

MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:
K. R. PODDAR

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

Editor:
K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

DECEMBER 10, 1949

VOL. I. NO. 21. FOUR ANNAS

CONTENTS

NO RECOGNITION FOR RED CHINA	1	SRI CHAITANYA (Poem) by Dilip Kumar Roy	8
THE ANACHRONISM OF THE DEATH PENALTY by R. N. Khanna	2	BOOKS IN THE 'BALANCE	
FROM OLD MOORINGS by M. P. Pandit	4	A LIFE THAT IS A PHILOSOPHY (Review by J. N. Chubb of	
VISION AND REALISATION	5	R. G. Collingwood's AUTOBIOGRAPHY)	9
LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS by K. G.	6	NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT:	
SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION		THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL	
Part II of "The World Crisis and India" by "Synergist"	7	by Bertrand Russell	10
		"OH, THAT'S ONLY POETRY!" by "Libra"	12

NO RECOGNITION FOR RED CHINA

INDIA'S mind still remains to be made up about Red China. What is perhaps even worse is that we are trying to inject our hesitation into the minds of Britain and America who already have their own temptations. Britain is instinctively inclined to be business-minded and if by recognising Mao she can be sure of securing her commercial interests she would like to do so. America is not indifferent to making a good bargain, but side by side with commercial interests what weighs with her is a certain strong sympathy with the Chinese people. She would like to believe that the Chinese Communist is somehow different from the Russian brand and this belief is inspired not so much by commercial wishful thinking as by a genuine "soppiness" about the common masses whom Pearl Buck and others have lovingly delineated. Luckily there is at the same time a very powerful counteragent on the ideological level, almost an anti-Communist faith and passion matching the fervour which the convinced Communist brings to his job of preparing the ground for a world-revolution in the name of Stalin. This semi-religious opposition on America's part is in practical politics today the one rallying-point for the forces of civilisation and it is to be hoped that no hesitation by any country will ultimately count against it. Already its influence is telling, but we are not clearly aware of its rightness and an effort continues to be made to darken counsel and there is lacking on our side a willing co-operation with the trend set by the American attitude.

We are showing a disposition to stick to three fancies. We say to ourselves: "Mao's regime is an established fact: we must lose no time in acknowledging it. It is also associated with very valuable agrarian reform: we must not hinder the beneficial process. Again, the people of China are backing up Mao: we must not stand in the way of their wishes." In a previous editorial, *Mother India* attempted to show clearly that Chinese Communism cannot be divorced from Stalin, that to overlook the freedom-stifling character of it by being taken in by a show of agrarian reform is capital folly, that it is purblindness to confuse the resentment against the Kuomintang rule with genuine allegiance to the Communist creed, that signs of a definite character are not wanting to indicate open revolt by the Chinese people wherever the strangle-grip of Mao happens to be insufficiently sustained and that recognition would immensely help the activities of the Communists everywhere and especially in India. What we purpose to do now is to bring together certain other points that have come more and more into the light.

Is the Constitution of Red China Democratic?

Shrewd students of Chinese affairs have not been slow to perceive that the very constitution of Red China published by Mao gives the lie to his claim of representing the millions under his yoke. This constitution is out and out centralised. The phrase used in article 2 is "democratic centralism." But it is not difficult to see that the adjective "democratic" is particularly meaningless in the present context. For article 1 speaks, among other things, of "various nationalities within the country." If China consists of various nationalities, the only government which at least on paper can call itself democratic would be a federal one. Where the governmental structure makes no pretence in even theory to be federal and be founded on the voluntary association of those nationalities, how can there be a people's government? There is indeed talk of convoking in the future an All-China People's Congress on the basis of universal suffrage, but till such time that this happens it is self-contradictory to speak, in the same breath, of "centralism" and of government by the people. The Soviet Constitution, on which the Chinese is supposed to be modelled, is at least

free from such centralism in theory. It claims to be federal and tries to exhibit in certain respects some resemblance to those of the western democracies. The resemblance means very little in actual practice: as Pandit Nehru remarked in the U.S.A., Soviet Russia is an extreme example of centralisation and regimentation, reducing freedom to almost a cypher. So we can gather from its historical precedent that the All-China People's Congress, even if it brings in federalism, will not constitute authentic democracy. But at the moment when drastic centralism is explicitly the order of the day it is absurd to suggest that Mao stands for the common people. We look in vain for any mention of fundamental rights of citizens in the constitution he has set up. It is pure and simple dictatorship or at best the grip of a self-elected clique. Perhaps one might plead that the unsettled condition of China calls for a military centralism, but such a defence, even were it valid, is quite different from holding that the military centralism is actually a people's democracy!

Is there Sense in Hurry to Decide?

To be insistent, therefore, on recognising the Peking regime is to betray the democratic cause in the most extreme sense. At the least we must watch and wait. One wonders why in addition to blinking the all-too-patent fact of a throttling militarism there is the hurry to decide this way or the other. Several new governments have had to labour on for a long time before getting recognition. The U.S.A., for instance, did not recognise Soviet Russia for seventeen years. Franco's Spain has had no recognition up to now, although she is of one mind with Britain and America as regards Communism. Even the government of Chiang Kai-shek which overthrew the Manchu Dynasty in 1912 was refused full recognition by President Wilson for a whole year. And, remember, there was little doubt anywhere about Chiang being a liberator. If under such circumstances there was no precipitate decision, why the feverish canvassing for a quick vote in Mao's favour when he comes with, to put it mildly, very questionable credentials?

Even to wait and see is foolish enough. There is opinion in some quarters that the act of abstaining from flat refusal to recognise Mao would produce on him an impression of friendliness. Of course he would be highly gratified if India did not set her face against him; it would serve his purpose excellently. But would it ever make him look upon India as friendly? Whatever be India's own feelings, she will remain an enemy in Mao's eyes no less than in Stalin's so long as she is non-Communist. To be non-Communist is to be, in their view, a confederate of "Fascist beasts". Not even a Socialist regime is regarded by Stalin and his followers as being amicable. They make no distinctions in the final summing-up. No country is accorded by them the right to choose its own government. No country is considered good-neighbourly unless it goes Red. Pandit Nehru's much emphasised neutrality produces not the least warming of the cockles of Stalin's heart. Neither is Mao rendered the least bit affectionate by Nehru's unwillingness to be teamed up with either bloc. We have only to tune in to Peking Radio to realise with our own ears the attitude of Red China towards us. Recently a series of talks was begun against the imperialism of India in South-East Asia. Pandit Nehru was attacked together with Doctor Hatta. And there was the uncompromising statement that all existing non-Communist East-Asian Governments would be swept away and "democratic people's republics" set up instead. Whether India recognises Red China or no, she will never cease to be marked out as a field for subversive activity leading to the downfall of everything that

Continued on page 3

THE ANACHRONISM OF THE DEATH PENALTY

By R. N. KHANNA

More than eight years ago, I made up my mind to enrol myself as a member of the Indian National Congress. I paid the subscription and filled the membership form. I just casually turned the form and felt upbought to find a picture of the Mother India if and when Congress came into power. One of the resolutions purported to abolish capital punishment. I heaved a sign of relief on reading it because from my childhood the harrowing tales of those sentenced to death have stabbed my heart. It saddens one to see the apathy of the government and the people to the agony of those who are immured in condemned cells for months together.

Indeed the manner in which we treat criminals is responsible for the thrill of horror that passes through the common man when he sees a person, handcuffed and fettered, escorted by armed policemen to jail. The murderer at once ceases to be a human being in our eyes and appears something like a mad dog or at best a man harsh and cruel who would run amuck if set at large. The result is that nobody even makes a sympathetic approach to the so-called criminals in order to probe into the deep roots of crime. I remember how, when a child, I used to be horrified whenever I saw someone behind the bars or handcuffed and fettered. The policemen also appeared men of tough fibres who could handle such ferocious persons.

Criminals at Close Quarters

Later on destiny drove me to court imprisonment as a Satyagrahi and placed me sometimes in the midst of murderers, robbers, dacoits and last but not least habitual criminals like pilferers and pick-pockets. I got many occasions to talk most intimately with gangsters, murderers and robbers and thank God I no longer feel that shudder and recoil which I felt before. It was a most agreeable surprise to see vividly "the soul of goodness in things evil". Some of the murderers and robbers were very magnanimous men and very emotional and brimming with the milk of human kindness. On the day of my trial, I was brought in the police van to the judicial lock-up, along with other under-trial prisoners. All of them came from the country and they clustered round me when they came to know that, though among them, I was not actually one of them. The judicial lock-up affords the prisoners an opportunity to relate the incidents that led them to their imprisonment. Some of them had been caught red-handed and so the vision of the gallows was haunting them. The 1942 disturbances were in full swing then and everywhere it was expected that the British Government would come down with a crash. Those arrested under section 302 I.P.C. asked me wistfully, "Is there any hope for our emancipation also?" "Surely", I replied, "you must remember that the Congress will abolish the death penalty if it comes into power." Their faces beamed with joy and I distinctly remember that when in the evening they chanted their prayers some of the prisoners used to pray for the victory of the Congress.

The jail authorities shut me up in a solitary cell and the adjoining cells were inhabited by dacoits and

murderers who had absconded and even had the audacity to shoot at the police. It is significant that when a person commits one murder, he is afterwards compelled to commit many others because of the spectre of death that begins to loom large on his horizon.

Solitude and Suspense

Few persons know what a solitary cell is. Even the jail world is shut out from you, so much so that the convict wardens who are on patrol duty are forbidden to talk with those living in the solitary cells. They provide you with a pan for your excreta, an iron cup and a clay jar. Day in and day out you are immured in a small cell suffering perhaps a worse fate than Coleridge's mariner—

Alone, alone, all all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

There is no other wall that separates human beings so completely as the jail wall. People read in the papers that a culprit has been arrested and then after some time they again read that the sentence has been passed. But

Between the arrest
And the sentence
Falls the shadow.

For the public the real punishment starts after the murderer has been sentenced to death or transportation for life. Few know that the Shadow falls in between. In fact the nightmare of the gallows begins to sit heavy on the mind from the very day the murderer is arrested. Sometimes innocent people are arrested and tried on trumped-up charges and very often they are acquitted either by the Sessions Judge or by the High Court judges. For the public it is enough that the innocent person is acquitted, but after what torment and tribulation? Day in and day out he is haunted by the gallows, with no one to give any solace—and all this for no crime. But it will be said that this possibility cannot be ruled out even if the penalty of death is abolished. In that case the accused will be haunted by the possibility of life imprisonment. But we must bear in mind that the anguish of the man caged in a solitary cell haunted by the fear of capital punishment is incomparably more racking than the fear of a life sentence. There are many redeeming features in the latter case. The prisoner can keep some contact with his kith and kin. If his behaviour is good, he gets remission and also becomes a convict warden and thus escapes many of the rigours of jail life. The judgments of the Sessions judges and High Court judges prove that the number of those who are not guilty and yet arrested under section 302 and then tortured by the police is very great. The world is now quite familiar with the third degree methods that are employed to extort confessions from people arrested. Admitted that there are cases in which hideous crimes have been committed and in such cases those responsible for them must be brought to book. But if we abolish the death penalty the heavens will not fall. Only those innocent people whom we have no right to torment with the constant fear of death by hanging will be spared all that misery.

