost influence by addressing a letter (February 9, 1922) to Lord Reading, the Viceroy, giving him seven days in which to announce a change of policy—the alternative being civil disobedience throughout the whole country. As another indication of his waning influence it may be mentioned that when the Committee of the Congress met in Delhi on February 24th, Mr. Gandhi met with

much opposition from some members who declared that his non-violent methods were throttling the ardour of the people. There were many who expected that the news of the Mahatma's arrest would be the signal for a universal rising. All remained quiet, though there can be little doubt that, if the arrest had been made twelve months earlier, frightful consequences might have ensued. But Lord Reading had carefully bided his time and the Mahatma he caused to be arrested was a Mahatma whose prophecies had been falsified before the eyes of the Indian peoples. Mr. Gandhi was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, but was released within twelve months.

When their leader's magnetic personality was withdrawn, Mr. Gandhi's followers lost their cohesion. The feeling had for some time been growing among them that his methods were too extreme to make for success. Many of them decided to enter the Reformed Councils which the Mahatma had boycotted, and at the general election at the end of 1923 they captured the second Assembly and became known as the *Swarajist* party. Under the leadership of Mr. C. R. Das they abandoned the Mahatma's medieval methods and began to use the up-to-date methods of parliamentary warfare. At the meeting of the Congress at Christmas 1924, Mr. Gandhi, in a long speech in which he confessed his failure, abdicated his political leadership. The best brains of the movement followed Mr. C. R. Das into the Councils and gradually abandoned the policy of rigid non-co-operation. After the third election to the Indian Legislative

Assembly in 1926 the Swarajists formed the largest party, but did not obtain an absolute majority. They refused, however, to accept the office of Minister-in-Charge of one of the transferred subjects. They thought that without Indian Ministers the transferred subjects could not be administered and, a deadlock resulting, the reforms would be wrecked; and then would follow the grant of full responsible government under the overwhelming pressure of their compulsion. The dyarchy then in operation they hated as an illogical and impossible half-way house. Their demand was for immediate and full self-government.

The death of Mr. C. R. Das on June 16, 1926, was a cruel blow to the Swarajists and found them quite unprepared. The mantle of leadership eventually fell upon the shoulders of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Soon after the death of Mr. Das the right wing of the party began to move in the direction of responsivist co-operation. The members of the Responsivist party, whose defection was a severe blow to Pandit Motilal Nehru and his followers, threw over the Swarajist policy of automatic and uncompromising hostility to Government measures and Government policy. They decided to accept the office of Minister-in-Charge of the transferred subjects and to treat all Government proposals on their own merits. The slogan of the Responsivist Co-operators was "Co-operation when possible: opposition when, necessary". In 1927 the Swarajists, under Pandit Motilal Nehru, began to call themselves the Congress party.

It is not easy to trace the history of extreme nationalism since the death of Mr. C. R. Das. His Swarajist party was a composite body and has since undergone a process of disintegration. It soon lost Moslem support and became a Hindu party, and not a homogeneous party at that. During the Great War there was considerable *rapprochement* between Hindus and Moslems. For the first time the Indian National Congress and the All-India Moslem League met in the same city and exchanged courtesies, though with some protests from the older members of the League. The President of the Moslem League, Mr. Mazhar-ul-Haq, declared, "When a question concerning the welfare of India and of justice to Indians arises I am not only an Indian first, but an Indian next and an Indian to the last, an Indian and an Indian alone." Writing in 1916 in his *Young India* (p. lxxv. f.), Mr. Lajpat Rai hailed the change of attitude on the part of the Moslems with enthusiasm. "The Mohammedans feel", he said, "that they can be as proud of the Hindu heroes, Rama and Krishna, of the Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, of Hindu science and Hindu philosophy, as the Hindus themselves are, without being false to their religion or to their community. Similarly the Hindus feel that they can be as proud of a Sher Shar and an Akbar and a Shar Jahan, of Alberuni, of Ibn Batuta, of Abul Fazal, Faizi and Galib, as the Mohammedans can be. . . . The Hindus and Mohammedans have discovered that they can take part in their respective festivals and take pride in

their respective past, without in any way being traitors to their respective religions and communities." For a time it seemed that Mr. Lajpat Rai's enthusiasm was well grounded, for at the Lucknow Congress in 1916 an *entente* between Hindus and Moslems was established. But the *entente* has always been liable to rupture on the slightest provocation. The Moplah rising in the Malabar country in 1921-2, in the course of which many Hindus were slaughtered by fanatical Moslems, must have given seriously minded men food for thought. More serious still from the point of view of the Indian Nationalists has been the succession of Hindu-Moslem riots which has broken out intermittently ever since 1923. They make every religious feast a source of anxiety to those responsible for law and order. In April 1926 communal battles went on for practically a whole month in Calcutta, and were only quelled by British troops. The feud is a long-standing one and its causes are well known, but its recrudescence is in part due to a violent reaction after the period of fraternization when Mr. Gandhi's Non-Co-operation campaign was at its height. On the Moslem side it is also a rebound from the humiliation felt by Indian Moslems when their Khalifate agitation was stultified by the action of Mustapha Kemel himself, whom they had regarded as the living sword of Islam. Again, it was an easy and rapid transition from a hatred of the Government to a hatred of other castes and creeds. Another cause for the revival lies in the fact that devolution of authority to Indians has

naturally excited a rivalry for place and power, and on the part of the Moslems a fear lest they should not receive from the overwhelming Hindu majority the same even-handed justice that they have had from the British *Raj*. Hence the resuscitation of the All-India Moslem League and the revival of their demand for communal representation, a bitter pill for Indian Nationalists of all shades of opinion to swallow, for they know how fatal it is to the development of Indian nationhood. Both parties in this strife have been actively engaged in religious proselytism. The Moslems, being in a hopeless minority, have been compelled to close their ranks. Some who had joined the Non-Co-operation party during the Khalifate agitation decided to enter the Councils to keep a vigilant eye on Moslem interests. Their action caused a curious split among the Hindu Swarajists. A section broke away which called itself the Independent Congress party. Its intentions were to co-operate with the Government, not because it liked the new Constitution, but with a view to seeing that Hindu interests were kept well to the front in the Assembly and the Councils. Its leader was none other than Mr. Lajpat Rai, whose extravagancies on Hindu-Moslem unity we noted above. His ideal was Hindu nationalism. His aim was the triumph of Hinduism as interpreted by the Arya Samaj, which derives, as we shall see later, its impetus from the tide of anti-Western reaction. The Arya Samaj's declaration that it seeks to reconvert Indian Moslems to Hinduism has led to constant Hindu-Moslem

riots in the cities where the Samaj is most active. The cold-blooded murder in Delhi in December 1926 of a prominent member of the Samaj, Mr. Munshi Ram (Swami Shraddananda), cannot be dissociated from his activities in the *Shuddi* movement, the object of which is to restore to Hinduism the Moslem descendants of converted Hindus.

The murder of so prominent an educationalist as the Swami sent a thrill of horror through the Hindu community. At the Indian National Congress held at Gauhati at Christmas 1926, the Extremist leader, Pandit Motilal Nehru, declared that the cup of dissension was now full and that both communities would be face to face with utter ruin, unless the militant sections called a halt. The President, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, affirmed, however, that the worst phase of communalism had passed and that nationalism was steadily establishing itself. It may be doubted whether Mr. Iyengar's optimism was well founded, for while he was speaking the All-India Moslem League met at Delhi and its President, Khan Bahadur Sheik Abdul Qadir, who had recently represented India at the League of Nations, urged the retention of communal electorates and made at the same time a vigorous plea for complete self-government, adding that the Moslem League must bring back to its fold the sheep that had gone astray. From such an utterance it is abundantly clear that the disposition of Indian Moslems to join hands with Hindus in a common hostility to British rule had been greatly chastened. Indian Extremists cannot reasonably complain of these

disastrous results, for they are the logical outcome of their policy of arousing racial hatred. This is the considered judgment of not a few Indian leaders, of whom Sir Surendranath Banerjea may be taken as typical. He writes:

It is this sentiment of hatred fostered among the masses, directed in the first instance against the British Government, that came, by a natural process of growth, to be extended to all others who worshipped in a different temple culminating in those communal and caste feuds that have darkened our recent history. I cannot help thinking that these leaders were playing with fire, and they have intensified a feeling already latent. . . . Let us not, for the sake of historic justice, forget the part the Non-Co-operation movement had in fostering and promoting it.¹

The Statutory Commission provided for in the Government of India Act of 1919 was appointed in November 1927. It has become known as the Simon Commission as Sir John Simon, K.C., was appointed Chairman. Lord Birkenhead (then Secretary of State for India), justified its appointment before the expiry of the ten years mentioned in the Act on the ground that relations between Great Britain and India were improving. The Commission, which included in its membership representatives of all parties in the House of Commons, paid its first visit to India in February and March 1928, and was boycotted by the Extremists because no Indian had been included. In 1928 Indian political leaders drew together to frame a draft constitution for India. Their intention was to anticipate the findings of the Simon Commission and to reply to Lord Birkenhead's challenge that Indians were

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 302.

not united and did not know what they wanted and could not get beyond easy generalities on *Swaraj*. The work was undertaken by a committee of the All-Parties Conference under the presidency of Pandit Motilal Nehru. The fruit of their labours is embodied in the so-called Nehru Report of 1928. It drafts a constitution for India on the basis of Dominion Status. The Report was adopted by the All-Parties Conference when it met at Lucknow in September 1928, but the younger Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, dissented. But the Report was still-born, for the younger Nehru was soon to capture the Congress with his slogan, "Complete Independence", and it was rejected by the Moslems and Depressed Classes who thought it did not do justice to their interests.

The Simon Commission spent two cold seasons in India collecting evidence, but its activities were, to some extent, hindered by the refusal of most leading Indian politicians to co-operate with it. The boycotters seized the presence of the Commission in India to reiterate their demands in a more extreme form. Many of them now began to say that they stood for immediate independence and the complete severance of British control. *Swaraj* was re-defined by them, not as Dominion Status, but as complete independence for India. Here they broke away from the policy of Mr. C. R. Das, who not long before his death had said, in a speech at Faridpur:

No nation can live in isolation; Dominion Status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great

Commonwealth of Nations, called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realize itself, develop itself and fulfil itself. . . . Therefore it expresses all the elements of Swaraj. To me the idea is specially attractive, because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world-peace, in the ultimate federation of the world. . . . The great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilization, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led, is bound to make a lasting contribution to the great problem that awaits statesmen, the problem of knitting the world into the greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race. . . . Independence to my mind is a narrower ideal than Swaraj.

The Extremists, who had taken complete independence as their watchword, now began their attempts to get it promulgated as the official creed of the Congress. At its meeting in Calcutta at Christmas 1928 they were thwarted. Mr. Gandhi stood out against them and his influence secured the adoption of a resolution that Congress was to organize a Non-Co-operation movement, including the non-payment of taxes, if by the end of 1929 Dominion Status had not been granted to India. Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose's amendment for complete independence was rejected. The obvious intention of the resolution was to force the hand of the Simon Commission, but the amount of support received by the amendment was an indication of the trend of opinion among the younger members of the Congress.

Throughout 1929 the publication of the Report of the Simon Commission was eagerly awaited by Indian politicians. Their patience was sorely tried when the year began to draw to a close and the Report had still not appeared. In October of

1929 the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, made an attempt to allay Indian feeling by an important announcement in a *Gazette Extraordinary*. After pointing out that what had delayed the Report was the Commissioners' discovery that they could not frame satisfactory recommendations without undertaking the additional labour of considering the place of the Indian States in their proposed scheme, the Viceroy went on to say that after the Reports of the Simon Commission and the Central India Committee had been received a round-table conference would be held in London at which representative Indians, both from British India and the States, would be invited to meet representatives of His Majesty's Government "for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would later be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament". Then followed a statement which defined more precisely the meaning of the Declaration of 1917¹ and, since it is likely to be as historic as the Declaration itself, it had better be quoted in full.

The Ministers of the Crown, moreover, have more than once publicly declared that it is the desire of the British Government that India should, in the fullness of time, take her place in the Empire in equal partnership with the Dominions. But in view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the Statute of 1919, I am authorized on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly

¹ See p. 21 above.

that in their judgment it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's Constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status.

In many quarters in India, Lord Irwin's announcement was received with a chorus of approval and hopes were freely expressed that much bitterness would now be allayed. Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mrs. Besant, and many others published a statement saying that they appreciated the sincerity of the Viceroy's pronouncement and hoped to co-operate with His Majesty's Government "in their effort to evolve a scheme of Dominion Constitution suitable for India's needs", but they added, "We hold it to be absolutely essential that the public should be made to feel that a new era has commenced even from to-day, and that the new Constitution is to be but a register of that fact." They also state the terms on which they would be prepared to co-operate at the proposed Conference. These were (a) the adoption of a policy of general conciliation, (b) a general amnesty for all political prisoners, (c) the representation on the Conference of Progressive political organizations, (d) the largest representation on the Conference for the Congress party. Since Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was among the signatories there were some who said that the independence movement was now dead.

The hopes aroused by the Viceroy's announcement were soon shattered, Lord Irwin received Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and Mr. Jinnah at Delhi, but negotiations were rendered impossible by the declaration of the

Mahatma and the Pandit that the Congress would not participate in the London Round-Table Conference unless its purpose was to draft a scheme for Dominion Status and that scheme was subsequently supported by His Majesty's Government. A few days later, when the Congress met in Lahore at Christmas 1929, the younger men, led by the younger Nehru, who was in the chair, carried the day for the complete independence policy. The Congress decided to withdraw its commitment to the Nehru Report, asked all Congressmen to withdraw from and to boycott the central and provincial legislatures and authorized its committee to launch a campaign for civil disobedience and the non-payment of taxes and the calling of general strikes by the workers, when it deems this necessary. The "national flag" was hoisted and the "General Officer Commanding" the Congress Volunteers saluted Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with drawn sword. The Pandit declared that the offer of a round-table conference was "vague with no promise of performance". As his presidential address marks such a definite change in the policy of the Congress it may be well to give a few extracts from it that the new notes which it sounded may be appreciated.

Independence for us means complete freedom from British domination and British Imperialism.

The embrace of the British Empire is a dangerous thing. It is not, and cannot be, the life-giving embrace of affection freely given and returned. And if it is not that it will be what it has been in the past—the embrace of death.

We have had much controversy about independence and Dominion Status and we have quarrelled about words. But the real thing is the conquest of power by whatever name it may be called. I do not think that any form of Dominion Status applicable to India will give us real power. A test of this power would be the entire withdrawal of the alien Army of Occupation and economic control. Let us, therefore, concentrate on these and the rest will follow easily.

We stand, therefore, to-day for the fullest freedom of India. This Congress has not acknowledged and will not acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to dictate to us in any way. To it we make no appeal.

I must frankly confess that I am a Socialist and a Republican and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry. . . . I recognize, however, that it may not be possible for a body constituted as is this National Congress and in the present circumstances of the country to adopt a full Socialistic programme. But we must realize that the philosophy of Socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over and almost the only point in dispute is the pace and the methods of advance to its full realization. India will have to go that way too if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality, though she may evolve her own methods and may adapt the ideal to the genius of her race.

The great majority of us, I take it, judge the issue not on moral but on practical grounds, and if we reject the way of violence it is because it promises no substantial results. But if this Congress of the nation at any future time comes to the conclusion that methods of violence will rid us of slavery then I have no doubt that it will adopt them. Violence is bad but slavery is far worse.

Let us also remember that the great apostle of non-violence has himself told us that it is better to fight than to refuse to fight out of cowardice.

The proceedings of the Lahore Congress at once rallied the more conservative forces of the country,

which viewed with dismay its revolutionary, republican Socialism. In the Congress itself Pandit Malaviya, the head of the Hindu Mahasabha, moved an amendment postponing the change of creed till after the All-Parties Conference in March or April and pleaded for an All-Party mentality. In this he was supported by Mr. Kelkar, who said that the boycott of the Councils was "an exploded stunt". Their amendment was rejected by an overwhelming majority. The members of the National Liberal Federation at once ranged themselves against the new orientation of the Congress, and issued an appeal to all parties to help to fight the independence move of the Congress. The Moslems, realizing that full independence would mean Hindu rule, condemned what they called Mr. Gandhi's fatal mistake. Mr. Yakub Hasan appealed to Dr. Ansari and all Moslems who had remained in the Congress ranks to come out of it. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the President of the Moslem League, characterized the Lahore resolutions as "most misleading, unpracticable, unsound, and unwise . . . calculated to do enormous harm to the interests of India". Proposals were set on foot for the formation against the Congress of an alliance of all parties supporting the Dominion Status ideal, so that the opportunity of the Round-Table Conference should not be lost. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, a National Liberal, appealed to the Hindu Mahasabha, the Moslem Leagues, the Justice Party, and the Non-Brahmin and Depressed Classes organizations to join the proposed alliance.

To none was the Congress demand for independence more repugnant than to the Indian Princes, to whom Pandit Jawaharlal had devoted a section of his presidential address. He described the Indian States as "curious relics of a bygone age", their rulers as "puppet kings", of whom many have "hardly any redeeming feature".¹ He demanded self-determination for the peoples of the States and declared that Congress was "perfectly willing to confer with such rulers as are prepared to give it and to devise means whereby the transition may not be too sudden". The cool impudence of these remarks was not lost on the Indian Princes, who usually give agitators a short shrift. The Maharajah of Patiala, speaking at a durbar, said that independence was "a will-o'-the-wisp" which would be "disastrous in the extreme to the ideal of a greater India". "It is time", he declared, "that we of the States should once more make it plain that we cannot enter into any working arrangements with British India except on the basis that the connection with Britain is maintained."

The next important move came from the Viceroy, who, on January 25, 1930, made in the Legislative Assembly an impressive speech which was virtually a reply to the challenge of the Lahore Congress. He said that by his announcement in November he had never sought to delude Indian opinion into the belief that "a definition of the purpose, however plainly stated, would of itself, by the enunciation

¹ Cf. the similar indictment in *Indian Princes under British Protection*, by P. L. Chudgar.

of a phrase, provide a solution for the problems which have to be solved before that purpose is fully realized. . . . No sensible traveller would feel that a clear definition of his destination was the same thing as the completion of his journey, but it is an assurance of the direction". Lord Irwin also made it clear that it was not the function of the proposed Round-Table Conference to fashion a constitution for India which should thereafter be accepted unchanged by Parliament. "It is evident", he said, "that any such procedure would be impracticable and impossible of reconciliation with the constitutional responsibility that must rest on His Majesty's Government and upon Parliament." No date could be fixed for the meeting of the Conference, but he would welcome the views of the members of the Assembly and the leaders of political thought. In the meantime his Government would discharge to the full its responsibility for the maintenance of law and order, if unlawful methods were resorted to.

The next day, Sunday, January 26, 1930, the Congress party proceeded to celebrate "Independence Day" in various cities. In Calcutta, for instance, the white, green, and red "national flag" was hoisted and the Mayor, Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, reviewed 250 khaki-clad volunteers of the "National Army". This body had been drilling for some time, but Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, its "G.O.C.", was now in jail and its drill had suffered in consequence. On the previous day, the "national flag" had been hoisted on all municipal build-

ings in accordance with a resolution of the Corporation.

Mr. Gandhi now gave out that he was maturing his plans to carry into effect the Lahore resolution. In a long letter to the Viceroy, dated March 6th, he declared his intention of starting the civil disobedience campaign by a concerted defiance of the Salt Laws. He would defy the Government's salt monopoly by encouraging the production of salt by the people wherever natural facilities offered themselves, and by organizing the dock-workers with a view to securing the united refusal by them to handle imported foreign salt. Lord Irwin replied by pointing out that the course of action contemplated was "clearly bound to involve a violation of the law and a danger to public peace".

The spectacular salt-campaign was immediately started. Mr. Gandhi made his way to the sea and began to boil down sea-water to produce salt. His followers began attempts to manufacture illicit salt. Their law-breaking activities soon brought them into conflict with the police and before long hundreds of *satyagrahis* were in jail. Mr. Gandhi soon abandoned salt-making. It was too tedious an affair even for Indians and gave rise to deception. Enterprising traders were soon selling little packets of ordinary salt at exorbitant prices under a warrant that it was contraband material. Mr. Gandhi then took to cutting down the toddy palms and picketing the liquor shops. Threats of social boycott were used to induce village headmen and members of the police force to resign. This campaign of non-

violence was accompanied by the inevitable riots by the mob and outbreaks between Hindus and Moslems. Lives were lost in Bombay, Calcutta, and Karachi. Owing to murderous outbreaks of mob-violence it was necessary to proclaim martial law at Peshawar and Sholapur, while at Chittagong a mob of insurgents looted and destroyed the armouries and burnt the telephone exchange. Once more it was demonstrated that it is impossible in India to conduct a civil disobedience campaign without promoting bloodshed and disorder and without giving the anarchist and incendiary the opportunity he is waiting for. As soon as such a campaign is inaugurated the riff-raff of the cities get ready to stab and loot. The Government was advised that the campaign would fizzle out if Mr. Gandhi was not arrested. But the danger to public peace was so great that he was placed under arrest on May 5th. The Bombay Government issued a *communiqué* which stated that in full consultation with the Government of India it had "come to the conclusion that it was no longer possible to allow Mr. Gandhi to remain at large without grave danger to the tranquillity of India. . . . Every provision will be made for his health and comfort during his detention". Mr. Gandhi expressed himself as grateful for the arrangements made. The arrest of other Congress leaders such as Mrs. Naidu, the two Nehrus, and others soon followed.

Soon after Mr. Gandhi's arrest the Simon Commission Report was published. The long delay had been misinterpreted by many Indians as a

deliberate attempt to postpone the Round-Table Conference. In reality it was due to the necessity under which the Commissioners found themselves of giving close consideration to the question of the Indian States. For two or three years the Indian Princes had been "moving towards the centre of the political stage", and had frequently expressed the desire for a clearer definition of their position and status. The Princes are faced with a growing demand by their subjects for a larger measure of constitutional government. Lord Birkenhead appointed the Indian States Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler, to investigate and report. The Harcourt Butler Report, which appeared in April 1929, conceded some of the economic and political claims of the Princes, but yielded little or no ground on the question of the paramount power of the Viceroy over the Princes.

The Simon Commissioners issued their Report in two volumes and arranged for the first volume to appear some time before the second. The first volume contained a survey of Indian problems and the intention was to secure a full appreciation of these problems before controversy was engendered by discussion of the recommendations which the Commissioners confined to their second volume.

Volume I of the Report soon became a "best-seller". It is written and arranged with great literary skill. Perhaps its most striking feature is its detachment and the scientific spirit in which it handles the material collected. The Commissioners obviously make every effort to avoid wounding

sensitive susceptibilities. They pay a sincere tribute to the Nationalist movement and draw a picture of Hinduism that is calculated to arouse the pride of all Hindus. At the same time the causes of Hindu-Moslem antagonism are laid bare with cold, analytical precision. The weaknesses of Dyarchy are exposed and it is pointed out that as a system Dyarchy leaves no room for real political responsibility on the part of Ministers and that the Government is unable to influence public opinion since it has no Press. The condition of the depressed classes and the ryots is sympathetically expounded and it is pointed out that, though the latter have little understanding of political problems, they are easily influenced by such a personality as Mr. Gandhi. To many orthodox Hindus the section of the Report which deals with the Feminist movement in India will come as a surprise. The Report goes so far as to declare that the movement holds the key of future progress. Equally sympathetic is the Report's attitude to the Anglo-Indian or Eurasian community.

The vexed question of the control of the Army in India receives lengthy and incisive treatment. The Commissioners point out that "as regards external defence, India has to carry a constant burden of anxiety and provide against actual dangers on her north-west frontier, which are wholly without parallel in the case of the self-governing Dominions". None of these Dominions is ever likely to be invaded, whereas India, throughout her history, has been liable to incursions by foreign invaders, who have forced their way through the

passes of the North-West and have established themselves as conquerors in the plains of India, in spite of the fact that they have been in a minority as compared with the vast population of India. "The urgency and extent of the problem of military defence in India are without parallel elsewhere in the Empire, and constitute a difficulty in developing self-government which never arose in any comparable degree in the case of the self-governing Dominions."

But the task of the Army in India is not confined to repelling foreign invaders; it has also to maintain and restore internal peace. Outbreaks of communal and religious violence are not infrequent and in such circumstances the practically universal request is for British troops to quell the disorder, since the British soldier is a neutral and cannot be suspected of favouring Hindus or Moslems. "When, therefore, one contemplates a future for India, in which, in place of the existing Army organization, the country is defended and pacified by exclusively Indian units, just as Canada relies on Canadian troops and Ireland on Irish troops, it is essential to realize and bear in mind the dimensions and character of the Indian problem of internal order and the part which the British soldier at present plays (to the general satisfaction of the country-side) in supporting peaceful government."

The Commissioners next point out that in addition to India's need of a military force to deal with a danger of the first order of magnitude on her frontiers and her need of neutral troops to support

internal order, a third need must be added. Neither in the Dominions nor in the rest of the world is there any parallel to the fact that certain areas, notably Bengal and Assam, do not furnish a single man for the Regular Army. If the Gurkhas, who are recruited from the independent State of Nepal, are excluded, the Panjab supplies 62 per cent. of the whole Indian Army. "It is manifest", say the Commissioners, "that the peaceful unity of a self-governing India would be exposed to great risks if it relied, for the purpose of maintaining and restoring internal order, solely upon Indian troops drawn from selected areas and special races." Thus Sir John Simon and his colleagues, in their own way, show that after all there is some truth underlying the obvious exaggeration of the oft-quoted saying that if the British withdrew from India not a virgin nor a rupee would long be left in Bengal. The Commissioners conclude this section of their Report with a temperately worded double warning—"a warning, on the one hand, that Britain cannot indefinitely treat the present military organization of India as sacrosanct and unalterable, but must make an active endeavour to search for such adjustments as might be possible; and a warning, on the other hand, that Indian statesmen can help to modify the existing arrangement in the direction of self-government only if they too will co-operate by facing the hard facts and by remembering that those who set them out for further consideration are not gloating over obstacles, but are offering the help of friends to Indian aspirations."

