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THE CROSS MOVES EAST

A STUDY IN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GANDHI'S "SATYAGRAHA"

by

JOHN S. HOYLAND

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TO MY WIFE

BEST OF MISSIONARY COLLEAGUES

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THE CROSS MOVES EAST

CHAPTER ONE

THE CROSS

St. Paul was conscious, as almost all the great liberators of humanity have been conscious, of an eternal and inevitable strife between two antagonistic world-orders.

On the one hand there were the forces of 'this world': and on the other there were the forces of 'the Spirit.' In Christ's own phrase, the Kingdom of Heaven was ranged against the kingdoms of this world. In St. Augustine the terminology is a little different, but the thought is the same—the Earthly City is arrayed against the City of God.

The same conception appears again and again through the centuries of Christian history, and has recently been given voice to, by a distinguished modern thinker, in his discussion of the antinomy between the 'civilisation of power' and the 'civilisation of culture.'

But St. Paul's conceptions regarding this unrelenting antagonism between the two world-orders differ from those of later writers in one vital respect. He was convinced that in a deep and secret sense

the victory has already been won, and won by the forces of the Spirit.

He wrote to his friends at Colossae, "By the Cross Christ triumphed over the hostile princes and rulers, and boldly displayed them as His conquests" (Col. ii. 15).

In other words, the Cross of Christ meant to Paul that the world-order of force and greed, which was also inevitably a world-order of futility and ruin, had already been discredited, repulsed, and triumphed over by the forces of the Spirit. In the Cross God's incarnate love had come to grips with this ancient evil world-order, and had worsted it, by suffering the worst at its hands, in patient love.

Paul believed also that the Cross was an eternal principle, an immortal and inexhaustible source of power. There was, in the Cross, already present and available in the world a limitless store of spiritual power, of Divine good will, upon which any individual combatant in the warfare between the two world-orders could draw freely, and could gain therefrom, here and now, absolutely certain victory over wrong and evil. For Paul knew that God's love, bearing all agony and shame redemptively, as Christ had borne it, was in itself eternal victory over all wrong and evil; so that the Christ-trusting soul has only to tap those resources which are stored in the Cross and his triumph is already won.

Paul drew upon this inexhaustible store of power, for his own individual need, when he went through the experience which he describes as 'nailing my old self to the Cross of Christ,' the result of which was that 'I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me.' He urged his converts to seek the same experience for themselves, not merely individually, but in the life of the newly-born Christian communities which were beginning to appear all over the Roman world. He thought of the Cross as an undying principle of power and life, through obedience to which wrong might be conquered anywhere and at any time, by following Christ's way of suffering love, and by remaining in trustful dependence upon Him. He knew that God cannot force spiritual beings—i.e. beings to whom He has given the splendid but terrible gift of will—to follow His purposes and accept His rule; for any such forcing implies an immediate revoking of God's own gift of the power to will. God can only achieve His purpose by 'persuasion,' by inducing these spiritual beings freely to follow His way, and joyfully to accept His control. So only can His subjects remain spiritual beings, i.e. retain any real existence.

But this 'persuasion' is in the long run only to be achieved by a process of suffering love, which leads the lover to bear in his own flesh the evils which ensue from not following God's purpose, and from not accepting His rule. This process

means the Cross, which changes the will of estrangement into the will of joyful sonship, by free self-sacrifice on behalf of the estranged and rebellious, transforming the evil will into the good.

The realisation of this truth of the Cross, as an eternal principle, had brought ineffable joy to Paul's heart, so that he could declare to the Galatians, "God forbid that I should glory in anything except the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon which the world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world" (Gal. vi. 14). Whenever Paul was tempted to gloom and despondency: whenever an impulse came over him to congratulate himself on the fine fellow he was and the fine work he was doing: whenever the subtle attractiveness of some second-best course of action made its appeal to him: whenever selfishness of motive or conduct, under any shape or form, threatened to invade his life, he ran to the Cross and looked upon the Figure hanging there. As he looked, the true standards were re-established in power within his spirit: his will became attuned once more to the will of the Crucified: mean motives and half-good lines of action sank into their due perspective: and the true Joy came flooding into his heart once more, as he realised that *the Cross was the principle by which he, Paul, was to live.*

Thus the Cross came to mean to Paul, not only the great assurance, both historic and indwelling,

of God's love and God's sacrifice for those whom He loves; but a whole system of ethics.

In that single Figure, dead in that way so many years ago for him, Paul, and for all humanity, yet still living mightily, was summed up eternal Right at strife with, and conquering through defeat, the Wrong which too often seems eternal also.

The Cross was a final and sovereign standard of truth and goodness, by which Paul's own life must be lived, if it was to be rescued from futility and brought into the sweep of that Divine and glorious purpose, to share which is in itself the deepest and loftiest Joy.

Thus Paul could utter this daring aspiration, which was at the same time a direct and definite command, to his converts at Philippi, "Let the same purpose be in you which was in Christ Jesus. . . . He stripped Himself of His glory and took on Him the nature of a slave, and even stooped to die, yes to die on the Cross" (Phil. ii. 5–8). Paul had seen the Cross as the sole, and final, solution to the problem of pain. His contemplation of the Cross of Christ had taught him that pain may be something sacramental, something redemptive, something to be embraced, if it comes, as the deepest sharing of the purpose and spirit of God. The disciple of Christ is to follow his Master even in this terrifyingly practical sense that he will be restless and conscience-stung, he will despise and

loath himself, so long as he has not with deliberate purpose taken upon him something of Christ's suffering, for the sake of those who are needy, oppressed and helpless. He must follow Christ even in this, the self-stripping, the enslavement, the lingering and abject death, all undergone for the sake of needy humanity.

Still to-day we look out upon a world tortured and agonising in every description of pain. It is the function of the Christ-lover in this world to have the Spirit of his Master so springing up in his heart that it shall shrivel within him any inclination which he may once have had to profit from the pain of others, to snatch acquisitively good things for himself from a system, or a world-order, where so many are in anguish.

More than this—the Spirit of Christ within the Christ-lover makes him, if he is worth calling a Christ-lover, strip himself of one special advantage after another, that he may be like his brethren, and genuinely share their lot.

Finally, that Spirit spurs him on till he sacrifices his painlessness and his freedom, taking suffering and bondage on himself redemptively, for the sake of others who are in pain and bondage. Not only so, but the redemptive bearing of these things becomes to him a sacrament, that he may share in the world's anguish perfectly *from within*, and follow Christ's way to the utmost.

Then indeed such a man is bearing the Cross; for he conquers evil in Christ's way, by patiently-suffering love, which endures the worst that evil can do, even to death, for the sake of his brethren.

Paul had practised his own principles thus enunciated. He knew pain, and knew pain well. It had entered his life overwhelmingly, no mere 'thorn in the flesh,' but excruciating agony. "There has been sent to me, like the agony of impalement, Satan's angel dealing blow after blow, lest I should be over-elated. As for this, three times have I besought the Lord to rid me of him; but His reply has been, "My grace suffices for you" (2 Cor. xii. 7–9).

It is clear that this experience of pain had threatened to cripple Paul's usefulness. It had made him in some fashion ridiculous and contemptible. It had tortured him, probably for years.

But pain had become for Paul, not merely a salutary discipline, but the raw material of joy, triumph, Christ-revealing grace, and blessing to other people. Through pain Paul had penetrated farther into the experience of Christ than he could ever had penetrated without that grim tutor; he had achieved incalculably more also in usefulness for Christ's world. Through pain he had been driven back, absolutely helpless, a hundred times to Christ Himself, to obtain what Christ alone can give, the

grace and strength to live bravely through the next agonising moment—for that is all he could ask, and that was enough. Thus there had been bred in Paul the character of a Cross-bearer; and his pain had become a redemptive sharing of Christ's sufferings. Pain had brought Paul into a relationship to his Master which would have been impossible otherwise; and it was not only a relationship from which Paul got help for his own need; it was a relationship which made Paul, in his pain and through his pain, an agent of redemption to other men. Pain had humbled him: had cast out of him all foolish 'elation,' all arrogant self-confidence. It had purified him, sweetened his sternness, mellowed his crudities, made him sympathetic, gracious, generously eager to help others that they might find his own enduring solace. Pain had bred in him more and more of Christlikeness; for it had kept him, inevitably, close to Christ—so close to Him and so entirely dependent upon Him for strength to live from minute to minute through his pain, that he could not fail to become more like his Friend in the most distinctive of all His qualities and activities, His Cross-bearing for the sake of needy humanity.

Paul had learnt another sovereign lesson about pain. That the weaker, more persecuted, more despised, more beset by dangers, sufferings, and

disabilities he might be, the more opportunity was there for Christ to show Himself through Paul. "Most gladly therefore will I boast of my infirmities rather than complain of them, in order that Christ's power may overshadow me. In fact I take delight in infirmities, in the bearing of insults, in distress, in persecutions, in grievous difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. xii. 6).

Out of the pain comes a Joy, which could never have been but for the pain: and the Joy is above all this—the knowledge (not a knowledge merely of the mind, nor of a victorious faith, but of actual concrete personal experience) that Christ is most fully able to work through us and to reveal Himself in us when we are weakest; for when we are at the end of our resources, our last defence gone, our powers utterly exhausted, then we are flung back in most complete dependence upon Christ, so that Christ can then work through us most effectively; show Himself through us most plainly, and hold us most closely in His own joyful friendship.

Paul had realised also that from the universal point of view—the point of view of ultimate standards and values, which some day we shall share in God, looking back upon our struggles and trials as things of the small incidental past—what we shall recognise as significant is not the fact that we have suffered, but the spirit in which we have borne

our suffering. If that spirit has been right, we shall regret that we did not suffer more, since in so doing we might have borne more of the weight of the Cross. We shall be like Simon of Cyrene, who in after life must often have longed that the cruel degradation, and mental pain, of his Cross-bearing might have been twice as long, if Jesus could have been relieved thereby.

