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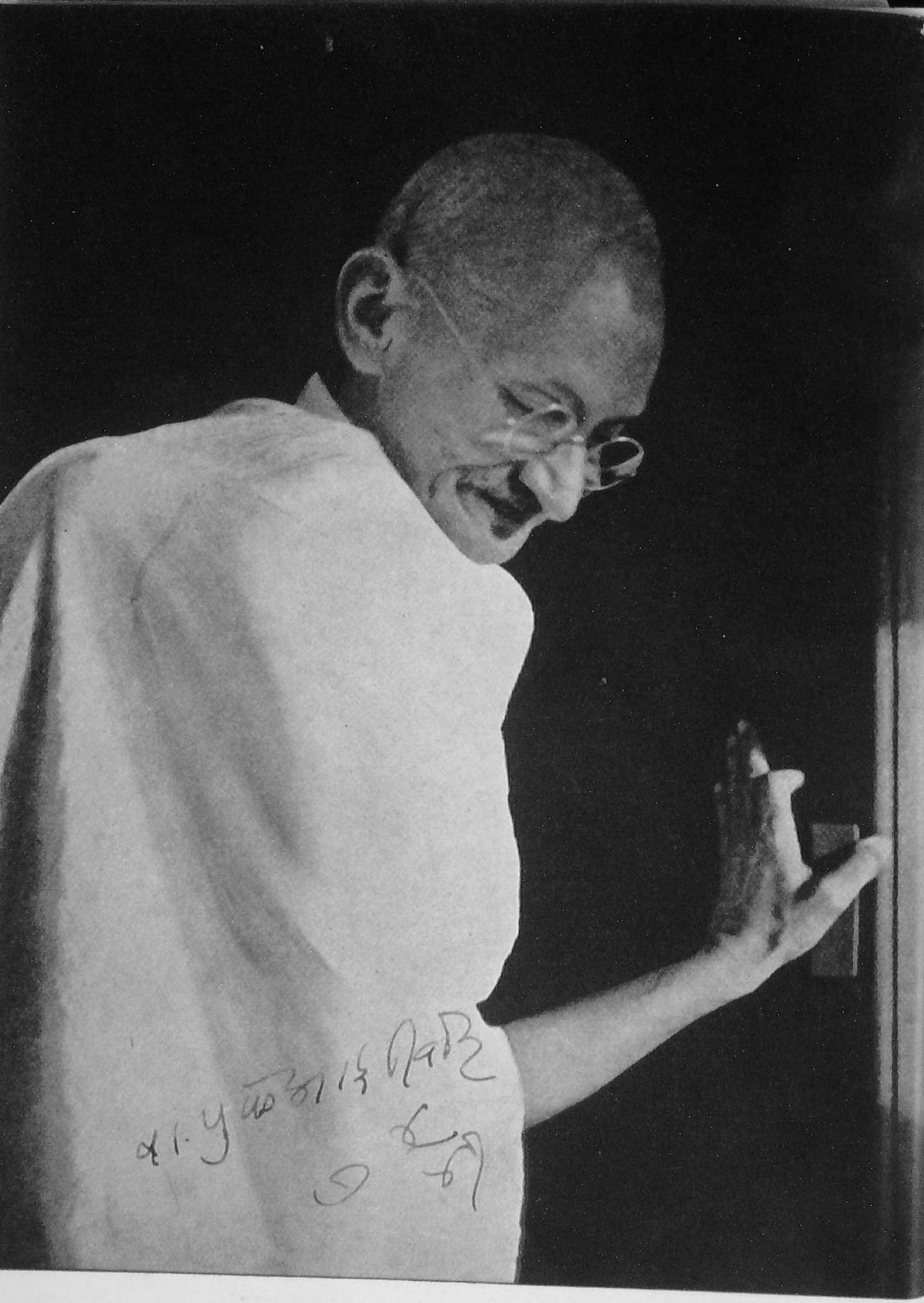

G.L. 102

TO THE STUDENTS

By

G.L. 86

MAHATMA GANDHI

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM.
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Gandhi Series

VOLUME I

EDITED & PUBLISHED

By

ANAND T. HINGORANI

KARACHI

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December 28, 1935 (Congress Golden Jubilee)
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I like Anand Hingorani's
idea of collecting my
writings under suitable
heads. The reader will not
fail to appreciate the
labour he has given to
securing attractive
printing & binding.

M K Gandhi

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

In placing this fifth edition in the hands of the student community, I wish to express my sense of joy at the numerous letters I have received from them from all over India in appreciation of this volume in particular and the *Gandhi Series* in general.

But while the demand for it continues to be as great as ever, I regret that the production is unable to keep pace with it. And this is so because of the peculiar conditions obtaining in the country today when all sorts of controls are in operation and strangulate the normal life of the nation.

Thus, due to the Paper Control, not only a limited number of copies are being brought out, but also the volume could not be enlarged. So this edition also, like the previous one, has necessarily got to be a reprint only.

October 2, 1945
GANDHI JAYANTI

ANAND T. HINGORANI
Upper Sind Colony, Karachi (Sind)

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

The third edition having gone out of print inside a year of its publication, the demand for a fresh edition grew so insistent that it had to be satisfied notwithstanding the difficult conditions created by the War. The reader will, I hope, forgive some rise in the price which has been necessitated by an all-round increase in the costs of production.

This volume is a reprint of the previous one, no new article having been added to it.

April 13, 1943
JALLIANWALLA BAGH DAY

ANAND T. HINGORANI
Upper Sind Colony, Karachi (Sind)

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The response given to the second edition of this book has induced me to bring out a third edition. The book, it is clear, has proved a veritable boon to the student community and to those who are interested in its welfare.

The present edition represents a great improvement on the previous one in more ways than one. The size of the book has been enlarged, its contents revised and more than forty-eight new articles added. At Gandhiji's own suggestion, an exhaustive index has also been given to facilitate reference to the subjects treated in the book.

Some articles which were included in the last edition have, however, been omitted as they have been reserved for more appropriate use in other volumes of the *Gandhi Series*.

The grouping of the articles has been done with an eye to sequence. But despite the care taken, it is possible that an article here and there may not have been assigned its proper place. The reader is cordially invited to point out such errors so that the next edition may, in this respect also, be an improvement.

The book has been brought up-to-date and can claim to be more or less comprehensive. Almost all speeches of Gandhiji addressed to students in Ceylon, as also a few speeches delivered to students in England on the occasion of the Second Round Table Conference, have been included in this edition. His famous speech at the Benares Hindu University in 1916 also finds a place besides two or three more of that early period.

In the end, I cannot help expressing my deep sense of gratitude to Mahatma Gandhi for having given me permission to publish his writings and speeches in a series of volumes according to the subject matter, the present volume being the first endeavour in this direction. It is my fervent hope and prayer that, with his blessings, I may succeed in presenting the public with the complete *Gandhi Series*, comprising all his important writings and utterances brought together under suitable heads and printed in a nice, attractive form. The *Series* should be a very valuable acquisition to both private and public libraries.

October 2, 1941
GANDHI JAYANTI

ANAND T. HINGORANI
Upper Sind Colony, Karachi (Sind)

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The second edition of this volume has been considerably enlarged so as to make it more interesting and useful. As many as twenty-four new chapters have been added and the volume has been brought entirely up-to-date. The articles have been grouped systematically in order to facilitate the study and understanding of each subject in a compact, connected manner.

It is hardly necessary to say anything in regard to the articles and the views expounded therein. Gandhiji's written word, no less than his spoken one, has a wonderful power and a magic of its own. And, I feel sure, that whoever peruses these articles will not fail to come under its spell.

May this collection prove an unfailing friend, philosopher and guide to the students of India in particular and of other nations in general !

October 2, 1938
GANDHI JAYANTI

ANAND T. HINGORANI
Joshi Villa, Naini Tal (U.P.)

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Students are the hope of the future: specially so, the students of a nation under foreign yoke. It is upon what they do when they enter life that the social, political and economic well-being of a country largely depends. May this little volume of Gandhiji's inspiring writings and speeches help to remind them of their duty to the Motherland, and awaken in them the spirit of selfless service and heroic sacrifice !

These articles are taken from the issues of *Young India* upto 1928. At a few places local and other references, which have today no vital bearing on the subject, have been omitted. Care has, however, been taken to see that such omissions do not affect the continuity of idea or rhythmic flow of language.

December 28, 1935
CONGRESS GOLDEN JUBILEE

ANAND T. HINGORANI
D/3, Cosmopolitan Colony, Karachi (*Sind*)

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A STUDENT'S FOUR QUESTIONS

ART

"All true Art must help the soul to realize its inner self..... Anything which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul is a delusion and a snare."

Among those who visited *Dilkhush*, during the weeks of penance and prayer, there was a young student from Shantiniketan, named Ramachandran. He is one of the pupils of Mr. Andrews and he had no difficulty in persuading his teacher to permit him to stay at Delhi for some time. On the evening when Mr. Andrews left Delhi, he took Ramachandran upstairs and said to Gandhiji: "I have not even introduced Ramachandran as yet to you. But he has been here all the while with us, helping us. He wants to ask you some questions and I shall be so glad if you could have a talk with him before he leaves to-morrow to go back to Shantiniketan." The 'to-morrow' was a silent Monday, and so Ramachandran stayed a day more. On Tuesday morning he had to take his train for Calcutta. Exactly at half past five, after the morning prayer, he was summoned. He had set down his questions,—the doubts and difficulties that tormented him. Yet, he could not altogether trust himself at first to be able to ask all that he wanted to. But ultimately he mustered sufficient courage, and he found to his utter surprise that in a moment Bapu's gentle inquiries about him, his place and his studies, had left no room for hesitation or nervousness. It is impossible to reproduce all the conversation that Ramachandran was privileged to have that morning with Gandhiji. I can but present the barest summary.

'How is it,' proceeded Ramachandran, 'that many intelligent and eminent men, who love and admire you,

hold that you consciously or unconsciously have ruled out of the scheme of national regeneration all considerations of Art?'

'I am sorry,' replied Gandhiji, 'that in this matter I have been generally misunderstood. There are two aspects of things,—the outward and the inward. It is purely a matter of emphasis with me. The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward. All true Art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man.'

Ramachandran hesitatingly suggested: 'The great artists themselves have declared that Art is the translation of the urge and unrest in the soul of the artist into words, colours, shapes, etc.'

'Yes,' said Gandhiji, 'Art of that nature has the greatest possible appeal for me. But I know that many call themselves as artists, and are recognized as such, and yet in their works there is absolutely no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest.'

'Have you any instance in mind?'

'Yes,' said Gandhiji, 'take Oscar Wilde. I can speak of him as I was in England at the time that he was being much discussed and talked about.'

'I have been told,' put in Ramachandran, 'that Oscar Wilde was one of the greatest literary artists of modern times.'

'Yes, that is just my trouble. Wilde saw the highest Art simply in outward form and, therefore, succeeded in beautifying immorality. All true Art must help the soul to realize its inner self. In my own case, I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realization. I can claim, therefore, that there is truly sufficient Art in my life, though you might not see what you call works of Art about me. My room may have blank walls, and I may even dispense with the roof, so that I may gaze out upon the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious Art of man can give

me the panoramic scenes that open out before me, when I look up to the sky above with all its shining stars ? This, however, does not mean that I refuse to accept the value of productions of Art, generally accepted as such, but only that I personally feel how inadequate these are compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in Nature. These productions of man's Art have their value only so far as they help the soul onward towards self-realization.'

'But the artists claim to see and find Truth through outward Beauty,' said Ramachandran. 'Is it possible to see and find Truth in that way ?'

'I would reverse the order,' Gandhiji immediately answered. 'I see and find Beauty in Truth or through Truth. All Truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures or songs are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see Beauty in Truth. The ordinary man runs away from and becomes blind to the beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise.'

Ramachandran then asked: 'But cannot Beauty be separated from Truth, and Truth from Beauty ?'

'I should want to know exactly what is Beauty,' Gandhiji replied. 'If it is what people generally understand by that word, then they are wide apart. Is a woman with fair features necessarily beautiful ?'

'Yes,' replied Ramachandran without thinking.

'Even,' asked Bapu, continuing his question, 'if she may be of an ugly character ?'

Ramachandran hesitated. Then he said: 'But her face in that case cannot be beautiful. It will always be the index of the soul within. The true artist with the genius of perception will produce the right expression.'

'But here you are begging the whole question,' Gandhiji replied. 'You now admit that mere outward form may not make a thing beautiful. To a true artist only that face is beautiful which, quite apart from its exterior, shines with the truth within the soul. There is then, as I have said, no Beauty apart from Truth. On the other

hold that you consciously or unconsciously have ruled out of the scheme of national regeneration all considerations of Art?'

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hand, Truth may manifest itself in forms which may not be outwardly beautiful at all. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time, and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind, he was beautiful because all his life was a striving after Truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of Truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see Beauty in outward forms also !'

'But Bapuji,' said Ramachandran eagerly, 'the most beautiful things have often been created by men whose own lives were not beautiful.'

'That,' said Gandhiji, 'only means that Truth and Untruth often co-exist; good and evil are often found together. In an artist also, not seldom the right perception of things and the wrong co-exist. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these moments are rare in life, they are also rare in Art.'

All this set Ramachandran thinking hard. 'If only truthful or good things can be beautiful, how can things without a moral quality be beautiful ?' he said, half to himself and half aloud. Then, he asked the question: 'Is there Truth, Bapuji, in things that are neither moral nor immoral in themselves ? For instance, is there Truth in a sun-set or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night ?'

'Indeed,' replied Gandhiji, 'these beauties are truthful, inasmuch as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How else could these be beautiful, but for the Truth that is in the centre of creation ? When I admire the wonder of a sun-set or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sun-sets and sun-rises would be mere hindrances, if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul is a delusion and a snare; even, like the body which often does hinder you in the path of salvation.'

'I am grateful,' exclaimed Ramachandran, 'to hear

your views on Art, and I understand and accept them. Would it not be well for you to set them down for the benefit of the younger generation in order to guide them aright ?'

'That,' replied Gandhiji with a smile, 'I could never dream of doing, for the simple reason that it would be an impertinence on my part to hold forth on Art. I am not an Art student, though these are my fundamental convictions. I do not speak or write about it, because I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. Whatever I might have been able to do in my life has proceeded more than anything else out of the realization of my own limitations. My functions are different from the artist's and I should not go out of my own way to assume his position.'

II

MACHINERY

"To-day machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."

Ramachandran now turned to the next question. 'Are you against all machinery, Bapuji ?'

'How can I be,' he answered, smiling at Ramachandran's naive question, 'when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery ? The spinning wheel itself is a machine. What I object to is a craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call 'labour-saving' machinery. Men go on saving labour, till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. To-day machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not

the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.'

'Then, Bapuji,' said Ramachandran with eagerness, 'you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence to-day.'

'I would unhesitatingly say 'yes'; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be the mere instruments of greed. Then, labourers will not be over-worked and machinery, instead of becoming a hindrance, will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation.'

Ramachandran said: 'When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go.'

'It might have to go,' admitted Gandhiji, 'but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of men. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine, in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour, but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.'

'But, in that case,' said Ramachandran, 'there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.'

'Yes,' said Bapu, smiling at Ramachandran's eager opposition. 'But I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is

an alteration in the conditions of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine will, under these conditions, be as much a help to the man working it as to the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, not greed, the motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; they will continue to provide the spindles; but when the spindle gets wrong, every spinner will have a machine of his own to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will come right.'

Ramachandran was evidently not satisfied with this. He had understood Gandhiji to be against all machinery and he had felt that this was right, too. So he wanted to go to the root of the matter. But it was getting late and he had many more questions to ask. 'Don't mind losing your train,' said Gandhiji, smiling. 'I am prepared to satisfy you. You may ask any questions you like this morning, and it won't tire me now in the least.'

The young friend had by no means exhausted his list of questions. The assurance from Gandhiji that he would give him full liberty that morning put him entirely at ease, and gathering courage once more, he proceeded with the next question which dealt with the institution of marriage.

III

MARRIAGE

"The aim of human life is *Moksha*. Marriage is a hindrance in the attainment of this supreme object, inasmuch as it only tightens the bonds of flesh."

'The third question,' said Ramachandran, 'that I would like to ask you is whether you are against the institution of marriage.'

'I shall have to answer this question at some length,' said Bapu. 'The aim of human life is *Moksha*. As a Hindu, I believe that *Moksha* is freedom from birth, by breaking the bonds of flesh, by becoming one with God. Now marriage is a hindrance in the attainment of this supreme object, inasmuch as it only tightens the bonds of flesh. Celibacy is a great help, inasmuch as it enables one to lead a life of full surrender to God. What is the object generally understood of marriage, except a repetition of one's own kind ? And, why need you advocate marriage ? It propagates itself. It requires no agency to promote its growth.'

'But must you advocate celibacy and preach it to one and all ?'

'Yes,' said Gandhiji,—Ramachandran looked perplexed—'then, you fear there will be an end of creation ? No. The extreme logical result would be not extinction of the human species, but the transference of it to a higher plane.'

'But may not an artist or a poet or a great genius leave a legacy of his genius to posterity through his own children ?'

'Certainly not,' said Bapu, with emphasis. 'He will have more disciples than he can ever have children; and through those disciples all his gifts to the world will be handed down in a way that nothing else can do it. It will be the soul's marriage with the spirit; the progeny being the disciple—a sort of divine procreation. No,

you must leave marriage to take care of itself. Repetition and not growth would be the result; for lust has come to play the most important part in marriage.'

'Mr. Andrews,' said Ramachandran, 'does not like your emphasis on celibacy.'

'Yes, I know,' said Gandhiji, 'that is the legacy of Protestantism. Protestantism did many good things, but one of its few evils was that it ridiculed celibacy.'

'That,' rejoined Ramachandran, 'was because it had to fight the deep abuses in which the clergy of the age had sunk.'

'But all that was not due to any inherent evil of celibacy,' said Bapu. 'It is celibacy that has kept Catholicism green upto the present day.'

IV

SPINNING

"Every yard of foreign cloth brought into India is one bit of bread snatched out of the mouths of the starving poor."

Ramachandran's last question was about 'Spinning Franchise.' Ramachandran assured Gandhiji at the outset, that he was a spinner, but had to confess that he, with three friends at Shantiniketan, only began spinning after they had heard of the Fast. He also affirmed that he believed in universal spinning. But he could not understand how the Congress could compel its members to spin. Persuasion, and not compulsion, should be the method.

'I see,' said Gandhiji, 'you go even farther than Mr. Andrews. He would not have the Congress to compel its members; but he would fain become a member of a voluntary spinning association, with rules about spinning. You object to any such association whatsoever.'