There have been innumerable cases in which innocent people have been executed, many others in which at the last moment Divine Grace came to their rescue and some new evidence cropped up which falsified the whole concatenation of events concocted by the police. In the Punjab High Court once a great tragedy was averted. In a village two parties were constantly at daggers drawn. One day members of one party were bathing in the river when a dead body was washed ashore. Incidentally one man of this party had left the village for some unknown destination. So these people hit upon a plan. They carried the corpse to the police and charged the other party with the murder of the man who had left the village. It is said they bribed the police who in their turn collected false evidence and proved that that was the corpse of the man who had disappeared from the village. About twelve persons were arrested on a charge of murder. In brief, some of them were sentenced to death by the Sessions judge. When the appeal was filed in the High Court, the accused exhorted their partymen to make frantic efforts to search out the man with whose murder they had been charged. Ultimately the man was found out and produced before the High Court and in this manner these people were saved from the gallows. All must have heaved a sigh of relief at the ultimate justice, but nobody visualised the undeserved anguish through which these innocent people had to pass.

The Psychology of Murderers

Now let us turn to the actual murderers. A sympathetic approach will reveal that firstly these people are not so evil and their existence is not so dangerous as it appears when we see them handcuffed and fettered and escorted by armed police. Moreover, we should not judge a man by one act only. Human nature is a very complex affair. There are many currents and cross-currents and the true sources of action are far below and beyond the superficial sight. Even men themselves are not aware what beings and forces are making them their instruments. Afterwards when the heat of the rage has cooled down, they cry out like Hamlet—

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes?
Never Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en
away,

And when he is not himself does
wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet
denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness:
if't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is
wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's
enemy.

It is universal experience that sometimes waves upsurge from the dark chambers of the human consciousness and even the noblest among us behave as wicked persons.

Furthermore it is not uncommon that sometimes when a person harbours in himself some feeling of hatred or revenge, he opens himself to the dark influence of some occult diabolic force and the same person is heard saying afterwards,

"I fail to understand how I could stoop so low." A little introspection is sure to reveal the presence of the eternal viper coiled fast into the darkness of our entrails. The Gita, which never takes recourse to honeyed glosses and optimistic scuttlings of truth, is uncompromising in its statement of truth. It says: "Even the mind of the wise man who labours for perfection is carried away by the vehement insistence of the senses."

It is time that we discarded our otiose ideas about criminology and made bold for a new approach. A really better order of society based on spirituality "would treat in its sociology the individuals from the saint to the criminal not as the units of a social problem to be passed through some skilfully devised machinery and, either flattened into the social mould, or crushed out of it, but as souls suffering and entangled in a net and to be saved, souls growing and to be encouraged to grow, souls grown and from whom help and power can be drawn."*

Persons with some insight into the human psyche should approach these people and study the many psychological complexes at the root of their crimes. In my part of the country the majority of the murders are committed because of the false ideas of honour and respectability deeply ingrained in their minds. In foreign countries they are sure to cause ribald laughter. If, for instance, a man falls in love with my daughter, then he must be killed out of hand and if my daughter also is responsive then she must be done away with before she gets a baby and becomes a blot on the name of the family. There is no greater crime than love before marriage. There have been instances when a whole family had to leave the village because one of its members became loose in sex. Once I was travelling from Amritsar to Lahore, when I saw a young Sikh, stout and hulking, escorted by armed police. Tears were spouting from his eyes. He had been sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge and was being transferred to Lahore to be caged in a condemned cell. The policemen told me his pathetic story. He was a poor man and his wife became adulterous. He admonished her times out of number. One day he was exasperated by some cheap gibes flung at him by his neighbours. He assassinated her. When I saw him, he was sobbing and bidding farewell to his daughter who had given evidence against him. He had no grudge against her. At Lahore, we alighted from the train and parted. I offered him an orange. He declined to take it and said in utter despondency, "It cannot heal my agony". His pale and agonised countenance continued to shadow me for many days. Again and again I would imagine his plight in the condemned cell, full of remorse as he was.

These people seldom go to sleep in the night in their cells because of the intimate association of death and night. In the day they doze away involuntarily. Companionless, with nothing but the shadow of

(Continued on next page)

* "The Human Cycle" by Sri Aurobindo.

THE ANACHRONISM OF THE DEATH PENALTY—Continued from page 2

death sitting heavy on their minds, shut up in small cells they pass their days. Many a time the torture becomes so wrenching and unbearable that they make attempts to commit suicide.

One man, finding nothing else, struck himself with an earthen jar and fainted. He could not stand, so he was seated on a stool and then hanged. Another case I distinctly remember. The High Court confirmed the death sentence passed on an assassin and so he was to be transferred from Ambala jail (where I was a prisoner) to Lahore for execution. He bade us farewell. He was all humps and hollows and looked wistfully at us all. The next day the jailor told us that when the train was running at full speed, he jumped out of the window with both hands cuffed and legs fettered. The

train was made to stop and every corner was scanned. In the end the clanking of his fetters got him rearrested and the next day he was hanged. The jailor said "I warned the police not to remit vigilance because I could read his intentions." Alas, nobody tried to imagine to what desperation the poor fellow must have been driven when he took such a perilous step.

A Barbaric Institution

It is strange that humanitarians like Pandit Nehru who are the finest flowers of modern culture and with whom it is against the grain to allow such barbaric institutions to continue should be at the helm of affairs and yet this anachronism persist.

It is a unique opportunity offered to us to awaken the conscience of

the world to this hideous legacy of the past, because the party in power is pledged to blot it out and the Law Member who is not a Congressman is all for the abolition of capital punishment. It seems that our legislators are labouring under the same fears as beset the British when a century ago, there were two hundred and twenty crimes for which people were hanged and it was believed that civilization would be imperilled if this step were taken. But time has belied those fears. So far only the Unity Party of India has tried to bring home to the people the imperative need to slough off such barbaric institutions. The people have not as yet realised the many evil consequences that inevitably flow from it. It does not serve as a deterrent. Sometimes a man in a fit of rage kills his enemy and then all at once is haunted by the

fear of the gallows and so threatens to kill those who can give evidence against him. Instances can be cited when even innocent people were shot at by the murderer simply because he feared lest they might catch hold of him. The facts from countries that have abolished capital punishment—Sweden, Holland, Belgium, New Zealand (not to mention a score of others)—amply prove that such fears are unwarranted.

India, with her long traditions of universal love and sympathy, is a country eminently fitted to lead humanity in its upward march and we expect that the leader of our young argosy, being a follower of the apostle of non-violence, will not bypass the anachronism of capital punishment.

NO RECOGNITION FOR RED CHINA—Continued from page 1.

the idealist in her stands for.

Is Recognition a Proof of Our Neutrality?

Not to see Red China's basic antagonism to democracies like India is political childishness. We must not be egged on by parties that paint the problem of recognition as if it were a test of India's vaunted independent foreign policy. They make it a point of honour almost that we should recognise Mao lest we should be taken to be camp-followers of the western bloc. But the truth is that the Commonwealth to which India belongs is not unanimous. While Dr. Evatt, Australian Minister of External Affairs, is vehemently against recognition unless there is a guarantee about Hongkong, Mr. Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, is prepared to waive the issue of guarantee and has personally been always in favour of the opposite course both because of so-called realism and because of commercial stakes in the Far East. South Africa and Pakistan are neutral, ready to abide by the decision of the rest. New Zealand alone is completely averse to recognition. It would, therefore, be incorrect to charge India with subservience to the western democracies if she were anti-recognition. But ultimately the question of India trying to evade the suspicion of being taken in tow by the western bloc is irrelevant. She should not make it her business to avoid seeming this or that. She has only to be true to herself. If Communist China stood for the ideals of liberty and did not try to regiment the human mind and atheistically obstruct its spiritual adventure, India should back her up, no matter if all the countries subscribing to the Atlantic Charter were for some reason or other loth to recognise her. But to accept Mao just because non-acceptance might cast doubt on India's independence of mind and make Stalin lift his eyebrows is to let adventitious circumstances dictate her decision. True independence consists simply in not being definitely influenced by anything except the highest ideal one can envisage. In the present case it is quite evident that India's highest ideal is absolutely antipodal to what Red China represents. India has lived for thousands of years in a many-sided quest of the Supreme Spirit and tried to mould her outer life from deep within—every aspect of existence acquiring value only inasmuch as it manifested the light of the Infinite, the mystery of the Eternal. Communism indulges in the fantasy that economic factors were predominantly responsible for the rishis who saw the Golden Immortal beyond time's darkness and that from a proper study of the means of production in the age of the *Mahabharata* we can explain the ineffable epoch-making presence of Sri Krishna and the Vision of the Cosmic Being he vouchsafed to Arjuna on the battlefield that became the symbol of man's fight with mortality. The country that gave birth to the Upanishads and the Gita would be untrue to its whole history and betray its own future if to a doctrine which denies the free intellect and the spiritual life it granted a status with possibilities of strengthening Soviet Russia's scheme of a world-revolution against man's inmost soul under the guise of combating capitalism and class-inequality. We may be as modern as we wish and talk of nationalisation or mixed economy or collective planning, but unless we choose to perish as a significant entity in the world we can never grip the hand of Mao Tse-tung when we know that this hand will sooner or later be lifted to strike, insidiously if not openly, at the very heart of this dear land of ours which the Avatars have hallowed from age to age.

Is it Wrong to Reject Mao while Recognising Stalin?

Perhaps we shall be told: "If you think Communism to be so pernicious when it confronts us from China, why not extend your condemnation to Soviet Russia herself who is the Arch-Communist and without whom China

could never have gone Red? Is it not unfair to swallow the camel of Stalin and strain at the gnat of Mao?" The answer to this sophistry is: "Though we may regret it, Stalin has succeeded in establishing himself internationally. Various circumstances such as the joint front which came to be formed against Hitler have helped to bring about this situation. The western democracies at the moment cannot refuse his delegates a share in international deliberations. All they can do is to guard against his aggressive policy and neutralise his influence within their own borders. India has virtually acted in concert with them except for the fact that she is not in absolute agreement with certain traits of the western powers and cannot join their bloc. Her neutrality means that she is on common ground with them with regard to the fundamental issues of international politics but in some important superstructural matters she finds them fall short. In the position vis-a-vis Russia she stands more or less as they do. It may not be a completely consistent position, and though she must develop a clear-cut rejection of all Russian influence she cannot in the present context of world affairs act very much differently from what she is doing. This does not imply that faced with Communism in other circumstances she must follow the same line. Red China comes with an entirely new practical problem and it has got to be tackled without the shadow of our past mistakes or necessities obscuring its features. Not only have we the full power to withhold recognition but we have also a greater insight into the terrible nature of the Communist fanaticism, thanks to Russia's coming out at last in her true colours. Whether Mao be a gnat or no, we have every justification for straining at him. It is to be hoped that we shall regurgitate the Stalinist camel which we have found difficult to digest, but there is no logic or ethic in waiting till then to deny Red China the slightest chance of increase in power though an international status."

Is it Realism to Recognise Mao?

India should allow herself to be fooled by no superficial argument. And perhaps the most superficial is the pretence of what is termed "realism". Authentic realism can mean for India nothing else save a constant sense of the basic and perfect reality that is the Divine, a persistent effort to co-operate with the evolutionary urge in the world higher and higher towards the full emergence of this reality, a refusal as much as possible to give support to all that sets at a discount the pure cry of the inmost soul for its supreme Self in the Godhead, an effective understanding of the truth that what manifests or aspires the least after the Divine and the Eternal is of all things the least real and should never be allowed to sustain its simulacrum on our sanction and acquiescence. It is a sham realist who never looks beyond appearances and the impact of the crudely immediate. Even the West which is supposed to be spiritually short-sighted has shown in Truman and Acheson an admirable instinct of the right course. Britain has taken note of the increasing evidence of Mao's alignment with Stalin and recently tempered her original clamour for recognition on business grounds. But, ironically enough, high governmental circles in India often prate of Red China's innocuousness. Some of our statesman may even go out of their way to persuade the other members of the Commonwealth Conference due soon at Colombo. The general state of mind in the country is, at best, hesitation. Instead of being hesitant, India should give the world a glorious lead in keeping Mao at arm's length. If she does not, she will commit a deliberate violation of her deepest nature. Whatever be the attitude of other countries, her recognition of Red China will be not only an egregious error of judgment but also a symbolic act of national and cultural suicide.