If we have no pain, it is almost impossible that the spirit of Christlikeness—the spirit which joyfully bears pain for others, and for and with God—will be even dimly developed in us and through us. But from pain rightly borne comes the deepest joy of all, the sharing of the Cross of Christ.

This leads us on to consider an even deeper and more mysterious aspect of the Cross. Paul says to the Colossians, "I fill up in my own person whatever is lacking in Christ's afflictions on behalf of His body, the Church" (Col. i. 24). He has come into a place where pain is not an enemy, nor even a schoolmaster, but a crown, and a crown to be accepted and worn as the highest and most glorious proof of fellowship with Christ.

At the back of all spiritual reality there lies this fact—we live in a universe where, as the Cross has shown to us, wrong can in the long run only be conquered by pain borne freely for the sake of winning release from wrong and pain for others.

Christ has given in the Cross the final and perfect demonstration of the fact that even to omnipotence and deity itself there is no way of conquering the evil will, but by bearing in patient love the pain and cruelty wrought by its malevolence. For so only can this evil will be changed into a good will: so only can love go the whole way (whether or no it be successful in changing the evil will) in its enterprise of liberating those enchained by the evil will.

When pain comes, even though it seems fortuitous and meaningless, the Christ-follower may —and must—take it to God as Paul took his pain, and say to Him, "Use this for Thy eternal purposes. Use it to fulfil Thy enterprise of the Cross. Use it in ways which I cannot understand to buy freedom for other men, to transform the evil will into the good."

Pain so borne becomes a sacrament of the grace of God; and in addition—this is infinitely more important—it becomes an efficient instrument for the carrying forward of the Cross. Every pang of it, so brought to God and submitted to His purpose in Christ, is fruitful and creative, in ways about which the sufferer himself will never know anything—for the release of others.

Repeated again and again throughout the writings of St. Paul we find another line of thought regarding the significance of pain. It is something to be proud

of, to be boasted about. The scars of pain are honourable scars, to be borne joyfully by the warrior of Christ.

It will be a poor follower of the Crucified Christ who after years spent in his Master's service has not a few such scars to show for his campaigns—a few old wounds which will not fully heal, but from time to time make themselves felt again, to remind him once more of the One whom he follows, and of what the Cross meant to Him.

Thus regarded pain is a crown of honour, the pledge of our allegiance to Christ, the tangible proof that we have paid a little at least of the hard eternal price of redemption. Pain is, from this point of view, a thing without which in our lives we should indeed be ashamed and disgraced, as soldiers in a warfare where, after our Leader has paid with His life for the cause, we have paid nothing, but rather made profit.

The Cross means that pain is a sign of fellowship in Christ's creative activity, and that the absence of pain is a proof that we have borne no share in that activity. Suffering is an essential accompaniment of any creative or regenerative work; and if we do not accept our share of it, we are cowards and shirkers.

Moreover, the Cross means that pain, rightly borne, is vicariously effective, for the lightening of the pain of others. When pain bit home upon

him, Paul reminded himself—and found deep comfort herein—that he was bearing it for the sake of his brethren. He switched his mind off from the pain, however insistent it might seem to be, and set it on the men for whose sake the pain had been incurred and was being suffered. He knew that the way in which he had lived, the crushing burden of responsibility which he had continuously borne, the persecutions which the service of Christ had made inevitable, had worn him out, and had brought this pain upon an exhausted and battered physique. Therefore he could hold his pain up to Christ, as an offering to Him, to be consecrated by Him, and used for Him and for His needy world. Even when imprisonment or physical collapse seemed to make active service for Christ impossible, and held Paul in what must have been an infuriating immobility, he comforted himself by this thought, that the pain was suffered vicariously.

The Cross means, again, that the Christian community, and the individual Christian believer, serves a defeated, suffering, tortured Lord: and serves Him by drinking in His own spirit, and by adopting so far as this is possible His own methods. When the individual or the community is called to serve Him in and through pain, then this is the highest possible honour and glory, not only because

we must so love Him that we cannot desire to have a different lot from His, but because we are conscious that unless we so serve Him in pain, we are no true followers of His and are unworthy of Him and of His calling.

To suffer, if suffering is borne in the right spirit and is offered to Christ as the free and joyful oblation of faithful hearts, is in itself a mysterious assurance of inner union with our Master, and of a fuller existence, in which we shall share His life eternally.

In the account of Paul's conversion the following words occur, "I will let him know what great suffering he must pass through for my sake" (Acts ix. 16). As Paul looked back in after years at this crucial event in his life, and at the long series of deprivations, persecutions, losses of health and friends, increasing feebleness and anguish, to which it had been the prelude, he reminded himself with joy that these things had been definitely laid upon him by Christ Himself, to be endured cheerfully and constructively for His sake.

Paul loved his Master so much, and realised so deeply that his Master was essentially One who suffered, that he would have been miserable and heartsick if he had not been called upon thus to bear something of Christ's suffering, at Christ's behest, and by Christ's side.

He had been brought into the mysterious inward knowledge that God's eternal purpose so works, and only so works, that life is bought by death, and joy by subjection to suffering.

If this process had not bitten home upon Paul's own personal life, binding him also to the same wheel of suffering whereon his Master had been bound (and was eternally bound in His self-identification with suffering mankind), then Paul would have known that he was too weak, too craven to be adjudged worthy of Christ's highest mark of trust and fellowship.

The fact that he was called upon to suffer with, and for, Christ was thus to Paul the highest possible proof of the Divine trust in him and love for him, His suffering was the outward and visible sign of Christ's commission of apostleship. The Cross of suffering vicariously borne was not only the principle ruling his life and the one means by which evil could be defeated and good established. It was also the highest crown of glory, fruitful and splendid, the sign and mark of a Divine calling.

But there was a deeper significance even than this in Paul's experience of suffering. When he suffered, he knew that his pain came to him as a sacrament of His Master's own presence. He knew that he had been called by Christ into this pathway of pain: that the treading of it was the manner in

which Christ was showing His trust in Paul, and His belief in the worthiness and ability of Paul to share in the task of redemption, which means eternally the Cross of pain. When his suffering came over him in a flood, and he was stung into bitter remembrance of what he had lost, Paul hastens to remind himself that every pang of agony and deprivation was just the proof of his Master's love and trust, the seal of His commission. But more than this, such pain was a ministering to Paul of the life-giving fact—a source of the deepest joyfulness—that Christ, the Cross-bearer, was with him, and he with Christ. The more he suffered, the more effectively was the ideal realised "That I may know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings" Paul found Christ in his pain, felt through it the strength and vigour of Christ's arm around him, the certainty of Christ's presence, the very life of Christ flowing through him and enabling him to bear his pain. Thus his pain brought him sacramentally ever closer and closer to his Master.

It was in this way that Paul had come into the experience which had been spoken of by Christ Himself, when He said to His two disciples, "Out of the cup from which I am to drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I am to be baptised you shall be baptised." The Cross had become to Paul an eternal principle ruling all his

life—and it was a principle by which evil was conquered and good established through suffering freely and courageously borne.

This principle of the eternal Cross, of which the historical Cross on Golgotha was the unique and perfect exemplification, had been foreshadowed, as Paul frequently points out, more and more definitely throughout the history of the Jewish race.

The documents comprised in the Old Testament constitute a unique record of a unique phenomenon, the evolution of a primitive tribal cult into a universal ethical monotheism. As we study the meaning of these documents, we are struck by two phenomena especially: on the one hand the steady raising of man's estimate of God's character, a process which is to be expressed, from the Godward side, as the progressive revelation of the Divine nature; and on the other hand the immense influence exerted on this development by the experience of individual and national suffering.

So much is this the case that it is not an exaggeration to say that if their history be regarded as a whole, the Jews are seen to have learnt more about God than their neighbours because they suffered more, and because they had amongst them a long series of master-sufferers, the Prophets, who could tell them what their suffering meant.

Hosea was in some ways the prince of all these

master-sufferers. His bitter experience of acute personal suffering had come to him in connection with his wife's unfaithfulness, and with his own vain efforts to win her back to loyalty and purity. Perhaps the crucial point of all pre-Christian history is that at which the conviction flashes in upon Hosea's mind that God will deal even more tenderly and redemptively with His erring people than Hosea himself had dealt with his fallen wife.

Here we have the 'sense of God in history' emerging almost fully developed from the very start, and intimately bound up with the emergence of the conception of the eternal Cross. As Hosea had suffered and agonised patiently, in order to win back his wife: so God would, and must, suffer and agonise patiently, in order to win back His people.

Hosea is typical of his great successors in the fact (apprehended dimly no doubt, but still with increasing clearness) that he has learnt to look along history, and to see a Purpose coming from far back, and extending far forward into the future, a Purpose which is essentially the showing upon the stage of history of God's own character and likeness, through the principle of the Cross, which is patient, suffering, redemptive love.

The great prophets saw in the life-story of their people—and we may see the same vision with them

God schooling humanity into the knowledge that He is the Father of all mankind; that He is holy, and merciful, and loving: and even (deepest mystery of all) that He suffers to redeem the lost.

The very greatest of the prophets are able also to declare that, grievous as had been the suffering laid upon what had truly become a martyr-nation, it had been transcendently worth while. Through invasion, massacre and wholesale deportation the Jewish people had been welded into the Church of the one universal loving God. They were a community in which the conception of the Cross was at least launched: in which this man and that had seen something of the sovereign glory and efficacy of defenceless suffering love, as the only means by which wrong could be righted, the lost redeemed, and the evil will changed into good. Thus they were becoming a fitting environment—indeed the only possible environment—for the incarnation of God in the Man of Sorrows.

