

HEATHEN ESSAYS

JAMES H. COUSINS

**UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY**

OU_212773

**UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY**

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Call No.

824.91 / ~~80664~~

Accession No.

30664

Author

Cousins, J. H.

Title

Heaven essay

This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.

HEATHEN ESSAYS

Books by James H. Cousins

ON TOPICS RELATED TO THIS BOOK

THE RENAISSANCE IN INDIA.—A survey of the cultural forces at present operating towards a revival in India, with special chapters on the Bengal movement in painting.

SAMADAKSANA: A STUDY IN INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY.—An examination of the influence of *Samadarsana* or *same-sightedness* fsynthesisj in the cultural expression of India.

THE PLAY OF BRAHMA.—An essay on the place of drama in national revival, with an analysis of its source, methods and purpose.

THE CULTURAL UNITY OF ASIA.—A study of the tendency to unification in Asian cultural movements.

WORK AND WORSHIP.—A plea for creative art as a promoter of true culture in educational systems; and an exposition of varieties of art-expression in Asia, racial, national, local and individual.

MODERN ENGLISH POETRY : ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND TENDENCIES.—A critical exposition from the point of view of intuition, intellect and aesthetical quality, with a chapter on Indian poets writing in English.

HEATHEN ESSAYS

BY

JAMES H. COUSINS

GANESH & CO., MADRAS

1925

FOREWORD

HEATHEN, *adj.* pagan, irreligious. **PAGAN**, *adj.* heathenish, pertaining to the worship of false gods.
[Chambers' Dictionary.]

The infallibility of Samuel Johnson and the lexicographical succession not being as yet declared, there is still time to rectify the contradiction of using the word 'irreligious' of those who 'worship false gods \ Worship, be its technique what it may, is a projection of the spirit of Man towards the Spirit of the Universe. The lines of that projection pass beyond the ostensible objects of the act of worship and converge in the Cosmic Personality, To distinguish between true and false gods is to make a false distinction, for there can be only one Being capable of bearing the universal qualities which all the religions have attributed to that Being. There is no false god. But to assert any one form of manifested life as a complete theophany of the Cosmic Personality is to assert an absurdity and to reduce the cosmos to a bag of tricks including one for making the physical part include the superphysical whole. It is equally absurd to assert that the Truth of the Universe can be hammered

into one set of dogmas whose particular mental formulation carries exclusive authority. Yet from such roots of falsehood is drawn the heady draught of religious exclusiveness and superiority which all along the ages has poisoned the blood-stream of humanity, and brought about the tragic paradox of the religions frustrating the true expression of the universal religious aspiration of humanity. This book, then, is directed neither against religion nor a particular religion, but against the claim of any system of religious thought and practice to be the only exponent of spiritual truth. It happens that that claim comes loudest from one direction, the Christian ; the rebutting of that claim comes therefore from the direction of the non-Christian aspect of Truth. In that sense these essays are heathen.

The chapters of this book were first written as special weekly articles in " New India."

J. H. C.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Civilisation and its Assumptions	. 1
The Assumption of Superiority .	. 9
The Assumption of Finality	. 16
India alid Civilisation .	. 27
In Defence of a Graven Image .	. 44
The New Politeness of Proselytism	. 55
Proselytism and National Expression	• 67
Truth and Performing Truths	. 74
The Future of Religion in Asia •	. 82

CIVILISATION AND ITS ASSUMPTIONS

THUS saith Dr. W. T. Ellis in an American • magazine with regard to the late Dr. Woodrow Wilson:

It may sound like an exaggeration to say so, but I think it is true that no other mortal man has ever attained so nearly absolutely universal fame as President Wilson. Often I have pondered the subject while in lands far outside the currents of civilised life—for the illiterate millions of Asia and the other backward continents must be considered in any summing up of really universal fame. They know nothing of the men ordinarily called famous in civilised lands. At best, fame is little more than local celebrity . . . But because of his magic appeal to the deepest sensibilities of all human life . . . the Wilson principles quickly spread to the uttermost parts of the earth. There the innate vitality of the ideals caused them to take root and to grow. As no other wholly human man had ever done before, Woodrow Wilson voiced the basic instincts and desires of the race.

The gist of this statement is that the uncivilised races appreciated the Wilson ideals equally with the civilised races.

This curious phenomenon throws a reflection on either the races or the ideals. An opponent of Wilsonism might retort to Dr. Ellis' claim— "So much the worse for Wilson's so-called

ideals, which were at the level of uncivilised appreciation." But this is not quite what Dr. Ellis intends. He means his statement to be a compliment to Dr. Wilson. In the trans-Pacific manner he gives his compliment a quantitative value by dragging in a few continents besides America.

A respectable American paper, conducting a voting campaign on a public question, prints a picture of the tallest building in New York, and puts beside it a line indicating that the voting-papers received, if piled on one another, would out-scrape the sky-scraper—an utterly irrelevant comparison the futility of which is capped by the further dazzling statement that the same voting-papers if set end to end would cover 75 miles. There is but one answer to these revelations—"Gee whizz!!" a phrase which makes cerebation superfluous. An Irish priest did it better. Introducing a lecturer whom he felt it his duty to "boost," he said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the learned lecturer is known all over the world, and several other places as well." The lecturer got a very respectful hearing. It may be that Dr. Ellis, in his zeal for the reputation of Dr. Wilson, felt it necessary to drag in the "uncivilised" races in order, so to speak, to draw his vote line

taller than the building of civilisation. When fame is merely universal it is coloured white; when it is "really universal," it must drag in the "uncivilised races".

But if it is necessary that the ear of the American public should be thus stretched longer than its normal length in order that it may take in a simple sound, it ought not to be necessary to put truth on the same rack. It may be true that the "uncivilised" peoples "know nothing of the men ordinarily called famous in civilised lands," and that such uncivilised ignorance may be no more a misdemeanour than the ignorance of America as to who or what or when is Shivaji, Damayanti or Ram Mohan Roy; but it is getting off the solid earth of fact into the "several other places" of fiction to say, at least of that portion of the "illiterate millions of Asia and the other backward continents" (why plural, unless it is a rap at modern Europe?) which dwells in India, that "at best, fame is little more than local celebrity". Dr. Ellis makes this statement in order to hang a dark background to show up the unique brilliance of his protege. But there are names besides that of Woodrow Wilson, names such as Tilak among the recently deceased, and Besant and Gandhi and Tagore

among the living, which are known to at least as many people in India as the total population of the United States—which leaves a fair margin (say 200 millions over and above the population of the United States) for any Indian who wishes to adopt the intellectual practice of drawing lines alongside the tallest thing on earth and playing the civilised game of beggar-my-neighbour.

Dr. Ellis' valuation of Dr. Wilson's fame is not, however, all quantitative. He gives a qualitative reason for its universality. His message appealed to the "deepest sensibilities of all human life"; he "voiced the basic instincts and desires of the human race". If this qualitative value was but a rhetorical flourish, one might take refuge from the blinding glare of this particular American's fame in another open-eyed "Gee whizz"! and pass on to other matters. But it happens that, as far as Dr. Wilson's fame in India is concerned, it is true. India accepted the Wilson ideals because they were fundamental, and to some degree reflected the age-long teachings of Hindu religion and philosophy. But here we come upon a curious see-saw. We are left with an impression of the wonderfulness of Wilsonism in being accepted by the "uncivilised"

racés as well as by the civilised, and of the wonderfulness of the "uncivilised" races in rising to the level of the civilised in their appreciation of Wilsonism ; and the joke, nay, the pitiful tragedy, is that while India *did* appreciate the idealism of the great American (who was great enough to need no exaggeration), European diplomacy had no use for it (with results that to-day are fit only for tears), and a majority of American citizens at the subsequent Presidential election rejected the man and his ideals.

There is something wrong in the thinking and expression that ramifies into such muddledom, and the wrongness is pivoted on that blessed word "civilisation" and its assumptions. It is a subtle and panther-like beast, this civilisation ; most difficult to track to its lair—for it has not any ; it is all over the place ; and protean.

"Silly how these Hindus say ⁴ 'good morning' in the afternoon," exclaimed an English gentleman to me one day. The emotional wave that swept through his offended being was twisty and swirly, and had deep implications linking up this assumed silliness with Hinduism and its assumed concomitant, uncivilisation. I changed the conversation to western drama, and we

waxed dithyrambic on many celebrated plays we had seen at *matinde* performances: *morning* performances that are in the *afternoon*! He was quick enough to see the intention of what at first appeared to be a digression into irrelevancy, and smiled a smile that had more recognition of my dialectic point than conviction of his own sin. It is quite right, and a sign of culture (Christian culture, if it comes to that), for an English theatre to have a matinee (morning) performance in the afternoon; it carries a lovely Frenchified flavour. But for Hindus to salute you with "good morning" at 2.30 p.m. is in some unspeakable way to be placed to the credit of heathenism, and is, therefore, discreditable. That is, in fact, the general attitude of West to East. If a "heathen" commits a sin, it is the natural result of his heathenism. If a Christian commits a sin, it is in spite of his Christianity.

We have not forgotten Dr. Ellis. We have a shrewd suspicion that beneath his record of the appreciation of Wilsonism by the "uncivilised" "backward" "illiterate" races there is the unspoken assumption that what they appreciated in the great President's world-mission was the fine flowering of Christian civilisation, a something natural, spontaneous, creditable—and as

naturally beyond creation by the "uncivilised" races. The plain fact, however, is that Wilsonism, and its immortal compression into the Fourteen Points, is only a product of civilisation by reaction, as the production of drastic medicine is a reaction to preceding disease, and the reverse to a health testimonial. The Fourteen Points were not fourteen "hurrahs" for civilisation, but fourteen indictments of it; and behind the points was the Christianity, not of the sects, but of Jesus Christ, one of the "illiterate millions of Asia".

Here we have the three elements in the muddledom brought together in mutual accusation: Christianity, civilisation, literacy. It is assumed that these are practically synonymous terms. On the contrary, the Christianity of Christ is the strongest accuser of the welter of greed, hatred, fear, immorality, unbelief, which has the effrontery to call itself a Christian civilisation. Look at Europe—in highly literate ruins, and anticipating still further ruination in "the next war". Look at America—her highly placed products of advanced literacy involved in financial scandals that cast suspicion on both State parties; her wealthy middle-classes "who sanction and participate in illegal traffic in intoxicating liquors," and so deeply implicate a

⁴⁴ respectable " British firm of distillers in smuggling that one of its heads commits suicide ; her boasted Christian civilisation and literacy of such a character that the editor of an American business paper is moved to write : " Every fairly intelligent person in the United States knows that bribery and fraud are not the exception, but the rule, in big business and politics " ; and an American Judge, inducting a junior, is compelled to brand America as the most criminal country on earth.

Look at these facts of so-called civilisation, and a hundred others like them. Then turn to the Sermon on the Mount, the spoken mandate of an " illiterate " Asiatic to specially chosen " illiterate " followers: after that, read the rock edicts of the Buddhist Emperor, Asoka, carved by that highly civilised ruler for the guidance of vast millions who reared something approaching a real civilisation over two thousand years ago ; ponder these things, and you will begin not only to realise the hollowness of the assumptions of unilluminated zealotry, but also to realise why awakening Asia is rising to the exalted and sanctifying hope that from her, as heretofore, will come the terribly needed impulse towards the spiritual regeneration of humanity.