The Commissioners open their second volume with an exposition of the general principles upon which their recommendations are based. These are four in number: (1) "The new constitution should, as far as possible, contain within itself provision for its own development." A periodic revision of the constitution prejudices its successful working. Those who have to work a temporary constitution "instead of making the most of the existing constitution and learning to deal with practical problems under existing conditions . . . constantly endeavour to anticipate the future and to push forward the day for the next instalment of reforms. There is little incentive to try to make the system a success." (2) The new constitution must be federal in character so as to leave room for the eventual inclusion of the Indian States. Regard must be had to "a future development when India as a whole, not merely British India, will take her place among the constituent States of the Commonwealth of Nations united under the Crown." Geographically the States and British India are closely interwoven; politically they are united by a common allegiance to the Crown; economically they stand and fall together; and Indian Nationalism has taken root in them both. "There are few subjects which should form the field of activity of a Central Government in India which do not, in fact, interest also the Indian States." Outstanding examples are Defence and Communications, whether by road, rail, air, post, telegraph, or wireless. "The fact that the majority of States are land-locked places them

in a position of reliance on British India for their communications with the rest of India and the outside world." Nevertheless "it is absolutely clear that the States cannot be compelled to come into any closer relationship with British India than exists at the present time. . . . the new constitution should provide an open door whereby, when it seems good to them, the Ruling Princes may enter on just and reasonable terms." (3) The ultimate form of the Central Government must await its final determination until the provinces have become self-governing units and together with other constituents are in the federal scheme. "The nature of the constituents themselves has great influence on the form which the federation takes." (4) Regard must be had to "the paramount necessity of securing that throughout the period during which India is progressing on the road to complete self-government there must be full provision made for the maintenance and efficiency of the fundamentals of government." Here the Commissioners have in mind the defence of India from invasion, communal strife, and safeguards for the minorities.

Turning to details the Commission recommends sweeping changes in the provinces. Dyarchy should be abolished and they should become self-governing States with a fully responsible parliamentary government. The Governor should choose his Ministers and the Cabinet thus formed should be responsible for all subjects, including Law and Order. The basis of the franchise should be broadened, though

communal electorates should remain. Reserve powers should be vested in the provincial Governors so that the administration can be carried on in any emergency, for the maintenance of law and order and for the protection of minorities. In so acting the Governor should act under the superintendence of the Governor-General, but otherwise the Governor-General should have no control over provincial Governors and the Government of India no control over the provincial governments except in external or inter-provincial affairs. At the Centre the present Legislative Assembly should be replaced by a body to be called the "Federal Assembly", whose membership should be chosen by the provincial councils themselves, and on which there should be representatives of areas not covered by the provincial councils. The new Federal Assembly should take over the powers of the Legislative Assembly and there will probably be an alteration in the range of its duties as the federal system develops. The Governor-General should remain under the superintendence and control of the Secretary of State for India, but should, in future, choose his own Executive Council. Three of the six members of the Executive should be officials and the Governor-General is recommended to choose the other three from "authoritative Indians", and the prospect is contemplated as "a hopeful development" of elected members of the Central Legislature being included in the Executive Council. At the centre the Government should not be responsible to the Legislature, though the influence of the Indian Legislature upon

the Executive, "which is already considerable, will undoubtedly grow". The powers of the Central Government over the Provincial Governments will take definite shape as the principles of federation are settled. Suggestions are made by the Commissioners as to the subjects in which the Governor-General in Council should exercise direction and control over the Provincial Governments. Two other important recommendations deserve attention. The paramountcy of the Crown over the Indian States should pass from the Governor-General in Council to the Governor-General himself. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army should no longer be a member of the Executive Council and the control of the Army in India should be vested in the Governor-General, acting in consultation with the Commander-in-Chief; and since the protection of the Frontier is an Imperial obligation, India should not bear the whole cost of the Indian Army but pay only a fixed sum.

The scheme outlined by the Simon Report obviously aims at bringing into existence at the earliest possible moment a Federal India with full Dominion Status, and while there is "no retrogression at the Centre" it does confer upon the Provinces a self-government which it is difficult to distinguish from Home Rule. But though the Report recommends advances that were inconceivable ten years ago, it was received in India with a chorus of condemnation in which some of the leading Liberals joined. It was described as "an insult", "a farce", "a colossal hoax". But the

Viceroy continued doggedly to pursue his policy of conciliation and made an announcement at the earliest opportunity. In an address to both Houses of the Indian Legislature on July 9, 1930, he took pains to define the scope of the Round-Table Conference and announced that it would meet in London in October of that year. In view of the issues at stake, his words deserve exact quotation:

The Conference accordingly will be free to approach its task, greatly assisted indeed but with liberty unimpaired by the Report of the Statutory Commission or by any other documents which will be before it. It is the belief of His Majesty's Government that by way of the Conference it should be possible to reach solutions that both countries and all parties and interests in them can honourably accept, and any such agreement at which the Conference is able to arrive will form the basis of proposals which His Majesty's Government will later submit to Parliament.

From such a definition of the scope of the Conference it is clear that His Majesty's Government conceive of it, not as a mere meeting for discussion and debate, but as a joint assembly of representatives of both countries on whose agreement precise proposals to Parliament may be founded. The Conference will thus enjoy the unfettered right of examining the whole problem in all its bearings with the knowledge that its labours are of no academic kind, and His Majesty's Government still hope that Indians of all schools of thought, whatever the attitude that some have hitherto taken, will be ready to share in this constructive work. I see no reason why from a frank discussion on all sides a scheme might not emerge for submission to Parliament which would confound the pessimism of those who would tell us that it is impossible for Great Britain and India, or for various interests in India, to reach agreement.

The party leaders in the Legislative Assembly

after discussing the Viceroy's speech issued a statement welcoming the Viceroy's pronouncement and appealing to the Congress to terminate their campaign of non-co-operation and civil disobedience and to avail themselves of the opportunity offered. "Our demands", they said, "will be irresistible when presented with a substantial degree of unanimity and that single-minded devotion to the high interests of the country which the occasion demands." As this book goes to press the Viceroy has given them permission to interview the Congress leaders in jail with a view to securing their co-operation at the Round-Table Conference. Whether the Congress leaders will go to London or not is not yet known. Apart from their fixed habit of non-co-operation there are good reasons why they should not go. Their presence at the Round-Table Conference will reveal to the world that they are in a minority. Against them will be ranged the Indian Princes, most of the Moslems and the Untouchables, all of whom will refuse to vote for *immediate* Dominion Status, to say nothing of complete independence, for fear of Hindu domination. Is Mr. Gandhi astute enough to prevent this *dénouement* in the capital of the Empire? Two things are clear: it will not be the fault of Lord Irwin if the Round-Table Conference fails; and the Simon Report cannot be shelved at the Conference. As *The Statesman* says, "It holds the field as the one coherent and detailed proposal for the future government of India." After the Round-Table Conference has done its work the matter will have to be discussed

by a Joint Parliamentary Committee before definite proposals are laid before Parliament.

It now remains to indicate the sources from which the different groups of post-war politicians have drawn their inspiration and to lay bare, if possible, the motives underlying the new alignments of parties. Mr. C. R. Das seems to have been greatly influenced by the speeches of British and American statesmen who, during the Great War, stressed the necessity of conceding the right of self-determination to the nations. From the end of 1918 onward, the *War Addresses* of President Woodrow Wilson had a large circulation in India. Let anyone peruse those addresses and he will at once see how easily some of their phrases would become *clichés* in the mouths of Indian Extremists, who had only partly appropriated their meaning and application. Indian politicians had also carefully watched what had happened in Ireland and imagined that a new constitution could be given to India as easily as it had been given to the Irish Free State. They were oblivious to the fact that this was possible in Ireland only by splitting the country into two portions and giving each a parliament of its own. But no Indian Nationalist wishes to see India divided into a number of States, as it would have to be, if all the minorities were to be adequately protected. Indian politicians also had their eyes upon that section of the Report of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of 1926 which states that "Every Dominion is now and must always remain the sole judge of the nature and extent of its co-operation with Great Britain."

They asked for the application of this doctrine to themselves, forgetting that their case differed from that of the Dominions in that those who penned the above sentence did not need to ask for safeguards that the British connection should be maintained. Here we light upon a fundamental defect of the Extremists—they are doctrinaire and display many of the symptoms of political adolescence. They are blind to the many difficulties inherent in the situation and count in days while British politicians count in years. They evolve formulas that have no relation to reality and seem to think that constitutions can be made and new forms of government instituted with the ease that a cheque is signed. They do not recognize that as a policy Non-Co-operation is sterile. But centuries of servitude have bred in many Indians, especially the Bengalis, a fixed habit of political non-co-operation as centuries of oppression did in the Jew. The same servitude has also developed in the Bengalis a remarkable aptitude for reading the minds of their rulers. There is also to be taken into account the East's inveterate habit of bargaining and of asking for more than it expects to get. Thus every fresh advance stimulates not only the Congress party but all other parties to raise their demands.

The influences from the West mentioned above are less important than the consolidation of Hindu and Moslem feeling during the last few years. The Hindus have formed their Mahasabha and have their conversion and organization movements (*Shuddi* and *Sangathan*). The Moslems have replied with exactly parallel movements (*Tabligh* and *Tanzim*).

Moslems dread a Hindu supremacy and are fearful lest their charitable institutions, schools, marriage and testamentary laws, should be interfered with. The Hindus are equally determined that their special interests shall not be lost sight of. Hence the formation in the Legislative Assembly of the Nationalist party which includes the Responsive Co-operators and the Hindu Mahasabhites; into which latter party the Independent Congress party (p. 55 above) was soon merged. When the Legislative Assembly met at Simla in July 1930, the Nationalist party (led by Mr. Jayakar), constituted the official Opposition and had 22 seats. The Swaraj or Congress party had 11; the Independents (led by Mr. Jinnah), 16; the Central Moslems, 13; the European group, 11, and the balance was made up of non-party men and Government and nominated members. Moslems feel that the British politicians over-estimate the power and importance of the Congress. They point out that it is now a purely Hindu institution and that it represents only the higher caste Hindus. Simultaneously the Depressed Classes¹ have awaked to political consciousness. Thus the problem of the minorities has been thrust forward as never before, and they are seen to constitute the crux of the political situation. No grant of responsible self-government can be made to India without some guarantee being made to the minorities that adequate safeguards will be provided for them. The Moslem leader, Dr. Abdullah Suhrawardy, had the Untouchables

¹ See below, chap. vi.

as well as his co-religionists in mind when he said recently:

It would be an irony of fate and a travesty of justice, if the liberalizing of Indian political institutions would mean their further enslavement and subjection to the despotism, tyranny, and domination of a narrow, selfish oligarchy or an equally selfish majority despite their splendid endurance and self-sacrifice. Those who clamour for the right of self-determination for themselves must not be placed in a position to deny the same to the minority communities on whom they have imposed or propose to impose a state of slavery. Dominion Status for themselves can hardly go hand in hand with the status of one of the worst forms of slavery and caste dominations known to history which divides humanity into demi-gods and pariah dogs.

Since the second General Election in 1923, the position of the Moderates has not been altogether a happy one. They did their best to make the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms a success, but in 1923 the Swarajists swept them from office and power. Nevertheless it was their efforts to work the reforms which really ended the first Non-Co-operation movement, for by 1922-3 the Swarajists were flocking into the Legislatures. The Moderates had joined hands with the Extremists in condemning the obnoxious Rowlatt Acts, but the publication of the *Satyagraha* pledge caused their immediate secession.

They saw how easily it might lead to anarchy and they disliked Mr. Gandhi's indiscriminating denunciation of Western civilization. "We are now in the whirlpool of a movement", wrote Sir Surendranath Banerjea, "that would recall us back to our ancient civilization, and our time-honoured ways and customs, untempered by the impact of the ages that

have rolled by and the forces of modern life, now so supremely operative in shaping the destinies of mankind . . . such a movement is against the eternal verities of things and that divine law of progress which the Unseen Hand of an Invisible Power has inscribed on every page of human history".¹

In more recent years the Moderates have been discouraged by their defeats and some of them are a little chagrined at the power passing into other hands. They are afraid to face the hostility of the Extremist leaders and their unruly followers, and when they have not been intimidated into silence or ambiguity, they make speeches which seem to indicate that they are moving from the centre to the left. They feel that the tide is running against them and that the Government goes out of its way to pacify the Extremists and is too little inclined to consult Moderate opinion. In January 1929 one of them, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, complained at the meeting of the National Liberal Federation in Allahabad that "Lord Irwin's Government specialized in the art of losing friends". At the same meeting the President of the Federation said, "I venture to think that every reasonable mind should accept the goal of Dominion Status,² which meets all national aspirations and carries with it the advantages of partnership in the most powerful Empire in the world." There is real political sagacity in the Moderate ranks, and it may safely be predicted that they will come into their own again at the Round-Table Conference.

¹ Op. cit., p. 308.

² Cf. p. 49 above.

From many points of view the most sinister feature of post-war politics is the emergence of secular republicanism under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. With the help of the younger men he has captured the Congress and Mr. Gandhi for his complete independence policy. At the same time he makes no attempt to disguise the fact that he is a secularist and a republican Socialist. This does not mean that he has captured Mr. Gandhi for secularism, but it does mean that the Mahatma has now lost his personal ascendancy over the Congress. In 1920, he was sole dictator; in 1930, he is one leader among others. It apparently means that for the time being he is prepared to sacrifice even religious interests to the needs of the political situation. The secular republicanism of the younger Nehru is such a new and strange phenomenon in India that it is important to examine the forces that have operated upon his mind. Until he came to the front as a Congress leader, Indian Nationalism had always been a religious nationalism. Even the Revolutionaries were inspired, as we have seen, with a religious passion and would cite the *Gita* in defence of their crimes. A few of them had been touched by Bolshevist influences, but none of them was inclined to abandon his religion in favour of a purely rationalistic view of the universe. Not all the Nationalist leaders have Mr. Gandhi's personal religious experience, but his leadership was one striking proof among many of the semi-religious character of the movement. While Mr. Gandhi was at the height of his power, the possibility

of Indian Nationalism ever becoming purely secular seemed extremely remote. In him, and in the movement so far as he represented it, religion and politics were indissolubly united. All the distinctive features of his programme were drawn from ancient Hindu ideas.

But at the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in December 1928 a new note was struck by Pandit Motilal Nehru in his presidential address. He made a plea for the complete separation of political from religious life. He also hoisted the "nationalist flag", while his lieutenant, Mr. Subash Bose, dressed like a stage-general and seated on horseback, reviewed the so-called Nationalist Volunteer Army. If Mr. Gandhi with his homespun *khaddar* was a symbol of the older religious nationalism, Mr. Bose in his military uniform may be taken as a symbol of the newer secular nationalism, which scouts the *satyagraha* idea. Pandit Motilal said in the course of his presidential address: "Whatever the higher conception of religion may be, it has in our day-to-day life come to signify bigotry and fanaticism, intolerance and narrow-mindedness, selfishness and the negation of many of the qualities which go to build a healthy society. . . . Religion as practised to-day is the greatest separatist force. It puts artificial barriers between man and man and prevents the development of healthy and co-operative national life. Not content with its reactionary influences on social matters, it has invaded the domain of politics and economics, and affects every aspect of our life. Its association

with politics has been to the good of neither. Religion has been degraded and politics has sunk into the mire. Complete divorce of one from the other is the only remedy." It will help to make clear the fresh development indicated by Pandit Motilal's words if we recall the sentiments of one of the older leaders. In 1916, Lala Lajpat Rai had written, "In my opinion there has never been any time in human history when religion and morals were successfully divorced from politics, either in Ancient India or anywhere else."¹

If the older Nehru stands on the verge of secularism, the younger Nehru (Pandit Jawaharlal) has crossed the line and stands for the position that all religion is unnecessary. He is a secularist, naked and unashamed. "Our religion", he says, with undisguised scorn, "is one of the kitchen, of what to touch and what not to touch, of baths and top-knots, of all manner of marks and fasts, and ceremonies that have lost all meaning; our very gods are manufactured in the factories of England or Japan".²

If we seek the causes of this remarkable conversion of some Indian leaders to a secular view of the world, three explanations are forthcoming. In the first place they are aware that Hinduism provides no solution for many of the modern problems of their country. Its social ethics can speak no word concerning the new conditions created by the factory system which has now established itself in the cotton mills of Bombay and the jute mills

¹ *Young India*, p. 126 n.

² In *The New Era*, Oct. 1928, p. 22.

of the Hooghly River. Its social ethics are embodied in the caste system, which was based on village organization. In face of the new conditions created by modern industry, Hindu Social Ethics is dumb. Again, the Nationalist movement has brought into prominence certain new values, which it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with such characteristic features of Hinduism as detachment and world-renunciation. Both Nationalists and Social Reformers stress the value of human personality. They have come to see that the touchstone of the moral level of any community is the value it sets on human personality. They also realize that their emphasis on the value and uniqueness of human personality cannot be reconciled with pantheism, karma, and caste, and that these Hindu doctrines have had a deleterious effect upon human initiative and endeavour. At present their national pride prevents their looking to Christianity to provide them with a basis for their programme of political and social reform and they prefer to espouse the secular solution.

The second explanation of the recent adoption of secularism is to be found in the hostility with which Hindu orthodoxy has met the demands of the reformers. The Hindu Maha Sabha may remove the ban of untouchability and Mr. Gandhi may treat the outcastes as his brothers, but traditional orthodoxy remains unmoved. This explains why some of the men who are keenest about social reform are now in the ranks of the secularists. They have given up all hope of moving the complacency of Hindu

orthodoxy, and are determined to be embarrassed no longer by its immobility. Religion now appears to them to be an engine of social tyranny and obscurantism. This is the line taken by some of the members of the Servants of India Society. Men like Mr. N. M. Joshi, who joined the Society in 1909 and who has been Secretary of the Bombay Social Service League since 1911 and of the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association since 1917, are enthusiasts for social reform but now think that religion is unnecessary to accomplish their ends. The orthodox have exhausted their patience and have created in them a growing aversion from all religion though they have not quenched their enthusiasm for generous causes. This explains the excellent features of Indian secularism. It stands for education, the emancipation of women and social reform. A significant sign of the times is the recent appearance in South India of a new Periodical, *Revolt*, which confessedly stands for the abolition of religion along with the promotion of social reform.

The third influence that has operated in the younger Nehru's conversion is that of Moscow. It is often said that Bolshevist principles will never find a congenial home in India; but that does not alter the fact that some Indian politicians feel that Soviet Russia has "delivered a new message to the world" and they are turning their eyes to her as the country which (to quote a vernacular newspaper) "has ushered in a new era in the world by carrying a new message of emancipation to the oppressed and down-trodden masses". These leaders are

tempted to think that an atheistic political philosophy, which repudiates all forms of religion, may be as successful in India as in Russia. Moreover, the bitterness of helplessness has eaten into the souls of some and driven them into the adoration of conscienceless strength. Their secularism also registers their doubt of the validity of Mr. Gandhi's principle that renunciation is more effective than action.

The secular movement in India is as yet in its infancy. Its future is difficult to predict. Count Keyserling, who cannot be charged with insensibility to the best in Oriental life and thought, is of opinion that Western Materialism will wield such influence in the East as to convert it into the greatest future menace to all spirituality. "Its acceptance by the East", he says, "has the same significance as the acceptance of the Christian impulse by the Mediterranean pagan world. . . . From now onward the Orient will be the bearer and symbol of materialism, however deeply spiritual may continue to be the minorities within it." Recent reports from India show that Soviet ideas are making headway among those literate in English. In a letter dated March 30, 1930, Dr. Stanley Jones says: "A youth of not more than fourteen stood up in one of my meetings and asked this question: 'Now that we are having an anti-imperialistic and an anti-capitalistic campaign, don't you think the next step is an anti-God campaign?' Afterwards I asked him where he had got these ideas from and he answered with a wave of his hand, 'Oh, they are

in the air' ". That the younger Nehru is catching the ear of the student classes is evident from an article contributed to *The Christian Union Quarterly* by Dr. Henry A. Atkinson, who has recently returned from a tour in Asia on behalf of world peace. He writes:

One hears on every hand from thoughtful men in India the statement that the present miserable condition of the country is the result of religion. It has served as a narcotic lulling the minds of the people to sleep. "What we need in India," said a young student to me, "is the complete destruction of all religion. Until this is accomplished there can be no independence and no progress for the nation and the people." "What will you put in its place?" I asked him. "Self-assurance, courage, hope instead of despair, buoyancy instead of depression, independence instead of servility. Why should a nation like ours be bowed down from one end to the other by fear of the gods and the wrath of the gods when every thinking individual knows there are no gods; that they are simply bogies manufactured by the priests and played upon by masters and governments to keep the people in a state of submission?" . . . In every city I visited the book-stores and asked what books the people were reading, and learned that it is the writers who have abandoned religion whose books are in greatest demand.

The influence of Moscow is clearly manifest upon a group of thirty-one men who at Meerut in January 1930 were committed to the Sessions to be tried for conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor and to deprive His Majesty of his sovereignty in British India. The magistrate who committed them said that it had been proved that they were in touch with the Communist International and in pursuance of its aims were working to execute a violent revolution. For this purpose the Communist

party of India and the Workers' and Peasants' parties had been formed. These bodies had received financial aid from Moscow, and their policy was dictated from Moscow directly and via England and the Continent through secret communications. The aim of the accused was to overthrow the sovereignty of the King and to establish a Socialist State under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the supreme command of the Communist International. The magistrate added that, "though the work is to be executed in India, the policy has been dictated from Russia, and a direct connection has been traced between the councils of the "mightiest world organization" in the Winter Palace in Moscow and the hawker of pamphlets in a hut at a bathing fair on the banks of the Ganges". One of the exhibits in the case was a letter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, which deprecates the apparent squeamishness of India on the subject of violence. It says, "If you are organizationally prepared you will be able to strike a blow just as Gandhi was able to do in 1921. But I hope that this time there will be no sentimental nonsense about the shedding of a few litres of blood and that the revolutionary movement will be led on purely materialistic lines." Another exhibit was a document which stated that no one who had watched Pandit Jawaharlal's public career could fail to admire the skill with which he maintains his balance on the summit of a precipitous ridge which separates the camps of Nationalism and Communism.

It is not easy to trace the post-war history of

the religious revolutionary movement, whose beginnings were sketched in Chapter IV. It is not unlikely that most of its leaders have now moved from a religious to a purely materialistic form of anarchism. They were responsible for a recrudescence of anarchy in Bengal in 1923-4, when two revolting murders were committed in Calcutta. As the Rowlatt Acts had been repealed by Lord Reading, the Government of Bengal felt powerless. The Labour Government then in office in Great Britain gave the necessary emergency powers and the revolutionary movement was again driven underground. It reappeared again in 1930, when 27 Bengali youths were charged with conspiracy to manufacture explosives. Most of them came from the districts in which the earlier revolutionary movement had flourished. From the speech of the Public Prosecutor at their trial it appears that they had been influenced by the literature of the Irish Revolutionaries. The accused circulated among themselves such books as *The Hundred Best Sayings of De Valera* and Dan Breen's *My Fight for Irish Freedom*, which advocates the blowing up of police barracks by bombs. Revolutionaries were responsible for the attempt to assassinate the Viceroy in December 1929 and for the armed raid on the armouries at Chittagong in 1930.

SOCIAL

CHAPTER VI

THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

THE rapid development in India of the demand for national emancipation, with which we have so far been concerned, is complicated by a concurrent demand for social emancipation, to which we now turn. The political movement naturally attracts the greater attention from the Western Press, but the social movement may be a truer index of India's reactions to Western culture and civilization. The social conscience of India was first aroused out of its long slumber by the Serampore missionaries, with whom Raja Ram Mohan Ray co-operated to secure the abolition of *suttee* and infanticide. Carey, Marshman, and Ward were the first Englishmen to settle in India for the wholly disinterested service of its peoples; and they were, therefore, the pioneers of the gospel of social emancipation and service which now inspires many Indians of all castes and creeds. The origin and growth of this social conscience in India may be studied in Dr. J. N. Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India* (Chap. VI). The movement for social reforms ramifies in various directions but in the present chapter we are concerned only with the Untouchables, who form an integral part of the caste system and whose position in the social organism is defined by it. Estimates of the number of those who belong to the Depressed Classes vary considerably. Sometimes the figure is put as high as 60 millions. By excluding the

aboriginals, who are definitely outside the pale of Hinduism, the Simon Commission Report brings the figure down to 43·6 millions, which is approximately 28½ per cent. of the total Hindu population. The squalor, ignorance and poverty in which these people live has been too often described to warrant repetition here.

Since the inception of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms there has been a remarkable awakening among the Depressed Classes. Many of them are now in open revolt against the social, economic and religious conditions to which the Hindu religion condemns them; and they are banding themselves together in an aggressive, and sometimes impatient, effort to obtain those rights which they hold in common with all humanity. They demand equal rights and opportunities for all. Until recent years their battle was fought by others on their behalf, but now they have capable leaders drawn from their own community. Within the decade 1917 to 1926 there was over 100 per cent. increase in the number of school children from the Depressed Classes, whereas the number of scholars drawn from the superior classes rose only by 33 per cent. during the same period. Christian missionary enterprise and private Hindu organizations are responsible for much of this progress.

The following facts are worthy of mention as further evidence of the widespread awakening and growing power of the Depressed Classes. (1) The formation of an All-India Depressed Classes Asso-

ciation, which is intended to weld together all the Associations in the different provinces, was undertaken as soon as the appointment of the Simon Commission was announced. They refused to join in the boycott of the Commission, because, as one of their leaders, Mr. Ram Chandra Mallah, said, they could not raise themselves without outside help, and if they boycotted their only outside help, the British Government, they would be doomed to everlasting slavery. They could not but welcome the Statutory Commission in spite of its defects.