When Paul spoke, in the eighth chapter of Romans, of the clash in his time of two world-orders, the ancient world-order of futility and ruin, and the new world-order of the 'manifestation of the sons of God,' that is, of emergent Christlikeness, he was summing up the whole message of the ancient prophets, and expressing it anew for a world which had known Christ and the Cross. His keen gaze saw clearly what the prophets had

seen dimly before him, the truth that suffering lies at the heart of the process by which the new world-order conquers the old. As Christlikeness is worked out amongst men, under the invincible stimulus of the Spirit of the Living Christ, *the process costs*. It costs the Cross, not once only on Golgotha, but all along the line of history, in generation after generation. Progress is won by those who can say (or rather, about whom it can be said) 'I fill up the sufferings of Christ'; for it is these men who through their sufferings enable the redemptive activity of the Spirit of Christ to reveal Christ more and more thoroughly in every sphere of human relationships.

In the Bible as a whole we thus see, first, the martyr-nation winning through its sufferings fresh knowledge of the nature and will of God; next, the martyr-God revealing His being through a human life: and then the process beginning, by which the likeness of Christ—the 'manifestation of the sons of God' is more and more perfectly worked out in all human affairs, through the agency of those who suffer patiently and vicariously in the spirit of the Cross.

It is a philosophy of history, of eternal scope, beginning amongst tribal nomads, and widening out to include all humanity, in all ages.

Above all, it is a philosophy of history to which the Cross is absolutely central.

As Paul looks back upon his life—a life lived under the ruling of this 'philosophy of the Cross'—he finds that all his sufferings are swallowed up in the wealth and splendour of his experience of Christ. He writes from his Roman prison to the Philippians: "All that was gain to me, for Christ's sake I have reckoned it loss. Nay, I even reckon all things as pure loss because of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for the sake of whom I have suffered the loss of everything, and reckon it all as mere refuse, that I may win Christ and be found in union with Him" (Phil. iii. 7–9).

Paul had flung away the advantages with which he had started upon life—social position, inherited gifts, a liberal education, probably some considerable wealth, influential friends, and so forth. He had become an outcast, a dangerous dreamer, a 'fanatic.' He had become poor, broken in health, hated by his fellow-countrymen, a laughing-stock to men of education and refinement for his vulgar and disreputable associates. In all these respects, and in many others (for example, the scourgings which he had endured), he had made himself the victim of a concentrated agony of suffering, mental, physical, spiritual.

Yet he looks back upon his life; and he declares that what he has lost and suffered is not worth one moment's consideration, because of the love of Christ which had come into his life in consequence

of his renunciation. The presence of Christ, and the friendship of Christ, had been to him, not only a reward for all that he had lost, but a good, a value, whose very existence made all other goods, and values, sink into insignificance and disrepute.

Paul's Cross-bearing had resulted almost automatically from his relationship to Christ. This latter was the main phenomenon.

We are thus brought to see the Cross as an eternal principle—suffering freely borne for the sake of others. We see such suffering redeeming men into Christlikeness, changing the evil will into the good, working joyfully and victoriously for the establishment of a new world-order of right moral relationships. We see it founded in, motivated by, bearing fruit in, a spirit of trustful love for Jesus Christ, and a following of his example set upon Golgotha.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CROSS IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

The Christian Church conquered the Roman world by the Cross—by suffering patiently, in trustful dependence upon Christ, the worst pain and oppression which hatred and evil could bring against her.

Generation after generation her martyrs bore the Cross; and in the long run the spirit of the Cross which they represented proved irresistible. Patient endurance of wrong had its inevitable effect. The wrong was vanquished; and the evil will was slowly transformed into a good will.

Then came a fresh trial. The Roman world, in which Christianity had thus won its place by suffering, was overthrown by the barbarian tribes. Culture, art, refinement, literature, almost all the higher values of life, were destroyed in the vast holocaust which consumed the ancient civilisation; and the Church was left to face a world of primitive savagery, stripped of all material protection.

Just at that supreme crisis, a supremely great man wrote a supremely great book. Augustine perished before the onset of the Vandals, notoriously the most ruthless of the barbarian invaders. But not till he had written the *City of God*, which is

in effect a philosophy of history founded upon the Cross. In that book Augustine declared that the world-order of force and greed is eternally opposed to the world-order of self-renunciation: and that progress results as the latter conquers the former. Such conquest is effected, not by arms and warfare, but by the methods of Jesus Christ, by the application of that principle of suffering love which is the Cross. He asserted that the fall of the Roman Empire was due to the sins of the Empire; and he had the courage to hail that world-shaking catastrophe, in which he himself was soon to become fatally involved, as a blessing in disguise, because it would clear the ground for the building of a new world-order founded on the Will of Christ, which is the Cross.

The Mediaeval Church was profoundly influenced by the conception of the Two Cities, as originated by Augustine. In many ways that Church performed miracles in the effort to establish the City of God on earth. Her achievement may be dated from the famous incident which occurred in A.D. 452. In that year the Huns under Attila were marching upon Rome. The city had been left defenceless. The Pope, Leo the Great, went out to meet the barbarians, and persuaded them to turn back. The success of the Pope's mission on that occasion showed that there is a power in the world which is superior to any organisation

of force, and which can defeat the evil will merely by its wielder's readiness to suffer anything, in his own person, in order that those in desperate need may be saved, and the evil will be turned into good.

The spirit which had inspired the early Christian martyrs, and had enabled them to win the Empire by their fearless suffering, lasted on with power into the long vista of nearly one thousand years during which the Church was winning the barbarians. Such a book as C. H. Robinson's *Conversion of Europe* is filled with the records of saints and missionaries who carried the Cross to the pagans, not merely by their preaching of a distant historical event, but often far more effectively by their lives. They went out defenceless, prepared to suffer anything in their ambition to bring something of goodness, beauty and truth to the followers of depraved and often blood-thirsty cults. In innumerable cases their reward was desperate suffering, serenely borne, and in the end martyrdom. Nothing could stand against such a spirit, so effectually embodied in practical action. The Cross went forward conquering and to conquer; its victory was demonstrated not so much in the fact that the barbarian populations became nominally Christian, as in the fact that the example of suffering love given by the missionaries bore fruit in a steady

raising of character and spirit amongst the tribes to whom they went.

Even before the collapse of the Western Empire an incident occurred, which may be legendary, but which none the less shows the idealism of the Cross, as applied to the refinement of barbarous institutions, in this case surviving from the Empire itself. The better mind of mankind had for long revolted against the gladiatorial shows, which were, however, so popular with the common people that in spite of their savage and depraved character they for long survived the Christianisation of Rome. They are said to have been finally ended by a singularly striking application of the method of the Cross. An Eastern monk, named Telemachus, travelled to Rome under the conviction that it was the Will of God that the shows should be stopped. Leaping down into the arena between the ranks of combatants, he was killed on the spot; but his self-sacrifice led to a change in popular opinion, and made it possible for the imperial government to abolish the games.

It was in this same spirit, and often by strikingly similar methods, that the barbarian tribes were gradually won, by a long succession of servants of the Cross, to a life of comparative order and refinement. The process was slow. It was nowhere complete. But when the results of a thousand years

of work are surveyed together, the method of the Cross will be seen to have accomplished miracles.

In spite of its glaring faults, the Church of the Middle Ages applied this primitive Christian principle with astonishing eventual success. It did so mainly through the agency of obscure individuals, and especially groups of individuals, who penetrated ever deeper and deeper into the recesses of heathendom, not so much preaching as living the Cross, by their practice of humble suffering love.

A typical instance of the working of this spirit may be found in the death of Boniface, the great English missionary to Germany in the eighth century: "The pagan Frisians resolved to put an end at once to the missionaries and their work. . . . They rushed upon the Christians, who numbered fifty-two, brandishing their spears. Whilst some of the members of Boniface's party prepared to defend him, he . . . thus addressed the Christians: 'Cease, my children, from conflict, and put aside your purpose of battle, for by testimony of the Scriptures we are bidden to return not evil for evil but good for evil. For now is the long-desired day, and the voluntary time of our departure is at hand. Be strong therefore in the Lord, and suffer willingly that which He permits. Set your hopes on Him, and He will deliver your souls." To the priests and deacons and those of inferior order

vowed to the service of God, speaking as with the voice of a father, he said: "Brothers, be of brave mind, and fear not those that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul that has an endless life, but rejoice in the Lord and fix on Him the anchor of your hope. He will forthwith give to you for ever your reward, and will grant to you a seat in the hall of heaven with the angelic citizens on high. . . . Receive with constancy this momentary blow of death, that ye may reign with Christ for ever." The pagans forthwith rushed upon the little band of Christians, and killed them."

It was such lives, and such deaths, rather than the schemings of ecclesiastical imperialists, which brought about the gradual recivilising of Europe under the sway of what was at any rate a partially Christian idealism.

Meanwhile there were springing up all over the Continent a multitude of religious houses, in which a splendid and determined effort was made, extending through many centuries of time, and affecting the lives of many millions of individual Christians, to make possible an existence of self-renunciation. We all know the faults of the monastic system, and the abuses to which it lay open. We do not, however, always realise that many religious houses constituted for ages little enclaves of unselfishness, piety and the good life, in the midst

of surrounding wastes of anarchy. They were inhabited by men who had very literally taken upon them the Cross, turning their back upon all earthly advantage, stripping themselves of the means of material protection and well-being, and devoting constant efforts to the alleviation of the misery around them through loving service.