FROM OLD MOORINGS

By : M. P. PANDIT

Akbar had an argument with Birbal over the relative merits of Allah and the Gods of the Hindus. "Without doubt, Allah is the Powerful" he said. "Look at the huge concourse of devotees at the gates of the Delhi mosques; don't you see that they come here because they find their prayers answered?" Birbal demurred: "It is just a question of faith, your highness" he said, "if one has faith, it does not really matter whom one worships—the God of the Brahmin, the Lord of the Yahudi or the Allah of the faithful." Akbar would not agree and there the topic was dropped. Birbal, however, as was his wont, wanted to convince the king. He ordered the construction of an imposing edifice, a temple in the countryside. He arranged to have it opened, when ready, amidst great rejoicings and in the august presence of the emperor himself. The altar was concealed from the view. The temple drew a large number of worshippers from far and near and the number grew day by day. One night at a lonely hour Birbal took the monarch to the temple and asked him to see who was the God that drew such large crowds. Akbar stepped inside the sanctum to the altar; it was covered with cloth. Eagerly he removed it and behold! a pair of torn miserable sandals on the altar! Birbal beamed; Akbar bowed and admitted the truth of Birbal's contention that Faith is God.

Whether or not the story is accurate history is quite immaterial for the purpose of the moral that is intended in the context. The story undoubtedly is a striking illustration of certain characteristic features of Birbal, Akbar and the generality of men. The unfailing wit and superior skill of the brilliant minister was brought to the fore; the graceful and timely appreciation of Akbar, his admiration for the admirable, the implied tact and, incidentally, political wisdom of the Mogul in admitting the errors in his reasoning and conviction, and a general magnanimity of the Emperor are certain arresting facets of the story. But when this is quoted to show that faith works wonders, we have to pause and accept it with qualification. For while it draws attention to a fact of mass psychology that the flock always follows and does not think, it lays stress on faith in such a way that it is treated as mere credulity and nothing else. Apparently the story purports to illustrate the powers of faith, but in the end, rather deeply, knocks the bottom out of it. In its zeal to over-emphasise the value of faith, it caricatures its true character and brings into ridicule the religious consciousness which is indeed the outflowering of faith. The error, unconscious perhaps, lies in the denial or the ignoring of the truth or the intrinsic merit of anything outside in the world, independent of the believer, in order to justify, to support and to bring to fruition the acts and attitude of faith. This is a dangerous proposition. Faith, then, may mean a crude belief, dim and dark or enlightened, and vanishes with the advent of the light of reason. But we must note that a dogmatic denial of the real value of external support, sacred symbols, is much worse. Faith is certainly an inner condition and attitude of the being; that is the basis on which any course of action can be proceeded with in any sphere of life. Assuming that the torn sandals took the place of the sacred symbol of worship, what happened to the people who crowded there day in and day out? In the purity of their innocence, in the ignorance of the character of the object they were supposed to worship they went and returned and enjoyed their visit, let us assume. There is nothing in it to show that their prayers were answered, nor is it necessary that a place of congregation is one where God grants the prayers of all men who gather there—and that too all sorts of prayers. Of course intense faith can work miracles—and in spite of the sandals. Could it mean, then, that there is nothing essentially religious or spiritual in the outer world? An emphatic NO is our reply. There are

sacred places, holy centres of spiritual Force, truly exalted personages who incessantly emanate rays of purity, peace and light. Approach to them not only verifies the faith within, but reinforces it, because they too are made of that faith appropriate to their dynamic presence. Does the sandal-symbol do such a thing? Abomination to think of. But let us turn to another story.

Ekalavya, son of a hunter-chief, desired to acquire proficiency in archery and looked for a competent guide. Those were the days of the Mahabharata and to whom else could he turn but to that great Master of the age, the celebrated Dronacharya at Hastinapura? Thither the lad journeyed, presented himself before the preceptor with due respect and sought his favour. But the teacher declined: "Thou art born of a Nishada—hunter", he said. A lesser spirit would have broken. Undismayed, the boy bowed, took the dust of the Master's feet and departed. On return, he got ready a clay idol of the Acharya. This boy of faith saw in it and worshipped the Guru day by day and practised with his bow and arrow before the image till, —so the story goes—he acquired so much dexterity and command that even the incomparable Arjuna recognised his superior in him. Drona was amazed. And later even when Ekalavya parted with his thumb in obedience to the wishes of Drona, his skill continued to be of the first order, though he had to become second to Arjuna, only to Arjuna.

When we come across stories of this kind we may not dismiss them, as old wives' tales; yet we are apt to repeat parrot-like the old saying, "Faith bears fruit" vishwasah phaladayakah and pass on. We do not pause to grasp the truths embedded in the narrative. In the story of Ekalavya there is a secret, a great occult truth we may say. The boy had so much faith in the teacher, that though there was no direct means of contact, he drew all the help he needed from the Guru through the power of sheer faith.

We may ask ourselves: what is this Faith? What are its rationale and *modus operandi*? And what is its place in the life of man?

Faith is primarily an attitude of the self-conscious being. It becomes a conviction in the mind, for it is based upon the soul's perception of truth of which the active mind may or may not be aware. Something in the being glimpses a truth, the central and radical part assents to it in a definite way. It is an aura of this vision and assent within that reaches the mind in the form of what we call faith. One may not

and does not really know why he has an unshakable belief at all in a particular thing that is of moment to him. But the mind tries to find some reason or justification for this persistent feeling of certitude and very often succeeds in improvising a "rational" explanation, but not always. The fact is the faith is there self-based. It is constant and is active even when the normal faculties of the mind are suspended, as for instance in sleep; the faith is there awake in the subconscious regions of our being. Even when faith appears to be a result of the reasonings of the mind or the influences of the general environment it is just an appearance. The object of faith may be anything: a truth underlying a phenomenon in the material existence, truth in an ideal, the reality of the Invisible. There is a truth behind every appearance in creation and it may be any of these that has been seized by the inner being which seeks to realise and express it.

Every being in the universe has some faith or other at the bottom of its very existence. In fact, it is really a will-to-be. For even inanimate objects have a certain kind of cohesive force which is a 'will-to-be' in the lower grade of existence. Otherwise they simply could not be. The creative energy deployed by the supreme Consciousness for building up the worlds implants an effective portion of its own nature in every formation. It is this element that makes all things from the amoeba to the solar system subsist.

Man, for instance, has an abiding faith in himself. As long as he has faith in his mental make-up, he thinks and reasons as a mental being. He has a faith in his life-energy and even a faith in the stability of his physical body and so lives and acts in the way he does. In a sense he can be said to be made of faith, *shraddhamayoyam purushah* (Gita). Of whatever faith one is, that he becomes, *yo yat-shraddhah sa eva sah*. The moment he loses the faith, the will breaks down, the main-spring of his activities is snapped and he ceases to live. For, faith is really a force of Will in the inner Consciousness, determined to work out the Destiny towards which the being wends its way. It is not a static mental belief; it is dynamic. Its basis of power is not less than that of knowledge. A strong faith does always endow one with the necessary strength and energy to work out or realise the end in view. It is obvious that this element of faith for any purpose, in one's mission in life is indispensable for progress in any walk of life. It is as

much necessary for a scientist as for a mystic. This truth holds good not in the individual sphere of life alone. It applies to the collective life as well. There, as here, Faith is a power. The effectivity with which possibilities, political, economic or social, are actualised depends to a great extent on the degree and intensity of the faith-power that is harnessed to the endeavour. A strong faith active in the collective mind of a people finds its due expression in the high-powered vehicle of a Leader and never fails to achieve its object.

Therefore, the mass of men, either in a collective affair towards a common Ideal or in their individual line of life, cannot move an inch without the faith that is the soul-factor for all endeavours to be possible or meet with success. Indeed in a sense it is pervasive everywhere in God's creation under the cover of what is commonly called Will-to-be. And it is for this reason one can say it can be made to manifest through activity and association and constant practice in all fields of life. Where there is an apparent failing of faith in the mind, supposedly justified by the bitter fruits of hard labour one may experience, even there by perseverance one can get back the seemingly lost faith, for it is the inestimable treasure, light and life of the soul, the core of all being. The ancients knew this secret, they knew the character and value of *shraddha*, the untranslatable Sanskrit word of which faith is the feeble English equivalent. The seers of the Rig Veda address their prayer with fervour to the Deity of Faith invoking her to bless them, to bestow her grace and bestow herself on them (Rig Veda X. 151), and hint at the means by which it can be attained when they sing:

"Faith one gets by the heart's yearning, by Faith the Riches"
*Shraddham hridayaya akutyah,
Shraddhaya vindate vasu.*

Yes, it is by the heart's yearning one wins the Faith. It is the cry of one's core of being, the very voice of the soul that manifests the faith of immense potency. It is this faith, not the sham faith of the Birbal story, that enabled Ekalavya of the Mahabharata to appeal to and draw from Dronacharya, not from the unwilling and superficial personality of Drona, but from the larger being—call it the subliminal—of the great Teacher of archery, all that he had to learn and learn in such a way as to win the admiration of the greatest archer of the times.

If this is a specimen copy you are receiving, it is an invitation to subscribe. you find it significant and interesting, don't fail to avail yourself of the subscription form below. you can spare your copy, please pass it along to your friends. Else supply the names and addresses of those who will be really interested and we will post free copies of one issue to friends anywhere in the world.

: MOTHER INDIA :

Subscription: Rs. 6 for 1 year; Rs. 3/4 for 6 months; As. 4 single copy.
Get your own copy by sending this form with remittance.

PLEASE ENROL ME:

NAME: (BLOCK LETTERS)

ADDRESS

As a Subscriber to MOTHER INDIA for Months.

VISION and REALISATION

Living and accurate expression of mystical and spiritual experience is rare. To convey the realities of this experience, in all their many-sidedness, and to show what the immense reaches of yogic evolution are, this series will present extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

WHAT a hymn of thanksgiving should I not be raising at each moment unto Thee! Everywhere and in everything around me Thou revealest Thyself and in me Thy Will and Consciousness express themselves always more and more clearly, even to the point of my having almost entirely lost the gross illusion of "me" and "mine". If a few shadows, a few flaws can be seen in the great Light which manifests Thee, how shall they bear for long the marvellous brightness of Thy resplendent Love? This morning, the consciousness that I had of the way Thou art fashioning this being which was "I", can be roughly represented by a great diamond cut with regular geometrical facets, a diamond in its cohesion, firmness, pure limpidity, transparency, but a brilliant and radiant flame in its intense ever-progressive life. But it was something more, something better than all that; for nearly all sensation inner and outer was exceeded and that image

only presented itself to my mind as I returned to conscious contact with the outer world.

It is Thou that makest the experience fertile, Thou who renderest life progressive, Thou who compellest the darkness to vanish in an instant before the Light, Thou who givest to Love all its power, Thou who everywhere raisest up Matter in this ardent and wonderful aspiration, in this sublime thirst for Eternity.

Thou everywhere and always; nothing but Thou in the essence and in the manifestation.

O Shadow and Illusion, dissolve! O Suffering, fade and disappear! Lord Supreme, art Thou not there!

November 26, 1912

THE MOTHER
Prayers and Meditations.