(2) Specially noteworthy is the admirable fashion in which the leaders collected evidence and placed it before the Commission. In November 1928 Dr. Ambedkar gave evidence before the Commission in Poona in the course of which he said, "We claim we must be treated as a distinct minority, separate from the Hindu community. There is really no link between the Hindus and the Depressed Classes. Therefore we must be regarded as a distinct and separate community. We deserve far greater political protection than any other minority in India because of our educational backwardness and economical and social barriers."

(3) The Untouchables now claim that the stigma of their name should be removed and that they should be called *Adidharmis* and described as such in the next census. The suggested name would bring out the fact that they are the survivors of an ancient race which ruled India prior to its invasion by the Aryans.

(4) They have now put out a systematic formu-

lation of their demands. These include (a) a separate electorate, without which they have no hope of electing their own men to represent them; (b) an increase in the number of seats allotted to the Depressed Classes in the Legislatures; (c) a wider franchise; (d) the introduction of free and compulsory primary education; (e) an equitable share in the Government service and the repeal of regulations debarring them from the police and the army; (f) equal rights with caste people in the use of all District Board public wells, public institutions and public streets; (g) the proscription of all Hindu scriptures in which contemptuous references are made to their community.

The Untouchables in more recent years have tried, to the great disgust of the orthodox, to make a forcible entry into Hindu temples. The leaders on both sides have tried to reach a *modus vivendi* but without success. In this connection Mr. Gandhi offered sound advice to the Untouchables when he spoke thus to them at Lahore in December 1929: "Act peacefully; forcible entry into temples is not *satyagraha*. Those temples where you are excluded because of your low birth have no gods in them and those who enter them forcibly have no godliness within them."

Early in 1930 a group of Untouchables in the Bombay Presidency sought to assert their rights by trying to enter the Kalaram Temple at Panchavati. When they were refused admission they crowded at the door of the temple which had been closed against them, and, adopting Mr. Gandhi's *satyagraha*

policy, sat down at the gate and made it impossible for orthodox Hindus to enter without walking over their bodies. The Sanatanists (orthodox) were greatly incensed and the usual riot broke out in which some of the Untouchables were severely handled. Disgusted with their status among Hindus, more than one hundred Untouchable families declared their intention of embracing Islam, but their leaders induced them to defer action at least for a time. This decision alarmed the Hindus and led several Hindu leaders to attempt a reconciliation between the Untouchables and the Sanatanists. With this object Dr. B. S. Moonje, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, was brought down to confer with the leaders on both sides. A conference followed, which issued the following appeal: "Feeling as we do that suspension of *satyagraha* would facilitate the creation of public opinion favourable to the Untouchables, we request Dr. Ambedkar to suspend the *satyagraha* and afford us sufficient time and opportunity to effect a compromise honourable to both sides regarding the vexed question of temple entry."

A number of prominent Indian Nationalists have made great personal efforts for the uplift of the Untouchables. The motives which inspire them to undertake this work are various. They are not unmindful of the fact that the Hindu majority might be in danger if the Untouchables left the Hindu fold and entered the open doors provided by Christianity and Islam. They are also anxious to deprive the opponents of political reform in India

of an argument they are never tired of using—that social exclusiveness is incompatible with a true nationalism. It is probably true that in his efforts on behalf of the Depressed Classes a man like Lala Lajpat Rai was inspired by his dislike of Christianity. He was a member of the Arya Samaj, which started its work on behalf of the Untouchables to save them for Hinduism and to prevent more of them entering the Christian fold. But the Lala and his associates must be given credit for other and more altruistic motives. It would be unfair, for instance, to attribute only motives of self-interest to Mr. M. R. Jayakar, who more than once has pleaded in the Legislative Assembly for special facilities for the education of the Untouchables and other Depressed Classes, and that the public services, especially the police, should be thrown open to them. In February 1928 he succeeded in carrying through the Legislative Assembly a resolution to this effect, though it should be noted that the Swarajists, from whose party Mr. Jayakar resigned in 1925, absented themselves from the debate.

At the present time the great influence of Mr. Gandhi is exercised on behalf of the Untouchables. If in recent years there has been any marked improvement in the attitude of the upper class Hindus to the Untouchables, it is largely due to his example. Heedless of the protests of orthodoxy, he is never tired of repeating his conviction to which he gave utterance on May 1, 1925, in the following words: "So long as untouchability disfigures

Hinduism, so long do I hold the attainment of *Swaraj* to be an utter impossibility. Supposing it were a gift descending from Downing Street to India, that gift would be a curse upon this land, if we do not get rid of this curse (of untouchability)." Mr. Gandhi has frequently appeared at Conferences of Untouchables and his example has been copied by other leaders, notably by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The Hindu Mahasabha has given much attention of late to the Depressed Classes and under the leadership of the Pandit has attempted to purify them by imparting to them the sacred mantras. In Bengal alone he has initiated thousands of outcastes, but time alone will show whether or not the initiation thus imparted will remove the disabilities of the Untouchables and what their precise position in the Hindu community will be. That the Pandit should thus act is a sign that Hindu orthodoxy is on the march. As yet it is too early to say whether the new attitude is likely to be permanent. For many years there will be those who will continue to denounce what they describe as "Gandhi's sacrilegious democracy". It is necessary to bear in mind that in the course of the long history of Hinduism reformers have from time to time appeared who have demanded the abolition of caste, but their reforms have been short-lived. Much depends upon the motive underlying the changed attitude of the upper classes. If it is merely political, it will not survive. If, on the other hand, it is a genuine love of humanity, we may be on the eve of changes undreamed of fifty years ago.

Some of the leaders of the Depressed Classes are suspicious of the efforts of the Hindu Mahasabha, and some openly declare that the real aim of the Sabha is to keep the Depressed Classes in perpetual slavery. A resolution of the Executive Committee of the Provincial Adi Hindu (Depressed Classes) Association at Lucknow urged their people to combat the movement and to welcome in their party all lovers of social equality including Jains, Christians, and Moslems. It also counselled them to beware of the "lip-sympathy of the Congress". Resolutions of this nature are inspired by the fear that the immediate introduction of full, responsible self-government would be tantamount to granting "a licence for unlimited oppression", as Mr. B. C. Mandul, of the Calcutta Namasudra Association, puts it.

CHAPTER VII

THE MASSES, RURAL AND URBAN

INDIA is a land of villages. More than 70 per cent. of its population get their living as cultivators. There is no large-scale farming. The majority of the cultivators own a couple of bullocks and tend a few acres of land. Their livelihood is precarious, for it depends upon the monsoons. Most live in a state of chronic debt. For centuries they have been under the numbing influence of a philosophy of life which has kept them, if not contented, uncomplaining even in appalling circumstances. Whatever befalls them is due to their karma. In 1918 the Montagu-Chelmsford Report could speak of their "placid, pathetic contentment" and went on to say that "in deliberately disturbing it we are working for her (India's) highest good".¹ To-day, however, there are many signs that rural population is awakening. The high prices of food and clothes caused by the Great War did something to stir the surface of the waters. The Non-Co-operation movement buoyed them up with the hope of a speedy millennium, though the palmy days of the movement have now been followed by a period of disillusionment. But above all the Great War produced upon the unsophisticated minds of the silent masses an effect injurious to the prestige of the ruling race. As Sir Valentine Chirol points out, the large Indian armies, amounting to nearly a million men, were

¹ P. 93, par. 144.

drawn in the main from these classes. "To the great majority of these men . . . the War had brought their first glimpse of Western conditions and habits of life, and, when they came home, they had many tales to tell and often of the seamy side of the things they had seen. Some of the more intelligent who had been in France were able to draw pictures of the French peasants' independence and prosperity which contrasted cruelly with the miserable life of the Indian ryot. They had had their share of the common victory . . . and they were not reluctant to convey the impression that without them the war would never have been won for England. . . . All these stories, often no doubt embellished with lively touches of Oriental imagination, travelled from village to village and into remote jungles and highland valleys which had hardly ever seen a white man, and just at a juncture when many other circumstances conspired to produce a ferment of unrest and racial jealousy. Nothing could have been better calculated to spread further and deeper the psychological change in the Indian attitude towards the ruling race which had begun with the Japanese victories over Russia and which the outbreak of the Great War had only for a time arrested."¹ Since Sir Valentine Chirol wrote these words the motor-car has made its way into the remotest parts of India and motor-omnibus services have helped to link up the rural population with the towns.

After the introduction of the Montagu-Chelms-

¹ Sir Valentine Chirol, *India*, p. 185 f.

ford Reforms 3 per cent. of the vast rural population of India received the franchise. How far they have developed a political consciousness it is difficult to determine. An Indian like Lala Lajpat Rai maintains that Nationalism has already permeated the masses.¹ The Simon Commission Report errs, if at all, on the other side. It speaks of "the small extent to which political consciousness has developed among the inhabitants of the 500,000 villages of India", and declares that "any quickening of general political judgment, any widening of rural horizons beyond the traditional and engrossing interest of weather and water and crops and cattle, with the round of festivals and fairs and family ceremonies, and the dread of famine or flood—any such change from these immemorial preoccupations of the average Indian villager is bound to come very slowly indeed".² This judgment is, to some extent, qualified by the Commissioners' admission that the Indian peasant can "be stirred by mass movements inspired by ideas within the range of his everyday experience. . . . While abstract political ideas may leave him unaffected, the personality of a leader such as Mr. Gandhi will make a great appeal. . . . The politically minded in India are only a tiny minority, but they may be able to sway masses of men in the country-side."³

This is well said; but it leaves one doubtful whether the writers of the Report are aware of the extent to which the masses of India are liable to "crowd-contagion". They are easily swayed by a

¹ *Young India*, p. 192. ² Vol. i, pp. 404 and 15. ³ Vol. i, p. 405.

magnetic personality and are readily susceptible to forceful suggestion. Instead of their possessing an idea, they are possessed by it. An idea spreads among them with the rapidity of a prairie fire. This has been demonstrated again and again in their religious history. Anyone who cares to study the rapid spread of the religious revival set on foot by Chaitanya (to quote one example) in Bengal and Orissa in the sixteenth century will be left in no doubt on this issue. A suggestion, interesting to the psychologist, is that both the caste system and the joint-family system help to break down the separation between individuals and to fuse large groups into unities, so giving them a common mind.

Besides the rural masses India now possesses a large and increasing urban proletariat. The importation of Western industrialism has brought into being the cotton mills of Bombay, the jute mills of Bengal, the Tata Iron and Steel works at Jamshedpur, and the mining industry of Bihar, to mention only the most important industries. In 1927 it was estimated that the number of factory workers was over a million and a half. These workers are concentrated in a few large towns and their housing conditions are often bad. Most of them are illiterate, as they are recruited from the villages. This rapid development of industry has thrust new problems upon the attention of the Government and a trade union movement has taken sufficient shape to warrant legislative action. The industrialization of India is now inevitable and it is important that the worst evils which accompanied

the Industrial Revolution in the West should not be repeated in India. To avoid such a calamity the Government of India appointed a Commission, under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, the late Speaker of the House of Commons, to inquire into labour conditions. Its report has not yet appeared. Its recommendations may influence the lives of millions of Indians for years to come in the formative period of Indian industrialism.

Industry has not grown in India without an increasing sense of the responsibility of the community towards Labour. The first Factory Act to be passed by the Government of India was in 1881. This Act was amended in 1891. An Act of 1911 for the first time restricted the hours of labour of adult males in textile factories to twelve hours a day. In 1923 the Act of 1911 was amended so as (a) to create a sixty hours' week, (b) to raise the age of children employed in factories from 9 to 12, (c) to prohibit night-work for women. In order to remedy a number of minor defects the Act was again amended in 1926. The radical revision of 1923 was due to the acceptance by India of her obligations under the International Labour Conference held at Washington in 1919. As a signatory to the Covenant of the League of Nations, India participates in the decisions of the League on labour questions. A Workmen's Compensation Act has now been in operation since July 1924. Those who framed it had the accumulated experience of other countries to guide them, but they did not attempt to incorporate the most advanced laws of Europe. As in

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Britain the employer is permitted to insure against possible liabilities under the Act.

The last ten years have seen a considerable extension of welfare work among the industrial workers, both by employers of labour and private associations. For many centuries the upper classes of India have been indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, whose lot they could complacently set down to the operations of the law of karma. But the younger generation of to-day responds readily to the call for social service. In an increasing number of colleges such work is carried on by the students and teaching staff. Some conduct night-schools for the benefit of the lower classes; others do Red Cross work, first aid or nursing; others, again, visit prisons, orphanages, and hospitals. In this work the lead was given by the missionary colleges and schools.

The last decade has seen the beginnings of trade unionism in India. Before the Great War there were none in existence, but by 1921 the Government welcomed the resolution, moved by Mr. N. M. Joshi in the Legislative Assembly, recommending that steps be taken to provide legislation for the registration and protection of Trade Unions. The result was the Trade Unions Act of 1926, which follows more or less the lines of British legislation on this subject. It came into force on June 1, 1927. It provides for the registration of Trade Unions, but does not make registration compulsory. A registered union must submit an annual statement of its income and expenditure to a Government depart-

ment, its books must be open to inspection, and at least half of its members must be engaged in industry. Unions which do not register fail to obtain the privileges granted by law to the registered unions. At one important point the Indian Act departed from the British model. When an Indian Trade Union raises political funds by the contributions of its members, the paying member has first to express his wish to join in such contributions, and the political funds thus voluntarily subscribed must be kept separate from other monies belonging to the Union.

The Indian industrial worker is now making increasing use of the strike-weapon. Most captains of industry counted 1925 as a black year, but 1928 was far worse. Operatives in the Bombay cotton mills, workers in the railway sheds at Lillooah and in the steel works at Jamshedpur downed tools. A bulletin issued by the Department of Industries and Labour of the Government of India states that the total number of disputes in 1928 was 203, in which over half a million workpeople were involved and the time-loss was 31,647,404 working days. The total number of working days lost during the year was greater than the total for the five preceding years taken together. Strikes are frequently commenced without notice; numerous and quite extravagant claims are put forward after the strike has been begun; and frequently the workers have no clearly defined grievance before downing their tools. These features have led employers of labour to favour the trade union

movement, as they would prefer to have an organized body of workers with whom they could negotiate. One real difficulty is that since the workers are illiterate, they have to depend upon the guidance of better educated leaders, who have little first-hand knowledge of the conditions of the industry, whose workers they represent. In the present stage of its development Indian trade unionism leadership affords a fairly well-paid career to the ambitious man of the educated classes, who likes publicity and welcomes the opportunity of making political trouble. This may be only a passing phase of the movement in India, but at present it is unavoidable, because the workers cannot at present find in their own ranks men with sufficient education and business capacity to manage the affairs of a large union. The first Congress to style itself the "All-India Trade Union Congress" met in Bombay in 1921 and claimed to represent ninety-two trades unions.

What has been said above of the rural population also applies to the urban proletariat. The movement among them is not due to the spread of education among them but to the appearance of crowd-leaders, who have magnetic personalities and oratorical gifts, and who know how to set on foot crowd-movements. Angered by the tales which are told them, of the injustices to their race, the masses are determined to intervene, without knowing how to do so effectively. Hence the not infrequent *hartals*, which are too often incoherent manifestations of crowd-feeling. The politician has learned how to use the workers as a striking force in political

agitation. The Indian National Congress has tried to capture the Trade Union movement. When the All-India Trade Union Congress met in the winter of 1929, with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as President, there was a split in the ranks. Mr. N. M. Joshi, a member of the Servants of India Society, who had represented the working classes of India at several International Labour Conferences at Washington and Geneva, and Mr. V. V. Giri, together with the representatives of twenty-four unions, severed themselves from the All-India Congress, so as to prevent the movement from being diverted from its real aim of securing improved conditions for Labour. These seceders promptly organized themselves into a new All-India Trade Union Federation which pledged itself to fight Communism and decided not to boycott the Whitley Commission.

The principles of revolutionary Marxism are now being preached in India by a resolute few, who devote their attention mainly to industrial workers.¹

¹. See above, p. 90 f.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Not the least important among the movements of contemporary thought in India is the awakening of Indian women to a new sense of their vocation and responsibility and their resolute determination to improve the conditions of female life. Women's work for women was begun in India about the middle of the nineteenth century and the pioneers were women Christian missionaries, whose numbers were greatly increased about that time. These European women tackled the problem of female education and soon made themselves acquainted with the conditions under which the women of India spend their lives in the zenanas. The piteous needs of their Indian sisters were soon made known to the world. Social legislation to benefit women was slowly enacted. In 1856 an Act was passed legalizing the remarriage of Hindu widows; and the Age of Consent Act of 1891 prohibited a husband from living with his wife before she reached the age of twelve. In such ameliorative work Christian missionaries received support from high-minded Indians. It was a Calcutta Brahmin, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, who agitated for the Act of 1856; and thirty years later the Parsi reformer, Mr. B. M. Malabari, greatly stirred Indian and British opinion by his pamphlets denouncing infant marriages and enforced widowhood. In course of time, however, the work of chivalrous Indians on

behalf of their mothers and sisters has blossomed out into a women's movement in the correct sense of the term. That movement has now been in existence some years, but the year 1927 marks the influx of new enthusiasm and abounding zeal. The Indian woman has now emerged and awakened to political and social consciousness. The strides she has made in a few years may be judged by comparing the space devoted to women in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918) and the Report of the Simon Commission (1930). The former Report contents itself with a bare reference to the obstacles which social custom sets up in the way of female education; the latter remarks that "no document discussing India's constitutional system and the directions in which it can be developed and improved could omit the women of India to-day".¹ Since the inception of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms women have received the franchise on the same terms as men, though the number of women on the electorate is very small compared with that of the men. The property qualification works against women, who, in India proper, do not own property in their own right. In seven provinces membership in the legislature is open to women, who are also eligible to represent these provinces in the Legislative Assembly. In several provincial councils women have taken their seats as nominated members and have done useful work. The Madras Legislature unanimously elected a woman as its Deputy-President. Women candidates are also appearing

¹ Vol. i, p. 49.

in the field of municipal politics in some cities, notably Bombay and Madras.

The formation in 1927 of an All-India Women's Educational Conference was an event of first-class importance. The Conference soon discovered that it could not confine itself to educational problems, owing to the intimate manner in which the problems of female education are linked in India with the social and legal disabilities of women. The demand for educational reform was sterile unless it was linked with a demand for social reform. All over India women are organizing themselves in regional conferences. The Bengal League of Social Service for Women seeks to train women for a career of social service, particularly in the villages. Saroj Nalini, the wife of Mr. G. S. Dutt, I.C.S., did splendid pioneer work in founding *mahila samitis* (women's associations), whose object was to develop friendly co-operation among *pardah* women, to interest them in work outside their homes, to arrange lectures on such practical subjects as domestic hygiene and domestic economy, and to train women, especially widows, in domestic industries in order to make them self-supporting. Saroj Nalini founded her first *mahila samiti* in Pabna in 1913 and later studied kindred organizations in England to perfect her organization. Unfortunately she died in January 1925 at the early age of thirty-seven. In Bengal alone there are now over two hundred *mahila samitis*.¹ It is noteworthy that the leaders of this women's move-

¹ See *A Woman of India, being the Life of Saroj Nalini*, by her husband. (Hogarth Press.)

ment have nearly all been educated in missionary schools and colleges or in England and America. They are nearly all married women, whose husbands are men of education and culture. All have had to meet stubborn resistance from orthodox Hindus who know that the fabric of Hinduism is endangered as soon as the movement for reform enters the home. A point of perhaps minor importance, but nevertheless worthy of mention, is the organization under pressure from women of Health Weeks and Baby Weeks. The Press now publishes photographs of prize-winning Indian babies and their mothers—and that at a time when the Hindu *pardah* woman regards the publication of her photograph as a gross insult. Another portent is the swarming of Indian women over the football grounds of Calcutta in the early part of 1930 to stop the play between Indian and English teams, as part of the civil disobedience campaign. Another sign of the times was the talk broadcast by Miss Cornelia Sorabji from the Calcutta Studio on "Careers for Women".

Since the beginning of the present century the institution of *pardah* has been losing ground among enlightened Indians. The number of Indian ladies who have discarded it is steadily growing. But the most important feature of the present-day agitation against it is that it is entirely indigenous. Indian women, influenced by recent happenings in Turkey, are now organizing for an attack on this ancient abuse. Speaking at the opening of the first All-India Women's Conference at Poona in 1928, H.H. the Maharani of Baroda said:

We have also to insist on the abolition of the custom of *pardah*. Adopted in earlier times for the protection of women, it is now not only no longer needed as those dangers are over, but it has itself become a danger to health and happiness. But surely there is no necessity to enter into a description of the many evils of this practice, with its enfeeblement of body and its starvation of the mind. If women are to take their part in the raising of the tone of social life, if they are to understand the duties and responsibilities for which their sons must be trained, the *pardah* must go. If women are to have that freedom of mind and that variety of interests, without which there can be no joyous life, the *pardah* must go. The woman behind her *pardah* is as much a captive as a bird in a cage. Pent up behind the *pardah* she is steeped in ignorance and allowed to grow and to flourish like a pet animal. No ray of light nor enlightenment can penetrate into the zenana. She is given away in marriage without any will of her own.

A popular adage compares a daughter to a cow. Like the unfortunate cow she licks the hand of the butcher raised to sever her throat. It is from this abysmal darkness that our woman has to be raised. Our honoured patriots have been straining every nerve for political emancipation. They have relegated social advancement to the background. They have to be painfully reminded of the doubt of the poet Shelley: "Can man be free, if woman be a slave?" Without women's elevation the progress of man, politically, socially, and even economically, can only be lop-sided and insecure.

In the same year a number of the leading men of Bihar originated a formal campaign for the discontinuance of *pardah*. In their published appeal they state: "We have arrived at the conclusion that *pardah* is an undesirable institution, being responsible for impeding our growth and progress in many directions, and it should not be allowed to continue a day longer than can be avoided. Whatever may have been the justification for its introduction into the scheme of our life, it is difficult

to defend it now on any grounds—rational, moral, or human. We hold that the system is repugnant to the genius of our culture.”

This manifesto attracted a good deal of attention, and *The Statesman*, the leading Calcutta daily, published the views of leading reformers regarding it. Mrs. Suprava Mukerjee, the Secretary of the Saroj Nalini Dutt Memorial Association in Bengal, is reported as saying: “No one who has kept his eyes open can dispute that India is in the throes of a new birth. Democracy and *Swaraj* are but empty vaunts and vain hopes unless they are preceded by the deliverance of women from the manifold bondages which they have been subject to . . . It is most encouraging that eminent and patriotic men from Bihar have started a campaign to eradicate the evil of *pardah*, which like a pest has been eating into the core of our society, sapping its strength and vitality”. Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal said that *pardah* was a serious moral evil because by seeking to suppress the sex instincts and impulses it really created sex consciousness to a degree unknown in other civilized countries. Mrs. A. N. Chaudhuri, Vice-President of the Bengal Presidency Council of Women, said: “In my mother’s time there was a distinct disinclination on the part of women to come out of the seclusion of the zenana, even if pressed by their husbands, but now there is hardly a woman to be found who would not be only too glad to avail herself of the opportunity.” Mrs. R. S. Hossein, Superintendent of the Sakhawat (Moslem) Memorial Girls’ School, Calcutta, said:

"It has been said by a great Mohammedan scholar that *purdah* is a painful sore to our society. I do not agree with him. Had it been so, then our women would have rent the sky with their groanings. The *purdah* system may rightly be compared with the deadly carbon monoxide gas, because it causes a painless death. People do not take notice of and guard themselves against the gas. Similarly our sisters within the *purdah* are slowly dying a painless death due to the *purdah* gas." Mrs. Kumudini Basu, B.A., said: "The Brahma Samaj discarded the *purdah* system fifty years ago. The example of Brahma women moving freely about and working for the good of the country has made a great impression on the minds of the women of the orthodox community, and the situation is gradually changing for the good."

The oft-repeated demand for the extension of educational facilities to their sex arises from the conviction which has now gripped the women of India that with the diffusion of education their other problems would find automatic solution. As the Maharani Regent of Gwalior observed in an address given at an educational conference in her capital in 1930, "It is early marriage that makes parents careless of their girls' equipment for life, and the sooner the women of India realize that they must be capable of earning their living before they are married, the greater will be the respect paid, and the better the fate in store for them." The Maharani Regent went so far as to declare herself a convinced advocate of co-education. As

the *Calcutta Statesman* for May 13, 1930, remarked: "The leading Maharanis of India are not to be lightly charged with a radical outlook. . . . When women like the Maharani Regent of Gwalior assail the time-honoured customs which govern the institution of marriage one seems almost to hear the tramp of the reforming legions on the march."

The problem of female illiteracy in India is one of gigantic proportions. According to the latest figures available (the census figures of 1921) only 2 per cent. of females of five years and over are literate, whereas the figure for males is 14.4 per cent. These figures are for all India and include Burma where the percentage for females reaches the comparatively high figure of 11.2 per cent. These illiterate women are a drag upon progress because the women of India exert a great influence within their own homes. They dominate their husbands and sons even when these have received a Western education. This is one reason why cultured and enlightened Indian gentlemen exercise little or no influence on the social life of the Indian home. The Junior Maharani of Travancore put this point with the utmost clarity in her speech in January 1929 as President of the All-India Women's Social Conference when it met in Calcutta. She said: "The great difficulty in the way of Indian progress is the divorce between conviction and practice, which has been so marked in the past and which has not even now died out. Many an ardent social reformer while eloquent on public platforms is

perhaps apt to abate his zeal and to weaken his advocacy when in his own environment and he ascribes his feebleness in action mainly to his wife, mother, or grandmother. It is we, therefore, the sisters, wives, mothers, and grandmothers, that have to reflect on these problems and their solution and to make it impossible for the men to invoke our names as stumbling-blocks to progress. How is this to be done? The answer is simple and unequivocal. It can only be done by a rapid and comprehensive programme of women's education whereby women might become effective social and political factors in the body politic, whereby they can help not only in the renaissance of Indian art and literature and Indian ideals, but may be potent factors in social uplift."