Again and again the purity of the idealism of the Cross was reawakened during the thousand years of the Mediaeval epoch; and was expressed through the development of some new monastic or missionary order. It was an age of appalling sin against the Cross, an age in which the Central organisation of Christendom showed itself callously willing to use the basest weapons of force and of secularism for the attainment of its spiritual ends. It was the age of the Imperial Papacy, of the Crusades, of the development of the Inquisition, of the savage conflict between Papacy and Empire —a conflict which the Papacy won by calling to its aid the rising power of nationalism, with the fitting result that the Pope himself soon afterwards became prisoner at Avignon to the very force which he had evoked. But it was also the age of faith. It sinned most grievously against the Cross: and yet at the same time it saw the Cross and its meaning with dazzling distinctness, and it bred by the thousand lives consecrated with peculiar power and beauty to the following of the Cross.

Above all, it was the age which gave birth to St. Francis.

The Franciscans, and pre-eminently St. Francis himself, made the discovery that the suffering which is the inevitable method and accompaniment of the Cross, is a thing which in itself is beautiful and joyous. They named this suffering Poverty; and they embraced Poverty in no morbid spirit of self-immolation, but zealously and ardently, in the atmosphere of chivalry, as 'the fairest bride in the world.'

St. Francis himself, speaking of the suffering of the Cross under this aspect, said to Brother Masseo: "Dearest companion, let us pray St. Peter and St. Paul to teach and help us to possess the immeasurable treasure of most holy poverty; for she is a treasure so all-worthy and so divine, that we are not worthy to possess her in our most lowly vessels; inasmuch as she is that heavenly virtue through which all things earthly and transitory are trampled underfoot, and every obstacle is removed from before the soul, in order that it may freely unite itself with God eternal. This is that virtue which makes the soul, while still placed on earth, converse in heaven with the Angels. This is she who accompanied Christ upon the Cross: with Christ she was buried, with Christ she rose again, with Christ she mounted into heaven: and it is she who, even in this life, gives to the souls who

are enamoured of her the means of flying to Heaven: inasmuch as she guards the weapons of true humility and charity. And therefore let us pray the most holy Apostles of Christ, who were perfect lovers of this evangelical pearl, that they beg for us this grace from Our Lord Jesus Christ, that, by His most holy mercy, He may grant us to merit to be true lovers and observers and humble disciples of the most precious and most beloved evangelical Poverty" (*Fioretti*, xiii).

This passage is highly characteristic of the zealous and joyful attitude adopted by Francis and his companions towards the suffering which is the deepest principle of the Cross. They did not merely bear that suffering patiently, sacrificing themselves for others in a spirit of austere resignation. They personified their suffering as Poverty, and they embraced it rapturously. They believed it to be in itself a treasure beyond all computation, and the highest possible good.

As they passed through the world, ragged, penniless and shelterless, in pursuance of their founder's precept "Naked carry the naked Cross," these early Franciscans made the way of the Cross beautiful and flowery. They sang the songs of the troubadours about the suffering of the Cross, so that all good men envied them that suffering, and thousands came to join their ranks. They brought a new element into Christianity, a constructive and

positive attitude towards all suffering which is vicarious and redemptive. They showed, to all time, that such suffering is not something dark and dreadful, however bitter it may be, but that it is a thing supremely joyous and splendid. The whole attitude is summed up in the exquisite story of Francis's marriage to Poverty.

In the course of the seven centuries which have passed since the rise of the Franciscans there have been a variety of movements within the body of Christendom which have brought back in power the message of the Cross, not as a mere doctrine concerning an event which happened in the distant past, but as a living and powerful weapon for the righting of wrong and the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the present.

The records of the missionary pioneers of both the Catholic and the Protestant communions are full of incidents showing fearless bearing of the Cross. The martyrdoms of the early Jesuit missionaries: the courage of such men as Paton, Williams and Chalmers in the South Seas: and the long history of missionary heroism in China, all bear witness to the fact that the Cross is still mighty. In a hundred different regions it has been proved that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.' In a hundred also it has been proved that once institutionalism creeps in, it stifles

the true spirit of Cross-bearing, by subtly transferring loyalty from Christ and His idealism of the Cross to a man-made organisation.

Yet in the main the missionaries have borne the Cross well, because they have been delivered from a repetition of the calamity which overtook Christianity when Constantine made it the state-religion of the Roman Empire. A great modern Christian has written thus of that disaster: "The conversion of Constantine was the greatest calamity which ever happened to the Church. 'Conquer by this.' Surely none can conquer by this save by dying upon it. Up to that time martyrs looked to the Cross that they might have divine strength to follow their crucified Redeemer. Thenceforward the benefits of Christ's Passion came to be regarded rather as a security for a future life than as an elevating power by which they might glorify God on earth. . . . Christianity triumphed in name but the world triumphed in power."

This quotation admirably brings out the fact that the Cross is more than a symbol of faith, or a badge of orthodoxy. It is a living principle. Constantine, or the ecclesiastics of his own time and later ages, believed that he had won the critical battle which gave him world-power because the Cross as a symbol had consecrated his arms. In reality that conquest, resulting in the raising of Christianity to dominant power, was the worst

possible thing which could have happened for the true religion of Christ. Men's minds largely forgot the Cross as the living principle of patient and suffering love, which had inspired actively and creatively the early martyrs and saints.

In the main, however, the modern missionary has been delivered from a repetition of this calamity. He has been left severely alone by governments. Not infrequently, to the great advantage of his work, he has been ill-treated or even persecuted by governments. Where, as in British India, his religion has been the religion of the governing race, even in spite of government neutrality in matters of religion he has frequently realised himself to be grievously handicapped by the connection.

In not a few areas the missionary has been able to live out the principle of the Cross, as a patient sufferer of wrong, completely stripped of any material defence. By such a life he has been successful in founding securely the Christian community of the future, as a strong, self-reliant and self-propagating movement. But where he has been regarded, however unfairly, as the pampered favourite of an alien government, the community which he has built up has been de-nationalised, pauperised and almost sterile. The reason for the difference is this and this alone—in the one case he has been able, however incompletely, not merely to preach the Cross but (and this is far more

important) to live by the Cross. In the other case his preaching has been rendered nugatory by his position.

The distinction in question may be illustrated by the difference in spirit between the missionary who champions British ascendency in India: and his brother-missionary who lives in daily peril of his life in China. And the distinction is illustrated also by the difference in spirit between the Christian communities originating from the labours of the one and the other.

The 'Holy Experiment' of William Penn and his fellow Quakers in the early days of Pennsylvania still presents the best Western example of the application of the principle of the Cross to the problems of political life. At a time when the other English settlements on the eastern sea-board of what is now the United States were struggling against the Red Indians in a series of sanguinary wars, Penn took the radical, and apparently almost suicidal, step of establishing his settlements without military defences, solely relying upon the protection of integrity, peacefulness and brotherhood as practised by his Quaker settlers.

The 'Experiment' endured for some two generations, during which time Pennsylvania was marvellously immune from the horrors of Indian warfare which periodically decimated the neighbouring settlements. Only when Penn's policy was finally

abandoned, and armed protection was instituted, did the colonists begin to suffer in this way.

In the other North American colonies the faith of the Quakers was frequently put to the test during the long-continued troubles with the Red Indians. On various notable occasions the method of the Cross was carried into triumphant operation, often by poor and obscure people.

For example, the following incident occurred: "The back settlements, far away from towns or any assistance, were an easy prey for the prowling bands of savages, and the people lived in constant dread. Every evening brought tidings of massacre and slaughter, and every night the settlers barricaded their houses as strongly as they could, and lay down with their weapons beside them, even then being scarcely able to sleep for fear. One of these solitary houses was inhabited by a Friend and his family. They had always lived in perfect security and peace with all around, both red and white, and having no apprehension of danger, had neither bolt nor bar to their door. The only means of securing their home from intruders was by drawing in the leathern thong by which the wooden latch inside was lifted from without. Even this precaution was never used—they slept peacefully in the log-cabin knowing full well that friend or foe could enter at any time by simply pulling the thong.

When the massacres began they discussed the

advisability of withdrawing the thong at nights as a precaution against any enemy there might be about, but believing as they did that God had protected them until now and would continue to do so, for a long time they made no change. One night, however, alarmed by the dreadful rumours, they yielded to their fears, and before retiring to rest drew in the thong and so secured themselves as well as they were able. In the middle of the night the Friend, who had been tossing restlessly, asked his wife if she were asleep. She replied that she could not sleep, for her mind was uneasy. He confessed that he could not either, and that he would feel safer if they put the string out as usual. She urged him to do so, and they lay down again, putting their trust wholly in God once more. Ten minutes later a dreadful war-whoop echoed through the forest, bringing fear to every heart, and almost immediately afterwards the Friends counted the footsteps of seven men pass the window of their room, which was on the ground floor. The next moment the string was pulled, the latch lifted and the door opened. A few minutes' conversation took place, but as it was in the Indian language, it was unintelligible to them. The result of it, however, was that the door was closed again, and the Indians retired without having crossed the threshold. In the morning the smoking ruins of their neighbours' houses were seen.

Some years afterwards, when peace was restored, and the colonists had occasion to hold conferences with the Indians, this Friend was appointed as one for that purpose, and speaking in favour of the Indians he related the above incident. In reply an Indian arose and said that he himself had been one of that marauding party, and that it was the simple circumstance of putting out the latch-string, which proved confidence rather than fear, that had saved their lives and their property. When the door was found to be open, they had said to one another, "These people shall live, they will do us no harm for they put their trust in the Great Spirit."[1]

A better-known incident is that of the party of Red Indians, on the war-path, who came with murderous intent to a Quaker meeting. 'They passed to and fro by the open door of the house looking inquisitively within at the quiet worshippers. At last having satisfied their curiosity, they quietly entered the meeting. They were met by the chief Friends with the outstretched hand of peace, and shown to seats, where they sat in reverent silence till the close of the meeting. The leading man of the Society then hospitably invited them to a meal at his house, and they were generously entertained and refreshed. As they were going, the Indian chief took his host aside, and

[1] See *The Arm of God*, by E. and R. Dunkerley.

promised him and his people perfect security from the ravages of the red man. He said, "When Indian come to this place, Indian meant to tomahawk every white man he found. But when Indian found white man with no guns, no fighting weapons, so still, so peaceable, worshipping Great Spirit, the Great Spirit say in Indian's heart—no hurt them, no hurt them!"