Out of the neutral silence of his soul
He passed to its fields of puissance and of calm
And saw the Powers that stand above the world,
Traversed the realms of the supreme Idea
And sought the summit of created things
And the almighty source of cosmic change.
There knowledge called him to her mystic peak
Where thought is held in a vast internal sense
And feeling swims across a sea of peace
And vision climbs beyond the reach of Time.
An equal of the first creator seers,
Accompanied by an all-revealing light
He moved through regions of transcendent Truth
Inward, immense, innumerably one.
There distance was his own huge spirit's extent,
Delivered from the fictions of the mind
Time's triple dividing step baffled no more;
Its inevitable and continuous stream,
The long flow of its manifesting course,
Was held in spirit's single wide regard.
A universal beauty showed its face;
The invisible deep-fraught significances,
Here sheltered behind form's insensible screen,
Uncovered to him their deathless harmony
And the key to the wonder-book of common things.
In their uniting law stood up revealed
The multiple measures of the uplifting force,
The lines of the World-Geometer's technique,
The enchantments that uphold the cosmic web
And the magic underlying simple shapes.
On peaks where Silence listens with still heart
To the rhythmic metres of the rolling worlds,
He served the sessions of the triple fire.
On the rim of two continents of slumber and trance
He heard the ever unspoken Reality's voice
Awaken revelation's mystic cry,
The birth-place found of the sudden infallible Word
And lived in the rays of an intuitive Sun.
Absolved from the ligaments of death and sleep
He rode the lightning seas of cosmic Mind.
And crossed the ocean of original sound;
On the last step to the supernal birth
He trod along extinction's narrow edge
Near the high verges of eternity,
And mounted the gold ridge of the World-dream
Between the slayer and the saviour fires;
The belt he reached of the unchanging Truth,
Met borders of the inexpressible Light
And thrilled with the presence of the Ineffable.
Above him he saw the flaming Hierarchies,
The wings that fold around created space,
The sun-eyed Guardians and the golden Sphinx
And the tiered planes and the immutable Lords.
A wisdom waiting on Omniscience
Sat voiceless in a vast passivity;
It judged not, measured not, nor strove to know,
But listened for the all-seeing Thought
And the burden of a calm transcendent Voice.
He had reached the top of all that can be known
His sight surpassed creation's head and base;
Ablaze the triple heavens revealed their suns,
The obscure Abyss exposed its monstrous rule.
All but the ultimate Mystery was his field,
Almost the Unknowable disclosed its rim.

His self's infinities began to emerge,
The hidden universes cried to him;
Eternities called to eternities
Sending their speechless message still remote.
Arisen from the marvel of the depths
And burning from the superconscious heights
And sweeping in great horizontal gyres
A million energies joined and were the One.
All flowed immeasurably to one sea:
All living forms became its atom homes.
A Panergy that harmonised all life
Held now existence in its vast control;
A portion of that majesty he was made.
At will he lived in the unoblivious Ray.
In that high realm where no untruth can come,
Where all are different and all is one,
In the Impersonal's ocean without shore
The Person in the World-Spirit anchored rode;
It thrilled with the mighty marchings of World-Force,
Its acts were the comrade's of God's infinite peace.
An adjunct glory and a symbol self,
The body was delivered to the soul,—
An immortal point of power, a block of poise
In a cosmicity's wide formless surge,
A conscious edge of the Transcendent's might
Carving perfection from a bright world-stuff,
It figured in it a universe's sense.
There consciousness was a close and single weft;
The far and near were one in spirit-space,
The moments there were pregnant with all time.
The superconscient's screen was ripped by thought,
Idea rotated symphonies of sight,
Sight was a flame-throw from identity;
Life was a marvellous journey of the spirit,
Feeling a wave from the universal Bliss.
In the kingdom of the Spirit's power and light,
As if one who arrived out of infinity's womb
He came new-born, infant and limitless
And grew in the wisdom of the timeless Child;
He was a vast that soon became a Sun.
A great luminous silence whispered to his heart;
His knowledge an inview caught unfathomable,
An outview by no brief horizons cut:
He thought and felt in all, his gaze had power.
He communed with the Incommunicable;
Beings of a wider consciousness were his friends,
Forms of a larger subtler make drew near;
The Gods conversed with him behind Life's veil.
Neighbour his being grew to Nature's crests.
The primal Energy took him in its arms;
His brain was wrapped in overwhelming Light,
An all-embracing knowledge seized his heart:
Thoughts rose in him no earthly mind can hold,
Mights played that never coursed through mortal nerves:
He scanned the secrets of the Overmind,
He bore the rapture of the Oversoul.
A borderer of the empire of the Sun,
Attuned to the supernal harmonies,
He linked creation to the Eternal's sphere,
His finite parts approached their absolutes,
His actions framed the movements of the Gods,
His will took up the reins of cosmic Force.

SRI AUROBINDO
Savitri: Bk: II, Canto 15.

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(20)

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many perplexing questions with which the common man is faced in his daily life. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not merely a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in the many trying situations that arise in the course of its day-to-day existence. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it applicable to the concrete problems of life, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers directly taken from Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q: 1. What were the principal effects of the vital subjectivism to which the modern mind arrived in its recoil from the intellectual objectivism of the nineteenth century and which very strongly influenced not only its philosophy, art and religion but also its political and social life?

A. "After the material formula which governed the greater part of the nineteenth century had burdened man with the heaviest servitude to the machinery of the outer material life that he has ever yet been called upon to bear, the first attempt to break through, to get to the living reality in things and away from the mechanical idea of life and society, landed us in that surface vitalism which had already begun to govern thought before the two formulas inextricably locked together lit up and flung themselves on the lurid pyre of the world-war. The vital *elan* brought us no deliverance, but only used the machinery already created with a more feverish insistence, a vehement attempt to live more rapidly, more intensely, an inordinate will to act and to succeed, to enlarge the mere force of living, to pile up a gigantic efficiency of life."

Q: 2. But could this adverse result not have been averted if the vital subjectivism had taken a profound and complete form instead of remaining shallow and incomplete?

A. "It could not have been otherwise even if this vitalism had been less superficial and external, more truly subjective. To live, to act, to grow, to increase the vital force, to understand, utilise and fulfil the intuitive impulse of life are not things evil in themselves: rather they are excellent things, if rightly followed and rightly used, that is to say, if they are directed to something beyond the mere vitalistic impulse and are governed by that within which is higher than Life. The Life-power is an instrument, not an aim; it is in the upward scale the first great subjective supraphysical instrument of the Spirit and the base of all action and endeavour. But a Life-power that sees nothing beyond itself, nothing to be served except its own organised demands and impulses, will be very soon like the force of steam driving an engine without the driver or an engine in which the locomotive force has made the driver its servant and not its controller. It can only add the uncontrollable impetus of a high-created or broad-based Titanism, or it may be even a nether flaming demonism, to the Nature forces of the material world with the intellect as its servant, an impetus of measureless unrelenting creation, appropriation, expansion which will end in something violent, huge and 'colossal', foredoomed in its very nature to excess and ruin, because light is not in it nor the soul's truth nor the sanction of the gods and their calm eternal will and knowledge."

Q: 3. Beyond the vital subjectivism there is the possibility of mental and psychic subjectivism. What would this greater subjectivism be able to achieve if it succeeds in exerting a powerful influence on the life of the individual and society?

A. "This greater idea would realise that the elevation of the human existence will come not through material efficiency alone or the complex play of his vital and dynamic powers mastering through the aid of the intellect the energies of physical Nature for the satisfaction of the life-instincts, which can only be an intensification of his present mode of existence, but through the greatness of his mental and psychic being and a discovery, bringing forward an organisation of his vast subliminal nature and its forces. It would see in life an opportunity for the joy and power of knowledge, for the joy and power of beauty, for the joy and power of the human will mastering not only physical Nature, but vital and mental Nature. It might discover her secret yet undreamed-of mind-powers and life-powers and use them for a freer liberation of man from the limitations of his shackled bodily life. It might arrive at new psychic relations, a more sovereign power of the idea to realise itself in the act, inner means of overcoming obstacles of distance and division which would cast into insignificance even the last miraculous achievements of material Science. A development of this kind is far enough away

from the dreams of the mass of men, but there are certain pale hints and presages of such a possibility and ideas which lead to it are already held by a great number who are perhaps in this respect the yet unrecognised vanguard of humanity. It is not impossible that behind the confused morning voices of the hour a light of this kind, still below the horizon, may be waiting to ascend with its splendours.

Such a turn of human thought, effort, ideas of life, if it took hold of the communal mind, would evidently lead to a profound revolution throughout the whole range of human existence. It would give it from the first a new tone and atmosphere, a loftier spirit, wider horizons, a greater aim. It might easily develop a science which would bring the powers of the physical world into a real and not only a contingent and mechanical subjection and open perhaps the doors of other worlds. It might develop an achievement of Art and Beauty which would make the greatness of the past a comparatively little thing and would save the world from the astonishingly callous reign of utilitarian ugliness that even now afflicts it. It would open up a closer and freer interchange between human minds and, it may well be hoped, a kindlier interchange between human hearts and lives. Nor need its achievements stop here, but might proceed to greater things of which these would be only the beginnings."

Q: 4. Would this mental and psychic subjectivism be free from the dangers that are found in the vital subjectivism?

A. "This mental and psychic subjectivism would have its dangers, greater dangers even than those that attend a vitalistic subjectivism, because its powers of action also would be greater, but it would have what vitalistic subjectivism has not and cannot easily have, the chance of a detecting discernment, strong safeguards and a powerful liberating light." But still this subjective age of mankind "must be an adventure full of perils and uncertainties as are all great adventures of the race. It may wander long before it finds itself or may not find itself at all and swing back to a new repetition of the cycle."

Q: 5. But is there also not this danger that the effort of mental and psychic subjectivism may succeed only with individuals but fail with the mass of humanity which even till this day remains so firmly entrenched in its physical mentality? Is it conceivable that the average physical man can be rapidly uplifted to the mental and psychical heights and to the farther elevations of the spirit?

A. "This was the one principal reason of the failure of past attempts to spiritualise mankind, that they endeavoured to spiritualise at once the material man by a sort of rapid miracle, and though that can be done, the miracle is not likely to be of an enduring character if it overleaps the stages of his ascent and leaves the intervening levels untrodden and therefore unmastered. The endeavour may succeed with individuals,—Indian thought would say with those who have made themselves ready in a past existence,—but it must fail with the mass. When it passes beyond the few, the forceful miracle of the spirit flags; unable to transform by inner force, the new religion tries to save by machinery, is entangled in the mechanical turning of its own instruments, loses the spirit and perishes quickly or decays slowly. That is the fate which overtakes all attempts of the vitalistic, the intellectual and mental, the spiritual endeavour to deal with material man through his physical mind chiefly or alone; the endeavour is overpowered by the machinery it creates and becomes the slave and the victim of the machine. That is the revenge which our material Nature, herself mechanical, takes upon all such violent endeavours; she waits to master them by their concessions to her own law. If mankind is to be spiritualised, it must first in the mass cease to be the material or the vital man and become the psychic and the true mental being. It may be questioned whether such a mass of progress or conversion is possible; but if it is not, then the spiritualisation of mankind as a whole is a chimera."

K. G.

SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA"

BY "Synergist"

SECTION II: THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF EXISTENCE

(c) THE THREE STAGES OF INDIA'S ANCIENT CIVILISATION: THE VEDIC, THE POST-VEDIC AND THE PURANO-TANTRIC.