Ramachandran sat silent.

'Well then,' replied Gandhiji, enjoying the argument, 'I ask you, has the Congress any right to say that its mem-

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'Well then,' replied Gandhiji, enjoying the argument, 'I ask you, has the Congress any right to say that its mem-

bers shall not drink? Will that be a restriction of the freedom of the individual, too? If the Congress exercized that right of enjoining abstinence from drinking, there would be no objection. Why? Because the evils of drink are obvious. Well, I say that in India to-day, where millions are on the brink of starvation and plunged in utter misery, it is perhaps a much worse evil to import foreign cloth. Think of the starving millions of Orissa. When I went there I saw the famine-stricken. Thanks to a kind superintendent who was in charge of an industrial home, I saw also their children, bright, healthy and merry, working away at their carpets, baskets, etc. There was no spinning, because these other things were much in vogue at the time. But on their faces there was the lustre of joyful work. But when I came to the famine-stricken, what did I see? They were merely skin and bone, only waiting to die. They were, then, in that condition because they would under no circumstances work. Even though you had threatened to shoot them, if they refused to work, I am sure they would have preferred to be shot, rather than do any honest work. This aversion for work is a greater evil than drink itself. You can take some work out of a drunkard. A drunkard retains something of a heart. He has intelligence. These starved men, refusing to work, were like mere animals. Now, how can we solve the problem of getting work out of people like this? I see no way except that of universalizing spinning. Every yard of foreign cloth brought into India, is one bit of bread snatched out of the mouths of the starving poor. If you could visualize, as I can, the supreme need of the hour which is to give India's starving millions a chance to earn their bread with joy and gladness, you would not object to the Spinning Franchise. I take the Congress to be a body of men and women who accept the paramount necessity of spinning. Why should it not ensure the integrity of membership in the body by making it compulsory for every member to spin? And you talk of

persuasion! What can be better persuasion than that every member of the Congress spins regularly a certain quantity of yarn every month? How would it be honest for the Congress members to ask people to spin, when they do not spin themselves?'

Ramachandran replied with great earnestness: 'But how can you exclude people, who do not spin, from the Congress? They may be doing valuable service to the nation in other ways!'

'Why not?,' asked Gandhiji. 'What is the reason for the property franchise? Why is it necessary for a man to pay four annas to be a member? And why is age considered a necessary qualification? Would the eight year old violinist prodigy of Italy have the franchise? John Stuart Mill, however clever he may have been when he was seven years old with his knowledge of Greek and Latin, had no franchise at that age. Why were these prodigies excluded? Some men will have to be excluded under any franchise. No, to-day many will not accept my position, but I have faith that the day will come,—it may be after my death,—when men will say that after all what Gandhi said was right.'

It was now seven o'clock and Ramachandran had missed his train. But he had gained what was infinitely more precious. The next morning, before starting, he was fortunate enough to get another talk,—this time a brief one, but one that at last converted him.

'So, Bapuji, Truth is the main thing,' said Ramachandran resuming the previous day's conversation, 'Beauty and Truth are not separate aspects of the same thing.'

'Truth,' repeated Gandhiji with greater emphasis, 'is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist, because he saw and expressed Truth; and so was Mahomed, the Quran being the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature,—at any rate, that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first

for Truth, that the grace of expression naturally came in; and yet neither Jesus nor Mahomed wrote on Art. This is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for and would die for.'

Ramachandran reverted to his difficulties as to Gandhiji's logical position with regard to machinery. 'If you make an exception of the Singer Sewing Machine and your spindle,' he said, 'where would these exceptions end?'

Gandhiji replied: 'Just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man.'

'But I was not thinking just now of the practical side, Bapuji,' said Ramachandran. 'Ideally, would you not rule out all machinery ? When you except the sewing machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor car, etc. ?'

'No, I don't,' said Bapu, 'because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man; for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle, on the contrary, happens to be an essential thing in life—a primary need. Ideally, however, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery. But machines will remain because, like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul it has to be rejected.'

'Why is it a necessary evil ?' asked Ramachandran. 'May not after all some artists be able to see Truth in and through Beauty?'

'Some may,' said Gandhiji, 'but here too, just as elsewhere, I must think in terms of the millions. And, to the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of Beauty in such a way as to see Truth in

it. Show them Truth first, and they will see Beauty afterwards. Orissa haunts me in my waking hours and in my dreams. Whatever can be useful to those starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give to-day first the vital things of life and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow.'

Here the long conversation ended, and early the same morning Ramachandran started on his way back to Shantiniketan rich with Bapu's blessings, wondering how far the teaching of his Gurudev, Rabindranath Tagore, would harmonize with that which he had just heard and how far there was a fundamental difference.—*Mahadev Desai.*

'AN UNMITIGATED EVIL'

"English education has emasculated us, constrained our intellect, and the manner of imparting this education has rendered us effeminate."

In reply to a question put to him in a public meeting at Cuttack whether English education was not a mixed evil inasmuch as Lok. Tilak, Babu Ram Mohan Roy and he himself were products of English education, Gandhiji said:

This is a representative view being expressed by several people. We must conquer the battle of *Swaraj* by conquering this sort of wilful ignorance and prejudice of our countrymen and of Englishmen. The system of (English) education is an unmitigated evil. I put my best energy to destroy that system. I don't say that we have got as yet any advantage from the system. The advantages, we have so far got, are in spite of the system, not because of the system. Supposing the English were not here, India would have marched with other parts of the world, and even if it continued to be under Moghul rule, many people would learn English as a language and a literature. The present system enslaves us, without allowing a discriminating use of English literature. My friend had cited the case of Tilak, Ram Mohan and myself. Leave aside my case, I am a miserable pigmy.

Tilak and Ram Mohan would have been far greater men if they had not had the contagion of English learning. I am opposed to making a fetish of English education. I don't hate English education. When I want to destroy the Government, I don't want to destroy the English language but read English as an Indian nationalist would do. Ram Mohan and Tilak (leave aside my case) were so many pigmies who had not hold upon the people com-

pared with Chaitanya, Shankar, Kabir and Nanak. Ram Mohan and Tilak were pigmies before these giants. What Shankar alone was able to do, the whole army of English-knowing men can't do. I can multiply instances. Was Guru Govind a product of English education?

Is there a single English-knowing Indian who is a match for Nanak, the founder of a sect second to none in point of valour and sacrifice? Has Ram Mohan produced a single martyr of the type of Dulip Singh? I highly revere Tilak and Mohan. It is my conviction that if Ram Mohan and Tilak had not received this education, but had their natural training, they would have done greater things like Chaitanya. If that race has ever to be revived, it is to be revived not by English education. I know what treasures I have lost in not knowing Hindustani and Sanskrit. I ask you to consider and value the glamour of education at its true worth. English education has emasculated us, constrained our intellect, and the manner of imparting this education has rendered us effeminate. We want to bask in the sunshine of freedom, but the enslaving system emasculates our nation. Pre-British period was not a period of slavery. We had some sort of *Swaraj* under Moghul rule. In Akbar's time, the birth of a Pratap was possible; and in Aurangzeb's time, a Shivaji could flourish. Has 150 years of British rule produced any Pratap and Shivaji?

You have got several feudatory Native Chiefs, every one of whom bends the knee before the Political Agent and admits his slavery. When I find young men complaining against Native Chiefs, my sympathy goes to them. They are doubly oppressed. When the Native Chiefs do so, I ascribe it to the British Conquerer not to the Chiefs. They are victims to the slave-owning system. So my appeal to you all is: 'Fly from this monster.' Never mind if you beg from door to door. Rather die begging than live in bondage. I refuse to shed a single tear if the English retire at this moment. I ask them to help us as our servants, equals and friends. I shall not allow them

to lord it over us with our consent. They may use aeroplanes, army, navy, but not our consent. Realize your own dignity even though India was infested with robbers. You must do your duty. What can be nobler than to die as free men of India? It is a satanic system. I have dedicated my life to destroy the system.

ENGLISH EDUCATION

"Of all the superstitions that affect India, none is so great as that a knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty, and developing accuracy of thought."

A friend asks me to give my considered view on the value of English education and explain my talk on the sands at Cuttack. I have not read the report of the talk. But I gladly respond to the friend's wish.

It is my considered opinion that English education, in the manner it has been given, has emasculated the English-educated Indian, has put a severe strain upon the Indian students' nervous energy, and has made of us imitators. The process of displacing the vernacular has been one of the saddest chapters in the British connection. Ram Mohan Roy would have been a greater reformer and Lokmanya Tilak would have been a greater scholar, if they had not to start with the handicap of having to think in English and transmit their thoughts chiefly in English. Their effect on their own people, marvellous as it was, would have been greater if they had been brought up under a less unnatural system. No doubt, they both gained from their knowledge of the rich treasures of English literature. But these should have been accessible to them through their own vernaculars. No country can become a nation by producing a race of translators. Think of what would have happened to the English if they had not an authorized version of the Bible. I do believe that Chaitanya, Kabir, Nanak, Guru Govind Sing, Shivaji and Pratap were greater than Ram Mohan Roy and Tilak. I know that comparisons are odious. All are great in their own way.

But judged by the results, the effect of Ram Mohan

and Tilak on the masses is not so permanent or far-reaching as that of the others more fortunately born. Judged by the obstacles they had to surmount, they were giants; and both would have been greater in achieving results if they had not been handicapped by the system under which they received their training. I refuse to believe that the Raja and the Lokmanya could not have thought the thoughts they did without a knowledge of the English language. Of all the superstitions that affect India, none is so great as that a knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty and developing accuracy of thought. It should be remembered that there has been only one system of education before the country for the past fifty years, and only one medium of expression forced on the country. We have, therefore, no data before us as to what we would have been but for the education in the existing schools and colleges. This, however, we do know that India to-day is poorer than fifty years ago, less able to defend herself, and her children have less stamina. I need not be told that that is due to the defect in the system of government. The system of education is its most defective part. It was conceived and born in error, for the English rulers honestly believed the indigenous system to be worse than useless. It has been nurtured in sin, for the tendency has been to dwarf the Indian body, mind and soul.

THE QUESTION OF HINDI

"If your horizon goes as far as Srinagar in the North and Cape Camorin in the South, Karachi in the West and Dibrugarh in the East—as, indeed, it should—there is for you nothing for it but to learn Hindi."

Delivering the Karnatak Hindi Convocation address at Bangalore, Gandhiji said :

I congratulate those who have won their diplomas and certificates to-day. I hope they will keep up their studies and go on adding to their knowledge every day. Those who go to ordinary schools and colleges go there for a career, read their books for examinations, and the moment they leave their examination-hall forget the books along with what they have learnt from them. Many care more for degrees than for knowledge. But those who have won their diplomas to-day have not done so for the sake of diplomas, for the obvious reason that the Institution for the Propagation of Hindi does not aim at helping you to win jobs. The diplomas and degrees conferred on you are meant only as a proof of the knowledge your teachers have imparted to you. It is quite possible, of course, for a few of you to earn your livelihood from your Hindi studies, but that certainly is not our object.

It delights my heart that a majority of the successful candidates to-day are the members of the fair sex. That indicates a bright future for Hindi *Prachar* and for Mother India, for I am firmly of opinion that India's salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her women. In many of the women's meetings I used to address, I emphasized the fact that when we wanted to speak of our ancient heroes and heroines or gods and goddesses we would name the latter first, *e.g.*, Sita Ram, Radha Krishna

and not Ram Sita or Krishna Radha. This practice is not without its significance. Women used to be honoured and their work and worth were regarded as of special value. Let us continue the tradition in letter and spirit.

I shall take this occasion to give you a few obvious reasons why Hindi or Hindustani alone can be the national language. So long as you live in Karnatak and do not look out of it, a knowledge of Kannada is enough for you. But a look at anyone of your villages is enough to show that your outlook and your horizon have widened, you no longer think in the terms of Karnatak, but in the terms of India. Events outside Karnatak interest you, but the interest cannot obviously go very far without a common medium of expression. How is a Karnatak man to establish and maintain contact with men from Sind or U.P.? Some of our people have held and, perhaps, still hold that English can be this medium. If it was a question of a few thousands of our educated people, English would certainly do. But I am sure none of you will be satisfied with that. You and I want millions of people to establish inter-provincial contacts, and they cannot obviously do so through English for generations to come, if ever. There is no reason why they should all learn English, and it certainly is no sure or substantial means of winning a livelihood. Its value for this object will, if anything, become less and less as more people come to learn it. Then, Hindi-Hindustani offers no difficulty in studying as English must. Study of it is never going to take the time that study of English would do. It has been estimated that the number of Hindus and Mussalmans speaking and understanding Hindi-Hindustani exceeds 200 millions. Would not the 11 millions of men and women of Karnatak like to learn a language that is spoken by 200 millions of their own brothers and sisters? And, can they not very easily learn it? The answer is supplied by a fact I noticed very strikingly a moment ago. You have all listened to a Kannada translation of Lady Raman's Hindi speech. You could not but have noticed

that the translation adopted unaltered quite a large number of words which Lady Raman had used in her Hindi speech —words like *prem*, *premi*, *sangha*, *sabha*, *adhyaksha*, *pada*, *ananta*, *bhakti*, *swagata*, *adhyakshatā*, *sammelan*. All these words are common to Hindi and Kannada. Now, supposing some one was translating Lady Raman's speech into English, could he have retained any of these words? By no means. The English equivalent of every one of these words would be new to the listeners. When, therefore, our Kannada friends say that Hindi is difficult for them, they amuse me no less than they make me angry and impatient. I am sure it is a matter of a few hours' careful study for a month. I am 67 and have not many years before me, but I assure you that when I listened to the Kannada translation, I felt as though I should not take more than eight days to learn Kannada if I gave a few hours to it each day. With the exception of half a dozen like the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri and myself, all of you here are quite young. Have you not energy enough to devote to a study of Hindi four hours each day for just one month? Do you think it is too much to devote this time to cultivate a contact with 200 millions of your own countrymen? Now, suppose those of you who do not know English decided to learn English. Do you think any one of you would be able to learn the language in a month by devoting four hours to it each day? By no means. The reason why Hindi is so ridiculously easy is that all the languages, including even the four South Indian, spoken by Hindus in India contain a large number of Sanskrit words. It is a matter of history that contact in the old days in the South and the North used to be maintained by means of Sanskrit. Even to-day the *Sastris* in the South hold discourses with the *Sastris* in the North through Sanskrit. The difference in the various vernaculars is mainly of grammar. In the North Indian languages, even the grammatical structure is identical. The grammar of the South Indian languages is, of course, vastly different, and even their vocabularies, before they came under the influence

of Sanskrit, were equally different. But now even these languages have adopted a very large number of Sanskrit words, so much so that I have not found it difficult whenever I have gone South, to get a gist of what was being said in all the four languages.

I come now to our Mussalman friends. They know the vernaculars of their provinces as a matter of course and Urdu in addition. There is no difference whatsoever between Hindi and Urdu or Hindustani. The grammar is common to both, it is only the script that makes the difference, and when one comes to think of it, one finds that the three words Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu denote only one language. If we were to refer to the lexicons of these languages, we should find that most of the words are the same. For, then, therefore, barring the question of script, which will adjust itself, there is no difficulty whatsoever.

To return, therefore, to where I began, if your horizon goes as far as Srinagar in the North and Cape Camorin in the South, Karachi in the West and Dibrugarh in the East—as, indeed, it should—there is for you nothing for it but to learn Hindi. English, I have shown to you, cannot be our *lingua franca*. I have no prejudice against English. A knowledge of English is necessary for a few scholars, it is necessary for international contacts and for a knowledge of the sciences pursued in the West. But I am pained when an attempt is made to give English a place it cannot take. That attempt, I have no doubt, is bound to fail. Everything looks proper in its own place.

There is a scare of which I should like to disabuse your minds. Is Hindi to be taught at the expense of Kannada? Is it likely to oust Kannada? On the contrary, I claim that the more we propagate Hindi, the more shall we stimulate a study of vernaculars, and even improve their power and potency. I say this from my experience of different provinces.

A word about the question of script. Even when I was in South Africa, I thought that all the languages

derived from Sanskrit should have Devnagari script, and I am sure that even the Dravadian languages could be easily learnt through the Devnagari script. I have tried to learn Tamil and Telugu scripts, as also Kannada and Malayalam, for a few days, through their respective scripts. I tell you I was frightfully upset over having to learn four scripts when I could see that if the four languages had a common script—Devnagari—I should learn, then, in no time. What a terrible strain it is on those like me who are anxious to learn the four languages! As between the speakers of the four South Indian vernaculars, does it need any argument to show that Devnagari would be the most convenient script for the speaker of one to learn the other three? The question of Hindi as *lingua franca* need not be mixed up with the question of the script, but I have referred to this simply in order to point out the difficulty of those who want to know all the Indian languages.

THE PLACE OF ENGLISH

"It is doing violence to the manhood, and specially the womanhood of India, to encourage our boys and girls to think that an entry into the best society is impossible without a knowledge of English."

Alongside of my suggestion about Hindustani has been the advice that the students should, during the transition period from inferiority to equality—from foreign domination to *Swaraj*, from helplessness to self-help—suspend their study of English. If we wish to attain *Swaraj*, we must do all that we are capable of doing for its advancement, and we must do nothing that would not advance it or would actually retard it. Now, adding to our knowledge of English cannot accelerate our progress towards our goal and it can conceivably retard it. The latter calamity is a reality in many cases, for there are many who believe that we cannot acquire the spirit of freedom without the music of the English words singing in our ears and sounding through our lips. This is an infatuation. If it were the truth, *Swaraj* would be as distant as the Greek Kalends. English is a language of international commerce; it is the language of diplomacy, and it contains many a rich literary treasure, it gives us an introduction to Western thought and culture. For a few of us, therefore, a knowledge of English is necessary. They can carry on the departments of national commerce and international diplomacy, and for giving to the nation the best of Western literature, thought and science. That would be the legitimate use of English. Whereas to-day, English has usurped the dearest place in our hearts and dethroned our mother-tongues. It is an unnatural place due to our unequal relations with Englishmen. The highest development of the Indian mind must be possible without a

knowledge of English. It is doing violence to the manhood, and specially the womanhood of India, to encourage our boys and girls to think that an entry into the best society is impossible without a knowledge of English. It is too humiliating a thought to be bearable. To get rid of the infatuation for English is one of the essentials of *Swaraj*.

"I cannot tolerate the idea of parents writing to their children, or husbands writing to their wives, not in their own vernaculars but in English."