The Hindu social custom which bears most hardly upon the female sex is that of child-marriage. According to Hindu law a father must marry his daughter before the appearance of the menses. This has led to marriages being contracted between children, though, of course, consummation was delayed. When it is remembered that it was not until 1891 that the age of consent was raised from ten to twelve and later to thirteen the worst consequences of thoughtless or pitiless incontinence are better imagined than described. As a temperate statement of the case against child-marriage the following words of the Maharani of Baroda may be quoted. It is

... a practice which more than all else militates against the advance of widespread female education. Before even the girl's body has

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reached real maturity, almost before she is aware that she has a soul of her own, she is made the plaything, either of a youth as sinned against as herself, or of a man who can neither respect her nor arouse her respect. Just out of the period of infancy herself, she is forced into the production of infants. She is prepared neither to give them healthy bodies, nor to train their minds to become noble men, loving and lovable women. Robbed of her own girlhood and youth, she is almost unaware of the many happinesses of a cultured life.

She knows of little but infancy and motherhood, motherhood and infancy. She lacks most of what is needed for her own happiness and for the education of her children. If we are to have strong vigorous sons and daughters, we must have strong and mature mothers. For this, marriage must be deferred till the girl is fully developed. That can rarely be before the age of eighteen. If we think of what is involved in child marriage, we must admit that there are even more reasons for this to be forbidden by law than there were against *suttee*. The latter was a short period of terrible torture; the former may mean a lifetime of unutterable misery.

The first protests against child-marriage were voiced by men who had come within the sphere of Christian influence, notably the Parsi journalist, B. M. Malabari (died in 1913), and some early members of the Brahma Samaj. Malabari was a convinced believer that freedom in the home must come before free political institutions. He characterized the Hindu marriage system as "her problem of problems, the mystery, the passion-play of her daily life, stamping all her national concerns, arts, sciences, industries, commerce, and agriculture with its own mark of premature development, arrested growth, and premature decay". Malabari gave the best years of his life to agitation on child-marriage and widow-celibacy, but he did not live to see the success

of his labours nor the change in public opinion since he started his work in 1884. The advance of public opinion may be registered by noting the different reception given by the populace to the Age of Consent Bill in 1891 and the Sarda Act of 1929. When the Government of India introduced the former Bill into the Legislative Council, crowds of excited Hindus paraded the streets of Calcutta all day and far into the night, shouting, "Our religion is in danger." They organized a monster demonstration on the Calcutta Maidan at which it is estimated one hundred thousand people were present. A day of fasting, prayer, and sacrifice was held at the famous temple at Kalighat and over £13,000 spent on the ceremony.¹ Less than forty years later the Sarda Bill called forth no such ebullition of anger. Various orthodox bodies registered their protest against it and memorialized the Viceroy. As a rule they contented themselves with such sentiments as those adopted by the All-India Marwari Agarwal Panchayet of Calcutta. Their memorial stated that "any legislation to fix the marriageable age of boys and girls is wholly unnecessary, as Hindu society is always careful to introduce reforms on the basis of the Shastras, where reform is considered to be desirable or necessary". The memorial further asks the Viceroy to take steps to place legislation on social or religious questions outside the functions of the Legislative Assembly and the provincial legislatures, "So that the people may have complete

¹ See Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 397 f.

autonomy in the domain of society and religion." The Bengal Landowners' Association stated that in their opinion the sacramental rites of Hindus, among which the marriage ceremony is one, should not be interfered with by any extraneous agency like the Legislatures and that any interference in such a direction would be in direct violation of the Royal pledges regarding non-interference in matters religious. A Bengali Brahmin voiced the feelings of Hindu male conservatives in a letter of protest to the *Calcutta Statesman* in which he said, "I must therefore record that the psychological justifications of the early marriage lie in the unparalleled chastity, purity, and sanctity of our womanhood."

These orthodox received summary treatment from Mr. M. R. Jayakar, who, in the course of the debate in the Legislative Assembly, spoke directly to the European members and said, "Judge the question from your notions of right and wrong, and if you have the support of an enlightened community, go ahead with reform, for a certain amount of coercion is inevitable. Because certain Hindus would oppose the measure, do not be frightened. And as for caution, is it necessary to observe caution to find out whether a boy or girl should, at the age of twelve, be in the hockey-field or a nursery or on a marriage-bed? . . . I think this cry of caution is misplaced on a question of this character." Pandit Motilal Nehru in a message to various parties in the Assembly said, "We are to-day on our trial before the civilized nations of the world and

the measure of the Assembly's support to the Sarda Bill will be the measure of our fitness to rank among those nations. The custom of early marriage is undoubtedly a curse and must be completely abolished at all costs, the supposed sanction of religion notwithstanding."

When Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda first introduced his Bill it was referred to a Committee, consisting of nine Indians and one European. They issued a valuable report. By contrasting the census figures of 1911 and 1921 they were able to show that some improvement had taken place. Nevertheless the 1921 census made it clear that practically half the girls of India were married before the completion of their fifteenth year; that two millions of them were married before the age of ten, and 100,000 were widows before reaching that age. The Committee stated that "the fundamental fact is undeniable, nor is it questioned, that early consummation almost inevitably follows early marriage amongst both Hindus and Muslims. . . . It is also established from the evidence that pro-puberty consummations are common." One curious by-product of the agitation over the Bill was the revelation of the extent to which the custom of child-marriage had penetrated the Moslem community. Some Moslems were as energetic as the most conservative Hindus in their denunciation of the measure. The Committee were of opinion that the Act of 1891 was practically a dead-letter and pointed out that in Bengal, during the three years for which the Committee had figures before

them, there were only seventeen prosecutions under the Act, with no convictions.

The Women's Associations of India gave the Bill their earnest support. A deputation which waited upon the Viceroy said that they had decided upon an organized national campaign for the abolition of child-marriage and that they were unanimously of opinion that their efforts toward educational reform were so handicapped by the child-marriage system as to be rendered almost nugatory. When the Bill was being discussed in the Legislative Assembly women picketed the Assembly and lined its approaches, calling for support for the Bill "in the interests of humanity and India's womanhood". The Bill was passed in September 1929 by 67 votes to 14, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya being one of the minority. The official title of the measure is "The Child Marriage Restraint Act". It prohibits the marriage of males under the age of 18 and of females under 14. It renders liable to punishment adult males who marry immature girls; persons who conduct or direct any ceremony, or part of a ceremony, leading to a child-marriage; parents and guardians who promote or permit such a marriage. The Act applies to all communities in India. The Bill certainly goes to the root of the matter and is a finely conceived attempt to eradicate a great evil. Its sponsor realized that little good was to be gained by an enactment which merely raised the age of consent. Such an enactment would be futile in a community practising child-marriages. He struck, therefore, at the child-marriage system itself.

The Sarada Act came into force on April 1, 1930, and in the months directly preceding that date thousands of child-marriages were celebrated. In eleven days no less than 7,000 such marriages were reported in Ahmedabad alone. The figure may be exaggerated, but there is no doubt that thousands of Hindu parents forestalled the Sarada Act by marrying their children, often at exceptionally early ages. As I write (July 1930) the news comes to hand of the first prosecution under the Act. As yet it is too early to see how far the country has accepted the new legislation. There will be difficulties in its administration in a land where the registration of births is not insisted on; but there is every reason to believe that it will lead to a great advance in female education.

A word may be said about Hindu widows. From about the time of the Christian era it has been an article of Hindu faith and practice that no Hindu widow, not even a virgin widow, shall remarry. As we have seen, it was owing to the efforts of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar that an Act was passed in 1856 legalizing the remarriage of widows. Sir Surendranath Banerjea gives a lively picture of the resentment of the orthodox at that time. As a youth Sir Surendranath supported the Pandit and he laments that the movement "made no impression on the community at the time . . . orthodoxy prevailed; and the champion of the Hindu widows died a disappointed man. . . . The progress which the movement has made since his death in 1891 has been slow. A new generation has sprung

up, but he has found no successor. . . . The lot of the Hindu widow to-day remains very much the same as it was fifty years ago."¹

The efforts of later reformers on behalf of Hindu widows are set out in Dr. Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India* (pp. 402 ff.). When he wrote in 1915 the number of Hindus who ventured to remarry their widowed daughters was still exceedingly small. In recent years there has been some slight increase. Mr. Gandhi has raised his powerful voice on behalf of Hindu widows. He declares that there is no warrant for this kind of widowhood in Hinduism. So long as there was a single widow wanting to fulfil her fundamental rights but was prevented from doing so, it would not be religion, but irreligion. He counselled the students of a Hindu College in Madras to eradicate the evil by determining to marry only widowed girls. The Hindu Mahasabha has put the remarriage of widows into its programme, and the report of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha, given at its annual meeting in December 1929, claims that during the year no less than four hundred Hindu widows were remarried in Bengal alone. But about this time the Indian Press contained reports of a riotous scene in Secunderabad at the wedding festivities of a Hindu widow of fourteen.

Mention may be made of a minor point which seems to indicate that in the future further inroads may be made into Hindu marriage law and customs. Though the Hindu law of marriage permits poly-

¹ *A Nation in Making*, p. 8f.

gamy, it does not contemplate divorce. It is now claimed by a few advanced people that the law should be amended to give the Hindu married woman the right to sue her husband for divorce. Sir Hari Singh Gour has introduced a non-official Bill into the Legislative Assembly which proposes to entitle a Hindu wife to secure dissolution of marriage in the case of the impotency, imbecility, or leprosy of her husband. The Bill was circulated with a view to eliciting public opinion, but the official representatives stated that the Government had serious objections to the principles of the Bill.

The Women's Movement in India is one of the most hopeful features of the present situation. It is hopeful because it is the women themselves who, in increasing numbers, are insisting upon change. Progress is slow, but its rate will be accelerated as female education spreads. Every woman who comes out of *pardah* is an apostle of freedom for her sisters, and every remarriage of a widow is a challenge to a gigantic oppression. The day cannot be far distant when all the provinces will have granted the franchise to women; and with the right to vote women's interests will be advanced all along the line, especially in such matters as health, sanitation, and social customs. Attempts are being made to side-track the women's movement into purely political channels. They are often counselled to let everything else wait till *Swaraj* is won. If the women of India listen to such voices, the intellectual and moral energy of their movement will be dissipated, instead of being used fruitfully for a campaign of

fresh social advance. These women have caught a vision of a reconstructed society, which provides a free and equal life for all classes and both sexes. Most of them know that India's release from the bondage of archaic social customs is a more pressing need than her emancipation from British tutelage.

The great obstacle in the way of the women's advance is the intricate manner in which social customs are bound up with religious considerations. "When divine sanction, in whatever form is invoked in aid of a social institution, it sits enthroned in the popular heart with added firmness and fixity, having its roots in sentiment rather than reason. Thus the social reformer in India has to fight against forces believed to be semi-divine in character, and more or less invulnerable against the commonplace and mundane weapons of expediency and common sense."¹ Since this is so, it is not difficult to accord some amount of sympathy to those Indian politicians who give the precedence to political over social reform. They are taking what they think is the line of least resistance. Their dread of offending religious susceptibilities is shared by British Government officials, who have too often interpreted the British pledge of religious neutrality as involving abstention from legislation and legal action in matters which concern religious faith and social customs. Their attitude to the Sarda Bill, to which they gave their support, seems to indicate that they are now moving a little from their policy of non-interference in such matters. It is this cautious tendency on the

¹ Sir Surendranath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

part of British officials to stand aside whenever matters affecting religious customs are in question which explains why some of the larger Indian States, such as Baroda, Travancore, Mysore, and Kashmir, have passed social legislation in advance of British India. By a stroke of the pen the Maharajah of Kashmir anticipated the provisions of the Sarda Act. There is also to be taken into account the Britisher's innate dislike of legislating ahead of public opinion.

RELIGIOUS

CHAPTER IX

PRESENT-DAY HINDUISM

It is not the purpose of the present chapter to give an account of the tenets of the different sects and philosophic schools of Hinduism, but to try to show how it is reacting to Christianity and what modifications it is undergoing. The influence of Christianity upon Hinduism cannot be estimated by counting the number of avowed converts it has made. Comparatively few converts have been won from the upper and middle classes, but Christianity has powerfully affected the thinking of these classes, many of whom have been educated in Christian schools and colleges and have no sympathy with the secularism of the younger Nehru and his school of thought. The progress of Christianity in India would have been greater than it is, were it not for the difficulty Indians have had in separating it from Western political ascendancy and Western economic exploitation. There are signs, however, which indicate that thinking Indians are now able to make this separation. An observant missionary has said that the first Hindu reply to the Christian preaching was, "Christianity is not true"; the second was, "Christianity is not new"; and the third was, "Christianity is not you."

Hinduism is offering a resistance to Christianity such as was not offered by the European nations, but as it resists it is undergoing far-reaching modifications, owing to the steady infiltration of

Christian ideas and ideals. The progress of Christianity in India may be appreciated if we notice (a) the rise within Hinduism of movements for the reform of that religion. These reform movements have sought to introduce far-reaching changes into the ancient faith. (b) The acceptance by many Hindus of the Christian Ethic, which has led to the growth of moral idealism and movements for social reform. (c) The development by Hinduism of a new defensive strategy. In elaborating these points it will not be possible to keep them strictly apart, for the movements referred to do not exist in separate watertight compartments. The religious thought of India to-day is full of cross-currents.

The first reform movements within Hinduism arose soon after the impact of Christianity had been felt. As Dr. Farquhar has shown in his *Modern Religious Movements in India*, movements favouring serious reform arose as early as 1828 and were not checked by a defence of the old faiths till 1870. 1828 saw the foundation of the Brahma Samaj, though eight years earlier Raja Ram Mohan Roy had published his *The Principles of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*, in which he combined an acceptance of the Christian ethic with monotheism and a humanitarian Christology. In his rejection of polytheism and pantheism and in his moral earnestness he reveals the influence of Christianity upon his thinking. The greatest saint of the Brahma Samaj, the Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, also rejected polytheism, idolatry, transmigration, and karma, but did not share Ram Mohan's veneration

of Christ. Yet his very rejections show how deeply Christianity had unconsciously influenced him. He was succeeded in the leadership of the Samaj by Keshab Chandra Sen, whose religious thought passed through several phases. He had been greatly influenced by F. W. Robertson's sermons and Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, and at one time in his career showed a veneration and enthusiasm for Christ which led many to expect that he would come over into the Christian Church. Later in his life Keshab founded the Church of the New Dispensation and led this section of the Samaj into an amorphous syncretism of Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam. As there had been a previous split in 1865, the Samaj was left, at Keshab's death in 1884, divided into three parties: The Adi Samaj, which has since increasingly manifested pro-Hindu proclivities among its small membership; The Church of the New Dispensation; and The Sadharan Samaj, founded in 1878.

The Sadharan Brahma Samaj to-day makes slow progress. Its creed¹ is one that could be accepted by any Unitarian or "Liberal" Christian. Indeed, the Samaj has always maintained friendly relations with British Unitarians, who sent the Rev. Dr. W. H. Drummond in the cold weather of 1928-9 to speak at the meetings arranged all over India in celebration of the Samaj's centenary. The Sadharan Samaj does not appear to have broken away from its earlier creed. Though its membership is small, its influence is great, because some of the best edu-

¹ Given by Farquhar, op. cit., p. 72.

cated men in India have joined its fellowship. It carries on mission work among the Khasis of Assam.

The Prarthana Samaj was founded in Bombay in 1867 and did for that city what the Brahma Samaj did for Calcutta. Its members adopted a theistic faith and rejected polytheism, idolatry, and most of them also gave up the doctrine of transmigration. The ground tone of their piety is more Hindu than that of the Sadharan Samaj. This Samaj has always been conspicuous for its zeal for social reform.

At one time much was hoped for from these Theistic Samajes, which gave an earlier generation of Christian missionaries the impression that Hinduism was to be conquered by a slow process of attrition. To-day, however, many indications go to show that these Samajes are suffering from arrested progress. They are not now making many converts and the enthusiasm of their members is running down. Their appeal is perhaps too intellectual for the majority of people in India. The Sadharan Brahma Samaj is also handicapped by the Christian character of its creed and metaphysic. But, as Dr. Macnicol says, the explanation of the arrested progress is that much of the truth these Samajes proclaim "has been of recent years so largely adopted into Hinduism that it seems to many that they can accept it without forsaking the faith of their fathers. The position occupied by the Brahma Samaj no longer appears as exalted as it seemed at first because considerable tracts of the popular

religion have been levelled up towards it.”¹ It is now recognized by educated Hindus that monotheism is the only possible creed for thinking men. It has also become an axiom with them that religion must be ethical. Defences of obscenity and immorality in the name of religion are no longer offered. Indeed, educated Hindus to-day have little or no hesitation in signifying their acceptance of the doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In all these respects the early Theistic Samajes have helped to carry Christian ideas into circles which remain nominally orthodox.

Perhaps the severest check to the influence of the Theistic Samajes came from the pro-Hindu reaction to which they gave rise. Their reforming efforts were followed by a counter-reformation. The desire to defend Hinduism arose and with it an increasing confidence in its defensibility. Religious movements came into being which favoured a full or partial defence of Hinduism and which were as antagonistic to the Brahma and Prarthana Samajes as to Christianity. Of the movements which have devoted their energies to a partial defence of Hinduism, much the most important is the Arya Samaj, which has a large and powerful following in the United Provinces and the Punjab. It was founded in 1875 by Dayananda Saraswati, who has often been compared to Luther, because he vehemently attacked the corruptions of Hinduism and uttered as his watchword, “Back to the Vedas”, the earliest and most sacred of Hindu scriptures. “He had”,

¹ *The Making of Modern India*, p. 47.

says Dr. Griswold, "a vision of India purged of her superstitions, filled with the fruits of Science, worshipping one God, fitted for self-rule, having a place in the sisterhood of nations, and restored to her ancient glory. All this was to be accomplished by throwing overboard the accumulated superstitions of the centuries and returning to the pure and inspired teachings of the Vedas."¹ Dayananda also taught that, if Hinduism needed to be purged, Christianity and Islam should be extirpated as being foreign superstitions. The important thing to notice is that the founder of the Arya Samaj did not betake himself to the teaching of Christ but to the Vedas for his inspiration. The Samaj is monotheistic and claims to find its monotheism in the Vedas. It rejects idolatry and pantheism, but accepts transmigration and karma and conceives salvation as emancipation therefrom. The doctrine of divine incarnation is denied, and pilgrimages and ancestor-worship are condemned as useless superstitions.

The Arya Samaj has done its best work in the fields of education and social reform. Dayananda set out to copy the educational institutions of the Christian missionaries and the Samaj has many schools and two excellent colleges in Northern India. It is opposed to child-marriages, allows the remarriage of widows. Its attitude to caste is somewhat ambiguous. In theory the Samaj condemns it but most of its members observe caste rules.

The Arya Samaj has made a greater appeal to India than the earlier Samajes ever did or could.

¹ Cited by Farquhar, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

It now has over half a million members, to whose patriotic and racial pride it makes a great appeal. It is difficult to estimate the amount of spiritual influence the Samaj exercises to-day, because many of its members have thrown themselves into the whirlpool of politics. Some of the more extreme politicians are its spiritual sons. As a religion it can have no future. Its handling of the Vedas is entirely uncritical and its founder was no systematic thinker. It is a lath and plaster structure in which much that is old and now transcended is held together by the plaster of an unscientific exegesis of the Vedas. The motive which inspired its builder was to defend Hinduism from the assaults of Christianity; but he had little solid masonry with which to build.

The reform movements which advocated not a partial reform but a full defence of Hinduism are dealt with by Farquhar,¹ who gives accounts of the work of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his disciple, the better-known Swami Vivekananda, as well as several minor movements. Ramakrishna (1834-86) was an extreme pantheist and in most respects was a very devout Hindu, but the reaction of Christianity upon him is seen in his teaching that all religions are true and in their essence identical and that each man should remain in the religion into which he was born. Ramakrishna won disciples because his theory that all religions are true "provided the ordinary Hindu with a defence he could use to meet Christian criticism and the Brahma Samaj".² Swami Vivekananda

¹ *Modern Religious Movements in India*, pp. 186 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

(1862-1902) carried on his master's teaching and founded the Ramakrishna Mission. His visits to Great Britain and America made him a well-known figure. Dr. Farquhar thus summarizes his teaching: "All religions are true and good; and, therefore, every man ought to remain in his own religion. God is impersonal, unknowable, non-moral. He is manifested in the whole world, in all men, in all gods and in all incarnations. The human soul is truly divine. All men are saints. It is a calumny and a sin to say that any human being can be guilty of sin. Idolatry is a very healthy and spiritual form of worship. Every particle of Hinduism is of value and must be retained. The reformers are mistaken. In trying to uproot the weeds, they are tearing up the precious wheat also. . . . It is also of the utmost importance that every Hindu should do all in his power to defend his religion and civilization, and save Hindu society from the poison of Western influences."¹

Hinduism has no authoritative creed and is such an amorphous system of religious beliefs and social practices that it is difficult to attack and easy to defend. On account of its elasticity and flexibility it can easily absorb other systems or make terms with them. Naturally, therefore, many Hindus to-day, in meeting the Christian attack, take refuge in religious syncretism as the best and easiest form of defensive strategy. They repeat the dictum of Vivekananda that all religions are true and therefore Hinduism is true. It was the influence of Rama-

¹ *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 203 f.

krishna which led Keshab Chandra Sen in his later days into religious syncretism. It appears that since its founder's death the New Dispensation Church has developed still further along these lines. After Keshab's decease the Church was seriously disintegrated by quarrels among its leaders. It still lacks cohesion. To-day Principal T. L. Vaswani, M.A., is its chief defender. He is a prolific writer of pamphlets in defence of New Dispensation principles. From his pamphlets I cull the following: "Religions are not rivals but brothers, for they all speak of One Law—the Law of Purity and Love, and the One Goal, the perfecting of man, and the One Eternal Spirit whom the Sages call by many names." "We believe in the harmony of religions. There is, in truth, but one religion unfolding itself in various religions, identified with no single prophet, but immanent in the teaching, and institutions of all wisdom-teachers of the world. The one religion must not be identified with but one of the great teachers of the world. The one religion is the religion of Christ; but it is not his alone, and so cannot be called Christianity. It is the religion of Buddha, but it cannot be his alone; and so, again, we may not speak of it as Buddhism. It is a synthesis of all world-religions, the dispensation of the spirit." It is obvious that these quotations register no departure from Keshab's syncretism and they leave it open to anyone to introduce as much, or as little, of any religion as seems good in his own eyes. Principal Vaswani's pamphlets show that he is widely read in philosophy and the comparative

study of religions, but he has not been able to utilize what he has read in a constructive, as opposed to a syncretistic, fashion. At the same time it should be said that there is often in his work a fine spiritual glow which is calculated to warm the hearts even of those who do not agree with him.

The new defensive strategy of Hinduism may also be illustrated by the claim, often put forward, that Christianity and Hinduism are identical. *The Indian Social Reformer* of January 21, 1928, contained the following passage from the pen of its editor: "We have always thought that the teachings of Jesus Christ give the net result of the highest philosophy of Hinduism, so as to be intelligible to a people who were mostly illiterate and without any aptitude for metaphysics. There is nothing whatever in the teaching of Christ that is alien to the Hindu mind. On the contrary, by trying as far as possible to follow the precepts of Jesus, a Hindu is also putting into practice the highest teaching of his own religion." The same point of view emerges in the remarks made by one of the officiating priests at the ceremony by which the American lady, Miss Miller, was initiated into Hinduism before her marriage to an Indian maharajah. He said, "To admit Christians or Muhammedans to Hinduism is not to ask those who seek it to give up their own faiths, but rather to enable them to enlarge their outlook and widen their horizon and live a broader and more tolerant life, doing what is in one's power to promote the happiness of the world."

Such a book as Mr. B. R. Rajam Aiyar's *Rambles in Vedanta* is a good example of a type of work that is frequently published by Hindus. It betrays some acquaintance with the comparative study of religions, but the facts are often ill-digested and the treatment of Hindu sources is frequently uncritical. It sets forth a Hinduism purified by the unconscious influence of Christianity and presented to the world as the essence of all religions. The superstitious elements of Hinduism are suppressed and attention is called to the highest flights of its philosophy.

The assertion that Christianity and Hinduism are identical is generally made as a particularization of the notion that all religions are equally true. Thus Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, a Hindu, is stated to have said that "to her Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism were all alike, like the various colours in a beautiful opal—turn it one way and you see blue; turn it another way and you see a rose colour, and yet another way and you see the greenness of the grass of the field." In an address given by Mrs. Naidu on July 26, 1926, to the Indian Christian Association, she said, "I believe that the World Masters, no matter in what age they were born or where, delivered the Christian message of peace, spoke the same thing, though they spoke each with his own spiritual vernacular. . . . To me it has never made any difference whether a man called himself a Christian, a Moslem, a Zoroastrian, or a Hindu. I am a Hindu, a devout Hindu, but inasmuch as I am a Hindu I must also recognize

and love and follow the teaching of the other Masters. And to-day a part of my spiritual possession is certainly the gospel of love that was preached and practised by the crucified Christ." The poetess then went on to deliver an address of great power in the course of which she quoted many times from the New Testament and exhorted her audience in the following terms: "Say to the Hindus, who are to-day the greatest sinners against humanity in this respect, that Christianity shall make this contribution to India, that no child of God shall be looked down upon, despised, hated, because he is one of the lower classes." "Remember that Christ is not merely a Jew who was crucified. The Cross is the expression of all the love that has ever been made incarnate in the world, of all the truth that has ever been made manifest in the world, of all the sacrifice that has ever tried to redeem the world from sorrow." If we were to substitute the word "sin" for the word "sorrow" in this quotation, it might have been spoken by an evangelical Christian.