Continued from previous issue

"The time in which these Vedantic truths were seen and the Upanishads took shape, was, as we can see from such records as the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka, an epoch of immense and strenuous spiritual seeking in which the truths held by the initiates but kept back from ordinary men broke their barriers, swept through all the higher mind of the nation and fertilised the soil of Indian culture for a general growth of spirituality. It was not as yet entirely universal; for it was chiefly men of the higher classes, mainly Kshatriyas and Brahmins trained in the Vedic system of education, who, no longer content with an external truth and the works of the outer sacrifice, began everywhere to seek for the highest word of revealing experience from the sages who possessed the knowledge of the One; but also we find among those who attained to it and became great teachers, men of inferior or doubtful birth like Satyakama Jabali, son of a servant-girl who knew not who was his father. The work that was done in this period became the bed-rock of Indian spirituality in later ages and from it gush still the life-giving waters of a perennial inspiration. It created the whole difference between the evolution of Indian and of other civilisations. For a time had come when the original Vedic symbols were to lose their significance and pass into obscurity, as did the inner teaching of the Mysteries in other countries. The old poise of culture between the crude or half-trained naturalness of the outer physical man and an inner and secret psychical and spiritual teaching for the initiates could no longer suffice as a basis of spiritual progress: the race in its cycle of civilisation needed a large, a more and more generalised intellectual, ethical and aesthetic evolution to help it to grow into the light, and this was a turn that had to come in India as in other lands. But the danger was that the greater spiritual truth might be lost in the reign and domination of the self-supported intellect and reason. That was what actually happened in the West, Greece leading the way, although the old knowledge was prolonged in a more intellectual form by the Pythagoreans, by Plato and the Neo-Platonists; but still in spite of them and in spite of the spiritual wave which swept over Europe from Asia in an ill-understood Christianity, the whole real trend of Western civilisation has been intellectual, rational, secular and even materialistic, its general aim a culture of the vital and physical man by the power of an intellectualised ethics, aesthesis and reason. The spiritual truth and the spiritual tendency were saved in India from this collapse by the immense effort of the age of the Upanishads which took up the Vedic truth into its highest and most simple expression of intuition and experience, but yet in a form which could lend itself to intellectual and philosophic statement and appreciation. The result was a great upbuilding of an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and social culture guided, uplifted and more and more penetrated and suffused by the saving power of spirituality.

The second or post-Vedic age of Indian civilisation, distinguished by the rise of the great philosophies, a vast epic literature, a vigorous and complex society, the beginnings of art and science, the formation of large kingdoms and empires and manifold formative activities of all kinds, great systems of living and thinking, was as elsewhere a high outburst of the intelligence working upon life and the things of the mind to discover their reason and their right way and bring out a broad and noble fullness of human existence. But this effort in India never lost sight of the spiritual motive or the touch of the religious sense. In philosophy the intelligence attempted to analyse by the reason and logical faculty what had formerly been approached through intuition and spiritual experience, but it started from the data these had discovered and went back always in one form or another to the profound truths of the Upanishads which kept their place as the highest authority in these matters,—and this amounted practically to a constant admission by the Indian mind that spiritual experience is a greater thing and a deeper cause of light than the intellectual reason. The epical literature is full of strong and free intellectual and ethical thinking, a criticism of life by the intelligence and the ethical reason, but the background is a constant religious sense and assent to the spiritual truths which remained the basis of the culture and suffused with their higher light secular thought and action. Art dwells much upon life, but its highest achievement is always in the field of the interpretation of the religio-philosophical mind of India and its whole tone is coloured by a suggestion of the spiritual and the infinite. Society develops its communal co-ordination of the mundane life of interest and desire, *kamā*, *artha*, but governs always its action by a reference at every point to the *dharma*, which takes the form of a complex practical amplification of the Vedic idea of truth and right action and

living, and it never loses sight of spiritual liberation as the highest point and the ultimate aim of the effort of Life. In later times there is a still stronger secular tendency of intellectual culture, science, mundane political and social development, a stressing of an artistic, sensuous, hedonistic experience, but this too always strives to keep itself within the frame and not to lose the special stamp of the Indian cultural idea and is compensated by a deepening of the intensities of psycho-religious experience, while every excess of emphasis on the splendour and richness, the powers and pleasures of life has its recoil and is balanced by a corresponding potent stress on spiritual asceticism as the higher way. The two trends, the extreme of the richness of life experience and the extreme of a pure intensity of the spiritual life, accompany each other, interact and preserve with whatever loss of the earlier harmony and synthesis the balance of Indian culture.

Indian religion following this line of evolution, kept its inner continuity with its Vedic and Vedantic origins, while it changed entirely its mental contents and colour and its outward basis. This it did not by any religious revolt or revolution, not with any idea of iconoclastic reformation, but by a development of its organic life which resulted in a natural transformation. At one time indeed it seemed as if a discontinuity and sharp new beginning were necessary and would take place; for Buddhism seemed to reject any spiritual continuity with the Vedic religion. But this was after all more in appearance than in reality. The ideal of Nirvana was only a negative and exclusive statement of the highest Vedantic spiritual experience, its ethical system, the eightfold path as the way to release, an austere sublimation of the Vedic notion of the Truth, Right and Law as the way to immortality, its strongest note, universal compassion and fellow-feeling, an ethical application of the spiritual unity which is the essential idea of Vedanta, its characteristic tenets such as Nirvana and Karma could have been justified, if it had chosen, from the utterances of the Brahmanas and Upanishads, and it might have claimed for itself a Vedic origin quite as well as the Sankhya philosophy and discipline with which it had some points of intimate alliance. But what most hurt Buddhism and determined its rejection, was not so much its denial of a Vedic origin or authority, but the exclusive trenchancy of its intellectual, ethical and spiritual positions,—a result of the high stress of the logical and rational mind in which it was born as a separate religion,—which could not in the end be made sufficiently compatible with the flexibility, many-sided susceptibility and synthetical turn of the Indian religious consciousness. Eventually, Indian religion while absorbing all that it could of Buddhism, rejected its exclusive positions and preserved the full line of its own Vedic continuity.

This evolution moved by a gradual fading out of the prominent Vedic forms, a transformation of symbol and ritual and ceremony, an emergence of things that are only hints in the original system, a development of new idea-forms from the seed of the original thinking, a farther widening and fathoming of psychic and spiritual experience. The Vedic gods, though losing their real significance, at first keep their hold, but are overshadowed by the great Trinity, Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, afterwards they fade altogether and remain only as a dead tradition; a new pantheon appears which in its outward symbolic aspects expresses a deeper truth and range of religious experience. The Vedic sacrifice persists only in broken and lessening fragments; the house of Fire is replaced by the temple, the karmic ritual of sacrifice transformed into the devotional temple ritual, the mental images of the Vedic gods figured in the mantras by mental forms of the two great deities, Vishnu and Shiva, and their Shaktis and by corresponding physical images which are made the basis both for external worship and for the mantras of inward adoration and meditation, while the psychic and spiritual experience which the inner sense of the Vedic hymns expressed finally disappeared into the psycho-spiritual experience of Puranic and Tantric religion and Yoga.....

The Vedic godheads were to the mass of their worshippers divine powers presiding over the workings of the outward life of the physical cosmos; but the Puranic Trinity had an entirely psycho-religious and spiritual significance and its more external significance, such as the function of cosmic creation, preservation and destruction, was merely a dependent fringe of these profundities. The spiritual truth remained the same, the

Continued on page 8

THE SPIRITUAL VIEW OF EXISTENCE —Continued from page 7.

truth of the One in many aspects,—the Trinity is a triple form of the one supreme Godhead and Brahman, the Shaktis are energies of the one Energy of the highest divine Being,—but this was now brought more powerfully, widely and intensely home to the general mind of the people. Even the so-called henotheism of the Vedic idea was prolonged and heightened in the worship of Vishnu or Shiva as the one Deity, the universal and highest Godhead of whom all others are the forms and powers. The idea of the Divinity in man was popularised, especially the manifestation of the Divine in humanity which was the basis of the worship of the Avatars. The systems of Yoga developed themselves on the same basis and led through psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual methods to a union with the Supreme, One and Divine which is in various forms the aim of all Indian spirituality. The whole of this Purano-Tantric system, if looked at in its totality and real significance and with an intelligent understanding of its forms, is an endeavour to raise man from a basis of generalised psycho-religious experience through knowledge, works and love to a supreme spiritual experience and spiritual status.

This stage is not the highest reach of spiritual or religious evolution. As the Vedic training of the physically-minded man made possible this development, this raising of the basis of religion to the inner psychical mind, so that again by its training of the psychically-minded man ought to make possible a still higher development and a raising of the basis of religion to the spiritual mind itself as the leading power of life. The first stage makes possible the preparation of the natural external man for spirituality; the second takes up his outward life into a deeper mental and psychical living and brings him more directly into contact with the spirit and divinity within him; the third should render him capable of taking up his whole mental, psychical, physical living into a first beginning at least of a generalised spiritual life. This endeavour has manifested itself in the evolution of Indian spirituality and is the significance of the latest philosophies; the great spiritual movements of the saints and bhaktas and an increasing resort to the various paths of Yoga. But unhappily it synchronised with a decline of Indian culture and an increasing collapse of its general power and knowledge, and in these surroundings it could not bear its natural fruit; but at the same time it has done much to prepare such a possibility in the future. If Indian culture is to survive and keep its spiritual basis and innate character, it is in this direction, and not in a mere revival or prolongation of the Puranic system, that its evolution must turn, rising so towards the fulfilment of that which the Vedic seers saw as the aim of man and his life thousands of years ago and the Vedantic sages cast into the clear and immortal forms of their luminous revelation."

* * * *

This essay, and the preceding ones by Sri Aurobindo clear a number of misconceptions and throw light on important philosophical and cultural issues. First, they make it quite clear that spirituality is not synonymous with life-negation, and that Buddhistic Nihilism and Shankarite Illusionism are only certain spiritual tendencies which took an extreme form. Spirituality need not be life-negating; it can also be life-affirming. Those spiri-

tual systems based upon the realisation of the Impersonal, Immutable and Static Self existing apart from the world-manifestation, which consequently seems to be a phenomenal existence super-imposed upon It, naturally lead to life-denial. The type of spirituality advocated and practised by Sri Aurobindo, as it arises from the vision of the Integral Divine Reality attained through the realisation of the Supramental Truth-consciousness, does not deny life, because it recognises the Impersonal and Static Self as only one aspect of the Divine—the Silent Self impartially supporting and sustaining the whole of creation and brooding equally in all things—it goes further and affirms that the personal and dynamic aspect of the Self is also real, the Self who manifests out of the depths of His Being this cosmos of myriad worlds. This means that the Supreme is the Lord of all Existence and appears to the human consciousness as a Reality that is Impersonal as well as Personal. The very nature of his realisation makes Sri Aurobindo accept life, for he sees the world as a manifestation and expression in Time of the Timeless Reality.

Then we saw how a metaphysic created out of the truths realised in spiritual experience can become the basis of the cultural life of a nation, and finally, how the double principle of persistence and mutation works in the evolution of a nation's culture—the permanent spirit in things, the persistent *swadharma* or law of being, and "the less binding system of laws of successive formulation,—the last obeying the mutations of the ages, *yugadharma*"*. In each new phase of the cultural evolution of a people, the outer forms have to be destroyed when they cease to answer to the spiritual, psychological and social needs of its evolving consciousness and new ones created through a renewed contact with the inner spirit. This can be seen in the growth of India's social and cultural life before her decline. The spirit of her culture has been always the same, but its form has undergone changes. This was inevitable, because the cultural evolution of a race is the result of the psycho-social evolution of its members. As we have seen in *The World Crisis and India*, the particular character of a culture is primarily determined by the type, range and level of the consciousness that creates it: the more luminous and wide the consciousness and the greater its apprehension of reality, the more enlightened the culture. Hence, a culture created out of the living spiritual experiences of seer-philosophers and rishis will definitely be greater than the ordinary rationalistic and utilitarian culture. This problem of the cultural growth of a race depending upon the evolution of consciousness of its individual members, is connected with the more fundamental problem of the reality of the individual, his place and significance in the cosmic process and his relation with the Transcendent Divine Reality.