THE ASSUMPTION OF SUPERIORITY

THE following paragraphs, taken from a newspaper published in Japan in American interests, illustrate the speculation that is proceeding in both western and westernised minds as to the relationships, present and probable, between East and West, particularly in the sphere of religion. Instead of discussing the various points that arise in a regular manner, I shall give the statements of the writer in full, and simply ask pertinent questions on challenging points :

The earthquake of last September disclosed that there is still living in Tokyo an old man who in the span of his 80 years has seen his country develop from the hermit nation of the 1850's to the enlightened and progressive Japan of to-day. He is Itto Kojima, the oldest member of the Episcopal Church, as well as the oldest living Christian in Japan. To what extent his own life exemplifies the advance Japan has made in Christian civilisation is illustrated in the fact that almost 50 years to the day from the consecration in Tokyo of Rt. Rev. Joseph Motoda as the first native Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Japan on December 7 last, Mr. Kojima was led into this city in chains for the crime of being a Christian.

Is the suggestion, that the religious liberty that everyone enjoys in Japan is a purely Christian characteristic, quite true?—or is its secondary suggestion true that religious intolerance is a non-Christian institution? or its tertiary implication that religious intolerance was a permanent feature of Japanese life prior to the incoming of "Christian civilisation" fifty years ago? ... Were the mutilations and slayings of Protestants by Catholics and Catholics by Protestants in Europe carried out by foreigners from non-Christian countries? Was the flight of the Pilgrim Fathers, to find religious liberty, from Japan—or Christian England? Has it been proved that the persons who shot others in the streets of an Irish city a couple of years ago for being adherents to a particular branch of Christianity, were Japanese in disguise? And was not the outburst in Japan against Christians fifty years ago simply a part of the reaction of a nation to a threat of foreign interference, in which threat the preaching of a foreign faith was seen as a denationalising element?

Mr. Kojima embraced Christianity in his youth and after various conflicts with the authorities for violating the edict against the foreign religion was finally arrested in Shimonoseki and under

guard of six Samurai carried to Tokyo, and was lodged in prison.

That was in 1873. He remained in prison for almost a year before his release which he ascribes to the influence of W. E. Gladstone, at that time Premier of Great Britain. According to a story which Mr. Kojima told recently to a representative of *The Japan Advertiser* who visited him in his quaint Japanese home at Shibuya, on the accession of the Emperor Meiji, an ambassador was sent to represent the Japanese at the British Court. During the ambassador's audience with Mr. Gladstone, the latter expressed his amazement at the fact that the Japanese who have accepted Buddhism from China, were intolerant of the Christianity of the West.

"If my people have been intolerant," replied the astute diplomat, "it was under a previous dynasty. It will be so no longer, under the reign of our enlightened Emperor Meiji."

"Then why detain Mr. Kojima in prison for being a Christian?" demanded Mr. Gladstone.

"Not because he is a Christian," was the reply of the wily envoy, "but because he has defied the Government."

Which was an exquisite Oriental subterfuge, since Itto Kojima's defiance of the Government consisted wholly in his violation of the edict against Christianity. Nevertheless, six months later, when the diplomat returned to Tokyo, he secured the release of the imprisoned Christian.

Is it quite within the realm of historical intelligence to pose a Japanese ambassador **and** Gladstone together, and **dub** the **former**

"astute" with the inference that the latter (nicknamed by the Irish politicians "the serpent") was a paradigm of innocence? And is it quite within the province of journalistic good manners (to say nothing of policy) for a journal existing on the good-will of an oriental country to publish the declaration that "subterfuge" is an oriental invention unknown in Christian countries?—on which point one will receive some illumination by asking any one who has been actively engaged in any real reform in England (such as the Woman Suffrage movement) as to the presence or absence of subterfuge in the make-up of certain political leaders. Ask Winston Churchill about Ramsay MacDonald—and vice versa.

Mr. Kojima, almost blind, but in vigorous health, hails the establishment of an independent Japanese Church under the administration of an Episcopal Bishop as the dawn of a new era in Japan.

"I almost feel," said he, "that the earthquake was the final shaking off by my country of the religious prejudices of the ages. I believe that Japan with the help of Christian America will go forward now with ever increasing acceptance of the Christianity of the West to the enlightened destiny which is marked out for her."

Did the earthquake manage to shake off *all* the religious prejudice; or did it leave just a

little bit still sticking somewhere? Is there a touch of conscience (or a faint glimmer of humour) in Mr. Kojima's "feeling", which is not complete, but just "almost"? And what is the third America—(1) North America, (2) South America, (3) "Christian America"? Does it mean that there is a department within the geographical America (U.S.A.) that may be labelled Christian? How many Americans live the life laid down by Jesus Christ (see the Sermon on the Mount)? Or does it mean that America is all Christian? Ask the Fundamentalists, then ask the Modernists, then ask the Ku Klux Klan about the "Jews and Jesuits". And what is this "Christianity of the West"? Is it a recognition of the difference that some people see between the sectarian distortions of a Europeanised version of an Asian religion, and the plain faith and practice of the religion of Jesus Christ for want of which, some claim, the world, and particularly the so-called Christian world, is in its present parlous condition?

Harking back to the matter of persecution, and as an assertive instead of interrogative anti-toxin to the poisonous implication that Japan's recognition of religious freedom was a sign of progress from intolerance peculiarly

heathen to a tolerance peculiarly Christian, I take the following from the *Nation* (America):

Don Miguel de Unamuno is in Spain what Tolstoi was in Russia, what D'Annunzio is in Italy, Anatole France in France, Maeterlinck in Belgium, Bernard Shaw in England. He is the glory of the Spanish nation. Don Miguel de Unamuno has made Spanish culture famous. The depth and human understanding of his work remove it from the barriers of nations and the bonds of time. His work has been translated into all languages, and has been studied and discussed throughout the world. He has created power and beauty.

Don Miguel de Unamuno, Professor of Greek at the University of Salamanca, and Dean of it as well, has done a great work. This old University, which once rivalled the University of Paris and was the nucleus of the greatest culture of the Spanish Renaissance, was proud to have at its head the most important intellectual in Spain. Professor, novelist, teacher, critic, poet, the finest poet in Spain to-day, Senor Unamuno is furthermore the great agitator of modern Spanish and European life. His press campaigns, keen, able, and stimulating, found their response in the youth and life of Spain. It is for this reason that Don Miguel de Unamuno was removed from his post and taken to Fuerte Ventura, a small island lost in the Atlantic, where the excessively hot climate will soon destroy the health of the great writer.

fijeneral Primo de Rivera attempted to justify his absurd action by saying that Senor Unamuno was not fulfilling his duties at the University. But this is a lie and a base slander, because, according to the testimony of the entire faculty of the University of Salamanca, he is a model Professor and Dean . . .

The real crime of Don Miguel is that he, as a democrat, dared to criticise the present military dictatorship in Spain, and against him are ranged not only the military and capitalists, but the high clergy of the Christian Church. These facts show that in the matter of subterfuge and persecution non-Christian Japan can go to school in Christian Spain.

THE ASSUMPTION OF FINALITY

DR. N. G. MUNRO, formerly Director of Yokohama General Hospital, concludes thus an article in *The Japan Advertiser* on the state of affairs in Japan, following the American legislation against Japanese immigration :

" A spiritual tide is rising in this land. The cry is 'Light, more light!' When Einstein was here he kindly asked me to accompany him to a great teaching institution where he had to show himself and make a short address. Never shall I forget the thrilling enthusiasm of 5,000 Japanese students, whose youthful countenances, beaming with gladness, and whose hearty shouts of greeting would have melted the stoniest heart that ever stood for racial disparity. Here was no anti-foreign spirit such as was betokened by the agitation and action in the United States. It was a spirit of joyful communion and, one might almost say, of adoration, that took no account of colour, but felt uplifted in the presence of a light of the world. Such are the boys and men who have

been slapped in the face by the contemptuous gesture of the United States Senate.

" By spiritual tide is meant something more than intellectual acquisition. Although the Japanese are known to be a sentimental people, they are not commonly taken as generally religious. It is true that the educated Japanese has outgrown Nature-worship for the most part, and that few seriously take Shinto as more than a ritual cult to be observed for national or official ends. Buddhism is now so tainted with sacerdotal and superstitious observance that its higher appeal is almost smothered. Yet there has recently been a considerable revival of interest in the fine ethics of Buddhism, such literature being in very great demand. Not less significant is the vast increase of literature on religion generally and on human problems associated with religion. The phase of materialism incidental to the new industrialism and reflecting the materialistic views of the nineteenth century is passing away and the Japanese are seeking for a reliable faith. Were it not that Christianity is so palisaded by incredible dogma, not at all essential to its existence, it would, I feel sure, make rapid progress in this country. While it has been an uplifting agency ethically and in respect to its

immense educational effort, for which the Japanese cannot be too thankful, it is too much to expect scientifically thinking Japanese to prefer the dogma, say, of the Virgin Birth to physical and biological information. But I am convinced that the wholesome truth that forms the real core of Christianity would find a warm echo in Japanese hearts, were it presented in the way now favoured by Liberal Christianity.

"One tremendous stumbling-block must be noticed, even more deterrent to the prospect of Christian propagation in Japan than theoretical dogmas, which chiefly affect the intellectuals. So long as Christian nations humiliate the Japanese by branding them as an inferior race, Christianity, itself the lofty religion of humanity, can hardly be expected to become the religion of the Japanese. Little wonder that altruistic missionaries of Christianity in Japan are even more righteously indignant than are the Japanese at this latest spectacle of racial disparity."

To this plain-spoken statement of the stumbling-blocks to religious proselytism in Japan, we add an article by Dr. W. E. Orchard in *The Westminster Gazette*, first, however, suggesting, as a footnote to Dr. Munro's statement that Japan would welcome "the wholesome truth

that forms the real core of Christianity," that it hardly seems worth while putting Japan to the trouble to get the core (which the Christian Churches will hardly release from its "palisade of incredible dogma") of a foreign faith when she has it in her age-long Buddhist teaching. When the world realises that the core of all the religions both in faith and practice is the same, the millennium will be at the door. Now for Dr. Orchard.

"It is frequently affirmed that our country is lapsing into a pagan condition. Sometimes men will be described as 'perfect pagans,' and sometimes persons will so describe themselves. What this ascription of paganism generally means, however, is that people have lost faith in God and have no interest in religion.

"Originally paganism meant anything but that. 'Pagani' were the people who lived in villages; for in the early days of Christianity, when the towns were the first to adopt the new faith, it so happened that the people in the villages remained unevangelised, or clung to their old beliefs and practices. But that did not mean that they were without religion and had no god; their whole life was dominated by religion; they had swarms of gods; the year was crowded with religious festivals, and at

every turn in life some god had to be invoked or placated. Therefore, when the modern person describes himself as a pagan because he has no religion, he is grossly misusing the word.