English is to-day studied because of its commercial and so-called political value. Our boys think, and rightly in the present circumstances, that without English they cannot get Government service. Girls are taught English as a passport to marriage. I know several instances of women wanting to learn English so that they may be able to talk to Englishmen in English. I know husbands who are sorry that their wives cannot talk to them and their friends in English. I know families in which English is being *made* the mother-tongue. Hundreds of youths believe that without a knowledge of English, freedom for India is practically impossible. The canker has so eaten into the society that, in many cases, the only meaning of education is a knowledge of English. All these are for me signs of our slavery and degradation. It is unbearable to me that the vernaculars should be crushed and starved as they have been. I cannot tolerate the idea of parents writing to their children, or husbands writing to their wives, not in their own vernaculars but in English.

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other peoples' houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave. I refuse to put the unnecessary strain of learning English upon my sisters for the sake of false pride or questionable social advantage. I would have our young men and young women with literary tastes to learn as

much of English and other world-languages as they like, and then expect them to give the benefits of their learning to India and to the world, like a Bose, a Roy or a Tagore. But I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect or be ashamed of his mother-tongue or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thoughts in his or her own vernacular. Mine is not a religion of the prison-house. It has room for the least among God's creation. But it is proof against insolence, pride of race, religion or colour.

THE CURSE OF FOREIGN MEDIUM

> "Among the many evils of foreign rule, this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by History as one of the greatest."

The spirited plea on behalf of the vernaculars as media of instruction of Nawab Masood Jung Bahadur, Director of Public Instruction, Hyderabad State, recently delivered at the Karve University for Women, has evoked a reply in the *Times of India* from which a friend sends the following extracts for me to answer:

> "Whatever is valuable and fruitful in their writings is directly or indirectly the result of Western culture.....Instead of sixty, we can go back a hundred years and yet say that from Raja Ram Mohan Roy down to Mahatma Gandhi, every one of the Indians who have achieved anything worth mentioning in any direction was or is the fruit directly or indirectly of Western education."

In these extracts what is considered is not the value of English as the medium of higher instruction in India, but the importance of Western culture to and on the persons mentioned. Neither the Nawab nor any one else has disputed the importance or the influence of Western culture. What is resented is the sacrifice of Indian or Eastern culture on the altar of the Western. Even if it could be proved that Western culture was superior to Eastern, it would be injurious to India as a whole for her most promising sons and daughters to be brought up in Western culture and thus become denationalized and torn from the people.

In my opinion, whatever reaction for the better the persons named in the extracts had upon the people at large, was due to the extent they retained their Eastern culture in spite of the adverse influence of the Western. I regard as adverse the influence of Western culture in this

connection in the sense in which it interfered with the full effect that the best in Eastern culture might have produced on them. Of myself, whilst I have freely acknowledged my debt to Western culture, I can say that whatever service I have been able to render to the nation has been due *entirely* to the retention by me of Eastern culture to the extent it has been possible. I should have been thoroughly useless to the masses as an anglicized, denationalized being, knowing little of, caring less for and perhaps even despising their ways, habits, thoughts and aspirations. It is difficult to estimate the loss of energy caused to the nation by her children being obliged to resist the encroachments of a culture which, however good in itself, was unsuited for them whilst they had not imbibed and become rooted in their own.

Examine the question synthetically. Would Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Tulsidas and a host of other reformers have done better if they had been attached from their childhood to the most efficiently managed English schools? Have the men, named by the writer of the article in question, done better than these great reformers? Would Dayanand have done better if he had become an M.A. of an Indian University? Where is among the easy-going, ease-loving, English-speaking Rajas and Maharajas, brought up from their infancy under the influence of Western culture, one who could be named in the same breath as Shivaji who braved all perils and shared the simple life of his hardy men? Are they better rulers than Pratap, the intrepid? Are they good specimens of Western culture, these Neroes who are fiddling in London and Paris whilst their Romes are burning? There is nothing to be proud of in their culture which has made them foreigners in their own land, and which has taught them to prefer to waste the substance of their ryots and their own souls in Europe to sharing the happiness and miseries of those over whom they are called by a higher power to rule.

But the point at issue is not Western culture. The point at issue is the medium of instruction. But for the

fact that the only higher education, the only education worth the name, has been received by us through the English medium, there would be no need to prove such a self-evident proposition that the youth of a nation to remain a nation must receive all instruction, including the highest, in its own vernacular or vernaculars. Surely, it is a self-demonstrated proposition that the youth of a nation cannot keep or establish a living contact with the masses unless their knowledge is received and assimilated through a medium understood by the people. Who can calculate the immeasurable loss sustained by the nation, owing to thousands of its young men having been obliged to waste years in mastering a foreign language and its idiom, of which in their daily life they have the least use and in learning which they had to neglect their own mother-tongue and their own literature? There never was a greater superstition than that a particular language can be incapable of expansion or of expressing abstruse or scientific ideas. A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.

Among the many evils of foreign rule, this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by History as one of the greatest. It has sapped the energy of the nation, it has shortened the lives of the pupils. It has estranged them from the masses, it has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul. The sooner, therefore, educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OR DISSIPATION?

"Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education."

During my recent wanderings in Travancore and Madras, I found that most of the students and 'intellectuals' who came into touch with me were an instance of intellectual dissipation rather than intellectual development. The fault lies in the modern system of education which encourages this vicious tendency, misdirects the mind, and thereby hinders its development instead of helping it. My experiments in Segaon (now, Sevagram) have only confirmed this impression. But they are as yet too incomplete to be cited as evidence. The views on education that I am now going to set forth have been held by me right from the time of the founding of the Phoenix Settlement in South Africa in the year 1904.

I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, *e.g.*, hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. In other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lop-sided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual

faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another.

The baneful effects of absence of proper co-ordination and harmony among the various faculties of body, mind and soul respectively are obvious. They are all around us; only we have lost perception of them owing to our present perverse associations. Take the case of our village-folk. From their mind and soul, they have sunk to the level of the beast. Life to them is a sorry bungle which they muddle through anyhow. On the other hand, what goes by the name of education in our schools and colleges in the cities to-day is in reality only intellectual dissipation. Intellectual training is there looked upon as something altogether unrelated to manual or physical work. But since the body must have some sort of physical exercise to keep it in health, they vainly try to attain that end by means of an artificial and otherwise barren system of physical culture which would be ridiculous beyond words if the result was not so tragic. The young man who emerges from this system can in no way compete in physical endurance with an ordinary labourer. The slightest physical exertion gives him headache; a mild exposure to the sun is enough to cause him giddiness. And, what is more, all this is looked upon as quite 'natural'. As for the faculties of the heart, they are simply allowed to run to seed or to grow anyhow in a wild, undisciplined manner. The result is moral and spiritual anarchy. And it is regarded as something laudable!

As against this, take the case of a child in whom the education of the heart is attended to from the very beginning. Supposing he is set to some useful occupation like spinning, carpentry, agriculture, etc., for his education, and in that connection is given a thorough comprehensive knowledge relating to the theory of the various operations that he is to perform and the use and construc-

tion of the tools that he would be wielding. He would not only develop a fine, healthy body but also a sound, vigorous intellect that is not merely academic but is firmly rooted in and is tested from day to day by experience. His intellectual education would include a knowledge of mathematics and the various sciences that are useful for an intelligent and efficient exercise of his avocation. If to this is added literature by way of recreation, it would give him a perfect well-balanced, alround education in which the intellect, body and the spirit have all full play and develop together into a natural, harmonious whole. Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education. To say that this kind of education can only be given after we have attained our independence would, I am afraid, be like putting the cart before the horse. The advent of independence would be incredibly hastened if we could educate millions of our people through an intelligent exercise of their respective vocations like this, and teach them that they live for the common good of all.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS

"If our rulers are doing what in our opinion is wrong, and if we feel it our duty to let them hear our voice even though it may be considered sedition, I urge you to speak sedition—but at your peril, you must be prepared to suffer the consequences."

Gandhiji delivered the following speech at the Y.M.C.A. in reply to the Madras Students' address, the Hon'ble Mr. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri presiding :

Mr. Chairman and Dear Friends,

Madras has well-nigh exhausted the English vocabulary in using adjectives of virtue with reference to my wife and myself, and, if I may be called upon to give an opinion as to where I have been smothered with kindness, love and attention, I would have to say: it is Madras. (*Applause*). But, as I have said so often, I believed it of Madras. So, it is no wonder to me that you are lavishing all these kindnesses with unparalleled generosity, and now the worthy President of the Servants of India Society—under which society I am going through a period of probation—has, if I may say so, capped it all. Am I worthy of these things? My answer from the innermost recesses of my heart is an emphatic 'No'. But I have come to India to become worthy of every adjective that you may use, and all my life will certainly be dedicated to prove worthy of them if I am to be a worthy servant.

And so it is that you have sung that beautiful national song, on hearing which all of us sprang to our feet. The poet has lavished all the adjectives that he possibly could to describe Mother India. He describes Mother India as sweet-smiling, sweet-speaking, fragrant, all-powerful, all-good, truthful, land flowing with milk and honey, land having ripe fields, fruits and grains, and inhabited by a

race of men of whom we have only a picture in the great Golden Age. He pictures to us a land which shall embrace in its possession the whole of the world, the whole of humanity by the might or right not of physical power but of soul-power. 'Can we sing that hymn?' I ask myself: 'Can I, by any right, spring to my feet when I listen to that song?' The poet no doubt gave us a picture for our realization, the words of which simply remain prophetic, and it is for you, the hope of India, to realize every word that the poet has said in describing this Motherland of ours. To-day I feel that these adjectives are very largely misplaced in his description of the Motherland, and it is for you and for me to make good the claim that the poet has advanced on behalf of his Motherland.

You, the students of Madras as well as the students all over India—are you receiving an education which will make you worthy to realize that ideal and which will draw the best out of you, or is it an education which has become a factory for making Government employees or clerks in commercial offices? Is the goal of the education that you are receiving that of mere employment, whether in the Government departments or other departments? If that be the goal of your education, if that is the goal that you have set before yourselves, I feel and I fear that the vision which the poet pictured for himself is far from being realized. As you have heard me say perhaps, or as you have read, I am and I have been a determined opponent of modern civilization. I want you to turn your eyes to-day upon what is going on in Europe, and if you have come to the conclusion that Europe is to-day groaning under the heels of the modern civilization, then you and your elders will have to think twice before you can emulate that civilization in our Motherland. But I have been told: 'How can we help it, seeing that our rulers bring that culture to our Motherland.' Do not make any mistake about it at all. I do not for one moment believe that it is for any rulers to bring that culture to you unless you are prepared to accept it, and if it be that the rulers bring

that culture before us, I think that we have forces within ourselves to enable us to reject that culture without having to reject the rulers themselves. (*Applause*). I have said on many a platform that the British race is with us. I decline to go into the reasons why that race is with us, but I do believe that it is possible for India, if she would but live up to the traditions of the sages of whom you have heard from our worthy President, to transmit a message through this great race, a message not of physical might but a message of love. And, then, it will be your privilege to conquer the conquerors not by shedding blood but by sheer force of spiritual predominance. When I consider what is going on to-day in India, I think it is necessary for us to say what our opinion is in connection with the political assassinations and political dacoities. I feel that these are purely a foreign importation which cannot take root in this land. But you, the student world, have to beware lest mentally or morally you give one thought of approval to this kind of terrorism. I, as a passive resister, will give you another thing very substantial for it. Terrorize yourself; search within; by all means resist tyranny wherever you find it; by all means resist encroachment upon your liberty, but not by shedding the blood of the tyrant. This is not what is taught by our religion. Our religion is based upon *ahimsa*, which in its active form is nothing but love, love not only to your neighbours, not only to your friends, but love even to those who may be your enemies.

One word more in connection with the same thing. I think that if we were to practise truth, to practise *ahimsa*, we must immediately see that we also practise fearlessness. If our rulers are doing what in our opinion is wrong, and if we feel it our duty to let them hear our advice even though it may be considered sedition, I urge you to speak sedition—but at your peril, you must be prepared to suffer the consequences. And, when you are ready to suffer the consequences and not hit below the belt, then I think you will have made good your right to have your advice heard even by the Government.

I ally myself with the British Government, because I believe that it is possible for me to claim equal partnership with every subject of the British Empire. I to-day claim that equal partnership. I do not belong to a subject race. I do not call myself a member of a subject race. But there is this thing: It is not for the British Governors to give you: it is for you to take the thing. I want and I can take the thing. That I want only by discharging my obligations. Max Muller has told us—we need not go to Max Muller to interpret our own religion—but he says, our religion consists of four letters "D-u-t-y," and not in the five letters "R-i-g-h-t". And, if you believe that all that we want can be got from better discharge of our duty, then think always of your duty and, fighting along those lines, you will have no fear of any man, you will fear only God. That is the message that my master—if I may say so, your master, too—Mr. Gokhale has given to us. What is that message, then? It is in the constitution of the Servants of India Society and that is the message by which I wish to be guided in my life. The message is to spiritualize the political life and the political institutions of the country. We must immediately set about realizing its practice. The students cannot be away from politics. Politics is as essential to them as religion. Politics cannot be divorced from religion. My views may not be acceptable to you, I know. All the same, I can only give you what is stirring me to my very depths. On the authority of my experiences in South Africa, I claim that your countrymen who had not that modern culture but who had that strength of the *Rishis* of old, who have inherited the *tapascharya* performed by the *Rishis*, without having known a single word of English literature and without knowing anything whatsoever of the present modern culture, they are able to rise to their full height. And, what has been possible for the uneducated and illiterate countrymen of ours in South Africa, is ten times possible for you and for me to-day in this sacred land of ours. May that be your privilege and may that be my privilege ! (*Applause*).

HINDU UNIVERSITY SPEECH

"Whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India, be it in British India or be it in India which is ruled by our great Chiefs, I become jealous at once and I say: 'Oh, it is the money that has come from the agriculturists.' "

The following is the full text of Gandhiji's speech delivered on the occasion of the opening of the Benares Hindu University:

Friends,

I wish to tender my humble apology for the long delay that took place before I am able to reach this place. And you will readily accept the apology when I tell you that I am not responsible for the delay, nor is any human agency responsible for it. (*Laughter*). The fact is that I am like an animal on show and my keepers in their over-kindness always manage to neglect a necessary chapter in this life and that is pure accident. In this case, they did not provide for the series of accidents that happened to us—to me, keepers, and my carriers. Hence, this delay.

Friends, under the influence of the matchless eloquence of the lady (Mrs. Besant) who has just sat down, pray, do not believe that our University has become a finished product and that all the young men who are to come to the University that has yet to rise and come into existence, have also come and returned from it finished citizens of a great Empire. Do not go away with any such impression, and, if you, the student world, to which my remarks are supposed to be addressed this evening, consider for one moment that the spiritual life, for which this country is noted and for which this country has no rival, can be transmitted through the lip, pray, believe me you are wrong. You will never be able merely through the lip to give the

message that India, I hope, will one day deliver to the world. I myself have been "fed up" with speeches and lectures. I except the lectures that have been delivered here during the last two days from this category, because they were necessary. But I do venture to suggest to you that we have now reached almost the end of our resources in speech-making, and it is not enough that our ears are feasted, that our eyes are feasted, but it is necessary that our hearts have got to be touched and that our hands and feet have got to be moved. We have been told during the last two days how necessary it is, if we are to retain our hold upon the simplicity of Indian character, that our hands and feet should move in unison with our hearts. But this is only by way of preface.

I wanted to say it is a matter of deep humiliation and shame for us that I am compelled this evening, under the shadow of this great college in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me. I know that if I was appointed an examiner to examine all those who have been attending during these two days this series of lectures, most of those who might be examined upon these lectures would fail. And why? Because they have not been touched. I was present at the sessions of the great Congress in the month of December. There was a much vaster audience, and will you believe me when I tell you that the only speeches that touched that huge audience in Bombay were the speeches that were delivered in Hindustani? In Bombay, mind you, not in Benares where everybody speaks Hindi. But between the vernaculars of the Bombay Presidency on the one hand, and Hindi on the other, no such great dividing line exists as there does between English and the sister languages of India; and the Congress audience was better able to follow the speakers in Hindi. I am hoping that this University will see to it that the youths who come to it will receive their instruction through the medium of their vernaculars. Our language is the reflection of ourselves, and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best

thought, then I say that the sooner we are wiped out of existence the better for us. Is there a man who dreams that English can ever become the national language of India? (*Cries of* 'Never'). Why this handicap on the nation? Just consider for one moment what an unequal race our lads have to run with every English lad. I had the privilege of a close conversation with some Poona professors. They assured me that every Indian youth, because he reached his knowledge through the English language, lost at least six precious years of life. Multiply that by the number of students turned out by our schools and colleges and find out for yourselves how many thousand years have been lost to the nation. The charge against us is, that we have no initiative. How can we have any if we are to devote the precious years of our life to the mastery of a foreign tongue? We fail in this attempt also. Was it possible for any speaker yesterday and to-day to impress his audience as was possible for Mr. Higginbotham? It was not the fault of the previous speakers that they could not engage the audience. They had more than substance enough for us in their addresses. But their addresses could not go home to us. I have heard it said that after all it is English-educated India which is leading and which is doing all the thing for the nation. It would be monstrous if it were otherwise. The only education we receive is English education. Surely, we must show something for it. But suppose that we had been receiving, during the past fifty years, education through our vernaculars, what should we have to-day? We should have to-day a free India, we should have our educated men, not as if they were foreigners in their own land but speaking to the heart of the nation; they would be working among the poorest of the poor, and whatever they would have gained during the past fifty years would be a heritage for the nation. (*Applause*). To-day even our wives are not the sharers in our best thought. Look at Professor Bose and Professor Ray and their brilliant researches. Is it not a shame that their researches are not the common

property of the masses?

Let us now turn to another subject.

The Congress has passed a resolution about self-government, and I have no doubt that the All-India Congress Committee and the Moslem League will do their duty and come forward with some tangible suggestions. But I, for one, must frankly confess that I am not so much interested in what they will be able to produce, as I am interested in anything that the student world is going to produce or the masses are going to produce. No paper contribution will ever give us self-government. No amount of speeches will ever make us fit for self-government. It is only our conduct that will fit us for it. (*Applause*). And, how are we trying to govern ourselves? I want to think audibly this evening. I do not want to make a speech, and if you find me this evening speaking without reserve, pray, consider that you are only sharing the thoughts of a man who allows himself to think audibly, and if you think that I seem to transgress the limits that courtesy imposes upon me, pardon me for the liberty I may be taking. I visited the Viswanath Temple last evening and as I was walking through those lanes, these were the thoughts that touched me. If a stranger dropped from above on to this great Temple and he had to consider what we as Hindus were, would he not be justified in condemning us? Is not this great Temple a reflection of our own character? I speak feelingly as a Hindu. Is it right that the lanes of our sacred Temple should be as dirty as they are? The houses round about are built anyhow. The lanes are tortuous and narrow. If even our temples are not models of roominess and cleanliness, what can our self-government be? Shall our temples be abodes of holiness, cleanliness and peace as soon as the English have retired from India, either of their own pleasure or by compulsion, bag and baggage?