This brings us to Section III: *The New World View*. In this section, the spiritual philosophy of Sri Aurobindo will be presented, as far as possible in his own words, and then an attempt will be made to show how man can grow into a diviner nature by taking the next step in his evolution with Sri Aurobindo's help and guidance.†

*Refer to Section II. (b) The Spiritualisation of Life.

†Refer to the last Essay in "The World Crisis and India," where this point is discussed.

Sri Chaitanya

O thou whose body's every atom drips
Compassion—whose every thought's inspired by love,
Whose every conscient movement of life keeps
Tryst with the lone presiding Power above!

Whose radiant smile redeems and manifests
The kinship the topless peak feels for the abyss;
In whom the desolate pauper soul still rests
And the derelict consciousness is healed with bliss.

Who'll dare assert: our earth is dark and old
Where thou incarnatest in all thy Grace
Of peerless beauty renewed with manifold
Delights of a fadeless light of loveliness?

Where thou still comest thy message to proclaim:
"He is and He shall answer with tenderness
All who'll repeat His all-absolving Name
And none's so low but He leans to embrace."

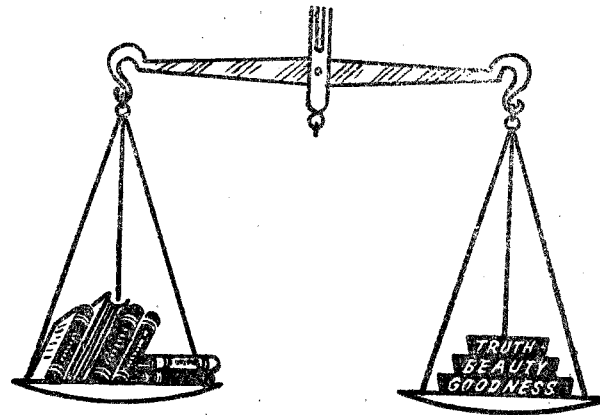
Our life is not a maya's dismal dream,
We know when thy feet's dust we hug and kiss,
O thou whose celestial dances are agleam
With hints of deathless glory we glimpse but miss.

And so thou bendest to mortality
From age to age thy marvel Flute to play
And sing: "For all is everlastingly
My garland as for night the boon of day."

DILIP KUMAR ROY.

BOOKS in the BALANCE

The books that will be reviewed here are not only those recently published. Those published some time ago but still deserving special attention will also be "in the balance".



A LIFE-STORY THAT IS A PHILOSOPHY

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY By R. G. COLLINGWOOD

To many of us the lives of great men are more interesting than their works. Very few can read with relish the writings of professional philosophers, if their manner is heavy and their matter abstruse, though their biographies would be read with considerable interest and in some cases even with amusement. To a large extent it is the fault of philosophers, in that their style or lack of style has created a prejudice against their subject and given rise to the "Ivory Tower" conception of the philosopher, as one whose feet are not on this earth, though his head may or may not be amid a crowd of stars.

The philosopher, freed from the vanities of life, is supposed to discourse in a strange tongue about supersensible entities which have as much bearing on our practical life as the gibberings of an unbalanced mind. Thus to the mass of men, who regard themselves as guardians of sound commonsense, the philosopher commits the two grave errors of renouncing Practice in the interests of pure Theory and of ignoring all considerations of literary style in giving expression to his barren ways of thinking.

No "Ivory Tower" Philosopher

And yet there have been philosophers, like Plato, Berkeley and Hume, to mention only a few, whose writings on even difficult themes could be ranked as pure literature, and if the layman holds that even the writings of these philosophers are not such as he who runs may read, it is sufficient to say that the rich significance of literature as of all things is not for those who can do better than run through their readings. Prof. Collingwood is one of those who believe and insist that the philosopher must observe literary manners when he writes, for indeed to him philosophy IS literature. We are familiar with Berkeley's injunction to philosophers to "think with the learned and speak with the vulgar." But this is hardly enough. The philosopher may think as learnedly as he pleases, provided he goes to school with the man of letters and speaks with him. Professor Collingwood's *Autobiography*, as indeed all his books, amply illustrates his own view that good philosophy is also good literature, for he writes in a style which would call for praise from the best man of letters. What is more refreshing is that Professor Collingwood is no mere "Ivory Tower" philosopher, for he would say with Aristotle that philosophy is not only a guide to the best mode of life, it is the best mode of life, and that in separation from life it stagnates and dies ingloriously as in the case of the Realism of the "minute" philosophers, which he describes as "the undischarged bankrupt of modern philosophy."

The autobiography is also a complete piece of philosophical thinking, for as the writer remarks in the preface, "the autobiography of a man whose business is thinking should be the story of his thought." It is the business of every one who is engaged on any sort of problem to think. Scientists and philosophers do their business more methodically than ordinary men, but perhaps it is the privilege of the philosopher alone to think about the nature of thought itself. A large part of the book is devoted to examining the way in which the mind works in dealing with scientific, philosophi-

cal and historical problems. A clear understanding of the nature of knowledge and what it implies is not only important for the scientist concerned with special problems, but is indispensable for a proper handling of human situations created by political and economic maladjustments, which, when they get out of control, lead to war, with all its disastrous consequences.

Logic of Question and Answer

After giving us the barest glimpse of his truly amazing mental powers while yet a child, the writer tells us that at the age of nine he read Descartes' *PRINCIPIA* which let him into the secret of the natural sciences; that they do not contain bits of truth piled into a heap, but form an organic whole capable of endless modification and that their historical development is not a passage from ages of error to truth, but consists in the successive clarification of our insight into truth. He discovered later, through his own historical research, the importance of the method proposed by Bacon in acquiring knowledge, which consisted in propounding our own questions to nature and compelling nature to answer them. This questioning activity is not a preliminary to knowledge, but an essential part of it, whose other part consists in supplying an answer to the proposed question.

In a rather outspoken criticism of the "minute" philosophers he points out that their theory of knowledge as a simple intuition of independent facts described something other than knowing, for it was incompatible with what he had learnt about knowledge in connection with his historical research. Professor Collingwood develops the view that all knowledge is an answer to a definite question which we ourselves propound, into a systematic logic of Question and Answer, which he thinks differs not only from the Realism of the "minute" philosophers, but also from the Idealistic logic of those with whom otherwise he is in great sympathy. But the distinction he draws between his position and that of the Oxford Idealists seems to be a distinction without much difference. No doubt Professor Collingwood feels himself to be a very isolated thinker in a university which in recent years has been quick in giving up its old traditions and following the lead of Cambridge in philosophy; and this feeling of isolation is perhaps what leads him to remark, "so far as my philosophical ideas were concerned I was now cut off not only from the 'realist' school, but from every school of thought in England, I might almost say in the world."

Significance and Context

But the logic of Question and Answer according to which the

truth or falsity or even the significance of a statement is never determined in itself, but is relative to a complex in which the question to which the statement is an answer is of primary importance, is not different from the Idealistic logic which lays stress on the relevant context or universe of discourse for determining the value of ideas. The truth underlying these two logics is that no significant statement stands by itself or is hurled into a discussion like a bolt from the blue, but arises in a definite context which determines its nature. It is merely the surface of a solid body of truths and as such cannot exist in separation. Thus, to take an extreme case, if a stranger or even a friend stops you in the street to remark, *à propos* of nothing that Henry the Eighth had six wives, or that 2 and 2 make 4, you would rightly become suspicious of his sanity, though the remarks themselves would be quite unexceptionable.

It seems to me that insanity consists not in an incapacity to make true statements, but rather in an unaccountable inclination to make them at inappropriate moments. It is unfortunate that many whose business it is to think ignore entirely this important truth that in every statement we make we present merely the surface of our mind and hence our meaning is never confined within the four corners of our expressed statement. No man ever means merely what he says, or to put it differently no man ever succeeds in saying wholly what he means. If this truth were more universally recognised, many futile controversies and misunderstandings would be avoided and communication between minds would become easier. We would not be hasty in convicting our opponents of error or even of inconsistencies, if we trained ourselves never to allow the face value of a statement to prejudice us against it, but always to probe into its underlying significance. Hence the injunction: Reconstruct the problem "whose solution you are considering" or "never think you understand any philosophical statement until you have decided with the utmost possible accuracy what the question is to which it is meant for an answer."

"Historical Thinking"

This, as the writer truly points out, is an historical way of dealing with problems. The "minute" philosophers tended to discourage the study of the history of philosophy, for they believed that the problems of philosophy were eternally the same, only their solutions differed with different philosophers; and thus failing to reconstruct the problems, they were too prone to dismiss the solutions as mere errors.

This insistence on historical thinking in philosophy brings about a rapprochement between History and Philosophy and what is needed now is a true philosophy of history. Professor Collingwood is equally eminent as a historian and those interested in the teaching of history will be delighted to read his scathing condemnation of what he calls "scissors and paste" history, according to which history is a closed sub-

ject in which we get from set authorities a narration of events which are past and buried. This was more or less the conception of history until the late nineteenth century when something like a Baconian revolution occurred, which leads one to expect that History will occupy in our age the same place of importance that natural science occupied during the last three centuries. This revolution consisted in treating history as an open subject, in which the historian, disregarding the set authorities, propounds his own questions and tries to elicit answers from all the evidence he can lay his hands on.

History then is not the study of a dead past, but a past which survives in the present which is simply a transformation of the past, so that in a sense all history is history of our present times. Further it is not merely a study of events that happened, but of the thoughts and purposes of men that were responsible for them; and to study the thoughts of men of the past, it is necessary that the historian should think himself into their minds. This training gives him a unique insight into human situations in the present and enables him effectively to deal with them. It is only thus that history may hope to become a school of moral and political wisdom.

Thought and Action

The solution which Professor Collingwood offers for the grave crisis which threatens European civilisation is a fresh study of history and the development of the historical insight. Many writers have in recent times emphasised the need for a psychological understanding of the causes of war. But we should now recognise that it is history and not the hybrid science of psychology which is the true and most comprehensive science of human nature. But what appears to me to be the best part of the argument is where Prof. Collingwood maintains with great insight that history does not and need not provide us with a body of ready-made rules for dealing with fresh situations. Rules, even if they be rules of right conduct such as the moralists preach, keep action at a low potential, for they enable us merely to react to certain types of situations instead of meeting them in their individuality. The highest moral actions, like the creations of art, are always improvised, while actions, according to rules, characterise what Socrates called the morality of the market place.

This rapprochement between Philosophy and History brings about a further rapprochement between Theory and Practice, and the rejection of the false division of humanity into thinkers and men of action. Philosophy gives understanding, but it is understanding that completes itself only in action. It is the historical insight which enables us to improvise actions to meet the concrete situations of our practical life. Prof. Collingwood thus enlarges Plato's dream of the philosopher-king. To him the ills of the world will continue to be our heritage, until philosopher-historians are kings.