Mrs. Naidu's reference to World Teachers suggests that she is in touch with the teaching of the Theosophical Society. Theosophy makes a real appeal to many Hindus because it accords with their defensive strategy. It purports to show men how they can remain in their own religion. Moreover, Mrs. Besant has taken pains to flatter Hindu susceptibilities. Her Society has published, through the Central Hindu College at Benares, a series of handbooks on Hinduism, which are intended to serve as text-books in schools and colleges.

Since syncretism is naturally opposed to the claim of any one religion to be final, present-day Hinduism is strongly opposed to Christianity's missionary propaganda. Frequent appeals are therefore addressed by Hindus to Christians to cease proselytizing. Such appeals have come from Mr. Gandhi, Professor Radhakrishnan, Mr. K. Natara-
 jan, who is the editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*, and many others. At the same time, however, there are signs that Hinduism itself is becoming a missionary religion. The Arya Samaj is very active as a missionary body and the *Shuddi* movement is a new phenomenon. The latter aims at the restoration to Hinduism of all Indian Moslems and at the conversion to Hinduism of persons belonging to foreign religions. The *Sangathan* movement is not without interest. Its aim is to organize all Hindus so as to bring together the different classes and sections of the community on to one common platform for the purpose of defence. In April 1927 Lala Lajpat Rai came down to Calcutta to inaugurate the *Sangathan* movement in Bengal. In his speech at a meeting in the Albert Hall he declared that it was not the function of the Hindu *Sangathan* to propagate any particular creed or dogma. "We do not want", he said, "to be aggressive . . . but if our insisting on our rights and claims means aggressiveness, I am aggressive. . . . The choice is before you. Either you disappear from India as a living religious community, having its own civilization and culture of which you have every reason to be proud, or you assert yourselves and face

the crisis. . . . There is still life in us. The result may be success or defeat, but we shall not go down without doing our part in the struggle." It should be added that the Lala was speaking at a time of communal tension and the rival he had principally in mind was Islam.

An outstanding feature of the religious situation in India at the present time is the genuine respect paid by so many Hindus to Jesus Christ. They are outspoken in their criticism of organized Christianity but have nothing but admiration for the teaching and character of its Founder. Out of many quotations which might be given to illustrate this fact the following must suffice. The curious reader is referred to Dr. Stanley Jones's *The Christ of the Indian Road*, if he desires further evidence. "There has, since the birth of creation, been only one perfect man. This was Jesus. And He was perfect because He was Divine." So wrote the *Indian Social Reformer* of February 11, 1928. When a Brahma Samajist wrote a book denying the historicity of Jesus and saying that "it is a disservice to the cause of spirituality to hold aloft a defective, manufactured person as a spiritual ideal to mankind", it was the Hindu editor of the *Indian Social Reformer* who took up the cudgels. In the issue of his journal for February 18, 1928, he wrote: "We think that He is unquestionably one of the two greatest World-Teachers, and that Gautama Buddha alone can be mentioned in the same breath with Him." The writer declares: "It is pretty safe to say that amongst religiously minded educated Hindus, as a class, the

teachings of Christ have become a great constructive influence in shaping personal and national ideals. They see in them the reflection in a clear and crystallized form of the conclusions of the highest Hindu teaching."¹

That Hindus should be able to pay this reverence to Jesus Christ, and no objection be raised by their co-religionists, is due to the tolerance and fluidity of Hinduism. A Hindu can be a Christian at heart provided he is faithful to the social system which is Hinduism's characteristic expression. No Christian missionary can be other than gratified by this respect paid to Christ. At the same time no Christian missionary can be content with this willingness on the part of so many Hindus to give Jesus Christ a place, and even a high place, in their pantheon, for the missionary enterprise stands or falls with the uniqueness and indispensability of Jesus Christ. Indian Christianity is just now faced with the problem of making this uniqueness and indispensability apparent to the Hindu mind. A well-known Indian Christian, Mr. P. Chenchiah, declares: "We have not demonstrated to the Hindu the uniqueness of Christianity. The outstanding religious leaders of modern India have all, notwithstanding their appreciation of Christ, made it clear beyond all doubt that they do not regard Him as their exclusive Saviour, or as having a message not found in Hinduism. . . . The Church itself does not

¹ I owe these and several other quotations in this chapter to a pamphlet (*The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Hinduism*) by my friend, the Rev. J. Ireland Hasler, B.A.

realize the uniqueness of Christ in spite of its loud assertions to the contrary. We do not exemplify in life and conduct anything unique which arrests the attention of the Hindu. Have we good men? So have they. Have we servants of humanity who renounced their all? So had they in the past. How then can we demonstrate the uniqueness of Christ when we do not evolve some new type of character, some spiritual power not paralleled in Hinduism?" There is a touch of impatience as well as of spiritual passion in these words, but they call attention to a problem that is both practical and theological. The problem is a pressing one to-day because the Christian missionary cannot forget that in the past Hinduism has displayed amazing powers of self-adaptation and absorption. What Dr. Macnicol calls its "omnivorous capacity" constitutes from the Christian point of view a real danger.

Our next task is to show how widely the Christian ethic has been accepted by Hindus. In the preceding chapters some account was given of the movements making for social reform. In all these movements the influence of the Christian conception of the value of personality may be traced. In the efforts now being made to uplift the Depressed Classes, to improve the conditions under which the women of India live, to abolish child-marriages and the devadasi system, the Christian conviction of the supremacy of personal values manifests itself. In all such social service there is an abandonment of the Hindu ideal of inaction and its teaching of the unreality of the visible world. The world is no longer

thought of as illusory, but as having a purpose. There can be no question as to the source from which modern Hindus derive their faith in progress and humanity. Never in the long history of Hinduism has such a faith attained a robust development. It has been taken over from Christianity. Mrs. Naidu's exhortation¹ to Indian Christians to carry on ceaseless war against the caste system's denial of human brotherhood is couched in language which makes it perfectly clear that she, at any rate, is under no illusion as to the only source from which inspiration can be derived for this crusade. Hinduism has never discovered in man such abiding values as to justify the effort to build a new and more perfect society. Many a Hindu reformer is embarrassed and hindered by his own Scriptures and the interpretation put upon them by the orthodox. Pandit Mahabagavat speaks for Hindu orthodoxy when he says, in his *The Heart of the Bhagavadgita* (p. 64),² "it is an impertinence to seek anything but one's own salvation. There is great spiritual danger in thinking that the world is in need of our help." In Christianity, on the other hand, the spiritual appreciation of humanity finds its noblest expression, for the teaching of Jesus gave the individual a place and prestige he had never before enjoyed. The moral idealism and passion for a juster social order which are characteristic of the West are not the product of humanism but are due to the working of the leaven of Christ's teaching. Whether we set down the new

¹ See above, p. 144.

² Cited by Saunders in his *The Gospel for Asia*, p. 158.

moral idealism which stirs so many Indian hearts to-day to the impact of Western civilization or to the impact of Christian missions, we reach the same conclusion, for the Western civilization and education which have come to India are impregnated with the Christian ethic. As a matter of sober history the movement for social reform and social service did not arise within Hinduism until after it had come into contact with Christianity.

It is not too much to say that one of the most important things that is happening to-day is that the process of moralizing Hinduism has begun. Still proud of the subtlety of its philosophical systems, it is nevertheless becoming increasingly aware of its ethical deficiencies. While it retains its metaphysical and religious concepts, it feels the necessity of grafting on to them ethical ideals that in their origin and essence are Christian. If we may define ideas as the highest conceptions of thought and ideals as the highest conceptions of action, we may say that the ideas of India are Hindu but its ideals are largely Christian. The point is important enough to warrant further amplification.

Hinduism has never been a moral force making for individual and social righteousness. Its characteristic saints have not been social reformers who preached a new divine society and a kingdom of righteousness, but devotees lost in mystic contemplation. The civilization of India has been controlled for centuries not by an ethical system but by a pantheistic metaphysic, which, if it has not obliterated, has always blurred moral distinctions. It is

impossible to graft a passion for social righteousness upon the metaphysics of the Vedanta, which by its very nature affords no incentive to material progress and no basis for social activity. And it is the pantheistic metaphysic of the Vedanta which provides the mental background for India's millions. Highly spiritual though its interpretation of the universe may be, it cannot give rise to a high appreciation of human personality. It has always subordinated ethical to metaphysical problems. Hinduism has always sacrificed an adequate ethic for a complete metaphysic. Its pantheism has always been destructive of moral vigour and moral enthusiasms. The West, on the other hand, influenced by Christianity, has preferred to sacrifice strict metaphysical consistency in order to preserve moral values and so adopts a teleological conception of life, whereas Hinduism, with its doctrine of cosmic cycles, has no feeling for the significance and value of history. Whatever men may think of the ultimate worth of these two contrasted tendencies, there can be no question as to which of them is freest to emphasize the value of human personality and to create a passion for social justice.

Further, caste, which is an integral part of Hinduism, has always been an insuperable barrier to the realization of the ideal of the equal worth of all human beings. It exercises a double tyranny—over each of its members, and of the higher castes over the Depressed Classes. It is essentially a system of group morality, which, without any balancing considerations, takes the group, and never the

individual, as the unit for all ethical purposes. It has no room for individual rights and values and can take no thought of man as a free, responsible individual. It therefore denies freedom of thought and the supremacy of conscience. A man's duty to his caste and the observance of its rules must override all other considerations, and among them the voice of conscience. It takes care to leave men no room to exercise freedom of thought. By laying down minute rules and regulations, applying to all circumstances and all situations, it keeps men in moral swaddling-clothes, thus stunting their moral development. Pantheism and caste, working together, have tended to enervate conscience and to suppress freedom of thought; and the result too frequently has been that the average Hindu is incapable of standing alone or taking the initiative in moral matters.

In spite of the prevailing tendency to glorify everything Indian, the protest against the caste system not only maintains itself but gathers volume. The classic protest of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore is mentioned elsewhere.¹ It is now some years since first he uttered it and to this day he has not abated the energy of his denunciation of a system which, as he says, has "forced upon our unthinking millions a system of social tyranny more perfectly organized than in any other country in the world."² Another

¹ See p. 162. For the earlier protests, see Farquhar's *Crown of Hinduism* (chap. iv) and his *Modern Religious Movements in India*, pp. 366 ff., pp. 387 ff.

² Letter to Dr. J. T. Sutherland, of New York, dated February 2, 1927.

Bengali who has been equally outspoken is the distinguished chemist, Sir P. C. Ray. At the Social Conference in Calcutta in January 1929 he characterized the caste system as the greatest of the disintegrating elements in Hindu society. He declared that the system was purely artificial and arbitrary, and, if Indians wanted a place in the community of nations, the sooner the system was abolished the better. At the same Conference Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, who has represented India at the Education Conference at Geneva, succeeded in carrying a resolution which strikes a deadly blow at the heart of the caste system. The resolution not only pledged the Conference to encourage inter-caste and inter-communal dinners, but also to give freedom for inter-marriages between the different communities inhabiting India. She declared that inter-marriage was the only means of securing a true national unity, because marriage laid the foundation of the home and from the home the unification of the whole country would come.

Denunciations of the caste system come not only from avowed social reformers but also from politicians, who are gradually coming to see that India cannot achieve political liberty until she has won for herself social freedom. This explains the frequent protests against caste heard from the platform of the Congress. In March 1929 the Bengal Provincial Conference of the National Congress hotly debated and passed a resolution urging the abolition of all caste distinctions, though it

rejected an amendment that every Hindu should be declared a Brahmin.

A recent movement of more than ordinary interest is the formation of the Self-Respect Conference, whose meeting at Erode, in the Madras Presidency, in May 1930, with Mr. M. R. Jayakar (mentioned above) in the Presidential Chair, attracted considerable attention. The Conference thus announced its object: "The Self-Respect Movement stands for the assertion of the self-respect of every individual by the establishment in every walk of life of equality between man and man and between man and woman." As the *Calcutta Statesman* of May 20, 1930, says: "the Self-Respect Conference is an institution which could only have been founded in India. Its title is naïve, revealing, and utterly lacking in self-consciousness. . . . It ought to disarm criticism by its very frankness."

Members of this Conference were, as might be expected, outspoken in their criticism of caste. "Whatever might be its historical origin or metaphysical justification," said the Chairman of the Reception Committee, "the caste system, as practised in Hindu society to-day, is the very negation of self-respect. Practically all the evils to which Hindu society is subject have their roots in this pernicious system, which divides man from man."

One resolution of the Conference manifests a curious puritan strain in its denial of the necessity of a mediating priesthood. The resolution runs thus: "This Conference is of opinion that not a single pie (farthing) or a single pie's worth of

material should be used for the purpose of worship in the temple or elsewhere in the name of God; and that no priest or intermediary between the worshipper and the worshipped should be employed." Critics at once seized upon this resolution to charge the Conference with atheism. To this charge the spokesman of the Conference replied: "Can any man of understanding or reason construe this resolution as a denial of the existence of God? The greatest obstacle to the realization of God by man is the priest who stands between man and God. It is the greed and corruption of the priests that have defiled the temples. We shall say a thousand times, 'Get rid of the idea that God can be propitiated by material offerings, and you have cleared the way for a true understanding of God'." This is something that needed saying in a priest-ridden land such as India. It means that the days of the Brahmin priest as a privileged person are numbered. He must either serve or go.

How far the caste system as a whole shows signs of disintegration it is difficult to say. Attacks upon it are frequent but its vitality is enormous. As a system it is not without social and economic benefits, but its evils are notorious. It has not only fixed the stigma of untouchability upon millions of human beings; it has also engendered throughout the country a spirit of division and disunion, mutual contempt and hostility. In South India, where the caste spirit is strongest, it manifests itself in the Christian Church, and Roman Catholic missionaries have made terms with it. Its value in the eyes of those

Hindus who still support it is due to their instinctive appreciation of the fact that it is the greatest of all bulwarks of Hinduism.

Such features of the caste system as have been modified by contact with the West belong to its outworks rather than to its citadel. The system has been relaxed in so far as it prohibited crossing the seas. Forbidden food is now openly taken, and dining with other castes, and even with non-Hindus, is connived at, if not openly countenanced. The train and tram-car have brought the different castes into closer and unavoidable contact. Hindu society is steadily moving and slowly adapting itself to its new environment; and the advance is in a direction which would have been abhorrent to the vast majority of Hindus even fifty years ago. Little impression has, however, been made upon the marriage rules of caste. Inter-caste marriages are still infrequent—so infrequent that they are always chronicled in the Press as valuable news items.

The stubbornness of the caste system (and in that system the Untouchables must be included) is due to the fact that caste has a religious basis. It is indissolubly linked with the doctrine of karma, which teaches that a man's caste is due to the working out of his karma. Each man is born into his caste because of the fruit of his deeds in previous existences. The social reformer in India is therefore confronted with a task of amazing difficulty. He cannot demand equal rights for all without seeming to overturn the fundamentals of the existing religion.

Since the doctrine of karma lies at the basis of the

caste system and is an essential part of Hindu doctrine, it is interesting to inquire how far it is undergoing modification in contemporary Hindu thought. The associated doctrines of transmigration and karma form an obsession which the Hindu mind finds it difficult to throw off. As we have seen, these doctrines were rejected by the early Theistic Samajes, but are retained by the Arya Samaj and by the Theosophists. The attraction of the doctrine of karma for most Hindus and Theosophists is due to their feeling that it gives them a complete and satisfying explanation of human suffering and of the inequalities of life. According to it a man's character, capacities, birth, wealth, station, in fact, the whole of his experience in life, are the just recompense for his deeds, good and bad, done in his previous existences; and all future existences will be determined by the same karmic law.

The defects of the karmic theory have often been stated. Stress is usually laid upon the following points: (a) The doctrine of karma is responsible for some, at least, of the pessimism of India, for karma is a road that leads nowhere. For the average man all it offers is the prospect of a long chain of existences, all of which are determined by the iron hand of karma. Karma is a great machine which grinds out results as surely and as certainly as the sun will rise to-morrow. The sharpest pangs of remorse and the bitterest penitential tears will never undo the workings of the penitent's karma, or suspend its operation even for a moment. (b) Punishment fails in its purpose if the person punished

does not know for what he is being punished. (c) Karma gives little or no encouragement to the philanthropist who is told that all suffering is deserved. If the lot of the pariah is due to the working out of his karma, I may only be interfering with the operations of karma if I try to alleviate his lot. If those, who lie by the roadside dying of hunger in time of famine, are in their plight through the working out of their karma, why organize relief for them?

The Hindu of to-day has felt the pressure of these arguments, especially the latter, which he tries to meet by saying that the assistance which the social worker brings to the needy is part of the latter's karma. Thus we read in *An Advanced Text-book of Hindu Religion and Ethics* (p. 117), published by the Central Hindu College, Benares, that it is "a mistake to say respecting a sufferer, 'He is suffering his karma; if I help him I may be interfering with his karma.' Those who thus speak forget that each man is an agent of the karma of others, as well as an experiencer of his own. If we are able to help a man, it is the proof that the karma under which he was suffering is exhausted, and that we are the agent of his karma bringing him relief. If we refuse to carry the karmic relief, we make bad karma for ourselves, shutting ourselves out from future help, and someone else will have the good karma of carrying relief and so ensuring for himself aid in a future difficulty." Concerning this modernized and modified view of karma, Principal Sydney Cave, to whom I owe the above

quotation, remarks, "the incentive to kindness seems strangely circuitous and ineffective".¹

The above quotation shows the growing difficulty Hindu Social Reformers feel in reconciling their altruistic service for others, especially the Depressed Classes, with the karmic doctrine that in the present life a man's karma cannot be altered. The present-day Hindu carries on his social service and his philanthropy in defiance of his karmic theory. Hence his tendency to reject it or to leave it an open question. Since the spirit of social service has come to India to stay, it follows that there will be an increasing recognition of the inconsistency between karma and the ideals of social service. So acute an observer as Dr. Macnicol is of opinion that karma is accepted by the educated classes "as furnishing an explanation of the inequalities of life: it is accepted also in the thoroughly ethical form of the proposition that 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also reap.' But the consequences from its full logical application are not deduced, and it is steadily losing its power."²

We conclude, then, that the ideals according to which many Hindus are seeking to reconstruct their social life are Christian rather than Hindu. In the sphere of social ethics especially, Hinduism is undergoing a sea-change. Some of the reformers are conscious of the Christian influence; others, perhaps the majority of them, are not, and so they repudiate all indebtedness. But no unprejudiced observer

¹ *Redemption, Hindu and Christian*, p. 186.

² *The Making of Modern India*, p. 122.

can deny that the Christian ethic has insinuated itself into Hinduism, though the Hindu is often unaware of the Christian origin of the phraseology he uses and the ethical principles to which he appeals. Few things are more suggestive than the fact that Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarada, the sponsor of the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, is an orthodox Hindu and the author of several works on Hindu culture, the best known of which bears the title *Hindu Superiority*. Fifty years ago the Social Reform Movement attracted only the few who stood aloof from Hindu orthodoxy; to-day it has entered the Hindu fold itself, though the conservatives still regard it as an interloper. For all thinking Indians, the debate concerning the superiority of the Christian over the Hindu ethic is concluded. Whether the attempt to graft the Christian ethic upon the Hindu religion is likely to be permanently successful is a question upon which opinions will differ, though most, if not all, Christians would give a negative answer, for reasons into which it would be beyond our province to enter here.

In the next chapters an attempt is made to show in greater detail how the reaction of Hinduism to Christian influences works out in the thought of certain distinguished Indians.

CHAPTER X

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE (born 1861) shares with Mr. Gandhi the honour of being the best-known Indian of to-day. A member of the rich, intellectual, influential Tagore family he has been exposed throughout his life to the full swing of all the tides of thought which have swept through India during the last half-century. It has been impossible for the poet to escape the influence of the nationalist movement; and on some few occasions he has flung himself into the political arena, but he has never been happy there. Political parties have more than once tried to capture him, but he has proved elusive. Mr. Gandhi tried to secure him for the non-co-operation movement, and the poet's refusal brought no little abuse upon his head. Politically, Rabindranath is a lonely figure. For one thing, he dislikes the din of politics, and, for another, his mind is so universal in its sympathies that for him it is axiomatic that in the modern world it is hopeless for India to try to stand in splendid isolation, clinging to her own culture and civilization and spurning those of all other nations. Rabindranath has no great liking for certain features of Western civilization. When he writes about it he can reproduce nearly all the well-known *clichés* of the most ardent Indian nationalists,¹ but detachment from politics enables him to see that, after all,

¹ See his *Nationalism* (London, 1917).

the West has something to teach the East. He likes to visualize his task as that of reconciler of East and West, and he is convinced that the future lies not in a policy of non-co-operation, but of mutual helpfulness. The aloofness of Rabindranath's attitude to politics may also be partly accounted for by his conviction that in India social reform must precede political reform. It was after a period of political disillusionment that he founded his now world-famous school at Bolpur. He would begin with the youth of his nation and seek to mould them into men, who would justify for themselves a place in the world. Caste he hates with a perfect hatred, and has denounced it in words which would be resented if they had come from a European's pen. He speaks of it as "this gigantic system of cold-blooded repression", and declares that in his opinion "the regeneration of the Indian people directly and perhaps solely depends upon the removal of this condition of caste", which has made "the free expression of manhood, even under the direst necessity . . . almost an impossibility". In various poems and writings Rabindranath has attacked with caustic irony other features of the Hindu social system, particularly the marriage-system.¹

We touch upon a question of intriguing interest when we try to define exactly Rabindranath's religious views. His father, Debendranath Tagore, had felt keenly the urgency of the religious problems created by the contact of Hinduism with Christ-

¹ For details see E. J. Thompson's *Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist*, chap. viii.

ianity. The father had sought and found peace of mind in a vigorously reformed Hinduism from which had been expunged polytheism, idolatry, and transmigration. Debendranath never moved towards the Christian position, and was never known to quote the words of Christ. His scriptures were the Upanishads.

The influence of his father has made it impossible for Rabindranath ever to go back upon the reforms of Hinduism his father had espoused. The effect of the poet's early training in a reformed Hindu home may be seen in the simplicity of the daily worship conducted at his school at Bolpur, where the one God is worshipped and no idol allowed in the school compound. To the same training, no doubt, the poet owes the retention of his membership in the Adi Samaj, at whose services he sometimes preaches, though he was a little disgruntled when the Samaj refused to fall in with his suggestion to open its pulpit to non-Brahmins. He is also an honorary member of the Sadharan Samaj. It would appear that his membership of both Samajes is somewhat nominal, for he told Dr. J. N. Farquhar that his opinion was that the regeneration of India would come through gradual changes within the body of Hinduism itself rather than from the action of any detached society like the Brahma Samaj.¹ However nominal Rabindranath's membership of the two branches of the Brahma Samaj may be, it is clear that religion is the breath of life to him. One needs to read only *Gitanjali* to appreciate that.

¹ Farquhar, op. cit., p. 384.

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¹ Farquhar, op. cit., p. 384.

Take away the poet's religion and he would cease to sing. There is, however, a difference between the religion of the father and the son. Perhaps we do the son no injustice if we say that his religion is inclined to be luscious where his father's was austere. Are there any signs that the son goes further than the father? Will he move forward to the Christian position or will he retreat nearer to Hindu orthodoxy? There has been no retreat to Hindu orthodoxy, and it can be shown that Rabindranath has assimilated much more distinctive Christian teaching than his father ever did. The question of the extent to which Rabindranath has been influenced by Christianity is still hotly debated and will need to be discussed.

To lay bare the intellectual content of Rabindranath's religious faith is not easy. The poet shows no inclination to imprison his creed in a dogmatic confession of faith. He comes nearest to such a confession in his *Sadhana*, which is made up of papers read by him before the Harvard University. Its sub-title is "The Realization of Life". Anything more unlike a formal theological or philosophical treatise it is difficult to imagine. Ideas are not systematically treated but poured forth in lyrical profusion; and in true Eastern fashion analogies and metaphors are presented as the equivalent of logical demonstration.

The preponderating influence in *Sadhana* is that of the Upanishads which are frequently quoted. As Rabindranath himself points out, he was brought up in a family where the texts of the Upanishads

were used in daily worship. It is generally agreed that the Upanishads teach the purest form of idealistic monism that has ever been set before the world. If this be true, it follows that according to Upanishadic doctrine God will be impersonal, human freedom an illusion, and evil non-existent. But we do not find Rabindranath accepting any of these conclusions. His interpretation of the Upanishads is his own and it is interesting to trace the influences that have led to his departures from the usual exegesis.