I entirely agree with the President of the Congress that before we think of self-government, we shall have to

do the necessary plodding. In every city there are two divisions, the cantonment and the city proper. The city mostly is a stinking den. But we are a people unused to city life. But if we want city life, we cannot reproduce the easy going hamlet life. It is not comforting to think that people walk about the streets of Indian Bombay under the perpetual fear of dwellers in the storeyed buildings spitting upon them. I do a great deal of railway travelling. I observe the difficulty of third class passengers. But the Railway Administration is by no means to blame for all their hard lot. We do not know the elementary laws of cleanliness. We spit anywhere on the carriage floor, irrespective of the thought that it is often used as sleeping space. We do not trouble ourselves as to how we use it; the result is indescribable filth in the compartment. The so-called better class passengers over-awe their less fortunate brethren. Among them I have seen the student world also. Sometimes they behave no better. They can speak English and they have worn Norfolk jackets and, therefore, claim the right to force their way in and command seating accommodation. I have turned the search-light all over, and as you have given me the privilege of speaking to you, I am laying my heart bare. Surely, we must set these things right in our progress towards self-government. I now introduce you to another scene. His Highness the Maharajah, who presided yesterday over our deliberations, spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in the great *pandal* in which the foundation ceremony was performed by the Viceroy. Certainly a most gorgeous show, an exhibition of jewellery which made a splendid feast for the eyes of the greatest jeweller who chose to come from Paris. I compare with the richly bedecked noblemen the millions of the poor. And, I feel like saying to these noblemen: 'There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India.' (*Hear, hear and applause*). I am sure it is not the

desire of the King-Emperor or Lord Hardinge that, in order to show the truest loyalty to our King-Emperor, it is necessary for us to ransack our jewellery-boxes and to appear bedecked from top to toe. I would undertake, at the peril of my life, to bring to you a message from King George himself that he expects nothing of the kind. Sir, whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India, be it in British India or be it in India which is ruled by our great Chiefs, I become jealous at once and I say : 'Oh, it is the money that has come from the agriculturists.' Over 75 per cent of the population are agriculturists, and Mr. Higginbotham told us last night in his own felicitous language that they are the men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour. Our salvation can only come through the farmer. Neither the lawyers, nor the doctors, nor the rich landlords are going to secure it.

Now, last but not the least, it is my bounden duty to refer to what agitated our minds during these two or three days. All of us have had many anxious moments while the Viceroy was going through the streets of Benares. There were detectives stationed in many places. We were horrified. We asked ourselves: 'Why this distrust? Is it not better that even Lord Hardinge should die than live a living death?' But a representative of a mighty Sovereign may not. He might find it necessary even to live a living death. But why was it necessary to impose these detectives on us? We may foam, we may fret, we may resent, but let us not forget that India of to-day in her impatience has produced an army of anarchists. I myself am an anarchist, but of another type. But there is a class of anarchists amongst us, and if I was able to reach this class, I would say to them that their anarchism has no room in India, if India is to conquer the conqueror. It is a sign of fear. If we trust and fear God, we shall

have to fear no one, not Maharajahs, not Viceroys, not the detectives, not even King George. I honour the anarchist for his love of the country. I honour him for his bravery in being willing to die for his country; but I ask him: 'Is killing honourable? Is the dagger of an assassin a fit precursor of an honourable death?' I deny it. There is no warrant for such methods in any scriptures. If I found it necessary for the salvation of India that the English should retire, that they should be driven out, I would not hesitate to declare that they would have to go, and I hope, I would be prepared to die in defence of that belief. That would, in my opinion, be an honourable death. The bomb-thrower creates secret plots, is afraid to come out into the open, and when caught pays the penalty of misdirected zeal. I have been told: 'Had we not done this, had some people not thrown bombs, we should never have gained what we have got with reference to the Partition Movement.' (*Mrs. Besant*: *Please stop it*). This was what I said in Bengal when Mr. Lyon presided at the meeting. I think what I am saying is necessary. If I am told to stop I shall obey. (*Turning to the Chairman*) I await your orders. If you consider that by my speaking as I am, I am not serving the country and the Empire, I shall certainly stop. (*Cries of "Go on"*). (*The Chairman*: *Please explain your object*). I am explaining my object. I am simply (*Another interruption*). My friends, please do not resent this interruption. If Mrs. Besant this evening suggests that I should stop, she does so because she loves India so well, and she considers that I am erring in thinking audibly before you, young men. But even so, I simply say this that I want to purge India of the atmosphere of suspicion on either side; if we are to reach our goal, we should have an empire which is to be based upon mutual love and mutual trust. Is it not better that we talk under the shadow of this college than that we should be talking irresponsibly in our homes? I consider that it is much better that we talk these things openly. I have done so with excellent results before now. I

know that there is nothing that the students are not discussing. There is nothing that the students do not know. I am, therefore, turning the search-light towards ourselves. I hold the name of my country so dear to me that I exchange these thoughts with you, and submit to you that there is no reason for anarchism in India. Let us frankly and openly say whatever we want to say to our rulers and face the consequences, if what we have to say does not please them. But let us not abuse. I was talking the other day to a member of the much-abused Civil Service. I have not very much in common with the members of that Service; but I could not help admiring the manner in which he was speaking to me. He said: 'Mr. Gandhi, do you for one moment suppose that all we, Civil Servants, are a bad lot, that we want to oppress the people whom we have come to govern?' 'No', I said. 'Then, if you get an opportunity put in a word for the much-abused Civil Service?' And, I am here to put in that word. Yes, many members of the Indian Civil Service are most decidedly over-bearing; they are tyrannical, at times thoughtless. Many other adjectives may be used. I grant all these things and I grant also that, after having lived in India for a certain number of years, some of them become somewhat degraded. But what does that signify? They were gentlemen before they came here, and if they have lost some of the moral fibre, it is a reflection upon ourselves. (*Cries of "No"*). Just think out for yourselves, if a man who was good yesterday has become bad after having come in contact with me, is he responsible that he has deteriorated or am I? The atmosphere of sycophancy and falsity that surrounds them on their coming to India demoralizes them, as it would many of us. It is well to take the blame sometimes. If we are to receive self-government we shall have to take it. We shall never be granted self-government. Look at the history of the British Empire and the British nation; freedom-loving as it is, it will not be party to give freedom to a people who will not take it themselves. Learn your lessons, if

you wish to, from the Boer War. Those who were enemies of that empire only a few years ago, have now become friends.

(*At this point there was an interruption and there was a movement on the platform to leave; the speech, therefore, ended here abruptly*).

AT THE GURUKULA

"In my humble opinion, fearlessness is the first thing indispensable before we could achieve anything permanent and real. This quality is unattainable without religious consciousness. Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man."

The following is taken from Gandhiji's speech at the Anniversary of the Gurukula:

Throughout my travels I have been asked about the immediate need of India. And, perhaps, I would not do better than repeat this afternoon the answer I have given elsewhere. In general terms, a proper religious spirit is the greatest and most immediate need. But I know that this is too general an answer to satisfy anybody. And, it is an answer true for all time. What, therefore, I desire to say is, that owing to the religious spirit being dormant in us, we are living in a state of perpetual fear. We fear the temporal as well as the spiritual authority. We dare not speak out our minds before our priests and our *pandits*. We stand in awe of the temporal power. I am sure that in so doing we do a disservice to them and us. Neither the spiritual teachers nor our political governors could possibly desire that we should hide the truth from them. Lord Willingdon, speaking to a Bombay audience, has been saying recently that he has observed that we hesitated to say 'No' when we really meant it and advised his audience to cultivate a fearless spirit. Of course, fearlessness should never mean want of due respect or regard for the feelings of others. In my humble opinion, fearlessness is the first thing indispensable before we could achieve anything permanent and real. This quality is unattainable without religious consciousness. Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man. If we grasp the fact that

there is a divinity within us which witnesses everything we think or do and which protects us and guides us along the true path, it is clear that we shall cease to have any other fear on the face of the earth save the fear of God. Loyalty to the Governor of governors supersedes all other loyalty and gives an intelligent basis to the latter.

And, when we have sufficiently cultivated this spirit of fearlessness, we shall see that there is no salvation for us without true *Swadeshi*, not the *Swadeshi* which can be conveniently put off. *Swadeshi* for me has a deeper meaning. I would like us to apply it in our religious, political and economic life. It is not, therefore, merely confined to wearing on occasion a *Swadeshi* cloth. That we have to do for all time, not out of a spirit of jealousy or revenge, but because it is a duty we owe to our dear country. We commit a breach of the *Swadeshi* spirit certainly if we wear foreign made cloth, but we do so also if we adopt the foreign cut. Surely, the style of our dress has some correspondence with our environment. In elegance and tastefulness, it is immeasurably superior to the trousers and the jacket. An Indian, wearing a shirt flowing over his pyjamas with a waist-coat on it without a necktie and its flaps hanging loose behind, is not a very graceful spectacle. *Swadeshi* in religion teaches one to measure the glorious past and re-enact it in the present generation. The pandemonium that is going on in Europe shows that modern civilization represents forces of evil and darkness, whereas the ancient, *i.e.*, Indian civilization, represents in its essence the divine force. Modern civilization is chiefly materialistic, as ours is chiefly spiritual. Modern civilization occupies itself in the investigation of the laws of matter, and employs the human ingenuity in inventing or discovering means of production and weapons of destruction, ours is chiefly occupied in exploring spiritual laws. Our *Shastras* lay down unequivocally that a proper observance of truth, chastity, scrupulous regard for all life, abstention from coveting others' possessions and refusal to hoard anything but what is necessary for our daily

wants is indispensable for a right life; that without it a knowledge of the divine element is an impossibility. Our civilization tells us with daring certainty that a proper and perfect cultivation of the quality of *ahimsa*, which in its active form means purest love and pity, brings the whole world to our feet. The author of this discovery gives a wealth of illustration which carries conviction with it.

Examine its result in the political life. There is no gift so valued by our *Shastras* as the gift of life. Consider what our relations would be with our rulers if we gave absolute security of life to them. If they could but feel that, no matter what we might feel about their acts, we would hold their bodies as sacred as our own, there would immediately spring up an atmosphere of mutual trust, and there would be such frankness on either side as to pave the way for an honourable and just solution of many problems that worry us to-day. It should be remembered that in practising *ahimsa*, there need not be any reciprocation though, as a matter of fact, in its final stages it commands reciprocation. Many of us believe, and I am one of them, that through our civilization we have a message to deliver to the world. I tender my loyalty to the British Government quite selfishly. I would like to use the British race for transmitting this mighty message of *ahimsa* to the whole world. But that can only be done when we have conquered our so-called conquerors, and you, my Arya Samaj friends, are perhaps specially elected for this mission. You claim to examine our scriptures critically. You take nothing for granted and you claim not to fear to reduce your belief to practice. I do not think that there is any room for trifling with or limiting the doctrine of *ahimsa*. You dare, then, to reduce it to practice regardless of immediate consequences which would certainly test the strength of your convictions. You would not only have produced salvation for India, but you would have rendered the noblest service that a man can render to humanity—a service, moreover, which you would rightly assert, the great *Swami* (Dayanand)

was born for. This *Swadeshi* is to be considered as a very active force to be ceaselessly employed with an ever-increasing vigilance, searching self-examination. It is not meant for the lazy, but it is essentially meant for them who would gladly lay down their lives for the sake of truth. It is possible to dilate upon several other phases of *Swadeshi*, but I think I have said enough to enable you to understand what I mean. I only hope that you, who represent a school of reformers in India, will not reject what I have said without thorough examination. And, if my word has commended itself to you, your past record entitles me to expect you to enforce in your own lives the things of eternity, about which I have ventured to speak to you this afternoon, and cover the whole of India with your activity.

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM.
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FOR GOD, KING AND COUNTRY

"There can be but one universal creed for man, that is loyalty to God. It includes, when it is not inconsistent, loyalty to King, Country, and Humanity. But it, equally often, excludes all else."

During my peregrinations, I once came across boys in uniform and asked them what their uniform meant. I observed that their uniform was made of foreign cloth or cloth woven out of foreign yarn. They said it was scouts' uniform. They whetted my curiosity by the answer. I was eager to know what they did as scouts. The answer was that they lived for God, King and Country. 'Who is your King?' I asked. 'King George', was the reply. 'How about Jallianwala? Supposing you had been in that place on the 13th April, 1919, and were asked by General Dyer to shoot your terrified countrymen, what would you have done?'

'Of course, I would not have obeyed the command.'

'But General Dyer wore the King's uniform?'

'Yes, but he belongs to the bureaucracy, and I have nothing to do with it.'

I suggested that he could not separate the bureaucracy from the King, that the King was an impersonal ideal existence which meant the British Empire and that no Indian could remain loyal, in the accepted sense, to the Empire as it was at present represented and be loyal to God at the same time. An Empire, which could be responsible for the terrorism of the Martial Law regime, that would not repent of the wrong, that could enter into secret treaties in breach of solemn obligations, could only be reckoned as a godless Empire. Loyalty to such an Empire was disloyalty to God.

The boy was puzzled.

I continued my argument. 'Supposing our country becomes godless in order to enrich itself, exploits other people, trafficks in intoxicants, goes to war for the sake of extending its trade and resorts to fraud in order to sustain its power and prestige, how can we be consistently loyal to God and Country? Must we not forsake the Country for the sake of God? I suggest, therefore, that you should bind yourself to be faithful and loyal only to God and none else in the same sense and in the same breath.'

There were many of his companions who were deeply interested in the conversation. Their chief, too, came in. I repeated my argument to him and asked him to tax himself and stimulate the inquiring spirit of the grown-up young men whom he was guiding. Hardly was the absorbing topic exhausted, when the train steamed out of the station. I felt sorry for the splendid lads and understood better the deep meaning of the movement of Non-co-operation. There can be but one universal creed for man, that is loyalty to God. It includes, when it is not inconsistent, loylaty to King, Country, and Humanity. But it, equally often, excludes all else.

I hope that the youth of the country, as well as their tutors, will revise their creed and set themselves right where they are convinced of their error. It is no small matter for tender minds to have formulas presented to them which cannot bear scrutiny.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY SPEECH

"I am an autumnal leaf on the tree that might fall off at any moment; the teachers are the young sprouts that would last longer but fall off at their proper time; but you, the students, are the branches that would put forth new leaves to replace the old ones."

The following is Gandhiji's address on the occasion of the inauguration of the Gujarat National University, popularly known as Gujarat Vidyapith:

I would first request the ladies and gentlemen present here to bless the movement[1] and wish it success not by mere words but by deeds, by sending their sons and daughters to the institution. India has ever helped such institutions financially, progress is never stayed on account of lack of financial support. But I do believe that it is stayed for lack of men, teachers and organizers. It is only a bad workman that quarrels with his tools, and the truest is he who gives the best with what he has. I would tell the Principal and the Professors that only one principle need guide them here. They are to teach lessons of freedom, not by their scholarship but by their sterling character. They are to meet the warring forces of the Government with their divine peaceful forces. We have to nurse the seed of freedom into a full-grown tree of *Swaraj*. May God justify my faith in you! I know that I have not the scholarship which is expected in a Chancellor of a University. But I have my faith which has moved me to accept it. I am prepared to live and die for this work, and I accept this high office only because I know that the same feelings actuate you.

[1]Non-co-operation Movement.

Now, I turn to the students. I consider it a sin to blame them, because they are one mirror in which the present situation is so faithfully reflected. They are simple things and easy to read. If they lack in virtue, the fault is not theirs but it is that of the parents, teachers and the king. How do I find fault with the king? *Yatha Praja Tatha Raja* (as are the subjects so is the king) is equally true as *Yatha Raja Tatha Praja* (as is the king so are the subjects), for a king is a king so long as his authority is respected. People are at fault and their drawbacks are mirrored in the students and hence we must try to reform parents, teachers and kings . Every home is a university and the parents are the teachers. The parents in India have at present foregone this sacred duty. We have not been able to estimate foreign culture at its proper value. How can we expect now to rise with that borrowed culture?

We inaugurate this University, not as an educational institution, but as a national one. We inaugurate it to inculcate character and courage in students, and our fitness for *Swaraj* will be rated by this our success.

This is not the time for words but for deeds, and I have called upon you to contribute your quota to the national sacrifice. Now, I address myself to the students. I do not regard them as mere students exempt from any responsibility. I regard the students who have joined this institution as examples to others and hence fulfilling the conditions of teachers to some extent. The Mahavidyalaya is founded on them; without them it would have been an impossibility. They share its responsibility and unless they realize this, all the efforts of the teachers will not bear fruits expected of them. They are to fully realize this when they have left their colleges and joined this. May God pour into them the strength to discharge their duties during this grim struggle, however long it lasts!

This strength of conviction, and not the strength in number, would make this institution a success and an

ideal to the rest of India. It shall be so not because of the wealth of Gujarat or its learning, but because it is the birthplace of Non-co-operation. The ground was first prepared in Gujarat and the seed sown. It is Gujarat that has suffered the birth-pangs, and it is Gujarat that has reared up the movement. It is not vanity that speaks in me. I do not mean to say that I am author of all this. I have simply been a *Rishi*, a Seer, if a Bania like myself can be one. I have simply given the idea and it is worked out by my colleagues. Their faith is of a superior type. I have seen it by experience as directly as I see the trees opposite, that India is to rise by Non-violent Non-co-operation and even the gods cannot convince me otherwise. But my colleagues have realized this by imagination, by reasoning, by faith. Individual experience is not the only factor in an action. Faith and imagination do play their part.

My colleagues have grounded the weapon and its effect cannot be fully realized at this moment, as it will be six months hence. But its corporate symbol is this Mahavidyalaya. The Chancellor, the teachers and the students form the component parts of the symbol. I am an autumnal leaf on the tree that might fall off at any moment; the teachers are the young sprouts that would last longer but fall off at their proper time; but you, the students, are the branches that would put forth new leaves to replace the old ones. I request the students to have the same faith in teachers as they have in me. But if you find them lacking in vitality, I would ask you to burn them in your fire of righteousness. Such is my prayer to God and that is my blessing to the students.

In conclusion, I pray to God, and I wish you to join me in prayer, that this Mahavidyalaya help us to win the freedom that would turn not only this country but the world into a heaven.

MESSAGE TO THE STUDENTS

"Strength of numbers is the delight of the timid. The valiant of spirit glory in fighting alone.....Be you one or many, this valour is the only true valour, all else is false."