In the life-story of George Fox, the founder of the Quaker community, there are a number of incidents to be found illustrating the method of the Cross. Thus on one occasion, when he was attacked by a man with a naked sword in his hand, Fox looked stedfastly at him and said, "Alack for thee, poor creature, what wilt thou do with thy carnal weapon? It is no more to me than a straw." The words and the look were enough.

On another occasion, when a meeting was in progress, a company of soldiers rushed in with drawn swords. One of the soldiers had sworn to kill Fox, and 'pressed through the company' to within six feet of him; but suddenly he sheathed his sword and made off; "For the Lord's Power came over all and chained him and the rest, and we had a blessed meeting."

Even more remarkable is the case of Thomas Lurting, a sailor, who met some Quakers and became much impressed by their patience under

ill-treatment. He eventually became a Quaker himself; and during a fight against the Spaniards at Barcelona he became convinced of the folly and wickedness of war. "The word of the Lord ran through me. How if I had killed a man? and it was with such power that I hardly knew whether I was in the body or out of it. But I turned about and put on my clothes" (he would be serving his gun stripped to the waist), "and walked on deck in great exercise of mind." The captain was (not unnaturally) enraged, and announced that he would kill any man who refused to fight. He had a notice put up, "If any man flinch from his quarters in time of engagement, any may kill him." Soon afterwards, on the occasion of another engagement, *Lurting and the other Quakers assembled in the* most public place on the deck in full view of the captain, and began to hold a quiet meeting. The captain was furious, and made towards them with a drawn sword in his hand. Lurting says, "No sooner was his sword drawn, than the word of the Lord ran through me like fire saying The sword of the Lord is over him, and if he will have a sacrifice, proffer it to him! This word was so powerful in me that I greatly quivered and shook. But I was not afraid of the sword, and when the shaking was a little over, I turned my head over my shoulder and said to a friend, 'I must go to the captain!' Then, watching the captain as he

came forward with his drawn sword in his hand, I fixed my eye upon him, and with a great dread of the Lord upon my mind I stepped towards him, and he furiously looked on me, to have daunted me, but I was carried above all his furious looks."

When he had advanced to the distance of only a few feet, the captain's expression suddenly changed. He turned pale, retreated and left the Quakers in peace. Later he sent a message of friendly conciliation.

Many remarkable incidents occurred during the course of the American Civil War illustrating the working out of the principle of the Cross. During that War the Quakers in the Southern States, where conscription was rigorously enforced, suffered grievous persecution because of their refusal to bear arms. One of them, Seth W. Laughlin of North Carolina, was kept without sleep for a long period, a soldier standing close at hand to awaken him with a bayonet if he should doze off. He was cruelly bound for three hours a day; and was hung by his thumbs for an hour and a half. These methods proving unavailing, he was court-martialled and sentenced to be shot. The troops were ordered to watch the execution. He stood erect before the six levelled rifles, and asked permission to pray, saying, in a perfectly calm voice, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The effect upon the firing squad was extraordinary. All of them

lowered their rifles and refused to fire. The sentence of death was revoked.[1]

Another Friend, William Hockett[1] of North Carolina, absolutely refused to bear arms or to do any other work necessary to the army (such as mowing grass for horses). He was violently threatened by the colonel of the regiment to which he had been attached, and was told to choose whether he would be shot at night or in the morning. He replied calmly that he was ready for death if God permitted it, but that there was a power above man's and not a hair of his head could be touched without his Heavenly Father's notice. The next day arrangements were made for his execution. Before the firing squad he prayed the same prayer, "Father, forgive them." The men refused to shoot such a man, and lowered their rifles without orders. Later, two men were ordered to bayonet him; but would not go farther than tearing his clothes and pricking him. When the officer had gone, the soldiers tried to persuade William Hockett to run away, but this also he refused. The next day, when he refused to carry his rifle, the men carried it for him themselves. Hockett even refused to help in cooking, and was told that if he would not cook, he should not eat. He was marched off hungry to another camp. On the way the window of a house opened and a

[1] See *The Arm of God.*

woman threw a large loaf of bread to him, which lasted him till the Battle of Gettysburg, where he was taken prisoner by the Federals, and soon afterwards set at liberty.

Somewhat similar experiences occurred in the case of many conscientious objectors to military service during the Great War.[1] In 1922, when the French occupied the Ruhr district for a time, the inhabitants practised against them a form of passive resistance which was inspired by the belief that wrong can be righted by a whole-hearted determination to suffer patiently the worst which wrong can do. It is true that in this case the Germans would have resisted if they could, and by force of arms, so that their efforts cannot be regarded as having been inspired by a redemptive purpose—they were indeed in a sense merely a *pis aller*. None the less the success eventually achieved by the Ruhr passive resistance demonstrates the extraordinary effectiveness of voluntarily-endured suffering.

Numerous other instances could be chosen, from many different times and places, to demonstrate the power of the way of the Cross. But it must be emphasised that the most striking of these instances have occurred when men were consciously following the teaching and example of Jesus Christ,

[1] See *Conscription and Conscience*, by J. W. Graham.

and were aware of spiritual dependence upon Him and of His redemptive purpose acting through them.

This principle is strikingly illustrated in the case of the great missionary to the South Seas, John G. Paton. Though he had no arms and was entirely at the mercy of the cannibals amongst whom he lived, Paton fearlessly denounced their cruel customs, for example, the inhuman treatment of women, the strangling of widows and the almost continuous warfare. "On one occasion a League of Blood was formed for the purpose of ridding the island of the white man, but at the critical moment in the council of war, two old chiefs—sacred men and amongst Paton's bitterest enemies—suddenly and unexpectedly came over to his side and defied the rest to touch him. Soon after that Paton persuaded twenty chiefs to form themselves into a peace party, and for a considerable time they managed to maintain peace. But a chief of one of the inland tribes was murdered, and his followers swooped down on the harbour tribes, and at once the whole place was ablaze with the war passion. Paton, anxious only to avert the impending war, went unarmed with two companions into the bush to search for the inland tribes. They passed many deserted villages, and at last came unexpectedly on a great company assembled at a feast. Immediately each man rushed for his weapons. Paton

walked straight into the middle of them and shouted, "My love to all you men of Tanna! Fear not, I am your friend!" An old chief came up and took him by the hand, and for about an hour they conversed together, the chiefs finally agreeing to give up the war, and sending him back with presents of fruit and fowls."

Paton was the means of stopping numerous other wars. One of these wars was undertaken by a party favourable to Christianity. Paton came between them and their enemies just before the battle was joined. The friendly chief begged for leave to shoot down his enemies, saying that if Paton refused it, all on their side, with Paton himself, would certainly be murdered. Paton shouted to both parties, "You may shoot or murder me, but I am your friend. I am not afraid to die. My love to you all." The result of his courage was peace.

"Paton's efforts made him many bitter enemies. They were continually planning to kill him, and his life was very uncertain from day to day. But he went about his work in perfect confidence and hope, and he was wonderfully protected and preserved in the most critical circumstances. Once a man rushed at him with an axe, but a chief, standing near, snatched a spade with which he had been working and dexterously defended him. The next day a wild chief followed him about for four hours with a loaded musket, which was often directed

towards him; but something restrained his hand. Three times one night Paton heard men trying to force the door of his house, but the next morning the report went all around the harbour that those who had tried to shoot him were 'smitten weak' with fear,' and were unable to carry out their plan. Through it all Paton was calmly conscious that so long as he had work to do he would be spared to do it, and he writes of these troublous times, "It is the sober truth, and it comes back to me sweetly after twenty years, that I had my nearest and dearest glimpses of the face and smile of my blessed Lord in those dread moments when musket, club or spear was being levelled at my life."[1]

This was the secret of Paton's courage, and of his success in applying the principle of the Cross. These things were founded upon the living experience of Christ's presence and friendship.

[1] See John G. Paton's *Autobiography* and *The Arm of God.*

CHAPTER THREE

INDIAWARDS

The following passage occurs in Canon Streeter's scholarly and authoritative work on *The Four Gospels*:

"The Doctrine of the Logos, as the author of the Fourth Gospel saw, made it possible to present Christianity to the educated Greek world in a way it could accept. It was the boldest 'restatement' of Christianity in terms of contemporary thought ever attempted in the history of the Church. . . . The conception of the Divine Logos, as hammered out by Philo to form a synthesis between Jewish and Neo-Platonic thought, was just the concept needed in a place like Ephesus, not only to interpret Christianity to the Greek in terms of Divine Immanence, but also to meet the standing taunt of the Jew that those who worshipped Christ were setting up a new God" (p. 468).

The development of the Logos Doctrine, here referred to, was of incalculable importance in the history of early Christianity. It rendered possible, and actual, the harnessing of the Greek intellectual genius to the service of the new Faith. It showed Christianity as the fulfilment of the highest strivings of the Greek spirit after truth, beauty and goodness.

It made what might have been, from the intellectual point of view, merely a reform movement within the obscure Jewish religion into a world-faith, whose problems in the sphere of the mind were tackled courageously, and with brilliant success, by a series of great thinkers—men whose training in Greek philosophy fitted them to become the builders of an intellectual fabric strong enough to survive the disintegrating influences of the Dark Ages.

But these considerations must not lead us into the error of imagining that the adoption into Christianity of the Logos Doctrine by the Fourth Evangelist was a piece of clever ecclesiastical tactics. He did not say to himself, "Now we Christians are in danger of remaining in a back-water amongst the Jews. We need a point of contact with the Greeks—something handy to attract them to our beliefs. We need a line of thought fitted to act as a bridge uniting two divergent world-views, those of the Jew and the Greek."