The God of Rabindranath's adoration is personal. The poet protests energetically that those thinkers, both Indian and European, are wrong who "maintain that the Brahma of India is a mere abstraction, a negation of all that is in the world", though he admits that "such a doctrine has been and still is prevalent with a section of our countrymen".¹ "The Infinite in India was not a thin nonentity, void of all content", he declares.² Tagore can even speak of "the sovereignty of the universal will".³

We may quote a few passages which make it clear that Rabindranath in some moods is more theistic than pantheistic. "It is the self of man which the great king of the universe has not shadowed with his throne—he has left it free. In his physical and mental organism, where man is related with nature, he has to acknowledge the rule of his king, but in his self he is free to disown him. There our God must win his entrance. There he comes as guest not as king, and therefore he has to wait till

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

he is invited.”¹ “At the other pole of my being I am separate from all. There I have broken through the cordon of equality and stand alone as an individual. I am absolutely unique, I am I, I am incomparable. The whole weight of the universe cannot crush out this individuality of mine.”² “We are absolutely bankrupt if we are deprived of this specialty, this individuality, which is the only thing we can call our own; and which, if lost, is also a loss to the whole world. It is most valuable because it is not universal. And therefore only through it can we gain the universe more truly than if we were lying within its breast unconscious of our distinctness.”³ “God’s love from which our self has taken form has made it separate from God.”⁴

If we were to judge him only from the quotations given above, we might easily suppose that Tagore is a theist. But he has other and more prevalent moods in which the pantheistic note is sounded. The following passage has as its motive a diplomatic attempt to commend the pantheism of India to the West and it is noteworthy for its implied criticism of Western materialism. “In the West the prevalent feeling is that nature belongs exclusively to inanimate things and to beasts, and that there is a sudden unaccountable break where human nature begins. According to it, everything that is low in the scale of beings is merely nature, and whatever has the stamp of perfection on it, intellectual and moral, is human nature. It is like dividing the bud and the

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 41.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

blossom into two separate categories, and putting their grace to the credit of two different and antithetical principles. But the Indian mind has never had any hesitation in acknowledging its kinship with nature, its unbroken relation with all. The fundamental unity of creation was not simply a philosophical speculation for India; it was her life-object to realize this great harmony in feeling and in action."¹

Since Tagore has been so powerfully influenced by the Upanishads, it would be a miracle if his mind did not incline at times in the direction of pantheism. He delights in their oft-repeated doctrine that in order to find the One, man must embrace the all.² The region of the infinite is the region of unity.³ "We must become Brahma. We must not shrink from avowing this", he declares.⁴ "Though the West has accepted as its teacher him who boldly proclaimed his oneness with his Father, and who exhorted his followers to be perfect as God, it has never been reconciled to this idea of our unity with the infinite being. It condemns, as a piece of blasphemy, any implication of man's becoming God."⁵ In order to depict the truth that the human spirit becomes Brahma, Tagore uses the old picture of the stream becoming the ocean. "In the music of the rushing stream sounds the joyful assurance, 'I shall become the sea.' It is not a vain assumption; it is true humility, for it is the truth. The river has no other alternative. On both sides of its banks it

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 6 f. (Cf. *Gitanjali*, No. 69).

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

has numerous fields and forests, villages and towns; it can serve them in various ways. . . . But it can have only partial relations with these, and however long it may linger among them it remains separate; it can never become a town or a forest. But it can and does become the sea . . . and its motion finds its finality when it reaches the sea."¹ If further proof be needed that the ground-swell of Tagore's thinking is Hindu and pantheistic, we may notice his frequent resort to such characteristic doctrines of the Hindu Schoolmen as *maya* and *avidya*. Heiler remarks² that Tagore has dressed in magnificent poetic garb the ancient doctrine that nature is *maya* (illusion) and God is the great illusion-maker (*mayin*). Tagore declares that man in his true being is divine; and all he needs to do is to cast off the veil of *maya*, and then he will know himself as divine, or rather, will become divine. In defiance, apparently, of what he has written elsewhere, he avows that the separateness of our self is an illusion (*maya*), "because it has no intrinsic reality of its own".³ Any sense that man may have of his own individuality is due to the "envelopment of *avidya*" (ignorance).⁴ Salvation is "deliverance from the thralldom of *maya*, of appearance which springs from *avidya*, from ignorance".⁵ "*Avidya* is the ignorance that darkens our consciousness,

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 156. Note here the inveterate habit of the East to offer an analogy as an argument.

² *Christlicher Glaube und Indisches Geistesleben*, p. 16. I wish to express my great indebtedness to Heiler's treatment of Tagore's teaching, though I do not agree with Heiler on all points.

³ *Sadhana*, p. 79.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

and tends to limit it within the boundaries of our personal self.”¹ “The true deliverance of man is the deliverance from *avidya*, from ignorance.”²

Tagore goes farther than many pantheists are prepared to go when he declares that God only becomes conscious of Himself in human beings.³ The thought that God needs men in order to become conscious of Himself is finely expressed in the following lines:

Thou didst not know Thyself when Thou didst sit alone. . . .
I came, and Thou didst awake, and the heaven blossomed out in lights.
I came, and thy heart was swelling; suffering and joy came to Thee.

Unmistakably Hindu is Tagore's refusal to acknowledge that God has given to the world any one historical revelation of universal validity.⁴ His pantheistic faith in a universal revelation of God has no room for an historic revelation in a definite place and at a definite time. Hence he rejects decisively the Christian claim that in Jesus Christ men confront an absolute and final revelation of the Divine. Jesus Christ is for him only one of many divine incarnations—a son of God but not the Son of God. The poet puts this point with an asperity which it is difficult to believe is uninfluenced by his strong nationalistic feelings. “God”, he says, “is magnanimous in the distribution of His love. His intercourse with men is not confined to a cul-de-sac, which stops suddenly in history. If ever such a catastrophe should come over men, as that a single

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 32.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³ Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

religion should submerge all others, then God would have to prepare a second ark in order to save His creatures from the destruction of their souls.”¹

Sufficient has been said to show that Tagore is far removed from traditional Christianity. His pantheism and his denial of an historic revelation in Christ are in themselves enough to show under which banner he marches. At the same time it cannot be too strongly asserted that the poet's religion is far from being purely Indian. Heiler remarks² that anyone like himself who has first studied the Upanishads, then the *Gita*, and next the Buddhist writings, steps into another world when he comes to Tagore. Heiler claims that Tagore “is in reality a living witness of the advance of the Christian faith in the spiritual life of India”. That Heiler is not exaggerating the following considerations will show.

We search in vain in the writings of Tagore for that note of pessimism which has sounded in Indian piety for over two thousand years. The climate of India and the associated doctrines of transmigration and karma have for long hung like a pall over the sensitive Hindu mind, creating within it a sense of world-weariness and despair. But the characteristic pessimism of his native land stirs Tagore almost to impatience. “No doubt”, he says, “there have been people who asserted existence to be an absolute evil, but man can never take them seriously. Their pessimism is a mere pose, either intellectual or sentimental; but life itself is optimistic: it wants to go on. Pessimism is a form of mental dipsomania,

¹ Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

it disdains healthy nourishment, indulges in the strong drink of denunciation, and creates an artificial dejection which thirsts for a stronger draught."¹ Here we see Tagore reacting to traditional Hinduism, but his reaction is not identical with that of a "healthy-minded Westerner".

For the traditional pessimism of his native land Tagore substitutes a joy that in its delightful naïveté is far removed from anything we know in Western civilization. At the same time it is quite different from the joy with which Hindu and Buddhist saints have hymned their attainment of Nirvana. In some respects it is more reminiscent of the early Christian Church than of India² or the modern West. Tagore's joy does not come to him, as it did to Hindu and Buddhist ascetics, by withdrawal from the world and the practice of an inward concentration, which leads stage by stage to *mukti*. His joy springs out of his discovery of the divine in the ordinary and commonplace both in nature and in man. The whole universe is both a manifestation of the Divine and the creation of joy. For that reason it is a marvellous symphony—a veritable cascade of wonderful tones and harmonies. Thus in the music of the birds and the thunder of the monsoon season men hear the footsteps of God, as in the spring flowers and autumn fruits they touch the garment of the Divine.³

This conviction that the universe is a creation of joy is grounded in Tagore's unshakable faith that God is love. The joy in the world is a revelation of

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 52 f.

² Cf. Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

³ Cf. *Gitanjali*, No. 45.

the divine love. Here we trace the influence of the Vaishnavas upon Tagore. The Vaishnavas were convinced that God is love because He became incarnate for their sakes. Other influences have doubtless affected the poet and among them we may place Kabir, Goethe, and Ruskin, but the Vaishnava influence predominates over any Christian influences that may have touched his mind. His conversion in his early twenties brought him his first vivid realization of this cosmic joy. "All of a sudden", he says, "a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes, and I found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side."¹

Another point at which Tagore breaks away from traditional Hindu thinking is in his belief in progress. The transmigration-karma doctrine is inconsistent with such a belief and not unnaturally Indian thinkers have always placed the Golden Age in the past. The writings of Tagore on the other hand are soaked in that belief in progress which is so characteristic of Western culture and modern Christianity.² The poet thus expresses his conviction that final victory belongs to the good: "Evil cannot altogether arrest the course of life on the highway and rob it of its possessions. For the evil has to pass on, it has to grow into good; it cannot stand and give battle to the All."³ In a well-known and highly poetical passage in his *Sadhana* Tagore pictures the triumphal car of humanity traversing

¹ See my *Conversion: Christian and Non-Christian*, p. 129.

² Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³ *Sadhana*, p. 52.

the wide fields of humanity. "Pain, disease, and disorder are at every step receding before its onset; the obstructions of ignorance are being thrust aside; the darkness of blindness is being pierced through, and behold the promised land of wealth and health, of poetry and art, of knowledge and righteousness is gradually being revealed to view."¹ Those who know India, past and present, on reading such a passage are driven to cry, "Never Indian thinker so spake!"

Naturally, the poet of the joy of life is the enemy of asceticism. "Deliverance", he cries, "is not for me in renunciation. . . . I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight."² To become a homeless wandering ascetic (*sannyasi*) is a denial of God who has created the world. Escape from the world is escape from God, for the divine is not some separate sphere, but interpenetrates everyday life. All work, then, even the simplest, may be, and should be, dedicated to God.

India is a land of ascetics and numbers among its population over three million sadhus and sannyasis. Protests have more than once been raised against them as social parasites, but these protests have never caught the ear of the common people attuned as it is to the ascetic note in religion. "There are many in our country", says Tagore, "who imagine action to be opposed to freedom. They think that activity being in the material plane is a restriction of the free spirit of the soul. But we must remember

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 130 f.

² *Gitanjali*, No. 73.

that as joy expresses itself in law, so the soul finds its freedom in action."¹ "Those who have fully realized the soul have never talked in mournful accents of the sorrowfulness of life or of the bondage of action."² "It will never do the least good to attempt the realization of the infinite apart from the world of action."³ "He who thinks to reach God by running away from the world, when and where does he expect to meet him?"⁴

Heiler makes an interesting and important point when he says that Tagore is the first Indian thinker to whom the mystery of suffering in all its greatness has been revealed. Tagore has not been able to reconstruct his doctrine of sin⁶ in the light of the Christian revelation, but he has seen the facts of suffering and death in the light of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. Nothing is so contrary to Indian thought as the faith that suffering can be a revelation of God. To the Indian mind suffering is nothing more than the working out of the law of karma, over which law even the gods have no control. The world of human suffering and the world of divine joy are therefore two completely separated spheres. For Tagore, however, suffering is not the unavoidable consequence of human deeds, as the law of karma asserts, but a means of divine grace—a painful means through which God draws man to

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 120.

² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130. Cf. the often-quoted poem in *Gitanjali* (No. 11), "Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads."

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁶ Tagore defines sin as "the blurring of truth which clouds the purity of our consciousness". *Op. cit.*, p. 38, cf. p. 74.

Himself. The burden of pain is a gift of God.¹ Since suffering comes from the hands of a loving God, it is for the good man a source of imperishable joy.

The same note is struck by Tagore regarding death. It is neither painful nor terrible. Its sting has been drawn and it is the gate into eternal life. Tagore's poems show that personal bereavement has driven him to reflect deeply over death; and his attitude toward it is as far removed from the helpless pessimism of the average Hindu as anything well could be. He excels at inventing similes and metaphors to set forth the kindness of death. Just as a child cries out when taken by its mother from her right breast but is immediately consoled when she puts it to her left breast, so death is nothing but a change in the arms of God.² Death is God's messenger and therefore the friend of man. Death is the wedding-day of the soul, which should be decked in its finest raiment to meet its spouse.³

It may be doubted if any Indian thinker has ever struck such joyous notes as these in contemplating human mortality. Heiler is probably right in saying that it is a Christian joy in death and a Christian faith in the beyond which have unconsciously guided Tagore's pen, and led him outside the boundaries of his ancestral faith. At the same time the arguments by which Tagore defends the conviction he has reached under Christian influence

¹ *Gitanjali*, No. 52.

² *Ibid.*, No. 95. Heiler sees here an echo of Romans xiv. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 91.

are thoroughly Hindu in form. "Our self," he writes, "as a form of God's joy, is deathless. For his joy is eternal. This it is in us which makes us sceptical of death, even when the fact of death cannot be doubted. . . . It is death which is monistic, it has no life in it. But life is dualistic; it has an appearance as well as truth; and death is that appearance, that *maya*, which is an inseparable companion to life."¹ Such sentences would sound strangely discordant if found in the New Testament Scriptures.

The extent to which Tagore has absorbed Christian ideas and ideals and allowed his thought to be modified by them stimulates Heiler to enthusiasm. He claims that at bottom Tagore's piety is Christian.² The poet is an unbaptized Christian, whose life-work is the fruit of Christian missions and more precious than 100,000 baptisms. It may be true that we find in the poet relics of the Old Indian pantheism, it may be true that he has not comprehended Christianity in its length and breadth and height and depth; but that is nothing, says Heiler, for there are millions of Christians who know less of Christianity than Tagore does. Through the poet Christianity is more effectively preached than by some Christian missionaries. This estimate errs on the side of extravagance. It seems better to say that in Tagore we get "a glimpse of what the Christianity of India will be like, and we see that it will be something better than the Christianity which came to it".³ Thus, for example, the following

¹ *Sadhana*, p. 81.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

³ E. J. Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, p. 101.

poem, which appears with several others by Tagore in a Bengali Christian Hymnal, published in 1911 by the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, is a better medium for the expression of Indian Christian piety than many Christian hymns imported from the West and lacking in Indian sentiment. I owe the English rendering to the Rev. W. Sutton Page, Reader in Bengali in the London School of Oriental Studies.

If the door of this heart of mine
Should ever be shut, O Lord,
Do Thou break open the door and come into my soul;
Turn not away, O Lord.

If ever the strings of this lyre
Should cease to echo Thy name.
Still in pity stand and wait;
Turn not away, O Lord.

If ever when Thou callest me,
Slumber should refuse to flee at Thy behest,
Wake me with the shock of Thy thunder;
Turn not away, O Lord.

If ever on Thy Throne
I should put another and serve him,
O Thou who art the king of all my days,
Turn not away, O Lord.

Tagore's piety is an amalgam of Upanishadic and Vaishnava Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Some slight Islamic influences have also come in through Kabir, whom the poet greatly admires. His rejection of caste, karma, and transmigration place Tagore outside the pale of Hindu orthodoxy.

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The prevailing tones of his piety are Hindu, but they are shot through and through with the colour of Christian ideas, some of which Tagore has on occasion manipulated to suit his own purposes. "Nearly all of such Christian influence as there has been on his poetry has been mediated by Western science, philosophy, literature, and by Brahmo teaching, and a little has come direct; he has taken whatever he wanted with both hands, never asking the source."¹ Indeed, the freedom with which Tagore handles Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian texts is disconcerting to anyone with scholarly instincts. In my judgment, the Christian influence upon Tagore is greater in the realm of ethics than metaphysics. In so far as a poet can have a philosophy of the universe, Tagore's is Hindu. But in the realm of ethical ideals and standards he is far more Christian than Hindu—witness his rejection of caste and pessimism, and his acceptance of the ideals of progress, of the dignity of toil, of the duty of service. Tagore has been driven by the *zeitgeist* to adopt new ethical ideals and standards, which, had he been a consistent thinker, he would have seen to be inconsistent with the pantheistic traditions of his Motherland. It is abundantly clear that both as poet and thinker Tagore is inexplicable apart from the impact of Christianity upon the Hindu mind. He is a remarkable witness to advance of the ethical ideas of Christianity in the life and thought of India.

¹ E. J. Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore, Poet and Dramatist*, p. 65.

CHAPTER XI

MAHATMA GANDHI

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI was born on October 2, 1868, at Porbander on the Sea of Oman. His parents were Vaishnavas, a Hindu sect which holds the *ahimsa* doctrine of non-injury to life in any form. At the age of nineteen he came to London to read for the Bar, and on his return to India in 1891 began to practise in the Supreme Court in Bombay. In 1893 he was called to Pretoria to conduct an important case, and the next twenty years of his life were associated with South Africa, where he did a splendid work on behalf of his fellow-countrymen settled there. Valuable though his work was, it did not make him the international figure that his more recent activity in India has done. It is probably correct to say that no living Indian has attracted more attention throughout the world than has Mr. Gandhi. It is important, therefore, to understand the thoughts and ideals upon which his work for India has been based. The foundation of Mr. Gandhi's political programme is to be found in a profound reaction against Western civilization, which he denounces as materialistic and satanic. He calls upon India to return to her own ancient civilization and to her time-honoured ways and customs and to shrink from Western influence as an unclean thing. Only thus can the soul of India be liberated from the bondage of the alien civilization which British rule has imposed upon her. In his

South African days Mr. Gandhi had familiarized himself with the writings of Rousseau, Tolstoy, Edward Carpenter, and other critics of Western civilization, and in his *Hind Swaraj*, published in 1908, he calls modern civilization "the great vice". The Great War only served to engrave more deeply in his mind the opinions he had already formed. In 1920 he wrote:

The last war has shown as nothing else has the Satanic nature of the civilization that dominates Europe to-day. Every canon of public morality has been broken by the victors in the name of virtue. No lie has been considered too foul to be uttered. The motive behind every crime is not religious or spiritual, but grossly material. . . . Europe to-day is only nominally Christian. In reality it is worshipping Mammon.¹

Naturally modern industrialism finds in Mr. Gandhi an implacable foe. India would be better if her industries, railroads, and tramways were all swept away at a stroke. All modern machinery is of the devil. It enslaves those who use it. All India requires is her plough and spinning-wheel (*charka*), for on them her ancient prosperity was founded. It is curious to notice that Western medical science comes under the Mahatma's condemnation. It is materialistic, whereas according to Mr. Gandhi "disease is the result of our thoughts as much as of our acts".

The limitations of Mr. Gandhi's thought are obvious. What he advocates is, in essence, a return to medievalism. His programme for working out the social and political salvation of India by a

¹ Cited by Romain Rolland in his *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 39.

return to the *charka* is an idle dream. He has failed rightly to assess the value of those forces from the West that are making their influence felt on India to-day and producing a widespread ferment. During the last two centuries the Western world has undergone revolutionary changes through the establishment of a new industrial-scientific type of civilization, through the establishment of democratic institutions and through the introduction of universal education. All these are now being imported into India. India needs the scientific knowledge of the West if only as a means of overcoming the poverty of many of her millions and of eliminating disease. But Mr. Gandhi rejects the industrial-scientific type of civilization as materialistic and as tending to enslave a nation to machines and to the things which machines produce. He fears that the victory of a mechanized civilization would mean the death of spiritual values. Here we may trace the influence upon his mind, not only of Hinduism, but also of Tolstoy. Mr. Gandhi's *charka* policy would condemn the vast majority of the people of India to that low standard of living, bordering on starvation, from which the applied science of the West might deliver them. He fears the destruction of spiritual values by the materialistic civilization of Europe; but it may be doubted whether the poverty of India is not as destructive of personal and religious values as the applied science of the West. There can be little doubt that India, in spite of Mr. Gandhi's opposition, will adopt what has been called the scientific strategy of the West. At present he can

see only the perils that beset the soul which is preoccupied with its physical circumstances. A clearer insight would have enabled him to realize that, real though these perils are, it is possible to serve the highest interests of human personality by improving the environment in which it lives and by which it is conditioned.

Mr. Gandhi's indiscriminate hostility to Western civilization is naturally viewed with misgiving by those of India's intellectuals who have absorbed the spirit of European culture. Of these, Dr. Rabin-dranath Tagore may be taken as typical. Towards Mr. Gandhi he entertains a warm personal admiration, but he is outspoken in his criticism of his leading ideas. He wrote:

The awakening of India is bound up in the awakening of the world. Every nation that tries to shut itself in violates the spirit of the new age.¹

All humanity's greatest is mine. . . . The *infinite* personality of man (as the Upanishads say) can only come from the magnificent harmony of all human races. My prayer is that India may represent the co-operation of all the peoples of the world. For India, unity is truth, and division evil. Unity is that which embraces and understands everything; consequently, it cannot be attained through negation. The present attempt to separate our spirit from that of the Occident is a tentative if spiritual suicide. . . . We of the Orient should learn from the Occident. It is regrettable, of course, that we had lost the power of appreciating our own culture, and therefore did not know how to assign Western culture to its right place. But to say that it is wrong to co-operate with the West is to encourage the worst form of provincialism and can produce nothing but intellectual indigence. The problem is a world problem. No nation

¹ *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 108.

can find its own salvation by breaking away from others. We must all be saved or we must all perish.¹

Satyagraha is the peculiar means Mr. Gandhi proposes to use to compel the British Government to grant his demands. *Satyagraha* means "truth-force". In 1919 Mr. Gandhi defined it as "holding on to truth". On another occasion he said, "I have also defined it as love-force or soul-force". The word was deliberately chosen to indicate that something more than passive resistance was meant. The resistance it implies is not passive but active, but the activity finds its outlet in methods of non-violence—in faith, love, and sacrifice. Two quotations from the Mahatma's writings will make clear his point of view.

I would risk violence a thousand times rather than the emasculation of the race. I would rather have India resort to arms to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a hopeless victim to her own dishonour. But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. Abstinence is forgiveness only when there is power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature.

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer but the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire and to lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

In formulating his conception of *Satyagraha*, Mr.

¹ *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 102 ff. Romain Rolland, who is a strong partisan of the Mahatma, also gives Mr. Gandhi's reply to Dr. Tagore. See pp. 96-119.

Gandhi has been influenced by Christianity as well as by the Hindu doctrines of *ahimsa* and *tapas*. "I have ventured", he said, "to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice, the law of suffering. The *Rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton, greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence". "If India made violence her creed I would not care to live in India. She would cease to evoke any pride in me. My patriotism is subservient to my religion."¹

The Mahatma's appeal to the ancient doctrine of *ahimsa* touched a responsive chord in Hindu hearts. For many centuries *ahimsa* has been a notable tenet of the Hindu faith and has caused not a few Hindus to be vegetarians. The doctrine has naturally made armed revolution an exotic in India. As we saw in an earlier chapter, there are a few Indians who have resorted to the bomb and the dagger as the weapons of their warfare, and have sought to justify their methods by an appeal to religion. But the bulk of the Hindus have never felt happy about their methods. To thousands who were ardently desiring *Swaraj* Mr. Gandhi's new programme of non-violence came as a revelation from heaven. It fitted exactly into the context of their religious thought. They could not march under the banner of the revolutionaries, but they marched with elation under

¹ Cited by Romain Rolland, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

the banner on which was emblazoned not the sword but the *charkar*. Constitutional methods seemed to have failed. They longed for some substitute for armed rebellion and Mr. Gandhi provided it. At the same time he solaced their injured national pride by an appeal to their ancient faith. Out of the unrivalled treasures of their spiritual inheritance the solution was to come, and political propaganda was to be reinforced by the appeal to religious sentiment.

The connection of the Hindu *tapas* doctrine with the *satyagraha* conception should not be overlooked. According to the *tapas* doctrine a man can influence others by the austerities he practises upon himself. The Hindu sacred writings abound in instances of men who, by self-mortification, acquired power over gods and men. But in none of these cases does the thought appear of active benevolence to others. This is a distinctive Christian concept, and in so far as Mr. Gandhi has incorporated it into his idea of *satyagraha* he has derived it not from Hinduism but from the Sermon on the Mount. In so far as *satyagraha* becomes active benevolence towards others it passed beyond mere passive resistance. Unfortunately, the masses of India, to whose religious sentiments Mr. Gandhi's ascetic life makes a great appeal, do not live on his high ethical plane and they pay no heed to the positive side of his teaching concerning active love. In their best moods they are content to interpret *Satyagraha* as passive resistance; in their worst, they dishonour their leader by adopting methods of crude violence.

Mr. Gandhi has become the idol of the masses of India as no other Indian leader before or since. His mere appearance among them is sufficient to arouse them to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. But he is quite unable to control those forces which he can so easily unleash. He preaches temperance to the masses and they reply by looting the wine-shops. It is useless for him to tell them, "You must not try to compel others by physical force to become good". He preaches non-violent, civil disobedience and the mob replies with riot, arson, and murder. In February 1922 a mob at Chauri-Chaura roasted alive some Indian police. Mr. Gandhi declared it was "the bitterest humiliation" he had experienced. He fasted repeatedly for the sins of his followers, but for long he did not see that his programme required a nation of saints to carry it out. Writing on March 2, 1922, just after the Chauri-Chaura outrage, he said:

I am a sadder and, I hope, a wiser man to-day. I see that our non-violence is skin-deep. . . . Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his fellow-being? Of what avail is it, then, if I fast myself to death in the event of such a catastrophe coming to pass? Let us be truthful. If it is by force that we wish to gain *Swaraj*, let us drop non-violence and offer such violence as we may. It would be a manly, honest, and sober attitude, and no one can accuse us of the terrible charge of hypocrisy.¹

It is this tremendous discrepancy between Mr. Gandhi's pacifist teaching and the violent manner

¹ Cited by Romain Rolland in his *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 134.

in which it is carried into practice by the masses, who regard him as their leader, that gives the impression to many Westerners that he must be a humbug or a hypocrite and no saint. But those acquainted with all the facts have not the least doubt of his perfect sincerity and of the saintliness of his character.

Mr. Gandhi has never hesitated to range himself on the side of social reform. Married himself as a child, he is an opponent of child-marriage. He does not go as far as some in denouncing the caste system as such, but defends it as a useful system for the division of labour. Yet how profoundly modified his Hinduism is in this respect is seen by his frequent insistence that caste confers no rights and privileges but simply imposes duties. His progressive views on the burning question of "untouchability" have already been referred to.¹ The orthodox have more than once threatened him with excommunication. How real their fears are may be seen from the fact that the Congress, which made him political dictator, expressly laid it down that he should agree to no religious changes without the consent of the Congress Committee.