Addressing the students of the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya at Ahmedabad, Gandhiji said:

1921 and 1926—What a difference!

Please do not think that I am striking a melancholy note. We are not going back, our country is not going back. We have gone five years nearer *Swaraj* and there can be no doubt about it. If some one says that it was very nearly achieved in 1921 and to-day it is far away, no one knows how far, do not believe it. Prayerful, well-meaning effort never goes in vain, and man's success lies only in such an effort. The result is in His hands.

Strength of numbers is the delight of the timid. The valiant of spirit glory in fighting alone. And you are all here to cultivate that valour of the spirit. Be you one or many, this valour is the only true valour, all else is false. And the valour of the spirit cannot be achieved without Sacrifice, Determination, Faith and Humility.

You have built our Vidyalaya on the foundation of self-purification. Non-violent Non-co-operation is one aspect of it. The 'non' means renunciation of violence and all that stands for it, *i.e.*, all Government control. But so long as we do not co-operate with our 'untouchable' brethren, so long as there is no heart-unity between men of different faiths, so long as we do not co-operate with the millions of our countrymen by according to the spinning wheel and *Khaddar* the sacred place they deserve, the negative prefix is entirely negatory. That non-co-operation will not be based on *ahimsa* but *himsa*, *i.e.*, hatred. A negative

injunction without a positive obligation is like body without soul, worthy to be consigned to the flames. There are 7,000 railway stations for the 7,00,000 villages of India. We know only through history the condition of villages not within easy reach of railway stations. The only loving tie of service that can bind the villagers to us is the spinning wheel. Those who have not yet understood this basic truth are in this institution to no purpose. The education is not 'national' that takes no count of the starving millions of India, and that devises no means for their relief. Government contact with the villages ends with the collection of revenue. Our contact with them begins with their service through the spinning wheel, but it does not end there. The spinning wheel is the centre of that service. If you spend your next vacation in some far-off village in the interior, you will see the truth of my remark. You will find the people cheerless and fear-stricken. You will find houses in ruins. You will look in vain for any sanitary or hygienic conditions. You will find the cattle in a miserable way, and yet you will see idleness stalking there. The people will tell you of the spinning wheel having been in their homes long ago, but to-day they will entertain no talk of it or of any other cottage industry. They have no hope left in them. They live, for they cannot die at will. They will spin only if you spin. Even if a hundred out of a population of 300 in a village spin, you assure them of an additional income of Rs. 1800 a year. You can lay the foundation of solid reform on this income in every village. It is easy I know to say this, but difficult to do. Faith can make it easy. 'I am alone, how can I reach seven hundred thousand villages ?'—this is the argument that pride whispers to us. Start with the faith that if you fix yourself up in one single village and succeed, the rest will follow. Progress is then assured. The Vidyalaya wants to make you workers of the type. If it is a cheerless job, the Vidyalaya is, indeed, cheerless and fit to be deserted.

AT THE BIHAR VIDYAPITH

"If observance of truth was a bed of roses, if truth cost one nothing and was all happiness and ease, there would be no beauty about it. We must adhere to truth even if the heavens should fall."

The following is the report by Shri Mahadev Desai of Gandhiji's Convocation Address delivered to the students of the Bihar Vidyapith:

Gandhiji's Convocation Address was more a long heart-to-heart chat than a speech, although it was addressed not only to the students, but to the public at large. But it was a public whom he well might have taken into confidence, who understood not only the spoken word, but the unspoken language of the heart. It was a talk full of colour and passion and replete with autobiographic references.

He hoped at the outset that the *Snataks* would live in their lives the vows they had solemnly taken that day and said, as he did at the time of Gujarat Vidyapith Convocation, that the Vidyapith would have more than justified its existence if it turned out even one ideal student and one ideal teacher. For, what was the function of these institutions? To discover gems, no matter how few, 'of the purest ray serene'. And he proceeded to give a reminiscence of his South Africa days:

"I lived in South Africa for 20 years, but never once thought of going to see the diamond mines there, partly because I was afraid lest as an 'untouchable', I should be refused admission and insulted. But when Gokhale was there, I felt it my duty to show him the chief industry of the place. There was no fear of his being insulted. So we went to the biggest mine there, and saw scenes

which I have not forgotten. Mountains upon mountains of excavated earth and stone and no diamonds! It was after millions were sunk in excavating millions of tons of earth and stone that a handful of precious stones could be discovered. And when Cullinan, the owner, discovered the stone named after him—a stone larger than the one which adorned the crown of the Czar and the Kohinoor—after years of labour and millions of pounds had been spent on it, you might imagine his joy. He felt that his life work was done. If we should not grudge to spend any amount of labour and capital on a thing which had but an artificial value, how much should we spend on excavating jewels from the human mine? Let us work away in that spirit."

That was an apt simile, apter than Ruskin used when he coined that phrase, 'manufacture of souls'. That manufacture is only in God's power. We human mortals have but to discover what is already there hidden by God.

He, then, referred to the positive and negative aspect of all non-co-operating institutions. The negative, which consisted of withdrawal of all connection with Government, had been already achieved by the existing institutions. When he thought of the number of students and teachers that he had called out, he felt not the slightest regret. Nor did he feel repentant for the fact that many of these had gone back, that many were discontented and unhappy. He felt sorry for them, they had his deep sympathy, but regret or repentance he had none.

"These troubles and sorrows are our daily lot, should be our daily lot. If observance of truth was a bed of roses, if truth cost one nothing and was all happiness and ease, there would be no beauty about it. We must adhere to truth even if the heavens should fall. What matters it, if, by following truth, we were to lose the whole world, including even India? We shall be true votaries of truth only if we follow it to death, in the conviction that under God we will get back the things we hold dear, including

India. I know that a large number of our teachers and professors are restless, a few are starving. That is true penance necessary for a proper cleansing of the national atmosphere."

That was the negative aspect and he was glad it had been carried out and a fair share of penance had been gone through. But this dual world had a positive aspect too, and one which was more difficult is also more permanent. Where else was it to be fulfilled except in institutions like the Vidyapith? And he drew a contrast between the method of education followed in Europe and that followed in India.

"In Europe, the education follows the peculiar genius of the people. One thing is taught in three different countries in three different ways according to the varying culture and genius of each. Only we delight in slavishly following the English model. The whole objective of the present system was to make us faithful imitators of the West. There is nothing novel in this, it is but the natural outcome of our having entrusted our affairs to those who never cared to know us. Poor Macaulay! What could he do? He sincerely believed that our Sanskrit literature was all superstition and he seriously thought he would give us something wholesome in the shape of Western culture. Let us not abuse him for having unintentionally worked our ruin. As a result of English being the medium of instruction we have lost originality. We have become birds without wings. The most we aspire to is a clerkship or editorship. One of us may under the system be a Lord Sinha, but every one, at best, is designed to be part of the huge foreign machine. At Muzaffarpur, a boy came and asked me if by going to a national school he could one day be a *Lat Saheb* . I said: 'No, you can be a village *Lat*, but not a Lord Sinha. Only Lord Birkenhead can make you that.' "

He referred to the craze for more and more palatial buildings raised out of the money of the poor, and raised for the purpose of giving an education which was denied

to the poor. "I had an occasion to visit the Economic Institute at Allahabad. As Prof. Jevons showed me over it and I was told that it had cost Rs. 30 lakhs (if my memory serves me right), I shuddered. You could not raise these palaces but by starving millions. Look at New Delhi which tells the same tale. Look at the grand improvements in first and second class carriages on railways. The whole trend is to think of the privileged few and to neglect the poor. If this is not satanic, what is it? If I must tell the truth, I can say nothing less. I have no quarrel with those who conceived the system. They could not do otherwise. How is an elephant to think of an ant? As Sir Leppel Griffen once put it in his speech as a member of the South African Deputation, only the toad under the harrow knows where it pinches. The arrangement of our affairs is in their hands and with the best will in the world, the best of them could not order our affairs as well as we could. For, their's is a diametrically opposite conception to ours. They think in the terms of privileged few. We must think in the terms of the teeming millions."

And, that naturally led him on to the *Charkha* which, he said, should be the very pivot and centre of all our arrangements.

"Let the *Snataks* take their degrees, learn anything they like, but let it centre round the *Charkha*; let their economics and thier science subserve the purpose of the *Charkha*. Do not relegate the *Charkha* to an old corner. The *Charkha* is the sun of the solar system of our activities. Without it, Vidyapiths are Vidyapiths in name. Lord Irwin told God's truth, when he said, that for any advancement through the Councils we should look to the British Parliament. Let us not be angry with him. He cannot think but in terms of the Parliament. The sun of his system is London, the sun of our system is the *Charkha*. I may be mistaken in this, but, so far as I am not convinced of the mistake, I shall treasure it. The

Charkha, at any rate, is incapable of harming anybody, and without it we, and if I may say so, even the world, will go to rack and ruin. We know what Europe has been feeling after the War in which lies were propagated as the highest religion. The world is weary of the after-effects of the War, and even as the *Charkha* is India's comforter to-day, it may be the world's tomorrow, because it stands not for the greatest good of the greatest number, but for the greatest good of all. Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself: 'I have also erred'; when I see a lustful man, I say to myself: 'So was I once'; and in this way I feel kinship with everyone in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy. It is in this sense that I want you to make the *Charkha* the centre of your studies. Just as Prahlad saw Rama everywhere and Tulsidas could see nothing but Rama even in the image of Krishna, let all your learning be directed to realizing the implications of the *Charkha*. Our science, our carpentry, our economics should all be utilized for making the *Charkha* the prop and mainstay of our poorest. I know in Gujarat Vidyapith we have not yet succeeded in doing it, you are not doing it. I am not saying this in a spirit of complaint. I am simply pouring out the agony of my heart. May you all understand it!"

NATIONAL *vs.* ALIEN EDUCATION

"What is literary training worth if it cramps and confines us at a critical moment in national life? Knowledge and literary training are no recompense for emasculation."

Delivering his address to the students of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Gandhiji said:

I trust you have given careful thought during your vacation to the fundamentals recently adopted by the Vidyapith. As I have repeatedly said, our strength does not lie in numbers. Not that we ignore them, but the fewness need cause no worry to us. Our real strength lies in a correct understanding, acceptance and practice, so far as it is humanly possible, of these fundamentals. If the students who have remained loyal to the Vidyapith live up to its creed, we are sure to achieve through them the goal that we have set before us, namely, *Swaraj*. What is needed is sincerity of purpose and fearless pursuit of the principles. I want you to put your teachers at ease and to assure them that you will be loyal at all hazards to the principles for which the Vidyapith stands. Truth and *Ahimsa* constitute the keystone of our arch, and those who have no faith in these have no place here.

Let us understand some of the obvious distinctions between Government institutions and the national. One of our students has gone to jail in Bardoli, and many more will go. They are the pride of the Vidyapith. Much as they may desire to do likewise, can students of Government institutions dare to do so? It is not open to them to go to Bardoli and help Vallabbhai, as it is to you. They can only give secret sympathy. What is literary training worth if it cramps and confines us at a critical moment in national life? Knowledge and literary training are

no recompense for emasculation.

Again, there is a world of difference between our method of teaching and theirs. For instance, we may not teach English in the way they do. We may give a working knowledge of that language, but we may not, without committing national suicide, neglect the mother-tongue, and make English the vehicle of our thought. In this national institution we strive to correct the pernicious practice. We must learn all our subjects through the Gujarati language. We must enrich it and make it capable of expressing all shades of thought and feeling. In no other country do we find the state of things we do here. We have paid dearly for having all these years learnt everything through the medium of the English language. We have strayed from the path of duty.

Then, take the teaching of economics. The present system obtaining in Government institutions is vicious. Each country has its own economics. German text-books are different from the English. Free trade may be England's salvation. It spells our ruin. We have yet to formulate a system of Indian economics.

The same about history. A Frenchman writing a history of India will write in his own way. The Englishman will write it quite differently. The descriptions of battles between the English and the French will differ with the writers who have described them. Indian history written from original sources by an Indian patriot will be different from that written by an English bureaucrat, though each may be quite honest. We have grievously erred in accepting English estimates of events in our national life. Here, therefore, there is a vast field for you and your teachers for original research.

Even our teaching of a subject like arithmetic will also be different. Our teacher of arithmetic frames his examples from Indian conditions. He will thus simultaneously with the teaching of arithmetic teach Indian geography.

Then we are putting a special emphasis on manual

and industrial training. Do not make the mistake of imagining that this training will dull your wit. It is not by making our brains a storehouse for cramming facts that our understanding is opened. An intelligent approach to an industrial training is often a more valuable aid to the intellect than an indifferent reading of literature.

AT THE KASHI VIDYAPITH

"In every great cause, it is not the number of fighters that counts, but it is the quality of which they are made that becomes the deciding factor. The greatest men of the world have always stood alone."

After the Snataks were administered the oath,[1] *Gandhiji began his Convocation Address by saying that his faith in national education was daily growing and that he fully expected students discharged from national institutions to give a good account of themselves and find themselves in the forefront in the fight for freedom. Proceeding further, he said:*

You are doomed to disappointment, if you compare your schools or colleges with Government schools or colleges. The two are different in kind. You cannot command the palatial buildings, nor a multiplicity of

[1]The oath was in Sanskrit and so was the exhortation.
Q. What is your duty towards ancestors ?
A. To banish injustice, helplessness and indigence from among mankind and substitute brotherliness, self-respect and truth in its place.
Q. What is your duty towards *Rishis* ?
A. To propagate enlightenment in the place of ignorance, righteousness in the place of unrighteousness, altruism and true culture in the place of selfishness, and to make spirituality the basis of individual and corporate life.
Q. What is your duty towards the gods ?
A. To propagate righteousness among mankind, to conserve the forces of nature and to utilize them for the service of man and to dedicate *Charamashram* (the final stage of life, or *Sannyasa*) to the devotion of God.
Q. Will you fulfil these duties ?
A. With the Effulgence of God as witness, I promise that I shall strive my best to fulfil these duties. May my effort be fruitful through your blessings and God's grace !

highly paid and learned professors and teachers that Government institutions, which live upon the people, can command. You will not have them, even if you had pecuniary resources at your disposal. The aim of Government institutions is pre-eminently to turn out clerks and others who would assist the alien Government to carry on its rule. The aim of national institutions is just the opposite. It is to turn out, not clerks and the like, but men determined to end the alien rule, cost what it may, and that at the earliest possible opportunity. Government institutions naturally must be loyal to the alien Government. National institutions can be loyal only to the country. Government institutions promise a lucrative career. National institutions promise instead only the barest maintenance for full service. You have just taken an oath to discharge a triple debt. Truly as Max Muller reminded us, life with us is duty. Duty well done undoubtedly carries rights with it, but a man who discharges his obligations with an eye upon privileges generally discharges them indifferently and often fails to attain the rights he might have expected, or when he succeeds in gaining them they turn out to be burdens. Yours, therefore, is the privilege of service only. There can be no rest for you till you have played your part in gaining freedom for the country. If you will assimilate this fundamental distinction between Government educational institutions and your own, you will never regret your choice. But I know that your fewness worries you often, and some of you doubt the wisdom of having given up your old institutions and secretly cherish a desire to return to them. I suggest to you that in every great cause it is not the number of fighters that counts, but it is the quality of which they are made that becomes the deciding factor. The greatest men of the world have always stood alone. Take the great prophets, Zoraster, Buddha, Jesus, Mahomed —they all stood alone like many others whom I can name. But they had living faith in themselves and their God, and believing as they did that God was on their side,

they never felt lonely. You may recall the occasion when pursued by numerous enemies Abu Bakr, who was accompanying the Prophet in his flight, trembled to think of their fate and said: 'Look at the number of the enemies that is overtaking us. What shall we two do against these heavy odds?' Without a moment's reflection, the Prophet rebuked his faithful companion by saying: 'No, Abu Bakr, we are three, for God is with us?' Or, take the invincible faith of Vibhishan and Prahlad. I want you to have that same living faith in yourselves and God.

ACADEMIC *vs.* PRACTICAL

"Modern education tends to turn our eyes away from the spirit. The possibilities of the spirit force or soul force, therefore, do not appeal to us, and our eyes are consequently rivetted on the evanescent, transitory, material force."

A student writes:

"Very often you give replies to your critics which are quite correct in the academic sense; they give a sort of temporary satisfaction to the mind, but in actual practice leave the riddle as unsolved as ever. Take for instance your saying: 'Only a coward fights on the strength of numbers.' It is all right in the abstract. It does, for the time being, bring one a sort of mental re-assurance, but of what avail is it in actual practice? You preach your gospel of soul force to all and sundry. But do you think that there is any chance of your Utopian advice being seriously taken by those who have no faith even in the spinning wheel and *Khadi* Won't your preaching be like pouring water over a duck's neck utterly futile?"

I certainly hope that my advice about soul force is not altogether wasted, though it might seem unavailing for the time being. As an English proverb says: 'Constant dropping will wear away a stone'. And, it is my faith that what seems Utopian to the correspondent to-day, will be regarded as practical to-morrow. History is replete with such instances. If the word 'soul force' appears a meaningless term to our students to-day, it only shows to what an abject plight we are reduced. For, is it not most tragic that things of the spirit, eternal verities, should be regarded as Utopian by our youth, and transitory make-shifts alone appeal to them as practical?

We have an ocular demonstration of the futility of mere numbers before us every day. What stonger proof of the proposition can be needed than that a nation of

three hundred million Indians is to-day being ruled by less than one lakh Englishmen? The very sight of a lion puts to flight a thousand sheep. The reason is plain. The sheep are aware of their weakness, the lion of its strength. And, the consciousness of strength in the latter overpowers the numerical strength of the former. By analogy, may we not deduce that 'soul force' or 'spirit force' may not after all be a mere chimera or figment of imagination but a substantial reality?

I do not wish to disparage the strength of numbers. It has its use, but only when it is backed by the latent spirit force. Millions of ants can kill an elephant by together attacking it in a vulnerable place. Their sense of solidarity, consciousness of oneness of spirit in spite of the diversity of bodies, in other words, their spirit force makes the ants irresistible. Even so, the moment we develop a sense of mass unity like the ants, we, too, shall become irresistible and shall free ourselves from our chains.

It is my firm faith that the students of our national schools, a mere handful though they may be, if they are inspired by a real spirit of sacrifice and service and a living faith in their ideals, will stand the country in far greater stead than all the students in Government educational institutions put together. That quality is more than quantity is sound theory because it is true in practice. Indeed, I hold that what cannot be proved in practice cannot be sound in theory.

When Galileo declared that the earth was round like a ball and turned on its axis, he was ridiculed as a visionary and a dreamer, and was greeted with abuse. But to-day we know that Galileo was right, and it was his opponents, who believed the earth to be stationary and flat like a dish, that were living in the cloudland of their ignorance.