⁴⁴ And yet there is a sense in which our age does show signs of returning to paganism: The widespread interest in cults, the adoption of Oriental philosophies and religions, slightly adapted to meet modern tastes and prejudices, the proposal that we should recover the natural gaiety of the Greek spirit before it was gloomed by Greek pessimism—all these are deliberate endeavours to return to the pre-Christian and pagan outlook. It is a somewhat astonishing movement, because it can often be noted as taking place where Christianity has been rejected as outworn, mediaeval, or pre-scientific.

⁴⁴ It seems a strange thing to refuse our religion because it is not modern, and then to go back to another which is still more ancient and even less touched by the modern spirit. It is extraordinary, too, that people should reject Christianity because it seems somewhat pessimistic in its outlook on life and somewhat severe in its asceticism, when these are balanced by other considerations, and adopt a religion like Buddhism, whose outlook on life is unrelievedly

pessimistic, since it regards existence as nothing but suffering, and where everyone must become a monk in order to practise the discipline necessary to attain to that cessation of desire which alone can bring release from suffering.

" It is curious, too, that the idea of the Incarnation as set forth in the Christian doctrine of how God became man in Christ should be rejected as philosophically inconceivable and mythologically impossible, and that a sort of westernised Hinduism should be accepted in which God is conceived as incarnate in all humanity, or the doctrine of reincarnation used to explain the existence of personality in anyone. It is often the very people who dislike the sacramentalism of Christianity who propose that we ought to go back and adopt something like the rites and ceremonies of the Greek mysteries, which as a matter of fact seem prophetic premonitions of the Christian rites of Baptism and the Eucharist. This movement is surely due to a very slight understanding of the old religions which are being taken up, and surely a very great misunderstanding of the doctrines and experience of Christianity. The endeavour to recapture the spirit of Greek paganism is still more astonishing, since it is generally undertaken by those who would be very scornful if a

return was suggested to mediaeval economics; which in some respects were so much saner than the economic ideas which govern modern society . . .

"Surely if we go back and recover the spirit of these ancient times before the questionings of intellect or conscience had begun, we should only be starting a process which would inevitably develop along the lines which man's thought and religion have historically followed. If the unconcern of the Greek mind was broken up by the penetrating questions of Socrates, was taken captive by Platonic idealism, and then was conquered by Christianity, how could those processes be prevented from happening all over again ?

"The putting of this question, however, raises a certain hope concerning the return to paganism which the modern spirit seems bent on pursuing. As the babe in its pre-natal condition recapitulates the stages of pre-human development, so it seems necessary that our generation should recapitulate the religious history of the race. After all, modern paganism, in so far as it is worthy of the name, registers some advance on sheer religious indifference, and when we see a person beginning to adopt pantheistic Hinduism, which reduces all individual existence

to illusion, and then adopting the doctrine of reincarnation, one can almost predict that the next move must be to be a sort of Buddhism in which the pain of existence is numbed by the adoption of interior indifference; and just as these Oriental religions filtered through to Greek thought through the Orphic mysteries, and Greek thought prepared the way for Christianity, so these people may really be undergoing the stages that are necessary for their personal appreciation of the Christian religion.

" It sometimes looks as if the world has got into its second childhood, but it may be that it is only going back in order to pick up for itself afresh the meaning of religious development. It would waste much less time if these people would begin where we are now ; for they could find the mysticism of Hinduism, the asceticism of Buddhism, the ritual of the Greek rites, the philosophy of Plato, all that was good and true in them, brought together, refined, and embodied in the religion which owes its rise to Christ and its development to the guidance of His Spirit. If people must go all round the world to get next door, and begin at the beginning in order to arrive at to-day, they must; but for many of us life is too short for such unnecessary experiments. It is when we take

our stand within the Christian religion that the past is with us as a still living and creative impulse, baptised into a new significance in Christ."

Dr. Orchard thinks it strange that people should revert from Christianity to ancient pre-Christian ideas. But if newness is to be a determining factor in religious selection, then surely the argument passes from Christianity to Islam—and all subsequent religions. He thinks it curious that people who cannot accept the Bible story of the Incarnation (see Dr. Munro on this) are able to accept the Hindu conceptions of God as incarnate in all humanity, and of reincarnation. But a Hindu might argue that it is curious that Dr. Orchard cannot accept the conception of the omnipresence of God (which surely includes humanity—and which is a Christian dogma, indeed, that is not paid heed to) or of reincarnation (which is both expressed and implied in the Christian scriptures and professed by early Christian writers), and yet can accept the story of the Virgin Birth. The argument, as argument, is equally logical either way; though, when its quality is considered, the weight is on the side of a conception of orderly periodicity in the manifestation of life, and against the physiological miracle of the

Virgin Birth when this is taken as a material fact.

In the sophistry that takes the place of true cerebration in all such arguments, the vitiating element is the ever present assumption of the finality and exclusiveness of the Christian conception. It is this assumption that makes Dr. Orchard write the fallacy that there were no questions of intellect or conscience prior to the Christian era. The oriental religions "filter through to Greek thought," and Greek thought—No! it would not square with the let-down-from-heaven-by-a-string notion of Christian origins to admit that it went through the filter; it "prepared the way" for Christianity. The filtering process recommences after Christianity; Christian thought may filter through to other systems, but Christianity cannot be just a preparer of the way for any succeeding religion. Its God gets a capital G, and the others only get small g's.

Dr. Orchard reverts to the chronological argument in his last paragraph; and the logical progression of the pre-natal parallel beyond the Christian stage he pulls up with his assumption of finality. If the process is a true process, why should it stop at the Christian boundary of birth, and not go on growing? If, as Dr. Orchard

says, it is a waste of time to go back beyond Christianity, why even go back beyond Islam, or Bahaim which is nearer still? These questions throw just a trace of a shadow over his mind, for he tries to short-circuit them by speaking of Christianity as a thing " now ". In other words he claims a two thousand years old religion as modern simply because of its continuity, but Buddhism, and Hinduism are not permitted the same logic.

INDIA AND CIVILISATION

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD, speaking at the Free Churches Congress at Brighton, said :

People who were rich and extravagant, people who were ostentatiously vulgar, were too often the powerful people in these modern times of which we too rashly boasted. This was a materialistic age, and there was no use in talking humbug about it, proceeded Mr. MacDonal. After pointing out that chemistry and physics, if another war broke out, would be used, not to make the soldier's task easier to end wars, but to destroy peoples, he declared that the idea of "class " was poisonous to the social mind, and, referring to modern scientific development, said that in these days of the aeroplane, we were as insecure as in the days of the big club.

This is a short account of a long speech ; the points are themselves apparently condensed. But as they stand, they have certain bearings, as all true utterances have, on matters beyond their immediate purport.

The then Prime Minister of England, out of his deep and long study of human affairs, informs us that wealth and vulgarity are still calculable elements in worldly power. He

admits the boasting about modern times, and calls it rash. He adds that this is a materialistic age, and indicates that there is a good deal of humbug talked about it, inasmuch as he is moved to utter a warning against such humbug.

The report does not tell us what geographical boundaries Mr. MacDonald set to these elements of the present age; and we wish to make a delimitation, which we are sure Mr. MacDonald himself would accept, but which is not likely to be taken for granted, as it should be, by the general public who read the report of his remarks. We wish to exclude India from Mr. MacDonald's "modern times" and "materialistic age". The exclusion could also apply to other parts of Asia.

We deny that wealth and vulgarity are, to any great extent, factors in power in India. Renunciation, not possession, is India's final value in human character and influence. The men and women of power in India to-day, as in all times, are either those who have rid themselves of the fetters of possession in order that they may the more freely serve humanity, or those who regard possessions as a temporary trust, and look forward to ultimate freedom for devotion to the highest. India knows the spiritual and economical

truth that is involved in the Biblical phrase: "As poor, yet making many rich." She knows also that the converse of the phrase ("as rich, yet making many poor") represents the fundamental fact of the self-destructive association of antagonistic human units which calls itself "civilisation," and which sends its hustlers to her doors with vigorous offers of training and help in the wonderful business of mutual exploitation.

We deny also that India to any notable extent participates in the materialism of the present age. Where, in this respect and in respect of the accumulation of wealth, she may err to some small extent through external influences, her error is the microscopic exception, not the rule, and is against the whole tendency of her genius. Materialism is the natural outcome of a view of the universe which sees humanity as a congeries of individuals warring their way, against one another and against their environment, upward from the non-entity of protoplasm to the assertion of the right of the individual to achieve what he regards as his felicity at the expense, if necessary, of his neighbour; a view that also sees a life of a few years, and a declaration or denial of belief in one or other of a set of rival religious formulae, as the factors

determining an eternity of torture or bliss. This is not India's view of the universe. From time immemorial she has asserted that the universe is really a universe, the elaboration of the Life of the One Divine Being into limitations and varieties within Itself for Its own joy. In this Life every atom shares, according to its ability to respond to impacts from beyond itself. Groupings take place, and the evolution of media of various grades of consciousness which become increasingly aware of themselves, later of one another, and ultimately of the universal Self. Such, in a few words (and with a recognition of the exceptional departures from its implications as to conduct), is the dominating, pervading, shaping thought of India. It sees for humanity a spiritual origin and a spiritual destiny, and between first and last an interaction that loses intolerance in its remembrance of the universal source, and sheds materialism in its anticipation of a super-material destiny.

Further, in Mr. MacDonald's forecast of the technique of "another war," we must point out that whatever proportion of the chemical and physical constituents "to destroy peoples" would be exported from India (through a commercial system that is at present mainly influenced from the "materialistic age" that lies beyond

India's borders), neither India's heart nor hand would go to the transformation of the beneficent offerings of Nature into means of destruction. "While western science is feverishly searching for new means of deadly attack and defence, Indian science (in the person of one of the long line of preachers and demonstrators of the unity and mutuality of life, J. C. Bose) is climbing beyond the illusory barriers between the kingdoms of nature and revealing ways and means to a more intelligent, conscious and benignant co-ordination of humanity with itself and its environment; and the work of this great *Rishi* of to-day (which will only be seen in its full significance as years go by) is inspired and guided by India's age-long vision of the unity and solidarity of God, Man and Nature.

It is only in the realisation of this cosmic truth, and in its application in the details of life's activity, that "the blessing of an assured peace" can be secured. In the matter of physical safety, says Mr. MacDonald, the aeroplane (an assumed engine of protection) leaves life as insecure as it was in the ages of primitive savagery. The reason for the failure of so-called civilisation to rise more than nominally out of savagery is not far to seek, from the Indian point of view: behind the physical

phenomenon of defence stands the poisonous psychological assumption of something that there is need to be defended from. Where that instinctive enemy-attitude (the natural outcome of the materialistic conception of the universe) has led the West to, is seen in the following press references to a speech by Sir Oliver Lodge at the same Conference as Mr. MacDonald spoke at:

Man is bringing about his own destruction with such engines of war as tanks, submarines, and aeroplanes, directed from a distance under wireless control, but without human beings inside them, said Sir Oliver Lodge, the famous scientist, in a lecture to the Free Church Council at Brighton.

"This is what we shall be coming to if sanity is not recovered," said Sir Oliver. "It is massacre toward which humanity is now again tending. Mutual extermination may be the destiny of man if he wills it so. It is for mankind to decide."

"To-day," he said, "the fighting instinct is prominent, and has blossomed into irrational forms which inflict untold misery . . . Happiness is not so super-abundant on this planet that we can afford to spend our energies in damaging and hurting each other. The evil is a disease of civilisation, a mania which has accompanied material progress. It is a devil and can and must be cast out."