Another incident sheds a curious light upon the ways of orthodoxy. In October 1928 Mr. Gandhi relieved a sick calf of its sufferings by having poison injected into it. A large meeting of Hindus was convened to protest against his action. One speaker protested that if such things were done in the Mahatma's *ashram*, it would hinder their attempts

¹ See page 100

to have the Bombay City Police Act amended so that the power of shooting injured animals in the streets might be taken away. A resolution was passed condemning Mr. Gandhi's action and the audience demanded the deletion of the word "Mahatma" from the resolution as drafted.

The Mahatma's revolt against Western civilization is not in him a revolt against Christianity also. His high appreciation of the New Testament makes it clear that he can and does differentiate between the Western civilization and the Christianity of the New Testament. He has made what he himself calls "a fair study" of the New Testament, and he got into trouble with the orthodox when he read it with the students of the Gujerat National College. He was charged with being a Christian in secret. In his paper, *Young India*, he replied to his critics in the following terms:

I regard my study of and reverence for the Bible, the Quran, and the other scriptures to be wholly consistent with my claim to be a staunch *sanatani* Hindu. He is no *sanatani* Hindu who is narrow, bigoted, and considers evil to be good if it has the sanction of antiquity and is to be found supported in any Sanskrit book. I claim to be a staunch *sanatani* Hindu because, though I reject all that offends my moral sense, I find the Hindu scriptures to satisfy the needs of the soul. My respectful study of other religions has not abated my reverence for or my faith in the Hindu scriptures. They have indeed left their deep mark upon my understanding of the Hindu scriptures. They have broadened my view of life. They have enabled me to understand more clearly many an obscure passage in the Hindu scriptures. . . . I do believe that in the other world there are neither Hindus, nor Christians, nor Mussalmans. There all are judged not according to their labels or professions but according to their actions irrespective of their professions. During

our earthly existence there will always be these labels. I therefore prefer to retain the label of my forefathers so long as it does not cramp my growth nor debar me from assimilating all that is good anywhere else.

Though he remains a Hindu, Mr. Gandhi, like so many other Hindus to-day, is really an eclectic. From the *Gita* he draws his belief in a personal God of grace and from Christianity his belief in the Fatherhood of God and his conviction that religion must be ethical. In his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, he mercilessly criticizes such Hindu sacred places as Benares and Kalighat. Many times he has denounced the devadasi system (religious prostitution) and has declared that God cannot dwell in Hindu temples where it is carried on. When in 1927 he declared that God did not reside in some Hindu temples any more than in brothels, the orthodox called upon him to withdraw his remarks. He refused to retract a single word and went on to say:

In one sense, it is quite true that God is everywhere. God is in the den of thieves. He is in the public-house and He is in the house of ill-fame, but we do not therefore seek out these places in order to pray to God. On the other hand, we seek out temples for communion with God in the belief that they are surrounded with a pure atmosphere. In that sense I do say God does not reside in some of the Hindu temples. If He does, He resides in them in the same sense that He resides in the house of ill-fame. If this statement of mine hurts the susceptibilities of some Hindus, I can only say I am very sorry, but for the sake of truth and for the sake of the Hindu religion itself, I cannot withdraw or modify the statement.

Professor Heiler has an illuminating discussion

of the extent to which Mr. Gandhi has assimilated Christian influences.¹ He claims that the Mahatma is an unbaptized Christian, like Rabindranath Tagore, and that his life and work stand under the spell of the Christian ideal. Mr. Gandhi's own words, "Jesus is the highest example of passive resistance", leave no doubt that he has read a new meaning into the Hindu *ahimsa* doctrine under the influence of the Sermon on the Mount. Non-violence is not, for him, merely a negative ideal, but positive, finding its essence in active love and boundless good will. It is this positive concept of *ahimsa* which has helped Mr. Gandhi to bridge the gulf between the castes and to create a new ideal of the caste system by conceiving it, not as a hierarchy, but as a useful system for the division of labour. Only Christian influences can explain Mr. Gandhi's deep respect for women. His stress upon the religious and moral value of womanhood places him in strong antithesis to the attitude of antipathy to women adopted by Indian asceticism. This veneration of women includes fallen women. He has more than once addressed meetings of such women, and at a meeting in Barisal he said: "I bow my head in deep shame before these hundred sisters." As Heiler says, it is Christ's holy love for sinners which has called Mr. Gandhi to the service of fallen women and inspired his efforts to lead them into a pure life. The same Christian influence betrays itself in Mr. Gandhi's passionate pleading for the outcastes. "I do not wish to be born again,"

¹ Op. cit., pp. 37 ff.

he cries, "but if I am born again, may it be among the Untouchables." But the Mahatma stands nearest to the Christian centre when he preaches to his followers that they must love their enemies; and in his heroic joy in suffering Heiler claims that Mr. Gandhi belongs to the great Christian "passion-mystics", because in his heart there lives a holy love for the cross of suffering such as is completely unknown in Indian religion. For Mr. Gandhi there is only one way to light and salvation—the way of suffering love, which is the way of the Cross. This "passion-mysticism" is not derived from the Hindu *sannyasi* ideal, but from the Cross of the Man of Sorrows. Mr. Gandhi's ideal of suffering is active and social and not the Hindu ideal of lonely, self-tormenting suffering (*tapas*). Hindu piety alone could never have produced a man like Mr. Gandhi. His heroic personality places him side by side with the Christian martyrs who are the creation of the Gospel of Christ. This point has not escaped the attention of Indian Christians, one of whom speaks of Mr. Gandhi as a man of sorrows and says he has brought Christ nearer to Indian Christianity. There can be no doubt that the Mahatma has helped many in India to find new meaning in the suffering love of Christ on the Cross.

Though Heiler maintains that Mr. Gandhi has taken his best and deepest thoughts from the New Testament, he does justice to the Hindu element in the Mahatma's piety. He points out that he is far more Hindu in his thinking than Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. Unlike the Bengali poet,

the Mahatma keeps his belief in transmigration and karma, places great emphasis on the ascetic ideal, allows the worship of idols as a means of religious concentration, teaches sexual abstinence as the way to spiritual perfection, visits Hindu temples, teaches the special sanctity of the cow, and recognizes the caste system. In all these matters Mr. Gandhi's Hindu affiliations are revealed and it is made clear that he lives in a Hindu thought-world. Hindu, too, is his all-comprehensive tolerance of conflicting religions. The absoluteness of Christianity is inconceivable to him. He says that the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Gita, the Koran, and the Avesta are all alike inspired. It is the limitless syncretism of Hinduism and his patriotic pride that enable him to remain a Hindu. In some moods the syncretistic tendencies of Hinduism assert themselves, in others, his patriotism. As an illustration of the latter we may quote the following words: "I place Hinduism higher than other religions. There was a time when I wavered between Hinduism and Christianity, but when I regained my spiritual balance, it was clear to me that I myself can only be redeemed through Hinduism, and my faith in this religion became always deeper and more illuminating." For the syncretistic mood we may use the following extract from one of his speeches: "The world, and therefore we, can no more do without the teaching of Jesus than we can without that of Mahomed or the Upanishads. I hold all these to be complementary of one another, in no case exclusive. Their true meaning, their

interdependence and interrelation, have still to be revealed to us."

Mr. Gandhi is specially drawn to the *Gita*, doubtless by its doctrine of selfless detachment. Addressing a conference of Christian missionaries in Calcutta in 1924, he said: "When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the *Bhagavad-gita*, and find a verse to comfort me, and immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies, and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teaching of the *Bhagavad-gita*." Dr. Kenneth Saunders¹ ventures the interesting suggestion that Mr. Gandhi has unconsciously Christianized the Krishna of the *Gita*, or he would have realized that his pacifist doctrines are incompatible with the apologia for war with which the *Gita* begins.

¹ *The Gospel for Asia*, p. 123.

CHAPTER XII

PROFESSOR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

IN this chapter an attempt will be made to outline the views of an Indian thinker, whose philosophical writings are well known in the West. Professor Radhakrishnan is King George V Professor of Philosophy in the University of Calcutta. His special interest is in the history of Indian Philosophy. This subject he has treated in two large volumes entitled *Indian Philosophy*, which have received a deservedly warm welcome in Europe and America. They are indispensable to all who would understand the course of Hindu thought from the Vedas down to the seventeenth century. The present chapter will not be concerned with any contributions made by Professor Radhakrishnan to current philosophy. He is an historian of philosophy rather than a creative thinker. What will engage our attention will be his reaction to the present religious situation in India. His is a somewhat lonely figure. Few Indians are as competent in Western philosophy as he. Yet his Western training has in no way abated his love of Hindu systems of thought, which he expounds with an amazing lucidity and even eloquence. What is more, he has never descended into the arena of Indian politics, but views the social and religious problems of his time and land from the standpoint of the philosopher. The extent of his divergence from Hindu orthodoxy and approach

toward a Christian view of the universe is a question of extreme interest.

It is one of Professor Radhakrishnan's deepest convictions that Hinduism needs reforming. He even speaks of "the present ageing to death". He has no patience with the conservatives who remain untouched by Western influences and who think to silence all inquiry and doubt by slighting scientific truth and by citing ancient texts. "To-day", he says, "a great mass of accretions has accumulated, which are choking up the stream and the free life of Spirit. To say that the dead forms, which have no vital truth to support them, are too ancient and venerable to be tampered with, only prolongs the suffering of the patient who is ailing from the poison generated by the putrid waste of the past."¹

Exactly how the reformation is to take shape Professor Radhakrishnan does not tell us in these volumes. He is confident that India will do what she has done before. She will assimilate those elements of Western culture which she deems valuable, and in assimilating them she will herself remain unchanged in all essentials. There will be no breach of continuity with the past. Let us build, he says, on the foundations already laid rather than attempt to substitute a completely new structure of life and ethics. The forms of religion in India may change, but the spirit enshrined in the forms will remain unaltered. All this is obviously written with Christian propaganda in view. What we should like to know is along what lines and to what extent is Professor

¹ *Indian Philosophy*, vol. ii, p. 777.

Radhakrishnan prepared to reform Hindu orthodoxy? How much or how little is to be given up?

To find an answer to these questions we must turn to Professor Radhakrishnan's *Hindu View of Life* which contains the Upton Lectures delivered by him in Manchester College, Oxford, in 1926. In this smaller volume the plea for a reformed Hinduism is set forth with great clarity and persuasive power. Addressing a Christian audience Professor Radhakrishnan evidently felt an obligation to make out as good a case as he could for Hinduism. His tactics as apologist are not without interest. First, he admits that all is not well with the ancient faith of India; then he reads as much Christianity as possible into Hindu ideas and ideals; and, when that is impossible, he constructs the best apologetic he can¹ and proceeds to carry the warfare into the enemy's country by pointing out the failings of Christian civilization. Some of these points may now be illustrated.

Professor Radhakrishnan admits that "there are gross imperfections in Hinduism, imperfections which justify the most bitter criticisms ever made against it". He instances "the curse of untouchability, the prejudices of caste, the rigours of the social code, the excessive emphasis on ceremonial piety and the exaggerated importance attached to trivialities which are associated with Hinduism, and which draw into disgrace the whole institution". But whereas the Christian thinker feels bound to maintain that these defects are the inevitable

¹ His defence of polygamy makes queer reading, p. 86.

consequences of Hindu ideals, Professor Radhakrishnan maintains that they are lapses. These defects of Hinduism are not essential but accidental. To set matters right no abandonment of Hindu thought and ideals is necessary. A purified Hinduism will suffice. Hinduism contains within itself an adequate motive for its regeneration and for the establishment of a social conscience. "Your work", he said to the Calcutta Missionary Conference in the autumn of 1925, "reminds us of the neglected truths of Hinduism, and for that we are thankful to you. . . . Hinduism is attempting to slough off its superstitions and purify itself, and there is no greater mission for you than to help in this process. Your task is not so much to make Christians of Hindus as to purify or Christianize (if that term is more acceptable to you) Hinduism."

The last phrase of the above quotation strikes the key-note of Professor Radhakrishnan's thought. Hinduism must be moralized and re-interpreted so as to provide life with a moral meaning and moral values. We may take Professor Radhakrishnan's treatment of the doctrine of Karma as a crucial illustration of the moralization of Hinduism attempted by him. He begins by stating the usual criticisms brought against the doctrine; it denies human freedom, which is the basis of all ethical values; it is mechanical in its working and independent of God in its operations; it leaves no room for the repentance of man; it induces a mood of fatalism and despair. Then in a manner that would surely alarm the orthodox pundits he proceeds to

argue that none of the foregoing propositions is true. "Karma is not a mechanical principle but a spiritual necessity. It is the embodiment of the mind and will of God. God is its supervisor. . . . There is room for repentance and consequent forgiveness on this scheme. . . . While it regards the past as determined, it allows that the future is only conditioned. The spiritual element in man allows him freedom within the limits of his nature. . . . There is thus scope for genuine rational freedom. . . . The law of Karma encourages the sinner that it is never too late to mend. It does not shut the gates of hope against despair and suffering, guilt, and peril."¹

There are several eloquent and persuasive pages to this effect. All that needs to be said about them is that they are an exposition of the doctrines of sin and forgiveness in terms much more Christian than Hindu. To clinch this point it is sufficient to point out that not one word has Professor Radhakrishnan to say about the Hindu doctrine of rebirth, with which the doctrine of Karma is indissolubly united. One would like to know whether he has rejected the doctrine of transmigration. If he has, can he rightly claim to remain a Hindu? Not less interesting than his silence about transmigration is the Professor's frank admission of the actual working of the Karma doctrine in India. He writes: "Unfortunately, the theory of Karma became confused with fatality in India when man himself grew feeble and was disinclined to do his

¹ *Hindu View of Life*, pp. 72-76.

best. It was made into an excuse for inertia and timidity and was turned into a message of despair and not of hope. It said to the sinner, 'Not only are you a wreck, but that is all you ever could have been. That was your preordained being from the beginning of time'.¹

Here speaks the Hindu. Here we have the authentic Karma doctrine and not Karma as Professor Radhakrishnan would like it to be after it has been moralized or Christianized.

Professor Radhakrishnan's treatment of caste is another revelation of his peculiar apologetic. He begins with his usual admission that all is not well with this characteristic institution of Hindu social life. It has "degenerated into an instrument of oppression and intolerance". It "tends to perpetuate inequality and develop the spirit of exclusiveness. . . . If the progressive thinkers of India had the power, as they undoubtedly have the authority, they would transform the institution out of recognition".² Then follows the usual defence of the institution in the course of which complete silence is preserved about certain integral features of caste and not a little of Hindu orthodoxy is jettisoned.

India, Professor Radhakrishnan tells us, was faced with an extraordinary complex racial problem peopled, as she was, by various racial groups and subject to one race invasion after another. In proceeding to solve the problem of racial conflict Hinduism has rejected the policy of extermination, the operation of which in North America has resulted

¹ *Hindu View of Life*, p. 76 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

in the extinction of Red Indian culture. She has equally decisively rejected the policy of subjugation, which the white races have adopted in their relations with coloured people on the Congo, in Brazil, and elsewhere. Since racial fusion on a large scale was also impossible, "Hinduism adopted the only safe course of democracy, viz. that each racial group should be allowed to develop the best in it without impeding the progress of others. . . . Caste, on its racial side, is the affirmation of the infinite diversity of human groups. . . . The tribes were admitted into the larger life of Hinduism with the opportunities and responsibilities which that life gave them, the opportunities to share in the intellectual and cultural life of the Hindus and the responsibilities of contributing to its thoughts, its moral advancement, and its spiritual worth."¹ Caste "places all beings on a common level regardless of distinctions of rank and status, and insists that every individual must be afforded the opportunity to manifest the unique in him". "It is a democracy so far as the spiritual values are concerned."² Having thus defended the institution and carried the war into the enemy's country, Professor Radhakrishnan advances the declaration that caste offers the world a solution of the problem arising out of racial prejudice, narrow nationalism, and class warfare. The success with which Hinduism has been able to absorb all the different races which have come into her ample fold is proof of this. In other words, caste, which Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and many

¹ *Hindu View of Life*, p. 97 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

other Indians denounce as "cold blood tyranny", is to become a leading principle of social ethics for humanity at large.

Professor Radhakrishnan's elaborate and eloquent apology for caste may have impressed those who heard it delivered in the academic atmosphere of Oxford, but it would fail to carry conviction to anyone acquainted with the facts of Indian life. An educated member of one of the "untouchable" castes would make short work of the lecturer's rhetoric about caste as a spiritual democracy. Having had practical experience of the ascendancy of the Brahmins he would laugh to scorn the notion that caste was designed to develop the best in each group without impeding the progress of others.

We may take Professor Radhakrishnan as a conspicuous example of the group which would moralize Hinduism from within. The members of this group are not prepared to defend everything in Hinduism. They have too keen an appreciation of moral values for that. At the same time, their nationalist pride makes it impossible for them to admit that Hinduism is suffering from senile decay. They seek its rejuvenation by reconstructing it. The Hinduism of the *Hindu View of Life* is not Hinduism as it is, or ever has been; but as Professor Radhakrishnan would have it to be after he has remoulded it nearer to his heart's desire. The right of these thinkers to remould Hinduism from within is not here denied. No thinking man can view their attempt with anything but a lively sympathy. No

reasonable man would wish to see a wholesale destruction of India's religious and cultural heritage. The point at issue is whether the task to which Professor Radhakrishnan has set his hands is a possible one or not. In attempting to pour the new wine of ethical earnestness into the old Hindu wine-skins, will he not destroy them? He thinks he will not, and that he will be able to retain karma, caste, and monism. The view of the present writer is that Professor Radhakrishnan will be compelled to abandon caste and karma if he is to find room for that individual freedom which the modern outlook desiderates. Nor will he be able to do justice to the modern emphasis on personality while he keeps that monism which is so characteristic of Indian thought. And would a Hinduism bereft of caste, karma, and monism be Hinduism any longer?

Evidence is not wanting that Professor Radhakrishnan is aware of the impossibility of the task he essays. He deplors the fact that if Hinduism lives to-day, "it lives so little. Listlessness reigns now where life was once like a bubbling spring. We are to-day drifting, not advancing, waiting for the future to turn up. There is a lack of vitality, a spiritual flagging."¹

Not less interesting is Professor Radhakrishnan's appeal to Christianity to abandon its exclusive claims. That any religion should claim to be the final and all-sufficient revelation is obnoxious to him. The idea of a single religion for all mankind he declares to

¹ *Hindu View of Life*, p. 128.

be illogical—the product of unreason and the parent of intolerance. In his address to the Calcutta Missionary Conference quoted above, he said, “While the Hindu is willing to regard Jesus as a striking character, revealing some of its divine attributes, he hesitates to accept Jesus as the unique revelation of God, bringing out the divine glory in all its fulness for all time. Such a kind of exclusive mediatorship and final revelation is inconsistent with the whole tradition of Hinduism.”

What, therefore, Professor Radhakrishnan advocates is a League of Religions, which will make possible an eirenicon between all religions and especially between Christianity and the Higher Hinduism. Without such a League he sees no hope for the religious future of the world, and this, he maintains, is the Hindu solution of the problem of the conflict of religions. There are passages in the *Hindu View of Life* (see especially Lecture II) which remind one of the similar sentiments of Celsus in the second century and of Symmachus in the fourth century of the Christian Era. All religions are aiming at the same goal. The more they borrow from one another the more valuable they become. Let Christians, therefore, abandon their exclusive claims and seek unity with all other faiths, not in a common creed, but in a common quest. Such an appeal, it may be noted, comes with perfect naturalness from an exponent of Hinduism, which has never hesitated throughout its long history to avail itself of whatever its rivals had to offer. In its powers of comprehension and absorption it

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stands unrivalled. To quote one of Professor Radhakrishnan's telling phrases, "Hindu thought never developed a Monroe doctrine in matters of culture".¹

¹ *Indian Philosophy*, vol. ii, p. 775.

CHAPTER XIII

THEOSOPHY

THEOSOPHY came to India with Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in 1878. Its history has been sketched by Dr. J. N. Farquhar in his *Modern Religious Movements in India* and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that his exposure of Madame Blavatsky's fraudulent methods has never been answered by Theosophists, who prefer to preserve a discreet silence. Theosophy has proved very attractive in India for a variety of reasons. Since 1893 Mrs. Annie Besant has spent most of her time in India and her chivalrous championship of Indian causes has drawn many to her side. Dr. Farquhar¹ attributes the success of Theosophist teaching in India to the following causes. It provided a new defence of Hinduism and Buddhism for thousands of educated men whose Western education had filled their minds with doubts about their ancestral faith. It condemned Christian missionaries as ignorant intruders. It flattered Indian pride by its avowal that Hinduism and Buddhism were the only religions which taught clearly the truths of the Ancient Wisdom. It appealed to the Indian love of the marvellous by its promise of occult knowledge and secret power. These attractions go far to explain the hold which the Theosophical Society has over its members, in spite of exposures which would have destroyed almost any other

¹ Op. cit., p. 233. Cf. pp. 286 ff.

society. Nor must it be forgotten that syncretism has always exerted a spell over the Hindu mind.

The tenets of Theosophy are not easy to define. A pamphlet published by the Society defines its basic truths as the immanence of God and the solidarity of man. "Its secondary teachings", we are told, "are those which are the common teachings of all religions, living or dead; the Unity of God; the triplicity of His nature in manifestation; the descent of Spirit into matter, and hence the graded ranks of Intelligences, whereof humanity is one; the growth of humanity by the unfoldment of consciousness and the evolution of bodies, i.e. reincarnation; the progress of this growth under inviolable law, the law of causality, i.e. karma; the environment of this growth, i.e. the three worlds, physical, emotional, and mental, or earth, the intermediate world, and heaven; the existence of divine Teachers, superhuman Men, often called the White Brotherhood, the Elder Brothers of the race."

It will be obvious to anyone who has received a scientific training in the Comparative Study of Religions that the above *Credo* has been drawn up by someone whose study of that Science has been, to say the least, amateurish. This is a serious charge to bring, but it exposes the fundamental defect of all Theosophical writers. Their exposition of religions is unscientific and misleading. We may quote the measured words of a scholar whose contributions to the Comparative Study of Religions have won him a reputation which needs no defence.

Dr. Farquhar writes: "It has certainly popularized, in Europe and America, a number of the best Oriental books, such as the Upanishads and the *Gita*, and has taught Theosophists to sympathize with Orientals and to think of them as brothers. . . . But there is a vast amount to be placed on the other side. . . . Theosophy has made no contribution to our knowledge of Oriental religions. It has not discovered a single fresh historical fact, nor brought a fresh text to the notice of scholars, nor produced a notable translation or commentary. Thousands of copies of Mrs. Besant's translation of the *Gita* have been sold; but no scholar would dream of referring to it for the translation of a difficult line. Apart from the writings of Mr. G. R. S. Mead and one or two others, we must pronounce the whole vast literature of the Theosophical Societies worthless from the point of view of scientific knowledge. Where is there a single scholar, historian, or philosopher to be found among its members? One and all are repelled by the charlatanism of the literature. There is, last of all, the gross disservice it renders by filling the heads of its ordinary members with the cosmological and historical rubbish which is dumped in such heaps by the high-priests of occultism at headquarters."¹

Theosophists are fond of saying that their teachings have never been disproved. To this it may be replied that it is quite impossible to bring such a variegated system to the test of any proof that normal intelligence can recognize. Theosophy sets

¹ Op. cit., p. 288 f.

its opponents the most impossible of all tasks—that of proving that nonsense is nonsense. A writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* of April 18, 1929, puts his finger on the tap root of Theosophy's amateurishness. He remarks: "It may be said without offence that a mental training more adequate than her excellent tutor, Miss Marryat, could offer in the eighteen-fifties might have made the religious writings of Mrs. Besant something far more cogent than what they too often are—namely, piles of disorganized information."

It must be recognized that there is a certain inevitability about the rise of Theosophy. History shows that in each period of world-wide civilization there is a marked tendency to religious syncretism. We get it in the Greco-Roman world when, to use the words of Juvenal, the Orontes and the Nile flowed into the Tiber. We are getting it to-day now that the sacred books of the great Eastern religions have been made known to the West and the Ganges is flowing into the Thames and the Mississippi. Such periods of confusion always give rise to precipitate attempts to reduce the new data to something like intelligible order; and much the most facile solution is that provided by religious syncretism. Let all the simple, universal principles of the great world religions be separated from their historic connections and let them be combined into a composite faith in which all the great prophets of humanity shall have their place of honour. Such proposals always have a strong attraction for those to whom generalities, provided they are compre-

hensive enough, always seem decisive. At its best Theosophy is an attempt to popularize Eastern ideas and religions among the masses of the West. As a system it is an amateurish attempt of untrained and unscientific minds to construct an inclusive philosophy of religion.

If the history of human thought helps to explain the rise of such a syncretistic system as Theosophy, it also helps us to predict, with some confidence, Theosophy's future. In point of fact no purely syncretistic faith has ever had a lengthy history. There is a biological law that living organisms must keep their individual character or become stunted. We cannot believe in the final success of a mingling of creeds or of an amalgam compounded of elements abstracted from the different religions. Men can no more manufacture a synthetic religion than a synthetic beech-tree. Again, history shows a certain connection between eclecticism and charlatanism which seems to be inevitable. Witness the trickery of the later Gnostics, the frauds of Madame Blavatsky and the immoralities of Mr. Leadbeater. Once more, Theosophical syncretism has no future because eclecticism in religion is as much to be reprobated as eclecticism in philosophy. No eclectic ever had any vital creative power. All are, as Novalis said, sceptics at heart, and the more eclectic they are, the more sceptical. Eclecticism is an almost infallible sign of mental bankruptcy.