Modern education tends to turn our eyes away from the spirit. The possibilities of the spirit force or soul force, therefore, do not appeal to us, and our eyes are consequently rivetted upon the evanescent, transitory,

material force. Surely, this is the very limit of dull unimaginativeness.

But I live in hope and patience. I have an unshakable faith in the correctness of my proposition, a faith that is based on my and my companions' experience. And every student, if only he has got the faculty of patient, dispassionate research, can experimentally prove this for himself:

1. That mere numbers are useless.
2. That all force, other than soul force, is transitory and vain.

It goes without saying, that if the above propositions are correct, it should be the constant endeavour of every student to arm himself with this matchless weapon of spirit force by dint of self-discipline and self-purification.

MESSAGE OF KHADI AND PURITY

"If you do not wake up betimes, the immoral wave that is fast gathering strength might soon envelop and overwhelm you. I cry out to you, therefore, with all the strength at my command: Be warned, and flee from the fire before it consumes you."

In his talk to the students of the Benares Hindu University, arranged at the instance of Pandit Malaviyaji, Gandhiji delivered the simple message of Khaddar and purity as follows:

'You have had your say now. No one is listening to you. Why not stop talking of *Khaddar* ?'—That is the advice that is being given me in some quarters. But why should I stop reciting my favourite *mantra* when I have before me the example of Prahlad of old, refusing to give up *Ramanama* in the teeth of tortures worse than death ? And, I have not had to go through any tortures yet. How can I give up the only message that the condition of my country has been whispering to me ? Panditji has collected and has been still collecting lakhs and lakhs of rupees for you from Rajas and Maharajas. The money apparently comes from these wealthy princes, but in reality it comes from the millions of our poor. For, unlike Europe, the rich of our land grow rich at the expense of our villagers, the bulk of whom have to go without a square meal a day. The education that you receive to-day is thus paid for by the starving villagers, who will never have the chance of such an education. It is your duty to refuse to have an education that is not within the reach of the poor, but I do not ask that of you to-day. I ask you to render just a slight return to the poor by doing a little *yajna* for them. For, he who eats without doing his *yajna* steals his food, says the Gita. The *yajna* that was

required of the British civic population during the War was for each household to grow potatoes in its yard, and for each household to do a little simple weaving. The *yajna* of our age, and for us, is the spinning wheel. Day in and day out I have been talking about it, I shall say no more to-day. If the message of the poor of India has touched your hearts, I want you to raid Kripalani's *Khaddar* stores to-morrow and denude them of all their stock and to empty your pockets to-night. Panditji has cultivated the art of beggary. I have learnt it from him, and if he specializes in laying the princes under tribute, I have learnt to be shameless in emptying the pockets of the poor for the benefit of those who are poorer than they.

Malaviyaji's one object in begging millions for you, in raising these palatial buildings, is to send out to the country gems of purest ray, citizens healthy and strong to serve their Motherland. That purpose will be defeated if you allow yourselves to be swept with the wind that comes to-day from the West—the wind of impurity. Not that the methods have the general sanction of Europe. There are friends in Europe, a very few, who are fighting hard to counteract the poisonous tendency. But if you do not wake up betimes, the immoral wave that is fast gathering strength might soon envelop and overwhelm you. I cry out to you, therefore, with all the strength at my command: Be warned, and flee from the fire before it consumes you.

Delivering the same message about two years later to the students of the same University, Gandhiji said:

What are you doing to deserve the monumental service of the great son of India ? He expects you to become not literary giants but defenders of Hinduism and the country, through expressing true religion in your own lives. Remember, that this greatest creation of Malaviyaji's will be judged, not by the magnificence of the buildings or the 1,300 acres that they cover, but by what you become. If you will express the requisite purity

of character in action, you cannot do it better than through the spinning wheel. Of all the myriads of names of God, *Daridranarayan* is the most sacred, inasmuch as it represents the untold millions of poor people as distinguished from the few rich people. The easiest and the best way of identifying yourselves somewhat with these starving millions is to spread the message of the spinning wheel in the threefold manner suggested by me. You can spread it by becoming expert spinners, by wearing *Khadi*, and by pecuniary contributions. Remember, that millions will never have access to the facilities that Malaviyaji has provided for you. What return will you make to these, your brothers and sisters? You may be sure, that when he conceived the plan of this University he had the question in mind, and he embarked upon the mission in the hope that you would so conduct yourselves as to deserve the training given to you.

AT THE GUJARAT VIDYAPITH

"To my mind golden shackles are far worse than iron ones, for, one easily feels the irksome and galling nature of the latter and is prone to forget the former. If, therefore, India must be in chains, I would they were of iron rather than of gold or other precious metals."

After giving the new Snataks his blessings, Gandhiji said:

You will naturally expect me to say something about the Independence Resolution passed at the Lahore Congress, especially the Civil Disobedience part of it, and you will want to know what is going to be your share in the struggle. Well, as I have often said here, we rely not on numerical strength, but on the strength of character, and the Civil Disobedience Resolution was moved more because I had faith in a few men sacrificing themselves for the cause than in the number of men coming forward in response to the call. You know, that the Calcutta Resolution pledged us to changing the first article of the Congress Constitution and preparing for a programme of Civil Disobedience, provided Dominion Status was not forthcoming by the end of 1929. This not having been fulfilled, there was nothing for us but to carry out the pledge even at the risk of adverse criticism and misrepresentation. Events, that have happened after the resolution, have added force to it. Earl Russel has given us plainly to understand that India's Dominion Status is something different from what we have always believed it to be, *viz.*, a status allied to that of Canada, New Zealand and Australia. These, the noble Earl admits, are virtually independent. I never had anything else in mind when I talked of Dominion Status for India. What Earl Russel says is tantamount to saying that instead of being in the

iron chains that India has been in for years, she may now have the choice of changing them for golden ones. And some of us seem to hug the proposal. We are so very much fear-stricken that a severance of the British connection means to us violence and chaos. Well, I want to make myself clear once more. Votary as I am of non-violence, if I was given a choice between being a helpless witness to chaos and perpetual slavery, I should unhesitatingly say that I would far rather be witness to chaos in India, I would far rather be witness to Hindus and Mussalmans doing one another to death than that I should daily witness our gilded slavery. To my mind golden shackles are far worse than iron ones, for one easily feels the irksome and galling nature of the latter and is prone to forget the former. If, therefore, India must be in chains, I would they were of iron rather than of gold or other precious metals.

The spectre of an Afghan invasion is raised in certain quarters the moment we talk of independence. Well, I don't mind the invasion when we have severed our slavish connection with Britain. But I am an incorrigible optimist, and my faith in India winning her freedom by a bloodless revolution is unshakable. We have a helmsman like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and I do not think we are ever going to have a better young man as our President. Would that we achieved our goal, whilst he has the reins of our affairs in his hands. And I think it is quite possible, if you will be true to your pledge. I would like to see the *Snataks* of this Vidyapith in the front in my campaign for *Swaraj*. I want you to visualize what is coming. You have a harder ordeal than going to jail. Robbers, dacoits and murderers also can go to jail, and they make themselves thoroughly at home there. But they do not serve the country by going to jail. A mere jail-going man does not help the country. What I want from you is the preparedness to offer yourselves willing and pure sacrifices in the struggle. There is a lot of violence in the air, and you will have to immolate yourselves in the flames, if there

are violent outbursts when and if I am put into jail. If you are true to your pledge of truth and non-violence, you will not hide yourselves in your houses whilst violence or incendiarism is going on, nor will you be active participators in it, but you will go and rush into the conflagration with a view to extinguishing it. For, surely, that will be expected of you. Even the votaries of violence will expect that and nothing else from you. Vice pays a homage to virtue, and sometimes the way it chooses is to expect virtue not to fall from its pedestal, even while vice is rampant round about.

You will be ready, of course, to march to jail, but I do not think you will be called upon to go to jail. The higher and severer ordeal I have just now pictured to you awaits you. I do not know what form Civil Disobedience is to take, but I am desperately in search of an effective formula.

I am impatient to reach the goal, if we can through non-violence and truth. I have infinite patience to wait if we cannot reach the goal without the sacrifice of non-violence and truth. Both spring from my unshakable faith in the supremacy of non-violence and truth. I know, that however long the route may appear, it is in my opinion the shortest.

NOT A POLICY BUT CREED

"The strength to kill is not essential for self-defence; one ought to have the strength to die. When a man is fully ready to die, he will not even desire to offer violence. Indeed, I may put it down as a self-evident proposition that the desire to kill is in inverse proportion to the desire to die."

Addressing the National Educational Conference at Ahmedabad, convened by Kaka Saheb Kalelkar, the Principal of the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, Gandhiji said:

The Vidyapith owes its origin to the Non-co-operation Movement, and, as I said some years ago, the object of the Vidyapith is the attainment of *Swaraj*. All those studying in national educational institutions and connected with them must do all the things that the country has to do, and must go through the same discipline as the country has to go through for the attainment of *Swaraj*, so that they may be ready to offer themselves willing sacrifices when the time comes.

Ours is a movement of self-purification. There are some who think that morality has nothing to do with politics. We do not concern ourselves with the character of our leaders. The democracies of Europe and America steer clear of any notion of morality having anything to do with politics. Bad characters are often great intellects, and they can manage certain affairs well enough by the force of their intellect. The private character of some of the leading men of the House of Commons will not bear examination. We, too, have often carried on our political movement in the same fashion. We did not concern ourselves with the morals of the Congress delegates or leaders. But in 1920, we struck an entirely new departure and we declared that since truth and non-violence were the sole

means to be employed by the Congress to reach its goal, self-purification was necessary even in political life.

To-day there is not much open opposition to the idea, though there are many who secretly believe that politics should have nothing to do with morality. That is why our progress is so slow, and in some respects even nil. If we had acted up to our creed of 1920, we should not have taken nine years to arrive even at the present stage. If *Swaraj* was not meant to civilize us and to purify and stabilize our civilization, it would be nothing worth. The very essence of our civilization is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private. And, as one of the functions of the Vidyapith is to civilize us, the battle of *Swaraj* calls for the greatest sacrifice from the national educational institutions.

I want you all to realize the implications of our creed. If you think that truth and non-violence constitute not the *creed* but the *policy* of the Congress, I do not know where I should be. But, if you are convinced that they are your personal creed, I need not expatiate on them. The very fact that a person belongs to the Vidyapith should be sufficient guarantee of his truthfulness and non-violence. The first thing, therefore, that this National Educational Conference, and those who are attending it, should do is to ask themselves whether all their doings have been in consonance with that creed. If you have gone about your work, following truth and non-violence as a policy, there will come a day when you might be tempted to alter the policy. For instance, my friends the Ali Brothers accepted truth and non-violence as a policy, and they never made a secret of it. They always said that they could not accept them as a creed. There are many others of their way of thinking, and they undoubtedly have their place in the service of the country, but for you, students and teachers of national educational institutions, that attitude will not suffice. You must accept both the principles as your creed, and they should be part and parcel of your being. If all make of *ahimsa* a policy, and I remain the

only votary of it as a creed, we can make very little progress. Let us, therefore, ask ourselves once again, and make sure, that we will in no circumstances harbour untruth and violence for the attainment of *Swaraj*. Then, everything will be well.

The constructive programme has sprung out of the creed of truth and non-violence. Let us examine every item of it. Hindu-Muslim unity will be impossible, so long as the Hindu cherishes violence against the Mussalman and Mussalman against the Hindu. The Congress resolution at Lahore on the communal question was a corollary to the creed. The Sikhs wanted bare justice, but the resolution, as you will have noticed, has gone further, and it is meant not only for the Sikhs but for all the communities of India.

Then, take the removal of untouchability. While talking of this question, some think of removing physical untouchability, some talk of the removal of the so-called untouchables' disabilities as regards the use of public wells, schools and temples. But you should go much further. You should love them even as yourselves, so that the moment they see you they might feel that you are one of them. Then and then only will you be able to have their co-operation in the constructive programme.

The same is the case with prohibition. Also with the *Khadi* programme. But, need I talk about it here? This work is so concrete and tangible that a man, who maintains a regular diary of his day's work, can give a clear account of how much he has added to the national wealth. If we had approached the task in that spirit, we should have made considerable headway by now. The Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee has told us what we have been able to achieve even by means of our very little work of last year. To my mind it is trifling, but if all of us had done the thing with a will and an active faith, what would have been the result? We badly need true and efficient workers. But I know that even amongst you there are quite a number of men in whom the will and, therefore, the capacity

are both lacking. We have to shed our inertia, our want of faith, and the capacity will follow as a matter of course.

I have told you what to do. I shall tell you now something as to what *not* to do. Literary training, scholarly research and linguistic pursuits, study of English and Sanskrit and fine arts, has better take a back seat. All our national schools ought to be converted into factories of our national ammunition, *viz.*, constructive work. There are millions of children in India to-day who have to go without any education, much less national education and the other big things I have mentioned. Why, then, can't we do without them until, at any rate, we have won our freedom?

The Working Committee has appealed to the country to enlist members and volunteers. Why should there be any other organization necessary for this work? You can all be members and volunteers and take charge of the work. Think what the students in Europe did during the Great War. Are we prepared to make the sacrifices that they made? If deep down in us is the conviction that we may not even breathe in peace until we have freedom, we will live and move and have our being in carrying out the constructive programme.

Lastly, may I sum up in a word what is expected of you? Even as we have to be pure, let us shed the fear of death. An Englishman has recently told us that though Gandhi may think that India will be none the worse if Englishmen left India, he has no doubt that not a rich man's property will be safe and not a virgin will be violate the moment his countrymen leave India. That shows what a low opinion he has of us Indians. But how can it be otherwise? We are so fear-stricken to-day that we have to maintain the services of hired men for the defence of our property and our honour. The moment we shed the fear of death, we shall escape from this wretched plight. I expect every maiden studying in the Vidyapith to wake up and muster sufficient moral strength to withstand even the touch of a wicked individual. I

want you all to shed the fear of death, so that when the history of freedom comes to be written, the names of the boys and girls of national schools and colleges may be mentioned therein as of those who died not doing violence but in resisting it, no matter by whom committed. The strength to kill is not essential for self-defence; one ought to have the strength to die. When a man is fully ready to die, he will not even desire to offer violence. Indeed, I may put it down as a self-evident proposition that the desire to kill is in inverse proportion to the desire to die. And, history is replete with instances of men who, by dying with courage and compassion on their lips, converted the hearts of their violent opponents.

A PROUD RECORD

"Let the proud record of the Vidyapith fill the *snataks* and *dikshits* with pride that they are the *alumni* of no less an institution than the Gujarat Vidyapith. Let them not be depressed by the thought that they are a handful. Though a handful they are like the ocean, and though the students of Government institutions resemble by their numbers the ocean, they are as unreal as mirage."

Paying a well-deserved tribute to those students of the Vidyapith who had taken a worthy part in the fight for freedom, Gandhiji said:

I am delighted beyond measure to know of the part you have played in the great struggle. The Bihar Vidyapith and Kashi Vidyapith also distinguished themselves in a like manner. When the history of the fight comes to be written, the contribution of our Vidyapiths to the struggle will occupy a large space in it. Even the world will be proud of your glorious record. When in jail I read something about the students and teachers of the Vidyapith, I naturally drew a comparison between Government educational institutions and the national ones, and I felt that our programme for boycott of Government educational institutions had more than justified itself. When I say this, I do not lose sight of the fact that Government schools and colleges are still full of students. There is also the more painful fact that students are so eager to go to those institutions that they do not hesitate to sign the most abject apologies and to pay fines to get admission to them. I have known circulars by heads or directors of the educational department that those who may have directly or indirectly taken part in the struggle, or who may have gone to jail, may not be re-admitted until after

the previous sanction of these heads. What is one to say of those heads and of those directors of education? I wonder if you know anything about the Government's attitude with regard to the Hindu University. It would have lost its grant but for the fearlessness and the readiness for sacrifice of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji. But even if the grant had been forfeited, Malaviyaji would not have shed a single tear. He was determined that the University should rather go without the grant than that any teacher or student who served the country be penalised for his service.

Let the proud record of the Vidyapith fill the *snataks* and *dikshits* with pride that they are the *alumni* of no less an institution than the Gujarat Vidyapith. Let them not feel that they had joined the institution through sheer helplessness. Let them be not depressed by the thought that they are a handful. Though a handful they are like the ocean, and though the students of Government institutions resemble by their numbers the ocean, they are as unreal as mirage. For, the education that they receive and the life they are taught to live, cannot give them the vital energy to win *Swaraj*; whereas, an institution like the Vidyapith can do so in a large measure, as one can see from the last year's record. Let those who have helped to maintain the Vidyapith realize that their money has been spent to noble purpose and that it has come back to them with compound interest. Let them study the Registrar's report and see if any institution in India can boast of a prouder record. I invite their attention to Kaka Saheb's appeal for funds, and trust that the money needed will be paid up automatically.

I want you to study the Vidyapith accounts. You will see that strict economy has been maintained. I do not think anyone can beat me in my passion for guarding and expending public money like a miser. The reason is obvious. Public money belongs to the poor public of India than whom there is none poorer on earth. That is why I asked the Sardar to make drastic cuts in the next

year's budget for Gujarat. I am hoping that the Provisional Settlement[1] may lead on to permanent peace, and I shall leave no stone unturned to achieve it. But man is often powerless before Nature. I, at any rate, cannot strive with Nature, and Nature seems for the time being to be against us. And, if God wills that there should be no peace, you may be sure that the next struggle will be fiercer than the last and will engulf us all. And it may have to be fought without any resources. Gujarat may be always ready to contribute funds, but even the resources of Gujarat are not inexhaustible. Let us, therefore, think twice before we expend a pie and curtail our expenditure in all directions. I have often wondered where we get all our cars from, and whether we need them really. I know I often use motor car, but let no one follow my bad example. Let the *snataks* and the *dikshits* of the Vidyapith make a point of going out to the villages on foot whenever possible. Let us be worthy of *Swaraj* when it comes. Let us remember that we have 20 points now instead of 11 which contain the quintessence of *Swaraj*, and let me tell you that it was not I who fixed the maximum salary of the Swaraj Viceroy at Rs. 500, but Pandit Jawaharlal. He has given his thought to the problem and he has deliberately fixed that amount. And if that is to be the salary of the Viceroy, what is to be the remuneration of an ordinary worker? Let us keep that ideal in mind and cut our coat according to our cloth. The Government of to-day collects taxes by force, and recovers revenue at the point of the bayonet. In *Swaraj*, we shall not be able to do so; we will have numerous Garhwalis to refuse to use arms against their brethren. Let us, therefore, order our affairs in the terms of the poor of the land. Let us not go to sleep, now that there is a Provisional Settlement. We have to be more wakeful, more cautious, more careful, and let us be ready to account for every pie that we receive from the public.