We must not suppose that the Fourth Evangelist set out, with these considerations in his mind, to explore the Ancient Greek writings, and the theories of contemporary philosophers: nor must we suppose that, after judicious balancing of the claims of other lines of thought (e.g. the Stoic system of ethics, or the ritual of the mystery-religions), he finally selected the Logos Doctrine, as the best calculated to serve his purpose.

The way in which he writes of the Logos convinces us that the Fourth Evangelist had learnt to regard this great conception of truth, which starts far back in Heraclitus, and comes down through Plato, the Stoics, the Neo-Platonists and Philo, not merely as a convenient point of contact with Hellenic thought, but as something livingly true in itself. He had traced the gradual expansion and enrichment of that idea down through the centuries, and had found in it something which immensely strengthened and deepened his own thought about God and his own experience of Christ.

The Fourth Evangelist did not merely pounce on the Logos Doctrine, with a shout of delight, crying, "This will be useful." He said to himself, as he knelt, "This is *true*. This will teach us more about Christ than we have ever known before."

He was not alarmed by the fact that the Logos Doctrine was Greek in origin, nor by the inevitable connection between that Doctrine and various 'heathen' conceptions and practices. He was honest in following truth as he saw it. He accepted the Doctrine as *true*, and therefore as enriching vitally the existing views of Christian truth.

More than this, he saw that, since the Doctrine was true, Christianity *must have it*, would indeed perish without it. And thus he, and those who thought with him, took the vitally important step

of welcoming the Greek philosophical thought into the heart of Christianity.

In so doing they performed three essential services on behalf of Christianity. They vastly enriched the Christian conception of Christ, showing us the Eternal Christ and the Inward Christ. They harnessed the Greek mind to the service and support of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, as a consequence of this, they saved Christianity from the extinction which must have overtaken it had it lacked that service and support.

Hence the Fourth Gospel has been well called the truest because the most spiritual. It deals less than the Synoptics with historical incident; but it shows us Christ as He had come to be known by a Christ-worshipper of the highest spiritual genius, who had learnt to look upon His Lord with Greek as well as with Jewish eyes, and thus to see Him in His universal and eternal significance.

In August 1930 occurred the fifteen-hundredth anniversary of the death of the greatest of all Africans, the most majestic and universal figure produced either by the races of the African continent or by the Christian Church after its first generation.

Augustine died besieged by the fiercest and most destructive of the advancing hordes of barbarians—the notorious Vandals—in the little town of Hippo,

which he had chosen as the centre of a lifetime of humble and Christlike service. He died surrounded by a universal catastrophe, the wholesale destruction of the ancient civilisation. A century before his time another great African, Tertullian, had said of the Roman Empire, "This alone stands between us and the end of the world." Augustine saw the end come and was unafraid. He sustained undismayed the ruin of civilisation around him; for he saw beyond the devastation caused by the barbarian invasions to the possibility of building a new civilisation, and a more Christlike one, on the ground which had thus been cleared. His faith and vision were such that they could pierce beyond the smoke of Vandal watch-fires to the far-off day when mankind should be ruled by the laws of Christ. In his great book *The City of God* he showed the principles which must be followed if that process of world-reconstruction were to be carried through successfully and permanently. Through his influence on the creation of the mediaeval world-polity, and especially through the power which his ideas exerted over such men as Charlemagne and Pope Gregory VII, he may justly be regarded as the greatest of all world-builders; and his thought in *The City of God*, although it has frequently been misinterpreted and misapplied, still has significance for us to-day.

But Augustine was more than a philosopher of

history (though he was perhaps the greatest of all such philosophers). He was a truly catholic spirit. For nine years he had been the devotee of an Oriental cult. Then he had become an ardent Platonist. Finally he was converted to the truth and beauty of Christ, and worshipped Him as Fulfiller not only of all the highest in Jewish religion, but of all the highest in Greek religion also. African in origin, Augustine became European in intellectual and Asiatic in spiritual affiliation; and perhaps partly for this reason his great books still have a vital significance for the whole world. Not only was he the chief builder, in his *City of God*, of the ideas which controlled the Mediaeval world—from which our own modern world sprang; but his *Confessions* are for all ages and for all races of mankind the classical record of spiritual pilgrimage.

Augustine is frequently thought of as a pillar of orthodoxy: as the scourge of heretics, the fierce opponent of Donatists and Manichees: as the originator of a cast-iron scheme of dogma, which lays onerous insistence upon predestination and original sin. In a sense this commonly received opinion is justified. Augustine, under certain aspects of his many-sided personality, was an arch-dogmatist and the very fountain of strictest Catholic orthodoxy. Yet it must be remembered that in the *Confessions* Augustine says, "Cicero's *Hortensius*" (a philosophical treatise, now lost, but dealing largely with

Platonism) "quite altered my affection, turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord, and changed my purposes and desires. All my vain hopes I thenceforth slighted: and with an incredible zeal of spirit I thirsted after the immortality of wisdom, and began to rise up that I might return to Thee. How did I burn then, my God, to fly from earthly delights to Thee" (*Con.* III, 4).

Indeed, as we read the *Confessions*, we are compelled to recognise that Augustine's conversion—using that term in Christ's sense, the sense conveyed by the Greek word translated 'repentance,' which means in reality 'change of ideals'—took place not primarily in the famous garden at Milan, but considerably earlier, when he began seriously to read the Platonists. His ideals were changed then; his will was surrendered at Milan, and so he became able to follow in action the ideals which he had already intellectually embraced.

Again, in his last book, the *Retractationes*, in which he reviews his life-work and gives his final pronouncements on his life's opinions, Augustine says, "The very thing which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never failed from the beginning of the human race up to the coming of Christ in the flesh. Then the true religion which already existed, began to be called Christianity" (*Retract.*, I, 13).

This pronouncement may remind us of the words

of Justin Martyr, "We have already proved Christ to be the firstborn of God and the Logos, of which mankind have all been partakers: and those who lived by reason" (i.e. by spiritual discernment) "were Christians notwithstanding they were thought to be atheists. Such among the Greeks were Socrates and Heracleitus, and those like them" (*First Apology*, 46).

Similarly St. Gregory says, "John the Baptist died not in the direct confession of Christ, but for telling the truth in a matter of righteousness; yet, seeing that Christ is truth, therefore in dying for truth he died for Christ" (*Moralium in Job. lib.* 28).

Here, then, we see two of the greatest pillars of Christian orthodoxy, the Fourth Evangelist and St. Augustine, together with others of the great early Christian thinkers, not only welcoming in from the Greeks their contribution to religion, but finding Christ amongst the Greeks and other great forerunners of Christian revelation, and being led into deeper and fuller knowledge of Him and of God through the contribution made to the understanding of Christ by the Greek view of truth.

Thus it came about, as has been pointed out by Dr. T. R. Glover, that "the Church conquered the world because it appealed to a great race on its highest levels."[1]

[1] *The World of the New Testament*, p. 189.

Our own generation is making contact with a world-culture far more ancient than that of the Greeks, far more enduring, far more spiritual.

We need, in our relations with India and especially with Indian religion, the same questing emancipated spirit which marked the author of the Fourth Gospel when he welcomed the Logos Doctrine into Christianity: and which marked also Augustine, and men like him, when they acknowledge the greatness of the debt which they owed to the Greeks.

Is it possible for us to-day to find anything which will act as a bridge between Indian religion and Christianity: and as a means of harnessing the Indian mind to the task of finding a fuller revelation of Christ than we have as yet found in the West?

These are daring questions to ask; but we shall not obtain a satisfactory answer to them, nor shall we do our duty either by East or West, unless we realise that they are not daring enough. We must go forward, as the Fourth Evangelist did, and as Augustine did, to ask yet more daringly, "Is there any interpretation of the meaning of Christ which we have missed: which we bitterly need: for lack of which our Western Christianity is starving?"

The Fourth Evangelist, brought up in the narrow circle of orthodox Judaism, and then living for many years in contact with what seemed likely to remain merely a reform movement in that small field, had come to realise that beyond the boundaries of his

little Jewish world there lay a vast and splendid world-interpretation of truth, which might show him and his fellow-believers a universal and eternal Christ whom they could never apprehend if their minds remained closed to Greek thought and content with Jewish-Christianity.

Augustine, trained from infancy by one who has ever remained the ideal of Christian motherhood, Monica, had found nothing in Christianity that spoke to his own need till he read the pre-Christian Platonists. Then, as he came to comprehend the true significance of the Greek thought about God and God's workmanship for beauty, truth and goodness, "with an incredible zeal of spirit I thirsted after the immortality of wisdom, and began to rise up that I might come to Thee. How did I burn then, my God, to fly from earthly delights to Thee" (*Con.*, III, 4). In consequence of this experience, Augustine's writings, and especially the *Confessions*, are shot through with Platonic conceptions, which are so employed as to give a new and permanent deepening to the whole spirit of Christian mysticism.

Have we the faith to say of Indian religion, as Augustine said of Hellenism, expressing the mature opinion of a lifetime, "The very thing which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never failed?"

If so, what is that 'thing'?

It is obvious that in asking such questions we are showing ourselves exceedingly rash. After all, the Fourth Evangelist wrote right at the beginning of the Christian movement, when canons of orthodoxy were as yet scarcely in existence. And even Augustine lies three-quarters of the way back along the line of time which connects our own age with the first beginnings of the Faith. Is it not presumptuous for us to imagine that it is possible to use methods to-day which may have once been legitimate, or even essential, but may now be so no longer?