J. N. CHUBB.

NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

Summary of the Reith Lectures in "Mirror"

Instinctively we divide mankind into friends and foes—friends towards whom we have the morality of co-operation; foes towards whom we have that of competition. But this division is constantly changing. In times of safety we can afford to hate our neighbour, but in times of danger we must love him. It is this that makes the difficulty of devising world-wide unity. A world State, if it were firmly established, would have no enemies to fear and would therefore be in danger of breaking down through lack of cohesive force. Religion, morality, economic self-interest, the mere pursuit of survival, all supply to our intelligence unanswerable arguments in favour of world-wide co-operation, but old instincts rise up in indignation, feeling that life would lose its savour if there were no one to hate, that struggle is the law of life, and that in a world where we all loved one another there would be nothing to live for. If the unification of mankind is ever to be realised, it will be necessary to find ways of circumventing our largely unconscious primitive ferocity, partly by establishing a reign of law, and partly by finding innocent outlets for our competitive instincts.

This is not an easy problem, and it is one which cannot be solved by morality alone. I do not think that ordinary human beings can be happy without competition, for competition has been the spur to most serious activities. We should not, therefore, attempt to abolish competition but only to see that it takes forms which are not too injurious. What is wrong with present forms of competition is that they form too small a part of the lives of ordinary men and women. I am not sure that the elimination of all danger makes for happiness.

The problem of the social reformer is not merely to seek means of security but to combine that degree of security which is essential to the species with forms of adventure and danger and contest which are compatible with the civilised way of life. Perhaps it may be possible, even in our mechanical world, to find some real outlet for the impulses which are now confined to the realm of phantasy and day-dreams. In the interests of stability it is much to be hoped that this may be possible, for, if it is not, destructive philosophies will from time to time sweep away the best of human achievements.

Practically all progress, artistic, moral and intellectual, has depended upon exceptional individuals. . . . In the present century we have seen in important parts of the world a loss of moral values which we had thought fairly secure, but we may hope that this retrogression will not last. The prophets and sages who inaugurated this moral advance, although not always honoured in their own day, were, nevertheless not prevented from doing their work. In a modern totalitarian State matters are worse than they were in the time of Socrates. In a totalitarian State an innovator whose ideas are disliked by the government is not merely put to death, which is a matter to which a brave man may remain indifferent, but is totally prevented from causing his doctrine to be known. Innovations in such a community can come only from the government, and the government, now as in the past, is not likely to approve of anything con-

trary to its own immediate interests. This is a new fact in human history, brought about by the much increased control over individuals which the modern technique of government has made possible. It is a very grave fact, and one which shows how fatal a totalitarian regime must be to every kind of moral progress.

Both for good and evil almost everything that distinguishes our age from its predecessors is due to science. In daily life we have electric light, and the radio and the cinema. In industry we employ machinery and power which we owe to science. The whole of the vast development of science is supported nowadays by the State, but science grew up originally in opposition to the State. It would not be surprising if, in the present day, a powerful anti-scientific movement were to arise as a result of the dangers to human life presented by the atom bomb and liable to be intensified by bacteriological warfare. . . . Science, in so far as it consists of knowledge, must be regarded as having great value, but in so far as it consists of technique the question whether it is to be praised or blamed depends upon the use that is neutral, neither good nor bad, and any ultimate views that we may have about what gives value to this or that must come from some other source than science.

In the modern world, and still more so as far as can be guessed in the world of the near future, important achievement is almost impossible to an individual if he cannot dominate some vast organisation. The scientists of the past did their work very largely as individuals, but the scientist of our day needs enormously expensive equipment and a laboratory with many assistants. All this he can obtain through the favour of the government. This change is very unfortunate, for the things which a great man could do in solitude were apt to be more beneficial than those which he could only do with the help of the powers that be.

The inferiority of our age in the arts is an inevitable result of the fact that society is centralised and organised to such a degree that individual initiative is reduced to a minimum. Where art has flourished in the past it has flourished as a rule amongst small rival communities. There is something about local rivalry that is essential in such matters. It played its part even in the building of Europe's cathedrals, because each bishop wished to have a finer cathedral than the neighbouring bishop. It would be a good thing if cities could develop an artistic pride leading them to mutual rivalry, and if each had its own school of music and painting, not without a vigorous contempt for the school of the next city. But such local patriotisms do not readily flourish in a world of empires and free mobility. I think that this problem of giving importance to localities will have to be tackled if human life is not to become increasingly drab and monotonous.

If life is to be saved from boredom relieved only by disaster, means must be found of restoring individual initiative not only in things that are trivial but in the things that really matter. I do not mean that we should scrap those parts of modern organisation upon which the very existence of large populations depends, but I do mean

that the organisation should be much more flexible, more relieved by local autonomy, and less oppressive to the human spirit through its impersonal vastness.

So long as democratic control is remote and rare, while public administration is centralised and authority is delegated from the centre to the circumference, a sense of individual impotence before the powers that be is difficult to avoid. And yet it must be avoided if democracy is to be a reality in feeling and not merely in governmental machinery.

Among the things which are in danger of being unnecessarily sacrificed to democratic equality perhaps the most important is self-respect. By self-respect I mean the good half of pride—what is called "proper pride." The bad half is a sense of superiority. Self-respect will keep a man from being abject when he is in the power of enemies, and will enable him to feel that he may be in the right when the world is against him. If a man has not this quality he will feel that majority opinion, or governmental opinion, is to be treated as infallible. Such a way of feeling, if it is general, makes both moral and intellectual progress impossible.

The load of poverty and suffering and cruelty from which mankind has suffered since history began is no longer necessary to the existence of civilisation; it can be removed by the help of modern science and modern technique, provided these are used in a humane spirit and with an understanding of the springs of happiness and life. Without such understanding we may inadvertently create a new prison, just, perhaps, since none will be outside it, but dreary and joyless and spiritually dead.

The primary aims of government, I suggest, should be three: security, justice and conservation. These are things of the utmost importance to human happiness, and are things which only government can bring about. In addition to our internal security, such as the protection of life and property, a more interesting kind of security is security against attacks by hostile States. This is more interesting because it has not been secured, and because it becomes more important year by year as methods of warfare develop. This kind of security will only become possible when there is a single world government with a monopoly of all the major weapons of war. Unless and until mankind has achieved the security of a single government for the world, everything else of value, of no matter what kind, is precarious, and may at any moment be destroyed by war.

Economic security has been one of the most important aims of modern British legislation. Insurance against unemployment, sickness, and destitution in old age has removed from the lives of wage-earners a great deal of painful uncertainty as to their future. Medical security has been promoted by measures which have greatly increased the average length of life and diminished the amount of illness.

Security, although undoubtedly a good thing, may be sought excessively and become a fetish. A secure life is not necessarily a happy life; it may be

rendered dismal by boredom and monotony. Many people, especially while they are young, welcome a spice of adventure, and may even find relief in war as an escape from humdrum safety. We cannot be content with security alone, or imagine that it can bring the millennium.

Justice, especially economic justice, has become, in quite recent times, a governmental purpose. Justice has come to be interpreted as equality. Political justice, i.e., democracy, has been aimed at since the days of the American and French revolutions, but economic justice is a newer aim, and requires a much greater amount of governmental control. It is held by socialists—rightly so, in my opinion—to involve State ownership of key industries and a considerable regulation of foreign trade.

Conservation, like security and justice, demands action by the State. I mean by conservation the preservation of the world's natural resources. This is a matter of enormous importance to which very little attention has been paid. During the past hundred and fifty years mankind has used up the raw materials of industry and the soil upon which agriculture depends, and this wasteful expenditure of natural capital has proceeded with ever-increasing velocity. In relation to industry the most striking example is oil. Already the need for it has reached the point where there is risk of its contributing to bringing about a third world war. When oil is no longer available in large quantities a great deal will have to be changed in our way of life. If we try to substitute atomic energy, that will only result in exhaustion of the available supplies of uranium and thorium. Industry, as it exists at present, depends essentially upon the expenditure of natural capital, and cannot long continue in its present prodigal fashion.

Even more serious, according to some authorities, is the situation in regard to agriculture. Except in a few favoured areas (of which Western Europe is one) the prevailing methods of cultivating the soil rapidly exhaust its fertility. The growth of the dust bowl in America is the best known example of a destructive process which is going on in most parts of the world. As, meantime, the population increases, a disastrous food shortage is inevitable within the next fifty years unless drastic steps are taken. The question of a reform in agriculture is perhaps the most important that the governments of the near future will have to face, except the prevention of war.

I have spoken of security, justice and conservation as the most essential of governmental functions, because these are things that only governments can bring about. I have not meant to suggest that governments have no other functions. But in the main their functions in other spheres should be to encourage non-governmental initiative and to create opportunities for its exercise in beneficent ways.

Uniformity, which is a natural result of State control, is desirable in some things and undesirable in others. In matters of opinion it is a good thing if there is vigorous discussion between different schools of thought. In the mental world there is everything to be said in favour of a struggle, and the

Continued on next page

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL (Continued from page 10)

survival of the fittest.

Artists and writers are nowadays almost the only people who may with luck exercise a powerful and important initiative as individuals, and not in connection with some group. But the initiative of the writer, though as yet it survives, is threatened in various ways. If book-production is in the hands of the State, as it is in Russia, the State can decide what shall be published, and, unless it delegates its power to some completely non-partisan authority, there is a likelihood that no books will appear except such as are pleasing to leading politicians. The same thing applies, of course, to newspapers.

If in scientific research only those are eligible who are considered orthodox in current controversies, scientific progress will soon cease, and will give way to a scholastic reign of authority such as stifled science throughout the Middle Ages.

Differences between nations, as long as they do not lead to hostility, are by no means to be deplored. Living for a time in a foreign country makes us aware of merits in which our own country is deficient, and this is true whichever country our own may be. The same thing holds of differences between different regions within one country, and of the differing types produced by different professions. Uniformity of character and uniformity of culture are to be regretted.

The control of greedy or predatory impulses is imperatively necessary, and therefore States, and even a world State, are needed for survival. But we cannot be content merely to be alive rather than dead; we wish to live happily, vigorously, creatively. For this the State can provide a part of the necessary conditions, but only if it does not, in the pursuit of security, stifle the largely unregulated impulses which give life its savour and its value. The individual life must not be subjected too completely to the control of vast organisations. To guard against this danger is very necessary in the world that modern technique has created.

I wish now to relate social and political doctrines to the individual ethics by which a man should guide his personal life, and, after the evils we have recognised and the dangers that we have acknowledged, to hold out, nevertheless, certain high hopes for the not too distant future of mankind, which I, for my part, believe to be justified on a sober estimate of the possibilities.

Bodies that have a certain independence of the State, such as universities and learned societies, have great value. It is deplorable to see men of science compelled to subscribe to obscurantist

nonsense at the behest of scientifically ignorant politicians who are able and willing to enforce their ridiculous decisions by the use of economic and police power. They should not presume to decide what is good music, or good biology, or good philosophy. I should not wish to see such matters decided in this country by the personal taste of any Prime Minister, past, present, or future, even if, by good luck, his taste were impeccable.

But liberty is not merely a personal matter. No man is wholly free, and no man is wholly a slave. To the extent to which a man has freedom he needs a personal morality to guide his conduct. If a man seriously desires to live the best life that is open to him he must learn to be critical of the customs and beliefs that are generally accepted among his neighbours. Man has thoughts and feelings and impulses which may be wise or foolish, noble or base, filled with love or inspired by hate. And for the better of these thoughts and feelings and impulses, if his life is to be tolerable, there must be scope. Few men can be happy in a community which allows no freedom of individual action.

A society should exist to bring a good life to the individuals who compose it. It is in the individuals, not in the whole that ultimate value is to be sought. Individual man is the bearer of good and evil, and not any separate part of a man, nor any collection of men. To believe that there can be good or evil in a collection of human beings over and above the good or evil in the various individuals is an error; moreover, it is an error which leads straight to totalitarianism, and is therefore dangerous. The "State" is an abstraction; it does not feel pleasure or pain, it has no hopes or fears, and what we think of as its purpose are really the purposes of the individuals who direct it.