These considerations regarding the future of Theosophy, drawn from the history of thought, appear to be borne out by current facts. For some

years now Mrs. Besant has proclaimed the near advent of a great World Teacher, whose coming would inaugurate a new era in human history. To prepare for this great event a new world-wide organization was created, called the Order of the Star in the East. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater for several years carefully trained a Madrasi Brahmin boy, Krishnamurti, as the coming World Teacher. For a year or two Krishnamurti has been before the public in the rôle Mrs. Besant has chosen for him. For some time he lived at the Castle of Erde, Ommen, Holland, "surrounded by a small group of eager students, believing in his inspiration and joyously welcoming the presence of the Lord". But in the summer of 1929 came the announcement that Krishnamurti had dissolved the Order of the Star in the East.

Some of Krishnamurti's addresses to the faithful have been published in a small volume, *The Kingdom of Happiness* (London, 1927). Mrs. Besant praises the depth of their wisdom, their striking originality, and the exquisite beauty of their diction. The following typical passage will enable our readers to judge for themselves Krishnamurti's powers as a thinker and Mrs. Besant's capacities as a critic.

You must train all your bodies—mental, emotional and physical—to have an independent existence of their own, and yet to be co-operative. So that the mind can say to the emotions: "You shall feel such-and-such a thing, and you shall go so far and no farther." And the same demands the emotions can make of the body. So you are three different beings; and you have much more fun, there is a much more adventurous spirit in this knowledge. Instead of being

one person, you are three separate beings; so that you have the point of view of three, the karma of three, the interests of three, the delights of three. You thus learn to become part of the world, part of the whole system, instead of being one particular individual; so that you lose yourself, your three selves, in the innumerable millions of selves.¹

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 86 f.

CHAPTER XIV

INDIAN CHRISTIANITY

ACCORDING to the latest census returns there were in India in 1921 4,464,000 Indian Christians, of whom 1,710,000 were in the Indian States. Owing to the educational work of Christian missionaries, the percentage of literates is considerably higher among Indian Christians than among Hindus and Moslems, despite the fact that many of them have been drawn from the lower social strata. It is the purpose of this chapter to chronicle those movements of contemporary thought among them which spring out of their separateness as a religious community.

It must be reckoned a defect of Christianity in India that much of it is too European and too little Indian. The Indian Christian has not yet learned to do his own thinking. He too often expresses his message in the thought-forms of the missionary from whom he learned it. Hence Christianity in India is often exotic rather than indigenous. It is orthodox according to the different standards of orthodoxy prevailing among the missionaries, but it is foreign. The Gospel has been too often transliterated instead of being translated. Professor Heiler quotes an eminent Jesuit missionary as saying, "The whole of modern mission work in India has gone to pieces on the rocks of rigid Europeanism".¹ There is truth as well as exaggeration in this statement. The British and American missionaries, who

¹ *The Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh*, p. 230.

predominate in missionary work, find it difficult to introduce into a land of mysticism and asceticism anything other than the matter-of-fact Christianity of Great Britain and America, and they use categories that are sometimes meaningless to their hearers. For this reason, if for no other, the ultimate Christianization of India can come only through her own sons and daughters. They alone will be able to clothe the Christian message in Indian garments and at the same time preserve its uniqueness. So far the Indian Christian Church has not produced original thinkers capable of doing such constructive work. Not many of its converts have had the requisite education, and none has as yet combined the necessary genius with such education. There is only one College in India which has the power to grant degrees in divinity, and its ancient charter has been in operation less than twenty years. Its standards are up to those which obtain in the Divinity Faculties of the Universities of the West, and it has now associated with it theological seminaries scattered all over India. Already it has exercised a real influence in raising the standard of theological training. It seeks to serve the Indian Christian Church by training men to understand and appreciate the religious history of India and those forms of thought in which the Christian experience has found expression in other lands and other ages. It believes that theological reconstruction can be undertaken only by men of liberal culture, and liberal culture for the Indian thinker should include the heritage of both East and West. It may be

ferently hoped that from Serampore College and its affiliated seminaries men may appear who will do for Indian Christianity what Sankara and Ramana-
nuja did for Hinduism and what such thinkers as Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Calvin did for the Christianity of the West. They will need to be learned in the sacred writings of both Hinduism and Christianity, if they are to formulate a system which at one and the same time does justice to India's religious heritage and the unique revelation of God through Jesus Christ. Only through the work of such men can Christianity become truly indigenous in India.

Some years ago it seemed as if an Indian Christian thinker had begun the enterprise of forming a synthesis of Indian and Christian thought, which would preserve the full content of the Christian revelation and at the same time do justice to India's unique religious quest. The hopes of not a few were centred upon Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, but his attempts came to nothing, through the opposition of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and his own emotionalism and instability. Bhawani Charan Bannerji, to give Brahmabandhav his original name, was born of Brahmin parentage in Bengal in 1861.¹ He had a good education and became a Sanscrit scholar. As a youth he was attracted greatly by such religious leaders as Keshab Chunder Sen, Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. In 1886 he joined Keshab's New Dispensation Church and so

¹ In what follows I am greatly indebted to Heiler's *Christliche Glaube und indisches Geistesleben*, pp. 51 ff.

came under Christian influences, for there was a fairly strong Christian element in the teaching of that syncretistic church. Bhawani Charan learned Greek in order better to understand the New Testament. In February 1891 he was baptized by an Anglican missionary and later in the same year joined the Roman Catholic Church. For some reason the Jesuits who received him rebaptized him and Brahmabandhav (Theophilus) was the new name given to him. The next years of his life were spent in active Christian propaganda in the course of which he strongly attacked the Hindu doctrines of pantheism, transmigration, and the cult of Krishna. In December 1894 he gave away all his possessions and donned the saffron robe of the sannyasi and henceforth lived on alms as a Christian ascetic. His attempt thus to relate Christianity with Hindu ideals of piety was not understood by his fellow-Catholics. His priest forbade him to enter the church in his sadhu robes, but permission was later granted by the hierarchy. To distinguish himself from Hindu sadhus he wore a small ebony cross. In 1898-9 he launched plans for founding a Christian *matha* (monastery) and an order of Christian Sadhus, who should live lives of poverty and devote themselves to prayer, contemplation, and preaching. About the same time he outlined his scheme for stripping the Christian philosophy of life of its European dress and clothing it in the Vedanta philosophy. The Roman Church took alarm and in 1901 Bishop Dalhoff of Bombay, a German Jesuit, rejected all his plans and prohibited

the periodicals *Sophia* and *The Twentieth Century*, in which Brahmabandhav's writings appeared. The Papal Delegate, Archbishop Zaleski, a firm opponent of the policy of accommodation, confirmed the Bishop's decision. In 1902 Brahmabandhav set out for Rome, but the cool recommendations of the Indian bishops made it impossible for him to secure a much desired interview with the Pope. He then went on to England and interviewed Cardinal Vaughan, who allowed him to express his views in *The Tablet*.

On his return from Europe Brahmabandhav's antagonism to European civilization hardened into deep dislike and he threw himself into the maelstrom of politics. He now began to revert to Hinduism and founded a school definitely Hindu in character, in which a place was found for the cult of the goddess of Wisdom, Saraswati, and for the praise of Krishna. In 1907 he underwent a ceremonial cleansing from the defilement contracted by his association with Europeans. By many of his friends this was interpreted as a definite return to Hinduism. He died in October 1907 after an operation. His body was cremated according to Hindu custom and the people demanded his ashes as something holy. Many have assumed that he died a Hindu. His Christian friend and disciple, Animananda, has attempted to prove that his master died a faithful Christian. The facts are best interpreted if we think of Brahmabandhav as dying still professing Christianity as one element in the syncretistic faith of the New Dispensation Church. His was a remarkable

spiritual pilgrimage. He began as an eclectic, who tried to wed Hinduism to Christianity; then he became an out-and-out Christian, declaring war upon the essentials of Hinduism; next came a reaction in which he recognized the necessity of proclaiming Christianity to Indians in Hindu thought-forms and Hindu asceticism; after the Roman hierarchy had condemned his missionary work his Indian spiritual inheritance became more precious to him; finally, he returned to an eclectic faith which was apparently more Hindu than Christian.

According to Brahmabandhav four things are necessary for the realization of a truly Indian form of Christianity.

(1) The social structure of the Indian peoples must not be touched. Hence Brahmabandhav was careful to observe the obligations of caste and was enthusiastic in his defence of the system. Here he followed the usual Roman Catholic practice. He believed that few things would be more advantageous to the spread of Christianity in India than for Christian missionaries to show respect to a social order which had been sanctified in the eyes of Hindus by the usage of many centuries.

(2) The establishment of an order of Christian ascetics so that the Christian missionary might become an Indian to Indians. India is a land of ascetics. Brahmabandhav believed that Christianity would make a decisive advance in India if Christian monasteries were dotted over the land, from which there would go out men who would take the torch of the Catholic faith into the darkest corners of

India. He maintained that Roman Catholic monasticism could not take root in India because it was too much influenced by the Western spirit. "We ought not to rest", he said, "until the religion of Christ is lived by Indian ascetics and preached by Indian monks, until the beauty of the Catholic faith is revealed in an Oriental setting." The Hindu ascetic orders are congenial to the soil of the land and have embodied for over two thousand years the Hindu religious ideal. The Hindu system needs baptizing into Christ, for only by means of renunciation and meditation can the Crucified Christ be brought home to the Indian peoples.

(3) The use of the Vedanta philosophy as a preparation for Christianity and for the presentation of Christian truth. What the Law was to the Jews and philosophy was to the Greeks, that the Vedanta should be to the peoples of India—a tutor to bring them to Christ. The following three quotations will make Brahmabandhav's point of view clear. "Indian thought can be made just as useful to Christianity as Greek thought has been to Europe." "The truths of the Hindu philosopher must be 'baptized' and used as stepping-stones to the Catholic faith." "The European clothes of the Catholic religion should be laid aside as soon as possible. It must assume the Hindu garment which will make it acceptable to the people of India. This change can only be effected by Indian missionary Orders who preach the sacred faith in the language of the Vedanta."¹

¹ From Heiler's *Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh*, p. 248 f.

It cannot be too clearly said that by the Vedanta Brahmandhava did not mean the strict monist system of Sankara. He regarded Ramanuja's system as the truest and most correct interpretation of the Upanishads. Now Ramanuja did not teach pantheism but a personal theism. He was not a monist but expounded a system of modified, or qualified, monism in which room was left for the sin of man and the grace of God. His deity was a personal God of grace. Brahmandhava proposed that the system of Ramanuja should be allowed to do for the Indian Christian thinkers what Platonism did for the Greek Fathers of the Early Church and what Aristotelianism did for Thomas Aquinas. "The end of the Vedanta", he said, "is faith in Christ, the Son of God." What he wanted was the Catholic dogmatic in the phraseology of the Vedanta and not in the terms of, say, the Nicene Creed and the *Quicumque Vult*. He had no intention of changing the content of the Creeds but ardently desired a change in their form—"a change of garments", as he constantly expressed it. The Indian people have had for many centuries a genius for philosophy; indeed, their genius is greater and more subtle than that of Greece. Why, then, should the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies alone be used as quarries to supply the stones required to build the edifice of Christian dogma? There is equally good material in the quarry of the Vedanta.

(4) The Vedas should be used together with the Old Testament as a preparation for and explanation of the New Testament, but at the same time the

New Testament ought to remain the highest source and norm of all Christian teaching and piety. This proposal was offensive to many of Brahmabandhav's contemporaries, but there are signs that it is winning some acceptance to-day, at least among Indian Christians who have given time to the Comparative Study of Religions and to the historical and critical study of the Old Testament. Thus, in his recent work, *Christianity as Bhakti Marga*, the Indian Christian scholar, Dr. A. J. Appasamy, says: "There are elements in the ancient Scriptures of India which have to be fearlessly given up. But there are also many ideals and doctrines in them which have to be jealously assimilated and carried on to their natural consummation in Christ. If Jesus blamed his contemporaries for not listening to the voice of Moses, with equal power and vehemence will he condemn us for not listening to Ramanuja, Manikkavachar, Tukaram, Kabir, and Chaitanya, who have left behind them teaching of such undying value pointing the way to Christ."

It is impossible not to sympathize with the motives that lie behind Brahmabandhav's courageous thinking. It is equally impossible not to speculate what the issue might have been, if he had received more sympathetic treatment from the leaders of his Church. The tragedy of the last phase of his life might never have been enacted. Escaping the perils of the syncretism into which he finally fell, he might have achieved a true synthesis of the truth of the Christian revelation and of Indian spiritual culture, which would have done for the Christ-

ianity of his native land what the great Christian scholars of Alexandria did for Greek Christianity, when they avoided the errors of Gnosticism and formulated a construction of Christian doctrine which related the new religion to their inherited Greek culture. As it was, Brahmabandhav was driven into a syncretism as dangerous to the Christian faith as the Gnosticism of the first Christian centuries. Yet it is not impossible that in the centuries that lie ahead, when historical judgments can be framed in a proper perspective, Brahmabandhav will be acclaimed as a pioneer, though like all pioneers he sometimes missed the track. His career presents a warning as well as an incentive. Christianity in India must be Indianized, but it must not be Hinduized. It is open to the student of Church History to speculate whether this Indianization can be accomplished without the rise of heresy, and whether the fight with heresy might not do as much good as harm to the Indian Church. But such speculations do not belong to contemporary thought, for Indian Christianity has not yet done enough thinking for itself to give rise to heresy.

It may be prophesied that if another Indian Christian were to arise who would attempt the task to which Brahmabandhav set himself with such disastrous consequences, he would receive the hearty assistance of an increasing number of missionaries. They are no more iconoclasts than was the anonymous writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews and they have learned to use that writer's apologetic method. They make it their business to show that Christianity

stands to Hinduism as centuries ago it stood to Judaism—as the substance to the shadow and as the fulfilment to the promise. They look forward to the day when Christianity in India will discard its European clothes and appear in its own comely dress. It is a sign of the times when the Report of the Jerusalem Missionary Conference of 1928 declares, "We ardently desire that the younger churches should express the Gospel through their own genius and through forms suitable to their racial heritage." The authors of the Report look forward to the day when Indian culture will express itself in the theology, worship, architecture, and art of the Indian Christian Church. The most hopeful feature of the present situation is that the demand for a truly Indian Christianity is now coming from an increasing number of Indian Christians. "There is an insistent feeling", says one of them, "against the isolation from Indian religious tradition which has been imposed upon them by the foreign character of the Christian Church."

Criticism is also frequently directed by Indian Christians against the importation into India of those sectarian divisions which sunder the Church of the West. They are dismissed as "foreign denominations which are alien to India". Indian Christian leaders have all been affected by the spirit of nationalism and are claiming autonomy and freedom from foreign control. At present they are giving their attention not so much to theology as to the problems of ecclesiastical polity. Their demand for Christian unity springs not only out of their feeling that the

divisions of Christianity are an accident of its development in the West and are, therefore, out of place in India, but also from their consciousness of their essential oneness as a community, which lives in the midst of a vast non-Christian population. A former pupil of mine, Mr. D. M. Devasahayam, B.A., B.D., thus puts the case in *The Christian Patriot*, a paper which circulates among English-speaking Indian Christians. "By baptism the convert not only becomes a Christian, but an Anglican, or a Wesleyan, or a Presbyterian, or a Baptist, or a Congregationalist, and so on, and has thus to conform to one or other of the particular types of Christianity evolved in other countries, under circumstances that are not his. Denominational differences are an insoluble puzzle for the inquirer, an unbearable yoke to the convert, and, for that matter, to the Indian Christian. Denominational enthusiasm is a very rare commodity in genuine Indian Christianity, and wherever it is found it is spurious. . . . It may be safely asserted that denominational loyalty in India is developed only at the expense of loyalty to Christ. The ecclesiastical connection involved in baptism means also, as things are, submission to modes of worship, language, and usages to which the Indian is not accustomed. . . . The movement towards a United Indian Church, in which all denominations will be merged and opportunities afforded for development on indigenous lines under Indian leadership, may gradually overcome the obstacles of denominationalism, the foreign character of the Church, and

foreign domination. . . . The fundamental note in the cry for an Indian Christianity is not indicated by the word 'national' but the word 'indigenous'. We do not want to repudiate Western Christianity, because it has come from the West, as foreign; but we want only to revise it on account of its unsuitable features. . . . Christ who taught his apostle to become a Jew to the Jews and a Gentile to the Gentiles, if by any means he could save some—the same Christ calls upon us to-day to become Indians to the Indians."

Such experiments as have already been made have to do with Christian worship and service rather than with Christian thought. That experiments in worship and evangelism should come before experiments in thinking is natural and inevitable under the circumstances. Attempts have been made to foster indigenous music in Christian worship. The earliest missionaries did the best they could when they translated Western hymns into the vernacular and got their converts to sing them to Western tunes. The present writer well remembers the shock with which he first heard a hymn from Moody and Sankey's Hymn Book sung by a Bengali congregation to the tune he had learned as a boy in an English Sunday School. The performance seemed highly unnatural. But it is futile to blame the missionary for this state of affairs which, happily in some language areas, is now rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Indians with the true poetic gift have now come into the Christian Church and are consecrating

their art to the purposes of Christian devotion. The hymns of the Marathi poet, Narayana Vaman Tilak, have such distinction that some have been rendered into English. Vedanayaga Sastri and Krishna Pillay are doing similar work in Tamil. The poetry of men such as these is much more fitted to foster the life of devotion than American revival hymns; and it is obvious that its power of appeal in the case of non-Christians is infinitely superior.

Another interesting experiment in the attempt to naturalize Christianity in India is the foundation of Christian *ashrams*. An *ashram* is a place of retreat in which a group can live together in spiritual fellowship and engage in study and practical service. The institution is Hindu in origin and has undergone modification of recent years. In earlier times a Hindu *ashram* was a place for the practice of meditation and austerity. It was not the home of social service. The impact of Christianity on the Hindu mind has caused a profound transformation of the older ideal. The Ramkrishna Mission, the Arya Samaj, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, and Mr. Gandhi have founded *ashrams* in which the Christian idea of social service is kept well to the fore. The repute of the *ashrams* of Dr. Rabindranath and the Mahatma have led to their imitation by Christians. There are now, at least, a dozen Christian *ashrams* scattered over the continent, of which that connected with the National Missionary Society of India and located at Tirupattur in South India is, perhaps, the most important. In these Christian *ashrams* a common life, usually of great simplicity, is shared

by the inmates, who give themselves to prayer and to such social service as each member feels he is most fitted for. At Tirupattur, for example, there are two qualified medical men. Some years ago, the late Mr. B. C. Sirkar founded an *ashram* at Puri, where is the world-famous Temple of Jagannath. In this place of meditation and prayer he was able to get into touch with pilgrims from all parts of India. The *ashram* outside Poona, belonging to the "Christa Seva Sangh" (The Society of the Servants of Christ), is noteworthy. It is a semi-monastic association of British and Indian Christians, who are pledged to celibacy, poverty, obedience, and a life of prayer. It has attracted graduates from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The brethren live in cells, employ no servants save a cook, and give themselves to teaching the poor and befriending the sick and lepers. The membership at present is Anglican, but members of other communions are welcomed as guests and associates. The great advantage of these *ashrams* is that an Indian who is seeking to know more of the Christian faith can live in one of them as a guest without feeling as awkward as he would if he came into the more elaborate home of a married missionary. These *ashrams*, moreover, are attractive to the Indian, because it is the ascetic side of self-sacrifice which most appeals to him. Even more important still is the fact that the members of an *ashram* are free from the administrative work so often connected with a mission station and can devote long hours to religious talks with inquirers. Indians have no sense of time. Their

lives are not ordered by the clock. They cannot understand the man who breaks off a talk on religion because he has another engagement. The ordinary missionary would do far more good if he were not so busy running the educational and philanthropic work of his station. The true Christian apostle to India will need to have no sense of time and to discard all schedules of work. Here the inmates of Christian *ashrams* have a great advantage over their Christian brethren. For these reasons liberty should be given by missionary societies to their Indian and European agents to experiment on these lines. From an institution so thoroughly in accord with the religious atmosphere of the land much good may be expected.

As we have seen, the wandering sadhu, with his saffron robe, has been a figure of Indian religious life for many centuries. Since the death of Brahma-bandhav further attempts have been made to found an order of Christian Sadhus; and the attempt has been made by one or two Europeans to live as Christian Sadhus, notably by Canon F. J. Western. A well-informed writer declares that whereas there were in 1921 only ten Christian Sadhus, in 1929 there were five or six times that number.¹ By far the best known and most influential of Christian Sadhus is Sundar Singh. Sadhu Sundar Singh was born of well-to-do parents in 1889 in the State of Patiala and converted to Christianity from the Sikh religion in 1904. For twenty years Sundar Singh wore the yellow robe and lived

¹ In *International Review of Missions* for April 1929, p. 193.

the life of a wandering ascetic. In April 1927 he set out on a preaching tour in Tibet and nothing has been heard of him since. It is generally supposed that he fell a victim to the revenge of the Lamas. He made extensive preaching tours in India and paid several visits to the West, which made him an international figure. His mystical experiences have interested Western theologians and psychologists, and around his figure there has grown up an extensive literature in several languages.¹ The Sadhu is not primarily a Christian thinker, but an evangelist of unique gifts and power. "He belongs", says Heiler, "to the category of naïve religious personalities, not to the 'reflective', to Francis of Assisi and to Luther, not to Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, or Calvin."² Like a true Easterner the Sadhu thinks and speaks in parables, which are often of remarkable beauty, and when he has found an apposite parable for the expression of his Christian experience or Christian doctrine, he feels no further need of explanation. As always in the East, an analogy does duty for an argument.

The simple theology of the Sadhu has been well sketched by Heiler.³ He has made a complete renunciation of all such characteristic doctrines of Hinduism as caste, transmigration karma, and pantheism. His message is essentially Christian but, to use a figure of his own, he offers the water of life in Indian, not European vessels. The Sadhu

¹ The best book is Heiler's *The Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh* (London, 1927).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

³ Pp. 136 ff.

spends several hours each day in reading the Bible, but he is no bibliolater and does not approve of the theory of verbal inspiration. Like most Indians he is drawn especially to the Fourth Gospel. It is easy for them to read their pantheism into such phrases as "You in me and I in you" but the Sadhu is not influenced by any such motive, and declares that he is drawn to the Fourth Gospel because John "had a greater power of expressing the inward and personal relationship of our hearts with Christ". Though the Sadhu is technically a member of the Anglican Church in India, "he has never been able to see the full significance of the institutional element in the Church, neither from the theological, ecclesiastical, nor sacramental point of view". "He sees in the Church on earth merely a number of individual Christians."¹ His attitude may be in part accounted for by the teaching he received from Presbyterian and Evangelical Anglican missionaries and still more by the fact that his rich and immediate personal communion with Christ naturally thrusts public worship and the sacramental means of grace into a subordinate place. It is not fanciful, however, to suppose that the influence of the Hindu *milieu* is to be traced here. Hinduism knows little or nothing of congregational worship and it has never developed a Church in the Christian sense of the term. Hindu worship is mainly private.

The influence of the Sadhu's upbringing in a Hindu (Sikh) home is revealed in several other ways. It is manifest in the scant justice he does to the

¹ Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

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Christian conception of the moral wrath of God. He rejects completely the Hindu doctrine of karma, but its influence lingers in the Sadhu's repeated declaration that it is not God who judges and punishes the sinner, but his own sin. Though the problem of sin is for the Sadhu the central problem of religion, he teaches what many Christians would consider an inadequate doctrine of sin. Sin, he declares, has no independent existence; it is merely the absence or the negation of good. There is no need to suspect the influence of Neo-Platonism or Augustinian teaching here. The pantheistic atmosphere of India is a sufficient explanation of such teaching from one who, in other respects, is an out-and-out evangelical.

The significance of the Sadhu has been well expressed by Archbishop Söderblom:

In the history of religion Sundar Singh is the first to show the world how the Good News of Jesus Christ in all its purity is reflected in the soul of an Indian. Sundar Singh himself is the reply to a question which exercised the minds of Christian and other thinkers before India came into close contact with the thought-world of the West. "What will the Christianity of India be like, if indeed it ever becomes anything more than an off-shoot from the West?" . . . Here is an Indian, who has remained Indian through and through, who yet has absorbed the essence of the Gospel into his being. . . . The striking thing about him is not the union of the Indian spirit with Christianity, but the way in which he intensifies and illuminates true Scriptural Christianity, from which we of the West could also learn much.¹

The notion that the Christian Church of India will one day have much to teach the Church of the West

¹ Quoted by Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 231 f.

is one which powerfully attracts the minds of the younger generation of Indian Christians. As far as I know, none of them has attempted to formulate his views in systematic fashion in a published work. They content themselves with generalities. Perhaps it is as yet too early for any detailed work on this theme to be attempted. The following may be taken as a fair representation of the thoughts that are working in their minds. India will in time make her own contribution to the understanding of all that is involved in the revelation of the Divine that has come through Christ. Christianity cannot be equated with those forms in which it has expressed itself in Europe. Thus far Christianity has had its home in Europe; but when it has been domiciled in India new light will burst forth from the Christian revelation revealing in it treasures unsuspected by the Western Mind. This new light which will come through India's acceptance of the Gospel will serve as a corrective to Western Christianity. India will teach the West essential Christian truths which the latter has neglected. Through Indian Christianity the West will learn rightly to value those passages in the New Testament which stress the transitoriness of life, the subordinate place to be taken by material possessions in the Christian view of the world, and the value of a life of renunciation. The West will come to see that it has changed the emphasis of the New Testament in exalting the active over the passive virtues. She will learn from India the true meaning of humility and meekness, which are virtues she has failed to comprehend.

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She will be helped by India to strike a truer balance between the life of contemplation and the life of action, and so to adjust her one-sided emphasis on the value of work. She will then realize that as much, if not more, emphasis is to be placed upon personality as upon organization as the supreme means of propagating the Christian faith. Last but by no means least, India will lead the West to a fuller understanding of the value of the systematic cultivation of the inner life and of the truth of Divine immanence, which is sadly needed as a corrective of the deistic tendencies of Western religion and theology. Such thoughts as these will be repugnant to no Christian who has any realization of the relativity of all religious doctrines and institutions.

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