Sir Oliver Lodge's speech comes at an interesting juncture in a debate which has proceeded in England for many weeks, as a result of Mr. John Galsworthy's plea for an international agreement whereby scientists would set their faces against the use of new inventions for destructive purposes.

Besides the distinguished novelist and essayist, the Hon. Bertrand Russell has contributed to the discussion in his book, "Icarus, or the Future of Science"*. In this book he contends that science threatens to cause the destruction of civilisation.

Sir Oliver Lodge regards this appalling menace as "a disease of civilisation" and as a devil to be cast out. But the process of extermination will fail just so long as the surgeons and physicians of civilisation regard the disease and the devil as intrusions, and fail to see that they are the natural result of civilisation itself as it is conceived in "civilised" countries. The "mania" of mutual destruction has not (as Sir Oliver is reported as saying) merely "accompanied *material* progress"; it is its entirely legitimate offspring. So long as a materialistic value is placed on life, so long will it set up false separations in order that through these and upon these it may glut its evil desire. The safeguard against this is not in Mr. Galsworthy's⁴⁴ "international agreement," it is in the orienting of the thought, feeling and action of humanity towards the spirit—in other words, the realisation in conception and the fulfilment in life of India's master-teaching that "there is no truth apart from the unity of things".

Where materialism prevails it can only produce, as lures of an illusory progress, the

semblances of strength that will ultimately clash into catastrophic weakness. Where spirituality prevails, and is allowed free growth, there can only be progress from strength to strength in the natural increase of mutual helpfulness and the elevation and happy intensification of life in its highest expressions. An American writer says: "As civilisation grows, it becomes more fragile"—to which India makes answer: '* It is not civilisation if it grows into fragility."

The writer referred to is Dr. Frank Crane, who contributes about three hundred words of "Day by Day Philosophy" to the world through the McClure Newspaper Syndicate. His daily philosophy is copyright—a highly civilised invention to prevent anyone but the author and the publishers from reaping any material benefit from what ought to be (in the uncivilised philosophy of India) a free gift to human thought. We quote some passages from one of these copyright philosophisings:

As civilisation grows, it becomes more fragile. The existence of life and all the products of life are more precarious to-day than in any preceding generation . . . All the police and detectives on earth can not adequately protect. The only protection is the development of the moral control of the people.

And that means the whole people. Civilisation is at the mercy of its weakest and wickedest. . .

The knowledge of fearful poisons, high explosives and dangerous weapons has spread to the commons. And this knowledge has spread faster than the power of restraint over it. The only kind of education that will be an effective insurance policy for society is an education not of the few but of the swarming millions . . .

The motive of former days, that we should try to make people moral and conscientious so that they might get to Heaven, is hardly sufficient now. We need to realise that unless we prosecute some vigorous form of evangelism that will increase the moral inhibitions of the people, we are travelling toward destruction.

In his diagnosis of the state of civilisation, Dr. Crane gives transatlantic support to Mr. MacDonald, Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. John Galsworthy and the Hon. Bertrand Russell. His cure, however, is different. Sir Oliver, like a good psychological researcher, wants to cast out the devil of destructiveness. The report of Mr. MacDonald's address gives us the bare inference that salvation will come through escape from materialism and class consciousness. Mr. Galsworthy wants an international agreement of scientists against destructive inventions.

Dr. Crane calls for more and better education. His idea of better education is to find a more effective motive for right conduct than the gaining of Heaven, and to "increase the moral inhibitions of the people". Now if there is one

thing that the application of psychology to education has emphasised more than another, it is that inhibitions on conduct have a nasty trick of merely disappearing underground and setting up a subtle putrefaction in subsequent conduct. To put a gun in a western boy's hands and tell him he must not use it, may sound an excellent academic way of combating the militarist spirit in youth, but it is playing the fool with that type of human nature. Not far from a hundred per cent of the evils of humanity exist because they have been inhibited. "Thou shalt not do this or that" is just a challenge to human cussedness and egotism. A negative morality leads straight to its own negation.

There is, however, a state of consciousness in which inhibitions are, so to speak, unconscious. We are all familiar with persons who are proof against certain temptations ; to whom a life of innocence in certain respects is automatic and temperamentally characteristic. If we study such persons attentively we shall see that, in the majority of cases, the impulses of life are concentrated on some pursuit that absorbs time and energy ; the higher nature of the individual makes a positive demand on its external implements in the physical world and creates a complementary area of negative response to

certain outer impacts. It is the attainment of this negative response to obnoxious impacts (such as the impulse to destructiveness) that is probably what Dr. Crane means by an increase of "the moral inhibitions of the people". But that attainment is only fully and stably possible under the uplifting and purifying stress of an ideal; and the highest ideal is the essential divinity of every atom of life, and its Heavenly destiny. To remove the motive of Heaven from conduct in the hope of elevating conduct, is to strip a hoist of its chain and expect the load beneath to rise. Materialistic and inadequate as the Heaven ideal has been, and is, in western religious exegesis, it is still a recognition of the larger and more excellent life whose call troubles the human soul. To eliminate or further reduce that ideal would be to rob western "civilisation" of its last hope of recovery from its self-inflicted wounds.

The failure of "civilisation," as India sees it, is just in proportion to its failure to grasp the spiritual nature of things and to apply spiritual standards to conduct. Life looked at from above is seen in relatively true perspective and grouping. Life looked at on its own level can have only a local, and therefore an incomplete

and distorted, appearance. Unfortunately it is this horizontal view of life that has made "civilisation" the troubler of the world and ultimately of itself. The "level-headed" man has been the curse of humanity.

We see this non-Heavenly attitude to life in the recently enacted laws against Asiatic immigration into America. In the argument for Japanese exclusion nothing remotely resembling an ideal is enunciated: all is at the dollar level. The racial and cultural difference of the Japanese might be tolerated, but their economical non-assimilability never. The head and front of their offending is that they live more economically than Americans; and in the crazy topsy-turvydom that says, the more complicated, numerous and expensive your wants, the more civilised you are, the door is closed on the simplicity of Asia—on the simplicity of the life and teaching of Jesus the Asiatic, in the practice of which lies the world's peace. And now the devil of destruction shows its ugly face in acts of mutual animosity that have in them the possibilities of God knows what future catastrophe; and the statue of Liberty stands as a cynical jest till the consciousness of America rises above the surface of life and rectifies a great wrong against herself.

The same low-level attitude is seen in operation in the religious relationship of East and West. Instead of the Asian prophet Micah's dream of unity-in-variety of worship of God, and Jesus Christ's divine vision of a spiritual fold that would be large enough to contain "other sheep who are not of this fold" besides the community that was grouped about His person, we have the rival efforts of non-Asian perversions of the Gospel of Asia to reduce the vast and natural variety of religious devotion to a mechanical uniformity of conception and expression. And in pursuit of this ultimately futile end we have two assumptions that make hay of thought and emotion: the assumption of the eternal rightness of the propagandist of a "Christian civilisation" (which has been a contradiction of terms for two thousand years), and the assumption of the eternal wrongness of the "heathen"—even when his wrongness is a duplication of Christian history. Mark the following from an American newspaper published in Asia:

A new religion which he considers a "menace to China" is reported from Shantung by the Rev. Joseph Weiss, S.V.D., of the Shantung Mission of the Society of the Divine World. The report tells of the advances made and the converts received by a cult recently established by one Tang Huan

Chang, a native of Szechuan, who declares he has the divine mission of consolidating all earthly religions. Tang, who has prophesied that one-third of the human race will be obliterated next September, has won many followers by appealing to their superstitions.

The offence of Tang is twofold. He seeks to consolidate the religions of the world. This will never do—for does not the Society of the Divine World seek to do the same, and by the more drastic method of annihilation of the others. Tang also prophesies catastrophe, and thus appeals to the "superstitions" of the Chinese. By a curious coincidence, The New Testament records the same catastrophic appeal by the early propagandists of Christianity; but Tang is more modest than they, for while he (if he is reported correctly) consigns a mere one-third of humanity to obliteration, the others proclaimed the coming end of the world: but the term "superstition" does not apply to them! The belief in the supernatural and miraculous is a Christian virtue—but a heathen offence.

India has had her own experience of this inadequate horizontal aspect of religion. She has had her ancient and profound philosophies belittled, her great religions distorted and misinterpreted, her supreme presentations of

various aspect of the Divine Being made mock of; and her day of tolerant endurance is not yet over. She is still to be treated to " education " as a " God-given channel " for her religious perversion. She is to have medical work among the ' natives ' to turn her away from her faith, to a denial of the truths of the Universe that she has given in fulness and clarity to the world. A recent threat of this experience comes from Ireland, a country in which hatred between the two rival divisions of Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) vitiates practically every activity of life ! At the recent annual meeting of the Irish branch of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, the Organising Secretary said that—

Until the Society's work among the women of India was brought up to the level of that done among the men, India would not be properly Christianised. The insatiable craving for knowledge which marked the inhabitants of India, she continued, was a God-given channel through which the message of the Gospel could be brought to the ignorant masses.

In regard to the Society's medical work among the natives, there was a great lack of doctors, nurses and supplies, and the great problem was how to remedy this state of affairs. Unless Christians availed of the present opportunity to come to the rescue, India would suffer greatly, and it would be a very long time before she would definitely turn to Christianity.

Thus are education, and what ought to be a simple human service without ulterior motive, to be degraded to the level of touts and carpet-baggers on behalf of a limited view of the universal and ineradicable religious function in humanity. Here the Heaven-motive (which Dr. Crane would have superseded) is in full activity; but the criticism of India is not against the Heaven-motive as such: Indian religion and philosophy see Heaven as an eternal verity. In the subtler presentations of the psychology of human relationship with the Universal Being she comprehends the truth phrased by Christ in "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you". She sees the universal activity as the creative joy of the Divine Personality, and the purpose of evolution as the setting free of the spiritual energy that is the central impulse in every atom and every group of atoms. As a consequence, India sets no store by nomenclature as her would-be mentors do. She will agree with them as to the reality of Heaven, but smile compassionately on the emphasis laid on the necessity of abandoning the Indian *Swarga* and seeking the region of what Mathew Arnold called "the eternal tea-party"• In the Indian view, labels are all right in their own place and for their own use. You may,

without harm, attach a label to yourself, so long as you treat it as a label and do not let it usurp reality; but you can never, without detriment to yourself and everyone else, attach yourself to a label—for this (the mistaking of the temporal for the eternal, the part for the whole, the accident for the reality, the letter for the spirit) is the source of all materialism (religious materialism as well as economical materialism) in thought and act, from which emanates the boastfulness and self-deception that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald sees and deplors in western civilisation.

India's cure for these distempers, for Sir Oliver Lodge's "disease" and Dr. Crane's "fragility" of civilisation, is the simple placing of life on its true spiritual pivot, and the attainment of the vision and practice of the One Divine Life manifesting in multitudinous interdependent limitations of Itself.