Every individual must work out his own answer to such questions. It can only be suggested here that the Christians of the first four centuries stood in a relation towards a great pre-Christian world-culture such as has never been repeated till our own generation, when the West has begun to awaken to the significance and the greatness of Indian thought. In a sense our *only* precedent for the right Christian attitude towards Indian religion is to be found in the attitude towards Hellenism of the Fourth Evangelist, of Augustine and of the great Christian thinkers intermediate in time between these two. We are compelled by the nature of the case to go back to the fountain-head.

It may be objected, in reply to this, that Islam, although post-Christian in origin, was, and is, a world-culture, and that Mediaeval Christianity had very definite contacts with Islam. But Islam is not

a world-culture in the sense in which Hellenism and Indian religion are world-cultures. It is a fighting-brotherhood, regimented with crushing authority, so long as it remains Islam, by a book and by organs of interpretation, which are used to impose a cast-iron discipline upon all believers. It is a religion not so much of freedom and growth as of passive submission to the inscrutable will of Allah, revealed for all time in a volume which is regarded with such abject veneration that it may not even be translated.

Moreover, as judged by the Spirit of Christ, the manner of reaction adopted by Mediaeval Christianity towards Islam was quite obviously wrong. There was no attempt made to find anything in Islam which might be a confirmation of, or a needed reinterpretation for, Christian truth: and this in spite of the fact that the Islamic spirit of brotherhood, transcending all barriers of race, caste, class or nationality, supplies an object-lesson of triumphant success in a direction in which Christianity has lamentably failed. The attitude adopted towards the new faith was in the main one of unreasoning and bigoted opposition, and was expressed on a gigantic scale in the Crusades. The relationships between Christians and Mussulmans have been poisoned ever since by the memories of the day when Godfrey de Bouillon and his followers, having at last reached Jerusalem and overcome its defences, "had the vile blood of the Saracens up to the knees

of our horses" (as Godfrey wrote to the Pope) on their way to give joyful thanks at the Holy Sepulchre.

The effort to find a contribution, and perhaps a very valuable one, to our knowledge of Christ from India is one which is sanctioned for us, and indeed enjoined upon us, by the example of the greatest of Christian thinkers during the only other period of Christian history when the Church was brought into contact with a world-culture alien to and more ancient than that of its origin, and a world-culture marked out by its long record of spiritual search as constituting a supremely high achievement of spiritual genius.

The record of the contact of Christianity with Hellenism, and the memory of the immense debts which Christianity owes to Hellenism, should make us uneasy lest, if we adopt an attitude of unbending self-sufficiency towards Hinduism, we may miss something which we and the rest of mankind grievously need. Had the Fourth Evangelist, and those who thought like him, adopted towards Hellenism the attitude that 'we have no need of anything from such heathen sources, have we not as good or better already in Judaism?' then Christianity would never have survived the Dark Ages: and the Christians of the first centuries would have been incalculably poorer in their understanding of their Master. If we adopt the same attitude towards Indian religion, we may be running an equal risk to-day.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE INDIAN SPIRIT OF DEVOTION

When the Westerner thinks at all about Indian religion, he is apt to think of it as typically pantheistic, as an austere undifferentiated mysticism, in which the effort of the soul, prolonged of necessity through long periods of intensely rigorous discipline, is to realise at last its unity with God.

We recall in this connection the ascetic who has abandoned all opportunity for joy and gain, and who sits with arms permanently extended above his head, till they wither away, or adopts some other intensely painful posture, engaged all the while in a rapt realisation of his oneness with God.

We think perhaps of the famous instance of the ascetic of this type, who was bayoneted by a British soldier at the sack of Delhi, and who exclaimed to him with his dying breath, "Thou too art He."

The West does not, however, sufficiently realise that this type of ascetic pantheism is not the only, or the chief, or the highest, expression of Indian religion. From time immemorial, in India itself, there has been waged an unrelenting warfare against such pantheism. A long series of prophets and saints has protested against the barrenness of the doctrine of an impersonal Absolute, and has affirmed

in opposition to this doctrine the religion of a personal and loving God.

This school of thought is known as the *Bhakti* school, the school of personal piety; and its writings on devotion, and the practice of devotion, constitute the living religion of India. As Dr. Otto points out in his *India's Religion of Grace*, "Wide circles of Indian piety recognise with glowing enthusiasm the way of *Bhakti* as the *only* way to God, and reject the way of monistic mysticism as damnable heresy and soul-destroying error" (p. 22).

The keynote of the monistic mysticism has been the teaching that the vast majority of mankind live only in ignorance and illusion. This has bred a spirit of Pharisaism; for release from illusion is only to be attained after most rigorous discipline by a few spiritual giants. Moreover, the release itself is a sterile and soulless extinction of all that we mean by personality. In defining the Absolute, into unity with which the released soul must come, all predicates disappear; and no qualities whatsoever, except existence, can be ascribed to the Object of spiritual search. There can be no sort of personal relationship to him (or, rather, to it); there can only be complete identity with it, which is in itself the denial of all relationship. Thus with the undifferentiated mysticism which is taught by the supreme monistic authority, that of the school of Sankara, personality disappears both in God and man, and

with it there disappear of necessity also worship, love and character.

But this monistic mysticism, which is the apotheosis of all that is negative, is not the true or characteristic religion of India. Beginning in the *Upanishads*, at least five hundred years before Christ, and going forward from that day to our own in ever-increasing power and popularity, there has been another school of thought regarding God and man, the school of *Bhakti*. The foundation of its teaching is to be discovered in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, which contains the following passage:

> He who, dwelling in the soul, is yet different from it,
> Whom the soul, so long as it is unillumined, does not know,
> Whose body the soul is,
> And who inwardly guides the soul,
> He is the Inner Guide, the Immortal.[1]

From that time to the present the heart of Hindu religion has been *Bhakti*, which forms in the aggregate a most splendid and precious contribution to the spiritual wealth of mankind. It has inspired a long succession of devout thinkers and singers: its mark is to be found on even the humblest Indian village: through the streets of country-towns and cities those whom it has claimed for its own pass daily: and at the great religious festivals, especially at spots regarded as exceptionally holy, tens of

[1] Quoted in Otto, *op. cit.*

thousands gather who have given up everything for the sake of *Bhakti*.

In the literature of *Bhakti* there are numerous collections of hymns, through which breathes the spirit of entire dedication to the service of a personal God. There are also many biographies of famous *Bhaktas*, written to show the manner in which they have served God and conquered sin and wrong; and there is a great mass of hortatory writings, speaking of the love and grace of God, and urging the reader to commit himself to the Divine care. There is much emphasis laid also upon the necessity for rightness of life, if God is to be pleased: "There is a sign by which one can know whether a man is religious or not. If a misfortune befalls another, notice whether thy heart is moved with sympathy for him or not, whether it suffers pain with him or the opposite. In the former case thou mayst be certain that thou art in filial relation with God, in the latter that he rejects thee."[1]

It is impossible to read through even a very brief anthology of *Bhakti* religious poetry[2] without becoming convinced not only that there is something here which is of great interest and beauty to students of religion, but that there is something which *we* definitely need. Our Christianity would be more full and perfect if we worshipped God and Christ

[1] Quoted by Dr. Otto from *Nanjiyar*.
[2] E.g. Appaswamy, *Temple Bells*, Student Christian Movement.

with more of this spirit of enthusiastic devotion. Our thought regarding our Father will be thinner and poorer than it might be, till we learn from India this joyful faith, which is yet so insistent on the frailty, weakness and sinfulness of the worshipper, and on the free generosity of the Divine grace. There is expressed in this literature an insatiable yearning for God, and at the same time a glad realisation that the yearning has met fulfilment, because it is a mutual yearning—God loves man. "The ignorant say that love and God are two. No one knows that love itself is God. Whoever knows that love itself is God shall rest in love, one with God" (Tirumular, A.D. 800).

Especially notable throughout this *Bhakti* literature is the emphasis upon the Motherhood of God. It forms a line of thought which is strange to the mind of Protestant Christians, who have been trained so largely upon patriarchal Jewish traditions. But it is well that we should remind ourselves that Our Lord cannot have designed to exclude from our conception of God any element of goodness and love when he called God Father: and also that His vivid sayings regarding God's counting the hairs of our head, and caring for our needs of food and clothing, and His defining God in terms of a parenthood which ran to meet the erring boy, kissed him delightedly, welcomed him unquestioningly, clothed him and fed him with the best, show that Christ in

speaking of God as Father meant his hearers to think of Him as One who is father and mother as well. Not improbably one of the main gifts which Indian *Bhakti* has in store for the world is a softening of that austere Jewish conception of the Divine Fatherhood, which still endures amongst us, and which makes us regard that Fatherhood too often as a stern and terrible thing.

The greatest single document of Indian *Bhakti* is the *Bhagavadgita*, which has been called the New Testament of the Hindus. The term is appropriate, except for the fact that the average Hindu pays a great deal more attention to the *Gita* than the average Christian pays to the New Testament. It would be impossible, for instance, for a Hindu to declare with a sneer that the precepts of the *Gita* cannot be put into practical application, as a distinguished British statesman declared not so many years ago that it was impossible to govern Ireland by the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. All over India to-day one may find men of every type, from distinguished lawyers and administrators down to the humblest peasants, who study the *Gita* in a spirit of reverent devotion, and endeavour with zealous piety to put its ideals into practice.

The main teaching of the *Gita* is twofold. In the first place Duty is to be done at all costs, and without ulterior motives. Again and again the worshipper is bidden to "renounce all fruits of action." This ideal

lies at the basis of the distinctively Hindu organisation of social, economic and industrial life. The individual is to work not from selfish motives, but for the sake of God and of the community.