Between those who care most for social cohesion and those who primarily value individual initiative there has been an age-long battle ever since the time of the Greeks. In every such controversy there is sure to be truth on both sides. There is not likely to be a clear-cut solution, but at best one involving various adjustments and compromises. I believe that in our day there has been too much tendency towards authority and too little care for the preservation of initiative. Men in control of vast organisations have tended to be too abstract in their outlook, to forget what actual human beings are like, and to try to fit men to systems rather than systems to men.

The world has become the victim of dogmatic political creeds, of which, in

our day, the most powerful are capitalism and communism. I do not believe that either, in a dogmatic and unmitigated form, offers a cure for preventable ills. Capitalism gives opportunity of initiative to a few; communism could (though it does not in fact) provide a servile kind of security for all. But if people can rid themselves of the influence of unduly simplified theories and the strife that they engender it will be possible, by a wise use of scientific technique, to provide both opportunity for all and security for all. . . . It is not only the experience and the fear of war that oppresses mankind, though this is perhaps the greatest of all evils of our time. We are oppressed also by the great impersonal forces that govern our daily life, making us still slaves of circumstance though no longer slaves in law. Energetic men have worshipped power rather than simple happiness and friendliness; men of less energy have acquiesced, or have been deceived by a wrong diagnosis of the sources of sorrow.

In seeking justice by means of elaborate systems we have been in danger of forgetting that justice alone is not enough. Daily joys, times of liberation from care, adventure, and opportunity for creative activities are at least as important as justice in bringing about a life that men can feel to be worth living. Spontaneity and some kind of personal expression are necessary for happiness. The pride of the artist, of the discoverer, of the man who turned a wilderness into a garden or who has brought happiness where there would have been misery—his kind of pride is good, and our social system should make it possible not only

for the few but for very many.

When security has been achieved the most important task for those who seek human welfare will be to find for man's ancient and powerful instincts as many outlets as possible that give joy and pride and splendour to human life. Our bondage to external nature is fast diminishing, as a result of the growth of scientific intelligence, and we know better year by year what should be done to prevent famines and pestilences. Hard work is still necessary, but only because we are unwise; given peace and co-operation we could subsist on a very moderate amount of toil.

But there are still wars, oppressions and hideous cruelties, and greedy men still snatch wealth from those who are less skilful or less ruthless than themselves. Love of power still leads to vast tyrannies; and fear—deep, scarcely conscious fear—is still the dominant motive in very many minds. All this is unnecessary. I disagree completely with those who infer from our combative impulses that human nature demands war and other destructive forms of conflict. I maintain that combative impulses have an essential part to play, but in their harmful forms can be enormously lessened. . . . Our present predicament is due more than anything else to the fact that we have learnt to understand and control to a terrifying extent the forces of nature outside us, but not those that are embodied in ourselves. It is only through a wider understanding of human needs than is assumed by most politicians and economists that we can find our way to the realisation of those hopes which, though as yet they are largely frustrated by our folly, our skill has placed within our reach.

IMPORTANT WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO

	Rs.	A.	P.
The Life Divine, 2 vols.	26	8	0
Essays on the Gita 2 series	17	8	0
Isha Upanishad	2	8	0
Lights on Yoga	1	8	0
Bases of Yoga	2	0	0
The Riddle of This World	1	8	0
The Yoga and Its Objects	1	0	0
The Mother	1	0	0
Ideals and Progress	1	0	0
Heraclitus	1	4	0
A System of National Education	1	8	0
Complete Poems and Plays 2 vols	15	0	0
Savitri (complete set of 24 cantos of Part I)	14	8	0

Important Publications of Sri Aurobindo Circle, Bombay

Letters of Sri Aurobindo I Series	6	8	0
" " " II Series	8	0	0
The Significance of Indian Art—Sri Aurobindo	1	8	0
The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo—K. D. Sethna	4	4	0
The Adventure of the Apocalypse (Poems)—K. D. Sethna	5	8	0
Sun-Blossoms (Poems)—Nirodbaran	4	8	0
Towards a New Society—Nolinikanta Gupta	1	12	0

SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE Annual Numbers 1 to 5

at Rs. 5, Rs. 5, Rs. 5/8, Rs. 6 and Rs. 7 each.

TO BE HAD OF

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, French India.
Sri Aurobindo Circle, 32, Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay, 1.
Sri Aurobindo Niketan, Connaught Circus, P. B. 85, New Delhi.
Arya Publishing House, 63 College Street, Calcutta 12.
Sri Aurobindo Library, 369 Esplanade, Madras.

MOTHER INDIA

IS AVAILABLE AT

WHEELER'S & HIGGINBOTHAM'S

RAILWAY BOOK - STALLS.

"OH, THAT'S ONLY POETRY!"

BY "LIBRA"

In a certain class of so-called sensible people, the most damning judgment that can be passed on any idea or phrase is: "Oh, that's only poetry!" Well, this particular phrase is, without the least doubt, the opposite of all that one would consider poetic: it has no imaginative fire, no power to cast a spell by its words, no subtlety of rhythm. But has it even a core of sensible idea?

Poetry and A Beautiful Face

What is the crime with which poetry is charged? The crime is precisely its quality of haunting word-music carrying with it a vision that holds the mind in an ecstasy. Such a magical influence, it is said, takes one's thought away from things that matter in the actual world, and sends it roaming among unrealities. But do not the detractors of poetry see that whatever it does is primarily by means of beauty and that there is no reason why a poem's beauty should be condemned as a slip-hole into unreality while no one condemns the beauty of a woman's face which makes a man turn round again and again—an exercise he deems quite worth while for the sake of such ravishing perfection? Surely, if beauty is real and valuable when perceived in a human being, it is just as real and valuable when its marvel leaps at us from that rarer creation, a faultless poem?

Has Beauty Any Use?

An objection may be raised: "A beautiful woman is useful: what use is poetry?" But this is to shift the ground of the argument. We are talking of beauty. What is the use of a woman's beauty? A woman as such has many functions—she may be of use as a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, as a friend, as a member of society. Her beauty, in itself, has no use. What is used is never

her beauty, for to no use, as commonly defined, can beauty be put. The same is true of the Niagara Falls or a Himalayan summit or the Lake of Geneva as of a human being. They can be used scientifically, but not as specimens of beauty. And when we choose a beautiful place to build our house in, or hang up beautiful things in our house, we may serve various ends but the sheer sense of the beautiful can be justified by none of them. It is justified only because it gives a specific inner experience which we feel to be somehow enriching life. So, everything that is beautiful is, as far as use is concerned, on an essentially equal footing.

"A Light that Never Was...."

One may still argue: "Poetry brings about beauty by expressing purely imaginary things that have no bearing on earth-realities, 'a light that never was on sea or land.' Is not a dwelling upon such matters a distraction from vital issues?" The answer is: "Even if poetry did express a light of this kind, would not our acceptance of beauty as a valuable experience point also to the value of that light? After all, beauty does not produce just a sensation of pleasure: it brings a 'transport' in one degree or another, a thrilled amazement as if at an ideality that is more than of the earth, a response as though to some supremely blissful Secret of the universe. The more, therefore, we have in beauty the power of a light that never was on sea or land, the more truly and profoundly do we have the presence of the beautiful and the greater is the power to enrich life and to manage earth-realities with the touch of a hidden Perfection.

Winged Journey

Besides, all poetry is not of the mystical order and does not express even a seemingly unearthly sub-

stance. No doubt, it weaves a chain of similes and metaphors which are often a surprise to the realist sworn to call a spade if not a "bloody shovel." And, as the familiar Latin tag tells us, every simile limps—that is, falls short in some respect of commonly observed straightforward fact. But if similes and metaphors limp, they also have the power to fly—maybe because limping interferes with walking but not with making a winged journey! Now, what is the benefit of flying? It shortens the long laborious route taken by feet that are not, like the Mercury feet of poetic metre, shod with pinions. This shortening of the usual route brings distant objects or ideas closer, removing the gap of difference, of strangeness, that lay between them. The sudden closeness is expressed in poetry by similes and metaphors comparing apparently dissimilar things, and discovering in them a kinship that pulls open our eyes to wonders and significances in life we are liable to ignore with our pedestrian mind-movements habituated to forget one thing before reaching another that is far away.

Take any fine burst of poetry as an instance:

Love took up the harp of life and smote on all the chords with might—

Smote the chord of Self that, trembling, passed in music out of sight!

All of us have seen a chord vibrating so rapidly when plucked that it becomes invisible; still, Tennyson alone could use this simple observation to lay bare the exquisite loss of selfishness, the thrill of freedom from our ego, that is caused by the harmonising touch of love. It is a flight of the imagination with the help of metaphors, limping metaphors, yet how unerring and reve-

latory its quick reaching out from fact to deeper fact.

Poetry and Action

Poetry, it is also argued, is often like a dope unnerving us from effective action of a practical kind. It may give us a rich inner life that brings a high quality of happiness and harmony, but does it render us dynamic? I am afraid history provides evidence to disappoint the enemies of poetry. Several of the most tempestuous men of action have been those whose nerves tingled to the magnificent sweep of vivid verse. Cromwell passed his days constantly under the spell of translated Hebrew poetry—the Old Testament. The Moors rushed across half the earth on the breath of the Koran which at its best has all the rhythmic word-passion of poetry. And what was the chief spur to that terrific outburst of energy known as the French Revolution? *La Marseillaise*—a poem, a mere poem! What was the motive-power behind India's awakening to the need for freedom? The brain may have rattled with political slogans, but the heart throbbed to the "mantra" of *Vande Mataram!*

The fact is that sterling poetry is born of the highest activity possible to the human consciousness—the activity of that mysterious gift, intuition. Intuition, of course, is not confined to poetry: it can take many forms, yet when it comes on poetry's breath of rhythmic ecstasy it does most intensely its work of seeing deep and seeing far and gripping both the inner and the outer. It may miss its aim in us if we are not properly prepared. But in itself it is above blame and is most precious. So, when it is said, "Oh, that's only poetry!" the truest retort is: "Why, what more can anything ever hope to be?"

Latest Publication of Sri Aurobindo
Circle, Bombay

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(On Poetry and Literature)

THIRD SERIES

Pages: 350.

Price: Rs. 6/-

Besides several important letters on the inspiration and vision, the form and technique, the style and substance and the translation and appreciation of poetry and literature this volume contains a number of letters giving Sri Aurobindo's definite views on spiritual poetry, modern poetry and Indo-English poetry and also his estimates of some modern eminent intellectuals and poets like Bertrand Russell, Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton, D. H. Lawrence, W. B. Yeats, A. E. and others. For all serious students of poetry and literature the book is indispensable.

AVAILABLE AT:

Sri Aurobindo Circle, 32, Rampart Row, Fort, BOMBAY.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, SOUTH INDIA.

TRAVEL
IN COMFORT BY
AIR : RAIL : SEA

BOOK THROUGH
INTERNATIONAL
CARRIERS LTD.,
32, Rampart Row, BOMBAY
Phone: 22319.

WE ALSO ARRANGE:

- * TOURS, PILGRIMAGES, SHIKARS, CHARTERS, CRUISES, ETC., ETC.
- * LIFT FROM YOUR RESIDENCE TO AIR COMPANY'S OFFICE.
- * TRANSPORT OF PARCELS FROM YOUR GODOWN TO AIR COMPANY'S OFFICE.

Special Arrangements for people going outside India.

Apply for Particulars.

JEWEL
CREATIONS

BY

TEL. 30321.

CHIMANLAL MANCHAND
& CO.
NEW QUEEN'S ROAD, BOMBAY.