IN DEFENCE OF A GRAVEN IMAGE

THE road to heaven is paved with bad intentions—which are all the more difficult to trample on, if they cannot be tramped over, because they are unaware of themselves and are bad with the best of intentions. Of these intentions perhaps the worst is the religious intention, which is mainly wielded by the irreligious. From the initial fallacy of exclusiveness and separate superiority, the debased religious intention acts on the universal and eternal religious function in humanity in such a way that it is diverted from its universality and immortality into temporal bigotries. It turns the homely fire of human devotion to the Supreme Spirit into a little bitter flame of dogmatic frenzy. It reduces a natural and universal function to the level of barter and exclusive ownership; and having made God a sectarian partisan, and shut Truth in a book, it allows ignorance (which is vulgar because unintelligent, and offensive because merely articulate) to swagger in dull assumptions of superiority.

In the storming of the Bastille in which the aspiring and expanding spirit of humanity is chained and tortured, the last barrier to go down will be that of religious separation. Search down to the foundation of every problem as between the various groupings of humanity to-day, and you will find that the deepest layer in the structure of division is religion. It is so as between North and South Ireland. It is so as between Catholic and Protestant Christendom (ask the Ku Klux Klan). It is so in the relationships between the occidental nations and Asia. Economic problems are adjustable; racial prejudices are surmountable by familiarity; but the assumptions of dogmatic religion are so drastic that a true affinity between people self-assigned to eternal bliss and others assigned by them to eternal damnation is practically impossible. You cannot give your whole mind to one on whom you scent the nether brimstone.

There is, of course, a certain mental ease in these assumptions. They make swift and simple decisions possible. There is no complication in the question of the superiority of the most unlettered inhabitant of the slums of Glasgow over the most enlightened pandit of Madras. "After all, Tagore is only a heathen." And (blessed privilege!) while warmly resenting

as blasphemy any disparagement of the paraphernalia of your faith by a heathen, you have the manifest right, nay, duty, to pour scorn on their "idolatrous images". For example, of one of the world's masterpieces of craftsmanship in the service of religious devotion you may write as follows, as wrote a describer of a series of travel pictures in an American album that had a large circulation :

Dia-Butsu.—A. golden Japanese idol which weighs over a million pounds. Two miles out from Kamakura and about twenty miles from Yokohama, Japan, on a terrace near the temple of Kamakura, sits this, the most gigantic idol or heathen god now known to exist. This immense brazen image of a deity was built or made during the reign of Shomu, who was forty-sixth in the present line of emperors, and who died in the year A.D. 748. This idol which has been prayed to daily for more than twelve hundred years by the crowd of devotees that early clustered about it, is still in perfect repair, and justly reckoned as one of the greatest wonders in the Orient. The dimensions of the god are truly colossal. This image weighs about four hundred and fifty tons, and is made of a combination of gold, tin, copper and mercury, in these proportions. Gold, five hundred pounds ; tin, sixteen thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven pounds; mercury, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-four pounds; copper, nine hundred and eighty-six thousand and eighty pounds ; a total of one million five thousand three hundred and sixty-one pounds. All other existing colossal images are pigmies compared with *Dia-Butsu*, whose hard-visaged face has looked down on the meaningless rites

of heathen idolators for more than twelve centuries.

The foregoing is put with more detail and less music than Dr. Robert Bridges' "Oxford Pageant" poem in which he sings of coral seas "where Buddha's vain pagodas throng the air". But the spirit is the same—self-superiority; and the cause of that spirit is the same—ignorance. In the case of the Poet Laureate it is ignorance pure and simple, for the poet is pure in intention and simple of mind; and the circulation of his falsehood is negligible. In the other case the ignorance is complicated through unintelligence, and elaborates itself into a widespread statement which, on examination, is seen to rise superior to metallurgy, grammar and arithmetic, superior to mere facts, and superior to truth. Let us examine the statement in detail, for though it will draw us into trivialities, it will show us the trivial foundations from which rises much of the sky-scraper psychology in regard to things oriental.

The name of the "Great More than Man" (which is a free translation of Dai-Butsu) is twice wrongly spelled Dia. Its age is twice stated. It was "built or made". Probably in America built things are not made, and *vice-versa*. There is a possible other alternative, that

of the dark young person (one dare not call her a lady for fear of that wonderful and misspelt invention of blanched democracy known as the color bar) who 'spected she growed. She was American born, and her other name was Turvey. The colossal affair was, we are told, constructed in the reign of one of the "present line of Emperors". This line must apparently have run collateral with some other line which has been discovered in America, since it is unknown in Japanese history, the "present line" being commonly regarded as unbroken since the lineal descendant of the Sun Goddess in the fifth generation founded the Japanese nation.

It is interesting to learn from our informant that the Japanese enjoy physical immortality. If we are to believe the descendant of George Washington, the Dai-Butsu "has been prayed to daily for more than twelve hundred years *by the crowd of devotees that early clustered about it*". The Japanese are a persistent people, but we doubt if any of the devotees amongst whom we have stood reverentially at the knees of the Dai-Butsu would own up to twelve centuries of daily prayer.

The colossalness of the Dai-Butsu is three times emphasised in general terms and three times in arithmetic. "All other colossal images

are pigmies compared with Dia-Butsu ". This gives the imagination scope for playing about the idea of colossal pigmies, such as the images that stand many feet higher than the Dui-Butsu in India, Burma and elsewhere, and which the purveyor of information to the knowledge-hungry masses of America no doubt had in mind.

On this matter of colossal-ness (with which, by the way, the image itself does not impress the beholder, for that would be a mere vulgarity of mass of which the Japanese were incapable until after their occidentalisation in the middle of the nineteenth century), it is interesting to note that, while it is stated that " the dimensions of the God are truly colossal," no dimensions are given, but the next sentence gives an analysis of the materials of the image in terms of weight. The image is called * brazen,' but brass is an alloy of copper and zinc, and there is no zinc in its composition. It is also called¹ golden,' but the quantity of gold in the image is one two-thousandth part of the total. There may, however, be a secret qualitative principle at work which, in non-Asian calculating, can not only transform dimensions into weight, but make a grain of gold two thousand times more important than a grain of mixed tin, mercury

and copper. This secret (and certain other psycho-analytical matters regarding fundamental values) is signalled to the initiated in a psychological cipher. But in these subtle matters one must be careful. One might, for example, conclude that the adjectival distinction implied between "heathen idolaters" and other brands of idolaters (such as post-Mosaic worshippers of the golden calf) was a sly disclosure of truth. On the contrary it is an accident.

At this level of romance, facts are of little importance. But, as a matter of mere fact, it has to be stated that the Dai-Butsu of Kamakura was not "built or made (constructed, raised, erected, or reared) during the reign of Shomu . . . who died in the year A.D. 748". It was cast under the direction of a Japanese craftsman about the middle of the thirteenth century. Hence "the crowd of devotees who early clustered about it" and who have prayed to it "daily for more than twelve hundred years" suffer five hundred years of reduction in their acquisition of merit. As a matter of mere fact also, the image to which the description under consideration refers is not the Dai-Butsu of Kamakura but the Dai-Butsu of Nara.

One may now take one's choice as to which is the colossal "heathen-god," and which is

the pigmy. Besides, that jaunty "two-miles-out-from-Kamakura" touch, which gives you that familiar feeling, as if you were "right there" under the illuminating guidance of the writer of the legend, is seen in its true character as a piece of hypnotisation of the mere ignorant by the articulate ignorant. It is, indeed, a clue to the mentality and method of the whole sorry civilised business of exploitation of humanity's desire for knowledge and a wider imaginative experience reaching out towards a realisation of the vast unity-in-variety of humanity. That demon of exploitation, for the sake of its own gain, makes its appeal to the lowest and most easily roused desires of men; and when, as in the instance before us, it comes face to face with some of the superb expressions of oriental aspiration, and the all-pervading religious spirit of the East, it interposes between the calm, pure influence of the image of the Lord of Illumination and its beholders the distorting mists of a purblind interpretation. It will not permit the generous imagination of youth or the ingenuous to contact the Great Calm which is the one Word spoken by the Dai-Butsu, (the Word that the world, and America in particular, so sorely needs), but vitiates the possibility of such contact by

interposing the phrase of unilluminated stupidity; "Dia-Butsu, whose hard-visaged face has looked down on the meaningless rites of heathen idolaters for more than twelve centuries."

The face of the Dai-Butsu is, indeed, hard in the material sense; but in the qualitative sense it is less brazen than the describer who reads hardness into it. It stands, or rather sits, as a most impressive embodiment of the contemplative aspect of Buddhism which influenced the arts of Japan through the Zen (*dyani*) sect. It figures the highest achievement of the Will in asserting its dominance over the lower nature. Physical, emotional and mental activity are not atrophied but surmounted. What this means may be glimpsed by analogy by even the writer of all the nonsense under notice if, when desire for anything possesses him, he denies the desire, or if he will command the resonating machine that he calls his mind to cease for five minutes from the mainly automatic and unintelligent process that he calls thinking. The Lord of Illumination is the Lord also of Repose, for light is reached only as the reward of discipline and self-mastery. This reward is also compounded of Compassion, of which the next Buddha is to be, it is believed, the special embodiment. There is no room for

hardness of visage in the conception ; and the Japanese artificers, in the Dai-Butsu and its companion images, large and small, have admirably embodied this conception. While the posture and expression of the Dai-Butsu of Kamakura are that of rigid self-control, there is no rigidity in the aesthetically sensitive mouth and the full curved contours of the face, which come out of the Kamakura era of Japanese civilisation, when the Fujiwara sweetness was still an influence in the arts.

But, apart from the matter of the external representation of an inner conception, the point is what the representation stands for to the Japanese people; and no foreigner has any right to add to or take from its significance to the Japanese because he happens to be too ignorant or too myopic to see it. There is, too, an element of false suggestion of superhuman aloofness in the reference to the Dai-Butsu as a god of hard visage looking down on his devotees. In the Pantheonic sense the Buddha is not a God. He is given Divine honours, not as a remote Celestial, but as Man-become-Divine. He is the end of the aspiration of the devotee. There is no gulf between. What the Buddha is, the devotee aspires to become; and however " meaningless " the simple and beautiful " rites "

of the " heathen idolaters " are to rudimentary minds that have not yet achieved the sense of Divinity, the Buddha stands to the Buddhist as the complete meaning, purpose, aspiration and inspiration of his life.

THE NEW POLITENESS OF PROSELYTISM

THE following from *The Literary Digest* of New York indicates the new methods that religious proselytism has been compelled to adopt, partly as a result of the awakening of Asia to the value of her own presentations of Truth, partly as a result of the infiltration of knowledge of Asian thought into western cultured circles, partly as a subtle adaptation to the jar that the Great War of the " Christian Nations " gave to their claims to supremacy :

" Can any faith not based on the Christian Bible contain anything good ? Once upon a time, the question would have been answered with a sharp and emphatic negative. Non-Christian religions were supposed to be more or less works of the devil, and any fragments of good they might possess were either bait cunningly devised by Satan to mislead the faithful or imitations or borrowings from the revelation supposed to have been completed when the last word in the Bible was written.