In the second place, the lesson of personal devotion to a God who is personal, gracious and loving is taught consistently all through the *Gita*: "Freed from passion, fear and anger, filled with Me, taking refuge in Me, purified in the fire of wisdom, many have entered into my Being. . . . With mind and reason set upon Me, without doubt thou shalt come unto Me. . . . He who offereth to Me with trust and love a leaf, a flower, a fruit, a cup of water, that I accept from the aspiring soul, since it is offered with devotion and love. . . . Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou deniest thyself, do that as an offering to Me. . . . Thus shalt thou be set free from the bondage of fate: harmonised through self-forgetfulness and through striving for union with Me, thou shalt come unto Me when set free. . . . They verily who worship Me in trust and love, they are in Me and I in them. . . . Know for certain that he who trusteth and loveth Me perisheth never. . . . On Me fix thy mind: trust me: love Me: do sacrifice to Me: worship Me: harmonised thus in the Supreme Soul, thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy goal. . . . Whatsoever is glorious, good, beautiful and mighty, understand thou that to go forth from My

splendour. . . . By trust and love alone may I be known and apprehended, seen in my essence and entered into. . . . He who doeth his duty for Me, whose supreme good I am, My devotee, freed from selfish desire, without hatred of any being, he cometh unto Me. . . . Rest thy mind in Me: into Me let thy reason enter: then without doubt thou shalt abide in Me hereafter. . . . He who taketh equally praise and blame, who is silent, wholly content with what cometh. . . staunch in mind, full of devotion, that man is dear unto Me. . . . They verily who partake of this wisdom of immortal life, endued with faith, I their supreme object, filled with love and trust for Me, they are surpassingly dear unto Me. . . . By trust and love man knoweth Me in essence, Who and What I am: having thus known Me in essence, he forthwith entereth into the Supreme: though ever performing all actions, taking refuge in Me, by My grace he obtaineth the eternal abode. . . . Merge Thy mind in Me, trust and love Me, sacrifice to Me, worship Me—thou shalt come even to Me. I give thee my promise: thou art dear unto Me. . . . Come unto Me alone for shelter: sorrow not, I will give thee release from all thy sins."[1]

These are only a few instances, chosen almost at random, from the very large number of *Bhakti* utterances contained in the *Gita*. They will serve

[1] See Mrs. Besant's translation of the *Bhagavadgita*.

to illustrate the spirit of devotion which marks the *Bhakti* school of thought as a whole. It is devotion to a personal and loving Saviour-God; and its very existence demands inevitably a bending of the will, and therefore of the character, to follow the will of that God.

This being so, it is not to be wondered at that there are signs already plainly to be seen in India of the fact that a day is coming when this spirit of *Bhakti* shall be applied to the worship of Jesus Christ, in a manner which will reveal to the West the thinness and coldness of our own adoration of Jesus.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the greatest Indian leader of that day, Keshab Chandar Sen, who never became a Christian, said of Christ: "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus, ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem, India: and Jesus shall have it. . . . My Christ, my sweet Christ, the brightest jewel of my soul—for twenty years have I cherished Him in this my miserable heart. Though often defiled and persecuted by the world, I have found sweetness and joy unutterable in my Master Jesus. . . . The mighty artillery of His love He levelled against me, and I was vanquished and fell at His feet"

A younger contemporary of Keshab Chandar Sen was Ramakrishna Paramahansa, probably the greatest modern leader of the *Bhakti* religion. He exercised a profound influence upon the thought of

his own and subsequent generations, especially for the purging, renewing and spiritualising of Hindu religious observance. It is not too much to say that he gave Hinduism a social gospel. In his name philanthropic activities are still carried on in many parts of India for the uplifting of the depressed classes and the helping of the outcastes.

Ramakrishna once saw Jesus in a vision, and for three days 'could think and speak of nothing but Him.' The experience is thus described in M. Romain Rolland's life of Ramakrishna: "One day when he was sitting in the room of a friend, a rich Hindu, he saw on the wall a picture representing the Madonna and Child. The figure became alive. Then the expected came to pass according to the invariable order of the spirit; the holy visions came close to him and entered into him, so that his whole being was impregnated with them . . . Hindu ideas were swept away. . . . The spirit of the Hindu was changed. He had no room for anything but Christ. For several days he was filled by Christian thought and Christian love. . . . One afternoon in the grove of Dakshineswar he saw coming towards him a person with beautiful large eyes, a serene regard and a fair skin. Although he did not know who it was, he succumbed to the charm of his unknown guest. He drew near, and a voice sang in the depths of Ramakrishna's soul: 'Behold the Christ, who shed His heart's blood for the redemption of the world, who

suffered a sea of anguish for love of men.' . . . From that time Ramakrishna believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God."

Mahatma Gandhi's writings and speeches contain numerous references to Jesus Christ and to the Gospels. For example: "I have endeavoured to study the Bible, and consider it to be a part of my Scriptures. The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount competes almost on equal terms with the *Gita* for the dominion of my heart." . . . "It was the New Testament which really awakened me to the value of Passive Resistance. When I read in the Sermon on the Mount such passages as 'Resist not him that is evil: he who smiteth thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also, and 'Love your enemies, pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven,' I was overjoyed. . . . The *Gita* deepened the impression, and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* gave it a permanent form."

After the three weeks' fast, which he took upon himself in 1924, in order to change the spirit of hostility then existing between Hindus and Mohammedans into a spirit of good will, Mr. Gandhi requested a Christian friend of his, who was present when he broke his fast, to sing to him the well-known Christian hymn 'When I survey the wondrous Cross': and he has borne witness on other occasions to the powerful appeal which is made to him by

that hymn, and especially by its third verse. He insists that followers of his who are Christian shall show that they are true and convinced Christians: and his own work gives evidence in many respects of his desire to apply the methods of Jesus Christ, and of his conviction that the principles enunciated by Jesus Christ are still supremely true and valid.

It is significant that when, in 1922, Mr. Gandhi was arrested and tried, the trial was compared, far and wide through India, with the trial of Jesus Christ. The Hindu mind seemed to have been led, by Mr. Gandhi's work and example, to a deeper consideration than had ever taken place before of the meaning of Jesus Christ and of His standards of character and action.

Thus the case of Mr. Gandhi serves to show how the spirit of *Bhakti* may be applied, even by one who calls himself an orthodox Hindu, to the person of Christ, and may result in the reinterpretation of Christ and of His standards and principles, in a fashion which may be of importance not only for India but for the whole world.

There are numerous indications also of the manner in which Indian Christians may in the future apply the spirit of *Bhakti* to the same task of the rediscovery and reinterpretation of Jesus Christ. The name of Sadhu Sundar Singh is well known, in this connection, thoughout the West. As one of his Western

biographers[1] has said, "The consequences for India of this pioneer attempt to Christianise the sadhu ideal no man can foretell. Already four hundred young men have come to Sundar Singh, passionate to follow his example. . . . Suppose then that all over India there should arise Christian sadhus. . . . In a country so open to the appeal of religion the effect might be stupendous." The secret of Sundar Singh's power in India is his *Bhakti* of Jesus Christ. He is devoted to the service of Jesus in a way which India can understand. He has abandoned everything—home, wealth, friends, prospects in life—for the sake of Christ: and he has done so, not in a spirit of austere asceticism, but out of a deep personal adoration for the Saviour. Hence he has discovered, through his *Bhakti* of Jesus Christ, a way of serving Christ which fits in with the ancient Indian tradition of renunciation; and through which therefore he can appeal to India with a hundred times the power exercised by the average Western missionary.

Those who are personally acquainted with Sadhu Sundar Singh will bear witness to the fact that they have found in his friendship a peculiarly Christlike quality. He himself has said, "From my fourteen years' experience as a sadhu for Jesus Christ I can say with confidence that the Cross will bear those who bear the Cross, until it lifts them up to heaven, into the presence of their Saviour." This Christ-

[1] Canon Streeter in *The Sadhu*, p. 251.

inspired and Christ-aimed *Bhakti* has led to a new Indian Christlikeness, and to a new Indian conception of the sovereign meaning of the Cross.

Another instance of the *Bhakti* of Jesus Christ is to be found in the life-story of the Indian Christian poet, Narayan Vaman Tilak, who at the age of fifty-five relinquished all means of support in order to become a *sannyasi*, a renouncer. He expressed his motive for so doing in the following words: "I must be free of all human agencies, except in love and service, and must be bound entirely and for all purposes to Christ and the Gospel. . . . I am a Christian *sannyasi*, which means a follower of *anuraga* (love) and never of *viraga* (the Vedantic detachment from all emotion), and will try to be and do as I am bid by the Spirit of God." At the time of this decisive step N. V. Tilak wrote the following lyric of Christian *Bhakti*:

From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on.

My food I'll get in serving Thee;
Thy thoughts shall be as eyes to me.
I'll live and breathe to sing Thy praise
From this time onward all my days.
Thy feet I choose, the world resign,
For Thou from this day on art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine.

To Thee I offer child and wife,[1]
My home and all my worldly life;
To Thee this body too I bring,
To Thee surrender everything.
My very self henceforth is Thine.
O take it, Lord, for Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine.

My thoughts and words are all of Thee,
Thou—Wisdom, Joy and Liberty.
Now Thee and me no rift can part,
One, not in semblance, but in heart.
Set free am I, and for me shine
The joys of heaven, since Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine.

From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on.[2]

The culminating experience of Hindu *Bhakti* is that of *Samadhi*. This term signifies the state of full and unclouded vision of God which is the goal of mystical contemplation. Modern Christian mysticism in India maintains that the experience of *Samadhi* is for the Christian also, and that it forms the crown and fulfilment of the *Bhakti* of Jesus Christ. Sadhu Sundar Singh speaks much of this experience, which comes to him frequently. The

[1] I.e. consecrate. He never deserted them.

[2] Quoted from *Sushila and Other Poems* by N. V. Tilak in Winslow's *The Indian Mystic*: the following quotations are also taken from the same book. No translation can give the full value of Tilak's exquisite Marathi verse.