[1]Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

STUDENTS AND NON-CO-OPERATION

"Non-co-operation means co-operation with all that is best in the Indian spirit. We cannot cultivate that taste by being in Berlin. It is in India that all our experiments must be made."

A student in a national college has written a long letter of which I give the substance as follows:

> "You are aware that in the year 1920, many students all over India left Government-controlled institutions. Several national institutions were started. Some have already gone under. The one that I know is a poor affair. It may be called a foreign imitation under national control minus discipline. Many of our teachers do not know the distinction between *Khaddar* and foreign or mill-made cloth. They dress like *Sahebs* and, though themselves dressed in foreign cloth, would not mind talking to us about *Swadeshi*. They remind one of drunkards advising others to give up liquor. They talk of the spirit of sacrifice and the value of joining national institutions, when they send their own sons or other relatives to Government-controlled schools or colleges. In fact, there is very little love lost between them and us. Do you wonder at many students having gone back to Government institutions? A few of us, however, still remain out. But how long can we do so? I would like to prosecute my studies in Germany, but my pecuniary circumstances do not allow me to do so. Can you not send me to the Berlin or any other European university?"

The writer has given me his own full name, and the name of the institution, and all other available particulars. I have purposely refrained from giving the name of the institution and further particulars. For, I do not know enough of it, and I could not be party to the specific condemnation of any institution without having studied it. Public purpose is sufficiently served by publishing the general complaint, so that those institutions, to which the complaint may be applicable, may examine themselves

and remove all cause of complaint. There is no doubt that in several national institutions things have not been as they should have, and that the professors or teachers have not conformed to the elementary requirements of the Congress programme, in so far as it is applicable to national institutions. Teachers, who themselves do not believe in non-violence or truth or non-co-operation, cannot impart to their students the spirit of any of these things. If they send their children to Government schools, they may not expect to enthuse their pupils over national institutions. Nor may they expect to infect their pupils with love of the *charkha* or *khaddar*, if they will not spin themselves or wear *khaddar*. It is hardly necessary to remark that all national institutions do not deserve the description that the writer gives of the one to which he has belonged. But the point I desire to emphasize in connection with this letter is that there should be no sorrow felt over one's sacrifice. That sacrifice which causes pain, loses its sacred character and will break down under stress. One gives up things that one considers to be injurious and, therefore, there should be pleasure attendant upon the giving up. Whether the substitute is effective or not, is a different question altogether. If the substitute is effective, it is no doubt well, but it is well also even if the substitute is ineffective. It must lead to an effort to procure a better substitute, but surely not to a return to what has been given up after full knowledge and experience of its harmful character. This hankering after going to Berlin or to some other European university, is not a sign of the spirit of Non-co-operation. It is on a par with substituting Japanese cloth for the English manufacture. We give up English cloth not because it is English, but because it robs the poor of their hereditary employment and, therefore, makes them poorer still. The Japanese substitute robs the poor no less than the English cloth. Similarly, we give up Government institutions because of their harmful character. We may not, therefore, reproduce the same thing under a

different name and hug to ourselves the belief that we are non-co-operators. Non-co-operation means co-operation with all that is best in the Indian spirit. We cannot cultivate that taste by being in Berlin. It is in India that all our experiments must be made. Till at least we arrive at a complete and effective substitute, the first step, it is quite plain, must be the giving up of Government institutions. Those students, therefore, who took that step did well if they understood what they were doing. And, only the sacrifice of such students will be of increasing benefit to the country as time passes. But those who are repenting or are dissatisfied with their own lot should certainly have no hesitation in going back to Government institutions. After all, it is a conflict of ideals, and if the ideal that Non-co-operation stands for is good and is congenial to the Indian soil, it will truimph over every conceivable obstacle.

SACRIFICE

"When it is difficult for millions even to make the two ends meet, when millions are dying of starvation, it is monstrous to think of giving our relatives a costly education."

I have before me several letters from young men, complaining that they have so many family burdens that a poor salary they get from public work is totally inadequate for their wants. One, therefore, says he must give up public work and go to Europe by raising a loan or securing a gift and increase his earning capacity; another is in search of a paying job; yet another wants a capital to start a paying business. Everyone of these young men is a sound, honest and self-sacrificing worker. But a reaction has set in. Family requirements have increased. *Khadi* or national education does not satisfy them. They do not desire to be a burden upon public service by asking for an increase. But the logical outcome of this attitude of mind must mean, if it becomes at all general, either stoppage of the public service, which depends upon the labours of such men and women, or a general indefinite increase which in its turn must bring about the same undesirable result.

It was because this process of multiplication of wants out of proportion to our surroundings was discovered to be going on with increasing velocity, that non-co-operation was conceived. And, thus conceived, it was not non-co-operation with persons but with an attitude that was responsible for the system which had seized us in its serpentine coil, and which was reducing us to dust. The system has raised the standard of living among us, its creatures, wholly unwarranted by the general conditions of the country. And since India did not live upon

exploitation of other peoples, the expansion of the middle class, who were also the middlemen, meant extinction of the lowest strata. Hence, the smallest villages were dying out through sheer exhaustion. This was all plain to many of us in 1920. The arresting movement is yet in its infancy. Let us not hinder it by any hasty action.

This artificial increase in our wants has been felt more severely than it otherwise would have been, because of the persistence of the family system which the Western method is ill-designed to support. The joint system having become wooden, its evils have become accentuated. Its sweet graces have disappeared. Thus evil has been added to evil.

Our self-sacrifice must, therefore, be in terms of the requirements of the country. The reforms required are more from within than from without. A perfect constitution superimposed upon rotten internal condition will be like a whited sepulchre.

The process of self-purification must, therefore, be completed. The spirit of self-sacrifice must be extended. Great as the sacrifice has been, it is nothing compared to the demands made upon us by the country. We dare not support able-bodied members of the family—men or women—who will not work. We may not contribute a single pice towards the expenses of conforming to meaningless or superstitious customs, such as caste-dinners or towards forming expensive marriage connections. Every marriage and every death brings an unnecessary cruel burden upon the head of the family. We must refuse to regard such acts of self-denial as self-sacrifice. They are evils to be counteracted with courage and resolution.

There is too, for us, the inordinately expensive education. When it is difficult for millions even to make the two ends meet, when millions are dying of starvation, it is monstrous to think of giving our relatives a costly education. Expansion of the mind will come from hard

experience, not necessarily in the college or the school-room. When some of us deny ourselves and ours the so-called higher education, we shall find the true means of giving and receiving a really high education. Is there not, may there not be, a way of each boy paying for his own education? There may be no such way. But there is no doubt that when we deny ourselves the way of expensive education, seeing that aspiration after higher education is a laudable end, we shall find out a way of fulfilling it more in accord with our surroundings. The golden rule to apply in all such cases is resolutely to refuse to have what millions cannot. The ability to refuse will not descend upon us all of a sudden. The first thing is to cultivate the mental attitude that will not have possessions or facilities denied to millions, and the next immediate thing is to re-arrange our lives as fast as possible in accordance with that mentality.

Without a large, very large, army of such self-sacrificing and determined workers, real progress of the masses I hold to be an impossibility. And without that progress there is no such thing as *Swaraj*. Progress towards *Swaraj* will be in exact proportion to the increase in the number of workers who will dare to sacrifice their all for the cause of the poor.

INSTITUTIONS BEFORE PARENTS

"No sacrifice is worth the name unless it is a joy. Sacrifice and a long face go ill together....He must be a poor specimen of humanity who is in need of sympathy for his sacrifice."

During my Bengal tour, I heard the astounding statement that the inmates of a public institution claimed to prefer the maintenance of their institution to that of their parents. This was said to command my approval. If anything I have written in these pages that has given any such impression, I apologize to the readers. I am not conscious of any such guilt. I owe all I am to my parents. I felt towards them as Shravana is said to have done towards his parents. So, when I heard the statement it was with greatest difficulty that I could curb the anger that was rising in me. The young man who took up the position was hardly serious about it. But now-a-days it has become the fashion with some young men to adopt the superior attitude and pose as paragons of perfection. In my opinion, the maintenance of one's aged and infirm parents is a first charge upon grown-up sons. They may not marry if they are not in a position to support their parents. They may not take up public work till this primary condition is fulfilled. They must starve so that their parents may be fed and clothed. What, however, young men are not expected to do is to comply with the demand of thoughtless or ignorant parents. Parents have been known to demand money for things not required for sustenance but for false show, or for uncalled-for marriage expenses of daughters. In my opinion, it is the duty of public workers respectfully to refuse to meet such demands. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember having met a single deserving case of starvation of public

worker. I have found some living in want. I have found a few who should get more than they are able to give themselves. But as their work prospers and their worth is known, they will not suffer from want. Difficulties and trials make a man. They are a sign of healthy growth. If every young man found himself in plenty, and never knew what it was to go without anything necessary, he may be found wanting when the trial comes. Sacrifice is joy.

It is, therefore, not right to parade one's sacrifice before the public. I was told by several workers that they did not mind any sacrifice. On cross-questioning, I was told that the sacrifice consisted in living by begging, in other words, on donations. I told them that there was no sacrifice in living on donations. Many public workers did so, but they did not on that account claim to have sacrificed anything. Many young men have sacrificed lucrative careers. That is certainly to their credit. But even there I should respectfully suggest that praising can well be overdone. No sacrifice is worth the name unless it is a joy. Sacrifice and a long face go ill together. Sacrifice is 'making sacred'. He must be a poor specimen of humanity who is in need of sympathy for his sacrifice. Buddha renounced everything because he could not help it. To have anything was a torture to him. The Lokamanya remained poor because it was painful for him to possess riches. Andrews regards the possession of even a few rupees a burden, and continually contrives to lose them if he gets any. I have often told him that he is in need of a care-taker. He listens, he laughs and repeats the same performance without the slightest contrition. *Madar-i-Hind* is a terrible goddess. She will exact the willing, aye, even unwilling sacrifice of many a young man and youngwoman before she deigns to say: 'Well done, my children! you are now free'. We are as yet playing at sacrifice. The reality has still to come.

HERO *vs.* BLIND WORSHIP

"I can conceive occasions when implicit obedience, without waiting for reasoning out causes, is a necessity.....But occasions for such obedience are, and must be, rare in any well-ordered society."

A teacher writes:

"There is a small group of boys of our school in.....who have been regularly sending 1,000 yards of self-spun yarn to the A.I.S.A. for some months, and they have been doing this little service merely on account of intense love for you. If anyone asks them the reason for their spinning, they reply: 'It is Mahatmaji's order. It has got to be obeyed.' I think such mentality on the part of little boys is to be encouraged in every way. Slave mentality is something quite different from the spirit of hero-worship or implicit obedience. These boys are now anxious to get some message from you in your own hand-writing for their inspiration. I am sure their request will be complied with."

I do not know whether the mentality betrayed by this letter is hero-worship or blind worship. I can conceive occasions when implicit obedience, without waiting for reasoning out causes, is a necessity. It is essentially the quality of a soldier. And, no nation can make substantial progress without the possession of that quality by a vast number of its people. But occasions for such obedience are, and must be, rare in any well-ordered society. The worst thing that can happen to boys in school is to have to render blind obedience to everything that the teacher says. On the contrary, if the teachers are to stimulate the reasoning faculty of boys and girls under their care, they would continuously tax their reason and make them think for themselves. Faith only begins where reason stops. But there are very few actions in the world for which reasonable justification cannot be found. A

teacher would not tolerate from his pupils, who were asked to account for drinking boiled and filtered water in a locality where the quality of well-water was suspected, an answer to the effect that such were the orders of a *Mahatma*. And if it be wrong to admit such an answer in the supposed case, it is surely wrong to approve of the justification for spinning that the boys of the school in question have given for their spinning. When I am dislodged from my *Mahatmaship* in that school, as I have certainly been dislodged in several homes to my knowledge, (for some of my correspondents have been gracious enough to inform me of their lost love), I am afraid, the spinning wheel will be destroyed. Surely, a cause is often greater than the man. Certainly, the spinning wheel is greater than myself. I should be exceedingly sorry to find, when the hero-worship of me is destroyed because of some fatuous mistakes that I may commit, or because people are enraged against me for some cause or other, that the good cause of the spinning wheel had to suffer. It is, therefore, infinitely better that the pupils should reason out for themselves all the things that are capable of being so treated. The spinning wheel is essentially a thing for reasoning out. With it, in my opinion, is mixed up the well-being of the whole mass of Indian humanity. Pupils should, therefore, learn something about the deep poverty of the masses. They should have an ocular demonstration of some villages that are crumbling down to pieces. They should know the population of India. They should know the vast extent of this Peninsula, and they should know what it is that all the many millions can do to add to their scanty resources. They should learn to identify themselves with the poor and the down-trodden in the land. They should be taught to deny themselves, so far as possible, things that the poorest cannot have. Then, they will understand the virtue of spinning. It will then survive any shock, including disillusionment about myself. The cause of spinning wheel is too great and too good to have to rest

on mere hero-worship. It lends itself to scientific economic treatment.

I know that there is among us a great deal of blind hero-worship such as this correspondent has described, and I hope that the teachers of national schools will take note of the warning I have uttered and prevent their pupils from lazily basing their actions upon statements, without testing, of men reputed to be great.

ON THEIR TRIAL

"The students cannot blow hot and cold. If they will be with the people's cause, they must hold their scholastic career subservient to the cause and sacrifice it when it comes in conflict with the interests of the country."

What happened to the students during the Rowlatt Act agitation is repeating itself now. During those precious days, one of them wrote to me that he felt like committing suicide because he was rusticated. A student now writes:

> "The students of.....heard the Mother's call and responded to it. We observed *hartal* on the 3rd. For this courageous deed of ours, we are being fined Rs. 2 per head. The poor students are losing their freeships, half-freeships and scholarships. Please write to Mr.....the Principal, or advise him through *Young India*. Tell him we are no criminals, we have committed no crime. Tell him we listened and responded to the Mother's call. We saved her, to our utmost, from dishonour. Tell him we are no cowards. Please come forward to our aid."

I cannot follow the advice to write to the Principal. If he is not to lose his 'job', I suppose he has to take some disciplinary measures. So long as educational institutions remain under the patronage of the Government, they will be, as they must be, used for the support of the Government, and the students or the teachers who support anti-Government popular measures must count the cost and take the risk of being dismissed. From the patriot's stand-point, the students did well and bravely in making common cause with the people. They would have laid themselves open to the charge of want of patriotism, if not worse, if they had not responded to the country's call. From the Government stand-point, they undoubtedly did wrong and incurred their severe displeasure. The students

cannot blow hot and cold. If they will be with the people's cause, they must hold their scholastic career subservient to the cause, and sacrifice it when it comes in conflict with the interests of the country. I saw this quite clearly in 1920, and subsequent experience has confirmed the first impression. There is no doubt that the safest and the most honourable course for the student world is to leave Government schools and colleges at any cost. But the next best course for them is to hold themselves in readiness, to be thrown out whenever a conflict occurs between the Government and the people. If they will not be, as they have been elsewhere, leaders themselves in the revolt against the Government, they must at least become staunch and true followers. Let their facing of the consequences be as brave as their response to the nation's call. Let them not humiliate themselves, let them not surrender their self-respect in trying to re-enter colleges and schools from which they have been dismissed. The bravery of their response will be counted as bravado, if it succumbs on the very first trial.

I hear that, during the days preceding the *hartal*, the students discarded foreign cloth and very largely patronised *Khadi*. Let it not be said of them that this was but a passing show and that they have, on pressure from without or temptation from within, discarded *Khadi* as quickly as they discarded foreign cloth. To me, foreign cloth for this country means foreign Government. I wish this was accepted as a self-evident proposition.

BOYCOTT AND STUDENTS

"In India, where political consciousness has till recently been unfortunately confined in a large measure to the English-educated class, their (students') duty is, indeed, greater. In China and Egypt, it is the students who have made the national movement possible. They cannot do less in India."

The Principal of a college writes:

"The promoters of the boycott movement are dragging the students into their movement. It is obvious that no one will attach the slightest value to the part the students play in this political propaganda. When the students leave their schools and colleges and join any demonstration, they mingle with the rowdies of the place and have to be responsible for the outrages of the *badmashes*, and often receive the first blows from the policemen's batons. They, besides, incur the displeasure of the school and college authorities whose punishment they have to submit to; they further disobey their guardians who might refuse to finance them further, which spells their ruin. I can understand youth movements which aim at doing such constructive work as teaching the ignorant peasants, spreading knowledge of sanitation etc. during holidays; but to see them turn against their own parents and teachers, and walk along streets in questionable company, and help the breaking of law and order, is a sorry spectacle. May I request you to advise the politicians not to draw the students from their legitimate work to make their demonstration *more effective?* In fact, they are detracting from the value of their demonstration by so doing, as it is likely to be easily put down as the work of inconsiderate boys, led astray by selfish and foolish agitators.

"I am not against their learning modern politics. It will be a good thing if the teachers would collect and bring to their notice newspaper utterances for and against any pending question of the day, and teach the students to draw their own conclusions. I have tried the scheme with success. In fact, no subject is taboo to the students, as Bertrand Russell and others advocate students should be taught even sex questions. What I am dead against is the students being used as tools for purposes which serve not themselves or those who so use them."

The correspondent has written in the hope of my condemning the participation by the student world in active political work. But I am sorry to have to disappoint him. He should have known that in 1920-21 I had not an inconsiderable share in drawing students out of their schools and colleges, and inducing them to undertake political duty carrying with it the risk of imprisonment. I think it is their clear duty to take a leading part in the political movement of their country. They are doing so all the world over. In India, where political consciousness has till recently been unfortunately confined in a large measure to the English-educated class, their duty is, indeed, greater. In China and Egypt, it is the students who have made the national movement possible. They cannot do less in India.

What the Principal might have urged was the necessity of students observing the rules of non-violence and acquiring control over the rowdies, instead of being controlled by them.

DUTY OF RESISTANCE

"In a country groaning as India is under foreign rule, it is impossible to prevent students from taking part in movements for national freedom. All that can be done is to regulate their enthusiasm, so as not to interfere with their studies."

The strike of nearly seven hundred students of Gujarat College, which has now gone on for over 20 days, is no longer a matter merely of local importance. A labour strike is bad enough, a students' strike is worse, whether it is justly declared or unjustly. It is worse because of the consequences it entails in the end, and because of the status of the parties. Unlike labourers, students are educated and can have no material interest to serve by strikes, and unlike employers, heads of educational institutions have no interest in conflict with that of the students. Students, moreover, are supposed to be embodiments of discipline. A strike of students, therefore, produces far-reaching consequences and can only be justified in extraordinary circumstances.