In recent years, however, says Dr. Daniel Johnson Fleming in *Asia*, there has developed a new and wide-spread appreciation of the values in ethnic faiths. 'More and more,' he tells us, * we are willing to believe that God has not left Himself without witnesses among any people; that there has been a Light lighting every man coming into the world; and that this Light has shone in darkness.' Such an attitude enables us to see that there are truths in religions other than the Christian that should be conserved, and that may even, now and then, be adapted to our own exigencies. And it has gradually dawned on Christians, we are told, that a continuance of the old approach of Christianity to non-Christian peoples would mean a failure to modern missions. For instance* writes Dr. Fleming, who is Professor of Missions at Union Theological Seminary, New York, no thoughtful student of Christian history is disposed to minimise the great service rendered by Confucianism in the moral discipline of the Chinese people, and 'more than one missionary carries the *Analects* of Confucius with him on his itinerary and finds in this ancient law many a fruitful text for a Christian sermon. So Dr. Fleming bespeaks a broadening of this attitude, that we may evangelise faiths as well

as individuals, sloughing off what is impure and retaining what is good.

^u But in the readjustment necessary to a more sympathetic point of view, it will be necessary, says Dr. Fleming, for us to eradicate from our vocabulary certain military expressions, such, for instance, as "warfare against Islam,"⁴ "conquest for Christ," "victory for Christianity," and "evangelistic campaign". Such phrases are offensive to those of other faiths, who may be quite as moral and high-minded as we, and the expressions do not embody the spirit of Him who bids the missionaries go forth. How much more richly beautiful is His vocabulary—seed, light, leaven, life! Some words, too, must go. "Heathen" has degenerated from its old meaning. It once designated those who do not acknowledge the God of the Bible, and applied technically to those who are not Jews, Christians, or Muhammadans. Now the word means "any irreligious, rude, barbarous or unthinking person or class." Japanese Buddhists, Dr. Fleming tells us, when sending in their contribution to the Near East Relief, said, "We send herewith to adopt one thousand orphans—but don't call us⁴ heathen" any more'. On the other hand, the missionary should have certain convictions more precious to him than life.

Yet, with his conviction should go readiness to see and to accept truth wherever found. He should not feel it disloyal to Christ to carry broad-mindedness over into the sphere of religion, for there is nothing incompatible between the most ardent allegiance to one's own faith and the cultivation of that confidence in others and respect for them which should characterise each member of a group met to share the most serious problems and deepest convictions of their lives. Such an interchange as is suggested, says Dr. Fleming, is actually being tried in a Christian Buddhist monastery near Nanking, in China, and here is the story:

" A Norwegian missionary, with the support and approval of many of the recognised leaders of the Christian movement in China, has begun the experiment. The buildings are very simple and as much like those of a Buddhist monastery as possible. Those who come in search of religious truth find a lotus pond, a temple bell, a guest-room, Buddhist and Christian symbols, and incense burning on an altar behind which is the picture of Christ in Gethsemane. The object is to discover and to use as much in Buddhism as is not out of harmony with the Christian spirit and to provide a place where, amid familiar surroundings, Buddhists may learn of Christ.

At worship the song may be a Christian hymn, a Jewish psalm, or a passage from a Buddhist psalter.¹

"Changes are undoubtedly taking place in non-Christian religions, says Dr. Fleming, and he tells us that a recent observer in Japan reports that one of the most significant things he saw there was the markedly increased activity of the Buddhist Church and its adoption wholesale of many Christian methods, such as preaching, parish work, Sunday-schools, day-schools, education for the priesthood, organisations both central and subsidiary, multiplication of magazines and free distribution of literature. So, says Dr. Fleming:

"⁴ The transformation in ethnic faiths, which is coming about in part through contact with Christianity, raises the question whether systems should not be evangelised as well as individuals. To attempt to Christianise Buddhism would be but to colour it so that it would merely look like Christianity, some would say. Others, though in no way relaxing their desire to share their best with individuals, would rejoice at any opportunity to help a non-Christian religion, as such, to appropriate deeper meanings and greater values. Such a chance often comes through those who are sympathetic towards

Christianity but do not feel called upon to change their allegiance to their own religious group.

" There is, for instance, Mr. K. Natarajan, the influential editor of *The Indian Social Reformer*. Though not a professing Christian, he was asked to speak at the Central Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia, in December, 1923. He had to refuse because of illness, but in a written message said among other things: That the influence of Christ Jesus should permeate Indian thought and activities is my earnest wish and that of a considerable number of my countrymen, including some of the foremost leaders. We are grateful for the philanthropic and humanitarian work of Christian missionaries, which has inspired similar movements among us. We appreciate their self-sacrifice and devotion and their tireless industry, often in conditions of overpowering difficulty.'

"⁴ In place of Mr. Natarajan, the Conference secured as a speaker Mr. P. K. Sen, a lawyer of Patna, a member of the Brahmo Samaj, who spoke on ⁴ 'India's Response to Christ'. Scattered through his address were declarations such as these: 'I put away everything and fled to Christ'; I prayed and sought. . . then light

came'; ⁴ 'I do believe in Jesus—I believe he is essential to salvation, but I do not worship Him'; ⁴ 'Slowly Christ will enter into the hearts of all men in India'; ⁴ 'The day has come when Christ has, to be accepted.' These sentences will indicate the response of this gentle and cultured son of India to the Lord Jesus, and yet he is not tabulated among the Christians in India.'

" Such examples could be given from countries other than India, says Dr. Fleming. There are those who, though non-professing, are Christian in every other sense, and the writer concludes :

⁴⁴⁴ With regard to the development of Christ-like attitudes and purposes in adherents to non-Christian faiths, and to the evangelising of religious systems through a progressive sloughing off of the impure and the superstitious, two views may be taken. Some will urge concentrating on winning converts to Jesus Christ because we shall fail in individual cases, and these partially evangelised searchers after truth will affect their own religions. From this angle, a change for the better in a non-Christian religion is merely a by-product of work for individuals. Others, while as deeply anxious that individual human beings shall give their allegiance to Christ, will rejoice that faiths also may be evangelised. And the holders of

both views should not forget that it is only Christianity at its best—a Christianity that has freed itself from invalid accretions, conflicting dogmas and a mind that wars against science—that can compete with the best in reformed and purified ethnic faiths.' "

Let us examine some points in this new politeness of proselytism.

There is no such book as "the Christian Bible". The term Bible was first used about A.D. 140 to designate "the books" (plural) containing the accounts of religious revelation in Western Asia and South-Eastern Europe. The Bible as we have it to-day has been adopted by Christianity—but it is by no means a Christian book. Two-thirds of it is Hebraic legend, mysticism and poetry, much of which is in direct conflict with both the letter and the spirit of that which constitutes the only test of the "Christianness" of anything—its agreement with the assumed teachings of the Christ. Of the other third, the minor portion is Christian in the strict sense; the rest is commentary with a visionary epilogue.

Our challenge to the phrase "the Christian Bible" may appear a small matter of nomenclature; essentially the phrase is a typical expression of the fallacious assumption of the universal

obligation, and exclusive efficacy for salvation, of what western religious proselytism chooses to regard as Christian. That assumption is behind the foregoing extract. Its new politeness presents no opacity to opened eyes. The naivete of the new method is almost too thin. The word "heathen" is to be replaced by the word "ethnic" which sounds quite harmlessly learned—but which is not so harmless as it seems; for it is only another term for heathen. Even if only its secondary meaning, which makes ethnic religions stand for religions pertaining to particular races, is to be taken in future, it leaves the matter as it was, with the acceptance of Christianity as a universal faith, and the regarding of the others as merely local. Architecture and equipment are to play a part in what takes on the unbeautiful guise of propagandist hypocrisy; an Analect of Confucious will make a text for a sermon—but "a Christian sermon," not a Confucian one. "As much of Buddhism as is not out of harmony with the Christian spirit" is to be used (along with Buddhist symbols, incense and familiar surroundings) as decoys towards Christianity.

There is something very mean in this poor masquerade to draw people from one presentation of eternal Truth to another, and the meanness

would be precisely the same if Buddhist propagandists in Europe or America put on a Christian mask. From the point of view of the Christian proselytiser it is but an adaptation of means to the achieving of an end that is the root conviction of Christian thought and the central impulse of Christian propaganda—the end of winning individuals to allegiance to Jesus Christ as the only means of escaping Hell and winning Heaven. In the article under notice there are references to the moral discipline of Confucianism and to the fact that non-Christians may be just as moral and high-minded as Christians. This is a concession which, by comparison with the past, gives great hope for the future necessary further broadening of Christian thought. But the concession, while it negatives the general assumption of the mental and moral superiority of those who are born into or adopt Christianity, does not get down to the root conviction stated above; mental and moral equality in a follower of an ethnic religion may give him (under the new method), a comfortable feeling of travelling in the direction of the New Jerusalem, but, without faith in Christ and Christ alone, he will find himself left outside the gate. This will be the last of the assumptions, not only in Christianity but in every

creed that claims the only right of way to *post mortem* bliss, to yield its foolish arrogance to all-conquering Truth—not to mental or emotional images that are, indeed, shadows of Raality mistaken for its substance ; but to Truth whose authority rests neither in this person nor that, this scripture nor that, but in its being just true.

This test of the truthfulness of Truth is being applied in many ways to all religions. There are "transformations in ethnic faiths . . . coming about in part through contact with Christianity". There are (though the writer of the article referred to did not say so) transformations in the faith of Christians coming about in part through contact with the universal truths that are uttered through the "ethnic faiths". The spirit of Matthew Arnold must rejoice that his attack on religious *aberglaube* (overgrowths) has produced an ultimate recognition of "invalid accretions" in Christianity. The Rationalists (though the march of knowledge has left them among the irrational things that strutted cock-a-hoop through the alleged fragments of "shattered superstitions" that are "generally shamming when they're dead") have the satisfaction and justification of having created a

bad conscience in the more sensitive Christian minds on the "conflictions of dogma" and the dullness "that wars against science".

It is a notable admission, as this writer admits, that Christianity has need of this three-fold purgation. When this has been carried on some stages, Christianity may then, with some claim to consistency, take up the work of the "evangelising of religious systems through a progressive sloughing off of the impure and the superstitious". When the impurities and superstitions that have gathered around all the religions have been sloughed, there will also be sloughed the childish notion of competition between them, and the making palatable of the Christian pill with ethnic sugar. Historical ignorance, too, will pass, such as that disclosed in the reference above to the activities of Buddhists in preaching, parish work and education for the priesthood as being adoptions of Christian methods! The universal content of the religions will be seen as complementary and mutually illuminating expressions of eternal Truth. Then will be achieved the unity of world religion in the spirit as the necessary step towards a subsequent unity of expression which will thus be brought about by natural fusion, not by unnatural domination.

PROSELYTISM AND NATIONAL EXPRESSION

IT has sometimes been pointed out by awakened Asians in India and elsewhere that the influence of foreign religious proselytism is a denationalising one. The following United Press Service cable from San Francisco to *The Japan Advertiser* appears to give point to the assertion.

The Methodist Bishop of Korea and Japan, the Rev. Herbert Welch, who has arrived here *en route* to the general conference of the Methodist Church in Springfield, Massachusetts, says that the Koreans have abandoned all thought of independence. The country is becoming stabilised and is advancing materially, and has "regained its former condition of peace," he says.

Apart from the questionable accuracy of Bishop Welch's diagnosis of the situation in Korea; apart also from the possibility of the diagnosis not being quite his own (for the American press has an unsavoury reputation for manufacturing opinions for those whom it reports and interviews), the cable does represent a state of mind of which awakening Asia is

becoming increasingly conscious, and against the obnoxious implications of which she is rapidly marshalling the thought-forces of Asian idealism. The press of Asia contains occasional refreshing criticism of the complex of spiritual utilitarianism and religious materialism that has the effrontery to call itself Christian civilisation. We can well anticipate the response to Bishop Welch's alleged statement by such critical minds. But, unhappily, in the lamentably un-Asian relationship which Japan persists in maintaining towards Korea, the statement is calculated only to confirm Japan in her dull application of western imperialism to Korea, and in the parrot application of the measuring-rod of material prosperity, which, whatever negative justification it may have for an un-Asian civilisation that knows no better, has no justification for an Asian civilisation that still claims ancestry from its own venerable Shinto and from the transcendent religions and philosophies of India and China. In such confirmation of the false relationship between Japan and Korea, the awakened minds in Japan (and there are many outside the timid and wooden obscurantism of the Japanese ruling classes) will see a subtle form of deflection of Japan from the

true path of Japanese nationality to the broad road of denationalising imperialism and its inevitable sequel. Every movement of social and material domination of one group of human beings by another (of Buddhists by Christians or of Christians by Buddhists) has not only the effect of reducing the dominated group to a state of non-volition or of unnatural volition, but imposes on the dominating group false and selfish preoccupations that stand in the way of its attention to the natural evolution of its own national genius, and pull it from the path of open rectitude into the twisted by-ways of dishonest thought, speech and action in the artificial defence of a false position. It is in this sense that the apparent approval of Japan's regime in Korea, and of Korea's renunciation of the right of political freedom (once regarded as an American ideal), gives a denationalising cast to foreign missionary influence.

But there is another aspect of the matter. Plato asserted that a change in a nation's music would bring about a change in its social organisation. There is considerable truth in the statement; but there is nothing but truth in the statement that an attack on a nation's religion is an attack on its national expression in its culture and arts; for these arise out of

fundamental concepts of life that are enshrined in religion, and colour and direct the impulses of artists, howsoever they may deny religion and philosophy.

We see this attack on Japanese culture and art as the necessary accompaniment of an attack on her religion, in the following announcement:

Leaders of Catholic churches in Japan are collecting materials relating to Buddhism, Shintoism and Mujjiammadanism and will exhibit them at the International Religious Exposition to be held in Rome at the Vatican next year. Shintoism exhibits are being collected by the Tokyo diocese and Buddhism exhibits are being assembled by the Osaka diocese.

The exhibition is to be held in connection with a Catholic celebration which takes place every 25 years. Representatives of the church will journey to Rome from all parts of the world to take part in the ceremonies. The exhibit being planned by Japanese Catholics is intended to show church members that there are still spacious fields of activity for missionaries.

Whatever advantage might accrue from a free-minded exposition of the various ways in which the universal religious impulse has expressed itself, is entirely dissipated in this falsely named "International Religious Exposition," since its avowed intention is the contemptible one of bringing contempt on the expressions of Buddhism, Shintoism and Muhammadanism by "showing church members

that there are still spacious fields of activity for missionaries ".

In this antagonism to the spirit of nationality and to the expressions of national culture, Catholic Christianity and Protestant Christianity are at one. They are at one also in the illogicalities and stupidities that dog the steps of the best-intentioned and apparently most intelligent of men when they ignore the way of universal Truth and spend their thought and feeling in the vain attempt to make universally obligatory one or other of the rival western degradations of originally pure Asian spiritual vision. It is not only un-Asian in general, but un-Christian in particular, for Bishop Welch, as the head of a community professing allegiance to the Divine Master of Asian spiritual idealism, Jesus Christ, to point with apparent approval at the material advancement of Korea as a justification of its alleged relapse into political indifference. In the name of his Master and with the authority of the basic truths of pure Christian teaching, he should exclaim—"What shall it profit a nation if it gain the whole world of material prosperity and lose its own soul?"

This approval of the spiritual degradation of Korea (if it is a fact, and if Bishop Welch's

attitude to it is as the report of his utterance implies), is not only un-Christian, but un-American ; for America to-day is being stirred by the propaganda of American nationalism which goes as deep as the infant schools of the Republic; and it ill befits a representative of America to trumpet with seeming satisfaction the stamping out in Korea of the national individuality that his own country is feverishly trying to establish against the supposed denationalising tendencies of foreign immigration.

On the other hand, the Exposition (exposure would be a truer name) of the expressions of non-Christian culture to the smug superiority of the Vatican and its adherents with a view to encouraging them in' their proselytism is no freer from question than Protestant materialism. From the extreme Protestant point of view, the rebuke of Heathenism by Catholicism is only a matter of " Satan reproving sin," since it means only the substitution of a false idolatry based on Christianity for a frank " heathen " idolatry.

But the offence of propagandist Catholicism goes deeper than this, for it sets itself against the whole spirit and law of human evolution in its effort to reduce the expression of human realisation of the Universal Being to one conception, one set of emotional and intellectual formulae,

one group of personifications. In its use of images as concrete nuclei round which the spirit of devotion to the Divine Personality may gather power, it has the assent of human experience in all times and places; but in its claim of exclusiveness and of universal obligation and efficacy for its images, it, the heresy-hunter, is guilty of the heresy of identifying the Infinite with the finite, the Formless with form. The attack of Catholicism on the external expressions of Japanese religion is not only, therefore, an attack on Japan's cultural national expression, but is a futile attempt to oppose one of the truest needs of the religious and aesthetical nature of humanity—the creation of the forms of art as modes of approach to That which is beyond form.

TRUTH AND PERFORMING TRUTHS

TWENTY years ago or thereabouts, Dr. William Barry, whose novel, "The New Antigone," had given him a place high among his literary contemporaries, reviewed one of Mr. G. K. Chesterton's early books. His mind, as keen of edge as that of the young writer, though lacking its glitter, gave a characteristic response in a phrase that has remained in my memory, with perhaps some slight verbal alteration, through the incalculable impressions of nearly a quarter of a century's travel in the kingdom of letters since then. Said the critic: "We do not go to Mr. Chesterton's writings for truth, but to watch a troupe of performing truths."

For years I followed Mr. Chesterton's career with special interest. A fellow-writer and fellow-townsmen, Mr. Louis J. Macquilland, who had followed many another ambitious young man from Belfast to London, wrote to me soon

after his settling in the literary Mecca : " Keep your eye on a young man called Chesterton." And I kept it. But much, indeed all, of what the eye sees suffers refraction in its passage to the consciousness across the barricades of custom and prejudice, and becomes as mixed as this metaphor. I rejoiced in the nimbleness of his performing truths, and hurraed with the loudest at his intellectual pranks around the somewhat stiff figure of Robert Blatchford when, as they fondly thought, the fate of Christianity stood trembling at the tips of their sword-play in the columns of *The Clarion*. At the end, Blatchford was confident that he had smashed Christianity, and Chesterton was confident that he had smashed Blatchford. To-day, Blatchford, grim tracker down of facts, is a rampant spiritualist, still smashing, but now smashing the unbelievers with the weapon of direct knowledge ; and Chesterton, handing the key of one side of his mental life to the Catholic Church, is still cracking the whip in the ring with his " performing truths ".

For example, in his weekly " turn " in *The Illustrated London News* not long ago Mr. Chesterton, commenting on the alleged oriental drama of " Hassan " by the late James Elroy Flecker, says, with regard to an incident of

torture in the drama : " And if it be true, as some say, that we cannot understand the East without entering into such demented triumphs of dirty spite, I hope we may go down to our Christian fathers without understanding the East."

Four hoops, it will be seen, are somersaulted through in this single circling of the ring. The first is the ancient dialectical subterfuge of *suggestio falsi*, the suggestion leaping through the first clause, and alighting on the back of the falsehood in the third clause. The second hoop has to be labelled ⁴ the last resort. When plain Truth, incarnating in some one who sees fallacy and speaks his or her sight, takes the pattering performer by the scruff of the neck, he has at hand the means of pointing out that it was not he who lied against another for the sake of tickling the ears of the groundlings; someone else did it. The fourth hoop is twin brother to the first, *suppressio veri*. If the whole truth as to the virtues of Mr. Chesterton's " Christian fathers" were displayed, Othello's occupation would be gone. Something of it must be kept out of sight to serve to-morrow's turn. And when the clown or the painted lady lands safely through the last hoop, all (not for anything omitting the circus-master) can retire snug and

smug to the nearest public-house, and quaff ale, and chant:

Prince, from the roasted corpse of Truth
 Let's make a jolly Christian feast;
 Proclaim how free
 And pure are we,
 And what a rotten lot the East.

It is not easy to estimate from the quoted sentence just what length of tongue Mr. Chesterton had in his capacious cheek when he wrote it. Neither is it easy to decide that he deliberately intended to send his circus audience home with the impression that cruel revenge was an exclusive specialty of the East, and that they and their Christian fathers were angels of compassion who went about perpetually turning the other cheek. It seems more probable that his subtly conveyed slander on a continent from which have emanated the finest things in human evolution, including Christianity, arises from the dreadful irresponsibility of habitual, as distinguished from purposeful, journalism, and from the obsession of the gibbering ghost of race-superiority.

This evil spirit wafts untruth from its wings ; and, even where truth is undeniable, but awkward, can retreat through the door—and return through the window as mental dishonesty. In the same article (as if an afterthought came

to the circus-master with a twinge of conscience and made him shout after his departing audience) he says: "Nothing worse was done to the oriental lovers than was done again and again to the Christian martyrs." That truth, in its lurid terribleness, should have made impossible the former suggested lie. And yet, even when it occurs to Mr. Chesterton, he will not accept it in its plain significance of human wickedness both West and East. Glory to the martyrs, he cries; but he leaves a curious flavour of inference that, in some mysterious way, those who inflicted the tortures of the Inquisition were not such a bad lot after all, since without their services the martyrs could not have won their glory. There is a deeper truth involved in this than Mr. Chesterton apprehends; but used by him to throw the glamour of justification over the villainies of his "Christian fathers" and to leave his audience still congratulating themselves that they are not as those terrible people of the East to whom no such justification can be extended, it but discloses that mental dishonesty which comes of the assumptions of egotism individual or national.

One could make a fairly accurate draft of the reply that Mr. Chesterton would make to a

Hindu who, after the last curtain of *Hamlet*, wrote in an Indian newspaper: "If it be true, as some say, that we cannot understand the West without entering into such demented triumphs of dirty spite, I hope we may go down to our Heathen fathers without understanding the West." But there is no Indian at the mental level of Mr. Chesterton sufficiently thoughtless to start so mean a lie; and none sufficiently stupid to maintain that because wicked men in the name of Christianity tortured and killed those who differed from them, Christianity was therefore to blame.

We find the same mental dishonesty in General Smuts' reply to the Maharaja of Alwar at an Imperial Conference in London. Questioned by the Maharaja as to what was proposed to be done with Indian settlers in Natal who had put their whole lives into the country, General Smuts replied: "They have all the rights, barring the rights of voting for Parliament and the Provincial Councils, that any white citizens in South Africa have. Our law draws no distinction whatever. It is only political rights that are in question there." Earlier in his speech, General Smuts had argued that common citizenship in the British Empire did not mean common rights of franchise. Observe how it

works. " There are certain rights of citizenship, some political, some otherwise. The coloured settlers have all the otherwise. The white settlers reserve the political—plus the otherwise. But they are only a trifle, you know, merely voting for a few people to meet and talk in Parliament. Our law makes no real distinction." But when we ask the question, from whence emanates the law that is so broad-minded, we put our finger on the hollow sham of General Smuts' infantile sophistry. It feels a humiliation of one's intelligence to have to point out that the law under which the coloured settlers have to live is made and administered through the political function which they are denied. The law, as made by Parliaments, settles public finance, social conditions, details of trading, education, etc., and the check on Parliamentary error, and the goad to Parliamentary truth, is the Parliamentary franchise. For this plain reason men, and in our time women, have suffered and died to secure for the people of all lands the power of the legislative vote for the institution that controls all life political and otherwise. No one, of course, claims that any citizen of any country can walk into another country and claim citizen rights. But the claim that where the duties

of citizenship are fulfilled according to the law of a country, he or she who fulfils such conditions should have the collateral rights of citizenship, cannot be set aside by a wave of the hand of General Smuts. Once upon a time nothing could deter General Smuts from his fight against a power that wished to control his own political organisation. He was ready to slay and be slain for the right that he now denies to others. On him as on Mr. Chesterton the ghost of racial superiority and egotism has cast its obsession. He who once surmounted barbed wire entanglements is unable now to jump the colour bar.

THE FUTURE OF RELIGION IN ASIA

PROFESSOR SYLVANI LEVI went to Japan after concluding his lecture course in 1923 at the Visvabharati (International University), Santiniketan, founded by Rabindranath Tagore. In Japan, Professor Levi delivered lectures on Asian culture, under the auspices of the Imperial Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto. The visit of the eminent scholar attracted much attention, and a representative of the ever-alert *Japan Advertiser* drew from Professor Levi the following interesting autobiographical item.

" It was my intention in the early days of my study to devote my life to the classical languages,' he said, in relating how he came to be interested in Buddhism and other Oriental religions. 'As I advanced in my study of Greek and Latin, I decided to trace Greek culture and civilisation to its origin, if possible. This led me step by step into India, China and even to Japan. On the other hand, it took me back to the Egyptians, the Babylonians and other leaders in the early civilisation of the

Near East. Oriental culture and religions greatly appealed to me, with the result that I have devoted most of my time to their study.' "

The newspaper man, interested more in practical and contemporary questions concerning religion than in erudition, asked Professor Levi his opinion as to religious proselytism. The great scholar summed up the matter as follows 2
" Just as Buddhism and other oriental cults will never spread extensively to occidental nations, so Christianity will never become firmly established as a national religion among the countries of the Orient. The religion of a nation depends on the average temperament and intellect of its people. Christianity in its demand for active participation in the affairs of the nation is best suited for western countries. Likewise, Buddhism, Brahmanism and other oriental religions, with their basic principles of contemplation and meditation, fit best into the scheme of things as typified in the less strenuous life of the Orient."

Professor Levi stated, further, that Buddhism was, without doubt, " the most firmly established religion in Japan, and the one best suited to the people of this country ". And, he added:
⁴⁴ While Shintoism occupies the position of the State religion, it will never exert the influence

upon the nation that Buddhism exerts. No, I am not a Buddhist nor a follower of any one religion, hut as a student of all, I appreciate their individual value in the advancement of civilisation and the spiritual development of the nations."

It was not to be expected that this unequivocal statement of opinion should pass unchallenged by the commendable alertness of propagandist Christianity in Japan. Dr. S. H. Wainwright replied to Professor Levi in an article in the same newspaper, in an admirable dialectical manner, in which he examines Professor Levi's assumption thus paraph rased by Dr. Wainwright: "fThat the temperament and intellect of eastern peoples are such that only religions with basic principles of contemplation and meditation can adapt themselves to human nature as it exists among peoples in this part of the world."

Dr. Wainwright asserts, *per contra*, that the quietistic assumption of the West regarding the peoples of the East does not exist in fact, and makes, in support of his assertion, the following interesting summary of the characteristics of the people of Japan, China and India :

"How can one observe present-day Japan, throbbing with life and movement, and

participating to the fullest degree in modern activities, and say that the Japanese are quietistic by temperament? The view that the Japanese are contemplative will become unsettled, if one should attend a session of the Imperial Diet, and observe the rising office buildings everywhere changing the landscape of Tokyo, or try to get on board a street car in the cities, or count the smoke-stacks everywhere darkening the sky overhead, or witness the flag of the Rising Sun steamships in nearly every harbour in the world. Certainly, the Japanese temperamental nature is not suffering from any incurable sleeping sickness. This nation has shown a virility similar to that exhibited in the West, and Japanese industrial and commercial competition with other nations is more formidable than that of France.

"And can we accept the judgment that the Chinese people are contemplative by temperament? In conversation, both in the use of words and gestures, they are more demonstrative, perhaps, than any other inhabitants on our planet. They are utilitarian and practical to the backbone. As a people, they seem to be almost incapable of subjectivity. The Indian missionary, Dharma, came amongst them, and sat looking at a blank wall for a period of nine

years. Not many Chinese have ever been induced to follow his example.

" Even India, as a people, is awakening. ,, The activity of a man like Gandhi, however extreme, is an indication of new life in India. It gives evidence that the vast population of India cherishes aspirations like those of the West, and is being moved by the forces operating on other peoples in our modern world, in the direction of scientific and intellectual progress, and toward a goal the acme of which is not *samadhi* or trance, not the submergence of consciousness, but the awakening of the soul of man to an active participation in life in the fullest sense."

Thus life in the Orient, as seen by Dr. Wainwright, has moved away from contemplation, and the extent of this movement is, he avers, the extent of the failure of Buddhism to impress itself on the people of Japan. " Human nature in the Orient is too intractable in its adherence to life and reality to be drawn away into a pursuit of quietistic metaphysics."

Dr. Wainwright's conclusion is, from his point of view, obvious and logical:

" In truth, grounds rather are for believing that the Orient awaits the spread of a religion that ministers to the active elements of human

nature, and holds in balanced proportions the contemplative and the creative elements of man's constitution, individual and social."

That ideal religion is, of course, Christianity. But before accepting Dr. Wainwright as any better a prophet in regard to the religious future of Asia than he complains Professor Levi is, there are some points to consider. The first is the assumption of Professor Levi (which is accepted by Dr. Wainwright) that Christianity is supremely the religion of external activity, and therefore (according to Professor Levi) unsuited to the contemplative East; while Buddhism is a religion of "quietistic metaphysics" (according to Dr. Wainwright), and insuited to awakening Asia, which needs Christianity as the religious expression of its new and developing activity.

It would take a volume, let alone a short essay, to elaborate all that is involved in this curiously diagonal proposition. We can only give a bare indication. The mutual assumption of the two protagonists of the argument, as to the non-contemplative nature of Christianity, is not borne out either by the teachings of Jesus Christ, which contain admonitions to quietism, or by the lives of many of those through whom the Christianity of tradition was elaborated,

which were as quietistic as those of the saints of the Orient. True, Dr. Wainwright, in his prescription of Christianity as the spiritual medicine for the Asia of the future, does refer to it as a religion that "holds in balanced proportions the contemplative and creative elements of man's constitution"; but in the general argument, the intent of which is to show the inadequacy of Buddhism to meet the demands of "an active participation in life in the fullest sense," he lets himself be carried too far in inference as to the practical side of Christianity. The truth is expressed in the balanced proportions referred to by Dr. Wainwright; and this, we submit, is the truth also with regard to Buddhism and the other great oriental religions. Hinduism touches every phase of life from *samadhi* (which is not the "submergence of consciousness," that Dr. Wainwright supposes it to be, but emergence into the higher consciousness by its lower personal instrument) to the simplest realistic application to the details of the Indian villager's life. The Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism leads, verily, beyond this earth-phase of the soul's existence ; but it does not pass across the rainbow; its track is along the surface of the good earth. Its steps and the Five Precepts

are as much concerned with the active and creative elements of man's constitution as with the contemplative.

Another point for consideration is the idea that Christianity, because it is the religion of the active races of humanity, is the proper religion for the hitherto contemplative races of Asia, who are now awakening to activity. Setting aside the very doubtful proposition that the activity of Japan during the last half century, and of India and China during the last decade, indicate any drastic shifting of national expression, the question arises: Is Christianity a synonym for the activism that has brought European civilisation to its present awful plight? Is the articulation of European activism and Christianity so perfect that one can stand upon it with perfect assurance and prophesy that, because Asia is becoming active like Europe, she will also, like Europe, become Christian?

An answer to these questions appeared in a symposium on religious indifference in *Pearsons Magazine* (London). Mr. H. G. Wells charged the Church in Great Britain with "moral impotence". The Bishop of Lincoln admits the charge, and adds that it is "common to all organised Christian Churches not only in

Britain but throughout the world ". He further says:

I have certainly been conscious that during the whole period of my ministry, the Christian appeal has found an increasing difficulty in finding a response in the world of men, and I must also add that that appeal was being expressed with increasing diffidence by those who should have been its messengers.

In other words a crevasse has opened between Christianity and activism ; and the charge of failure against Buddhism in Japan, made by Dr. Wainwright, may be turned in his own words against Christianity outside Asia : " Human nature in the Occident is too intractable in its adherence to life and reality to be drawn away into a pursuit of quietistic metaphysics."

This utilitarian valuation of religion is a crucial point in all religious propaganda. Both Professor Levi and Dr. Wainwright approach the question of the religious future of Asia from the purely practical point of view. But while no truth is fully realisable by embodied humanity save through life-experience, it would be reversing the pyramid of reality to hold that life is therefore the test of truth. Mr. T. L. Vaswani, in his recent illuminating book, *Atmagnan* (" Spiritual Wisdom ") emphasises

the principle of "accommodation of truth" to grades of human understanding; but that⁴⁴ "accommodation" is not a *coming* down of truth—it is a *reaching* down for the purpose of lirting up. It is no part of religious revelation to submit itself to the test of this or that code of morality—monogamy in the West or polygamy in the East, for example; it is the business of life to lift itself to the level of religion. The spiritual centre once attained, all details will adjust themselves in true perspective. Here we touch the ancient controversy as to the relative efficacy of "principle first" or "practice first" in religion. Laotze and Confucius worked it out in Asia two thousand six hundred years ago. The point applying to our present study is this, that neither the abstract nor the concrete sides of the controversy necessarily imply the renouncing of one religious system in favour of another.

All the religions of the Orient have within them the means of ministry to the whole nature of humanity. What is wanted is not a change from one system of belief and practice to another, such as propagandist Christianity prescribes with too obvious and monotonous ease; not perversion from form to form, but conversion (in the Christian sense) from

lip-service to a faith to heart-and-soul-service to the same faith, not another. Those who, like the writer, have lived in long and sympathetic contact with true followers of all the great faiths (that is, with those who stand on the "Rock of Ages" of spiritual truth which is the central authenticity of their faith and practice) know that between such devotees there is no more fundamental separateness than there is between the branches that spring from one root.