But, though occasions for students' strikes in well-ordered schools and colleges must be rare, it is not impossible to conceive such as to warrant strikes on their part. Thus, for instance, if a Principal running counter to public opinion refuses to recognize a day of universal rejoicing as a holiday, which both parents and their school or college-going children may desire, students will be justified in declaring a strike for that day. Such occasions will be more frequent in India as the students grow more self-conscious, and become more alive to a sense of their responsibility to the nation.

In the case of the Gujarat College, I cannot help saying that, so far as I have been able to judge, the students have

had ample reason for the strike. The facts can be briefly told. The students absented themselves from college with the rest of the boys all over India on the Simon Boycott Day. The absence was, no doubt, unauthorized. Students were technically in the wrong. They should have at least asked for formal permission before they absented themselves. But boys are the same all the world over. One might as well hope to restrain the winds as hope to curb the roused enthusiasm of students. Theirs was, at best, a youthful indiscretion. This was condoned by the Principal after a great deal of negotiation; the boys being permitted optionally to appear for their Terminal Examination on a fee of Rs. 3 each, it being understood that the majority would appear and that those who did not, would not be in any way punished. The Principal, however, it is alleged, broke his pledge and put up a notice making it compulsory for the boys to appear for the Terminal Examination upon payment of Rs. 3 each. This, naturally, incensed the boys. They felt 'if the salt loseth its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' They, therefore, struck work. The rest is simple. The strike continues, and friends and critics alike certify to the great self-restraint and correct conduct of the boys. In my opinion, students of a college are in duty bound to resist such breach of honour by their Principal, as is alleged against the Principal of the Gujarat College. It is impossible to tender to a teacher that unreserved respect to which he is entitled by reason of his honourable calling, when he is found to be guilty of breach of honour.

If the students are resolute, there can be but one end to the strike, *viz.*, withdrawal of the offending notice and an absolute promise of immunity from any punishment to the students. Indeed, the most proper thing would be for the Government to appoint another Principal for the college.

There is in the Government colleges too much of espionage and persecution of boys holding pronounced political views, or taking any part in political gatherings

not liked by the Government. It is high time that this unwarranted interference was stopped. In a country groaning as India is under foreign rule, it is impossible to prevent students from taking part in movements for national freedom. All that can be done is to regulate their enthusiasm, so as not to interfere with their studies. They may not become partisans, taking sides with warring parties. But they have a right to be left free to hold, and actively to advocate, what political opinion they choose. The function of educational institutions is to impart education to the boys and girls who choose to join them, and thereby through to help to mould their character, never to interfere with their political or other non-moral activities outside the school-room.

The question, therefore, raised by the strike of the Ahmedabad students, is of first-rate importance and they deserve the sympathy and support of other scholastic institutions and the public in general. Parents are as much concerned with the strike, as school-going boys and girls. For, the Ahmedabad students have, I understand, acted throughout with the approval of their parents or guardians.

STUDENTS' STRIKE

"It is my conviction that our schools and colleges, instead of making us manly, make us obsequious, timid, indecisive and ballastless. Manliness consists not in bluff, bravado or lordliness. It consists in daring to do the right and facing consequences, whether it is in matters social, political or other. It consists in deeds, not in words."

The strike of the students of the Gujarat College, Ahmedabad, continues with unabated vigour. The students are showing determination, calmness and solidarity that are worthy of all praise. They are beginning only now to feel their strength. And I venture to think that they will feel it still more if they will do some constructive work. It is my conviction that our schools and colleges, instead of making us manly, make us obsequious, timid, indecisive and ballastless. Manliness consists not in bluff, bravado or lordliness. It consists in daring to do the right and facing consequences, whether it is in matters social, political or other. It consists in deeds, not in words. The students have now before them probably a long time of waiting. They must not be disheartened, if events shape themselves so. It will then be up to the public to intervene. It will be upto the student world all over India to vindicate the right which is entirely on the side of the students. Those who would study the question in all its fulness can secure from Sjt. Mavlankar copies of all the relevant papers. The fight of the Ahmedabad students is a fight not for their own personal rights; it is a fight for the honour of students in general and, therefore, in a sense, for national honour. Students who have been fighting so pluckily as these are doing, deserve the fullest public support.

And this the students will surely get, if they will engage

in some constructive national activity. They need not confine themselves to the Congress programme, if it does not commend itself to them. The chief thing is to demonstrate their capacity for holding together and doing independent solid work. The charge is often brought against us that we are good only at oratorical displays and fruitless momentary demonstrations, but fail when we are called upon to *do* work that requires cohesion, co-operation, grit and unflinching determination. The students have a splendid opportunity of falsifying the charge. Will they rise to the occasion?

They may not lose faith on any account whatsoever. The college is the nation's property. If we were not demoralized, a foreign Government should never be able to hold our property or make it practically criminal for students to take part in the nation's battle for freedom, which it should be the duty and privilege of students to lead.

STUDENTS AND CHARACTER

"The system of education is responsible for the lack of character wherever it shows itself. The remedy now is not to seek my opinion or assistance, but for the teachers to make common cause with the students and lead them to victory."

A retired Inspector of Schools, Punjab, writes:

"You might have noticed that there has been a considerable stir among the college students of our province since the last session of the Congress. A new fire seems to be burning in the young heart. Being the chief origin of this fire, and so mainly responsible for the direction it might take, I trust, you will consider the following two points connected with the matter and give your opinion:

1. I have not the least objection to the boys' expressing their love for their Motherland or their yearning for Home Rule on proper occasions, without transgressing the bounds of true 'non-violence'. But when they take to uttering, in season and out of season, revolutionary cries, clearly showing an aggressive or hateful spirit, I am afraid, they are positively guilty of 'violence.' Is not the cry 'Down, down with the Union Jack' open to this charge?

2. Hardly anything worth the name is done in our schools and colleges in the way of character-building. Will you, then, let our youth follow the impulse of the moment, sacrificing decency and discipline and not caring a straw for their various duties as students? Should not, therefore, formation of proper character in our young people be the first care of all concerned?"

I have already written about the cries in a previous but recent issue of *Young India*. I fully agree that 'Down with the Union Jack' smells of violence. There are several other objectionable cries that have come into vogue. One who believes in non-violence, even as a policy, may not utter those cries. They do no good and may do harm. A disciplined young man will not utter those cries. It is certainly opposed to *Satyagraha*. As for the second point raised by the writer, he has evidently failed to see that

the authorities are reaping as they have sown. The system of education is responsible for the lack of character, wherever it shows itself. The remedy now is not to seek my opinion or assistance, but for the teachers to make common cause with the students and lead them to victory. The latter know the tragic history of their own nation, they know how the other nations have gained their liberty. It is impossible to restrain them from working for the freedom of their own country. If they are not properly guided in their approach to their goal, they will take the means that their unripe and unaided reason will suggest. In any event, in so far as I am concerned, I have shown the way. If I am responsible for their enthusiasm, I am glad. I am trying, too, to guide it in the right direction. If they go wrong, in spite of my effort, I cannot be held responsible.

No one can be more grieved than I over the bomb outrage at Amritsar, through which an innocent young man, Sardar Pratap Singh, who was undoubtedly not the target of the bomb-thrower, met his death. These outrages are surely due to the lack of character to which the retired Inspector of Schools has drawn attention. The word 'character' is, perhaps not the happiest expression. Ballast is the right word. If it was the Principal of the Khalsa College who was aimed at, the incident is proof of a deep-seated disease. There is no bond between the teachers and the taught. The teachers of educational institutions, whether entirely owned or aided by the Government, naturally feel it incumbent upon them, whether they have it in them or not, themselves to profess and inculcate in others loyalty to the existing Government. The students have no sense of loyalty in them. They have become impatient. Impatience has led to loss of self-control, and so their energy finds its vent through dubious channels. For me these incidents are no warning to stay my hand, but to go on with my programme and gain control over or break myself in the attempt to stem the surging tide of violence on either side.

FOUL PLAY

"A school or a college is a sanctuary where there should be nothing that is base or unholy. Schools and colleges are factories for the making of character."

The worst feature of the attempted assassination of Sir Ernest Hotson, the Acting Governor of the Bombay Presidency was that the act was done by a student of the college which had invited His Excellency, when as its honoured guest, he was being shown round the college premises. It was as though a host was injuring his guest under his own roof. The canon recognized throughout the world is, that the deadliest enemy, when he is under one's roof as a guest, is entitled to protection from all harm. The act of the student was, therefore, essentially foul play, without a single redeeming feature.

For the Acting Governor it was a providential escape, and it was fortunate for India and more so for the student world. I tender my congratulations to Sir Ernest Hotson, as also to the nation.

It would be well if the believers in violence will take a lesson from this happy tragedy—happy, because no one has suffered but the assailant.

Has he suffered, is he suffering or is he deluding himself with the belief that he is a hero? Let this event be a warning for the students. After all, a school or a college is a sanctuary where there should be nothing that is base or unholy. Schools and colleges are factories for the making of character. Parents send their boys and girls to them so that they may become good men and women. It would be an evil day for the nation, if every student is suspected as a would-be assassin capable of any treachery.

The Bhagat Singh worship has done and is doing

incalculable harm to the country. Bhagat Singh's character, about which I had heard so much from reliable sources, the intimate connection I had with the attempts that were being made to secure commutation of the death sentence, carried me away and identified me with the cautious and balanced resolution passed at Karachi. I regret to observe that the caution has been thrown to the winds. The deed itself is being worshipped as if it was worthy of emulation. The result is *goondaism* and degradation, wherever this mad worship is being performed.

The Congress is a power in the land, but I warn Congressmen that it will soon lose all its charm if they betray their trust and encourage the Bhagat Singh cult whether in thought, word or deed. If the majority do not believe in the Congress *policy* of non-violence and truth, let them have the first article altered. Let us understand the distinction between policy and creed. A policy may be changed, a creed cannot. But either is as good as the other whilst it is held. Those, therefore, who hold non-violence only as a policy may not, without exposing themselves to the charge of dishonourable conduct, use the Congress membership as a cover for violence. I cannot get rid of the conviction that the greatest obstacle to our progress towards *Swaraj* is our want of faith in our policy. Let this fortunate failure of attempted assassination open our eyes.

'But look at the Governor's black record. Does not the doer himself say he shot because of the Sholapur deeds, because he superseded an Indian and became Acting Governor,—some hasty youths, or even grown-up people, will argue. My answer is: We knew all this when in 1920 we settled the Congress policy of non-violence and truth. There were, within our knowledge at the time deeds much blacker than his worst enemies have imputed to Sir Ernest Hotson. The Congress deliberately, and after full debate, came to the conclusion in 1920, that the answer to the vile and violent deeds of the Government was not greater violence on our part, but that it was pro-

fitable for us to answer violence with non-violence, and vileness with truth. The Congress saw further, that the worst administrators were not bad inherently, but that they were a fruit of the system of which they were willing or unwilling victims. We saw, too, that the system corrupted even the best from among ourselves. And so we evolved a policy of non-violent action that should destroy the system. Ten years' experience has shown that the policy of non-violence and truth, though followed half-heartedly, has answered phenomenally well and that we are very near the harbour. The record of Sir Ernest Hotson, however bad it may be, is wholly irrelevant and can in no way extenuate, much less excuse, the double crime of attempted assassination and treachery. The reported hostile demonstration by some students has made the ugly affair uglier still. I hope that the students and the teachers throughout India will seriously bestir themselves and put the educational house in order. And, in my opinion, it is the peremptory duty of the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee to condemn the treacherous outrage, and reiterate its policy in unequivocal terms.

One word to the Government and the administrators. Retribution and repression will not do. These violent outbreaks are portents. They may judge those who are immediately guilty. But they can deal with the disease only by dealing with the cause. If they have neither the will nor the courage to do so, let them leave the rest to the nation. It has progressed past repression and retribution. It will deal with violence in its own ranks in its own way. Any Government action, in excess of the demands of the common law, will simply intensify the madness, and make the task of believers in non-violence more difficult than it already is.

STUDENTS AND STRIKES

"Students should have the greatest freedom of expression and of opinion. But, in my opinion, they may not have freedom of action whilst they are studying."

A college student of Bangalore writes:

> "I have read your article in *Harijan*[1] and I request you to let me know your opinion on students taking part in strikes like Andamans Day, Abattoir Day, etc."

Whilst I have pleaded for the removal of restrictions on the speech and movements of students, I am not able to support political strikes or demonstrations. Students should have the greatest freedom of expression and of opinion. They may openly sympathize with any political party they like. But, in my opinion, they may not have freedom of action whilst they are studying. A student cannot be an active politician and pursue his studies at the same time. It is difficult to draw hard and fast lines at the time of big national upheavals. Then, they do not strike or, if the word 'strike' can be used in such circumstances, it is a wholesale strike; it is a suspension of studies. Thus, what may appear to be an exception is not

[1] *In the article referred to, Gandhiji wrote as follows :*

> "The students' minds must not be caged, nor for that matter those of the teachers. The teachers can only point to their pupils what they or the State considers is the best way. Having done so, they have no right to curb their pupils' thoughts and feelings. This does not mean that they are not to be subjected to any discipline. No school can be run without it. But discipline has nothing to do with artificial restraint upon the students' all-round growth. This is impossible where they are subjected to espionage. The fact is that hitherto they have been in an atmosphere subtly anti-national where it has not been openly that. The students should know that the cultivation of nationalism is not a crime but a virtue."

one in reality.

As a matter of fact, the question, such as the correspondent has raised, should not arise in the Congress Province. For, there can be no curb which the best mind of the students will not willingly accept. The majority of them are, must be, Congress-minded. They may not do anything that would embarrass the Ministries. If they struck, they would do so because the Ministers wanted them to. But I cannot conceive of Congress Ministers wanting them to strike except when the Congress is no longer in office, and when the Congress declares, may be, a non-violent active war against the Government of the day. And, even then, I should think that to invite students in the first instance to suspend their studies for strikes would be tantamount to a declaration of bankruptcy. If the people in general are with the Congress for any demonstration in the nature of strikes, students will be left alone except as a last resort. During the last war, the students were not the first to be called out, but they were the last, so far as I recollect, and then only college students.

FILTH IN LITERATURE

"An orderly strike on the part of students is the quickest way of bringing about the much-needed reform. Such a strike would not be boisterous. It would simply consist in the students notifying boycott of examinations which require a study of objectionable literature."

A Travancore Headmaster of a high school writes:

"You know the political atmosphere of Travancore is very unhappy just at present. Even high school pupils are going on strike and picketing others. There is a feeling among pupils that you are in favour of students' strikes and even pupils' strikes'. I would like to get a communication addressed to pupils in general about your opinion on the matter. It will clarify the situation."

I think I have written often enough against strikes by students and pupils, except on the rarest of occasions. I hold it to be quite wrong on the part of students and pupils to take part in political demonstrations and party politics. Such ferment interferes with serious study and unfits students for solid work as future citizens. There is one thing, however, for which it is the duty of students and pupils to strike. I have received a letter from the Hon. Secretary, Youths' Welfare Association, Lahore, giving copious specimens of obscene and erotic passages from the text-books prescribed by various universities. They make sickening reading. Though they are from prescribed text-books, I would not soil these columns with a reproduction of the extracts. I have never come across such filth in all the literature that I have read. The extracts are impartially given both from Sanskrit, Persian and Hindi poets. My attention was first drawn to such writings by the girls of Mahila Ashram, Wardha, and recently by my daughter-in-law who is studying in

the Kanya Gurukul at Dehradun. Though she is not illiterate, she had never come across such obscenity as she found in some of her text-books. She appealed to me for assistance. I have been moving the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan authorities. But big institutions move slowly. Monopolies grow up. Self-interest of authors and publishers prevents reform. The altar of literature claims special incense. My daugher-in-law suggested, and I at once fell in with her suggestion, that she would risk failure at her examination and omit to learn the obscene or erotic passages. This is a mild strike on her part, but this is an occasion which not only justifies a strike on the part of students and pupils, it is, in my opinion, their duty to rise in revolt against such literature being forced on them.

It is one thing to defend the liberty to read what one likes. But it is a wholly different thing to force on young minds acquaintance with literature that cannot but excite their animal passions and an unhealthy curiosity about things which, in due course and to the extent necessary, they are bound to learn. The evil becomes accentuated when it comes in the guise of innocent literature, bearing the *imprimatur* of great universities.

An orderly strike on the part of students is the quickest way of bringing about the much-needed reform. Such a strike would not be boisterous. It would simply consist in the students notifying boycott of examinations, which require a study of objectionable literature. It is the duty of every pure-minded student to rebel against obscenity.

The Association asks me to appeal to the Congress Ministers to take such steps as may be possible to remove text-books or passages which are objectionable. I gladly make the appeal hereby, not only to them but the Education Ministers in all the provinces. Surely, all are equally interested in the healthy growth of the student mind.

IS IT NON-VIOLENT?

"I can understand not going to a school for whose teachers I have no regard. But I cannot understand disrespect towards or vilification of my teachers. Such conduct is ungentlemanly, and all ungentlemanliness is violence."

Below is an extract from a letter from a teacher in the Annamalai University:

"Some time in November last, a group of five or six students organizedly assaulted the Secretary of University Union, a fellow-student. Shri Srinivasa Sastri, the Vice-Chancellor, took a serious view of it and punished the leader of the group with expulsion from the University, and the rest with suspension till the end of this academic year.

"Some sympathizers and friends of these punished students wanted to abstain from attending classes and strike work. They consulted the other students the next day and tried to persuade them also to strike work as a mark of protest. But they could not succeed, as the majority of the students felt that the punishment meted out to the six people was well deserved and so refused to join the strikers or show any sympathy for them.

"The nex day, about 20 per cent of the students stayed away from the classes; the remaining 80 per cent attended the classes as usual. I may add, the strength of this University is about 800.

"The student who was expelled next came inside the hostel to direct the strike. Finding the strike unsuccessful, he adopted other methods in the evening, as for example, bodily lying across the four main outlets from the hostel, locking some gates of the hostel, locking up some of the young boys inside their own rooms —especially the junior kids who could be intimidated into obedience. In this way, in the afternoon, the rest of the students were prevented from coming outside the hostel gates by fifty or sixty people.

"The authorities, thus finding the gates closed, wanted to make an opening in the fencing. But when they started pulling down the fence with the help of servants of the University, the strikers prevented the other students from passing through the breaches to attend college. They tried removing the picketers bodily but

could not succeed. The authorities finding the situation unmanageable, requested the police to remove the expelled student from the hostel premises as he was the source of all the trouble, which the police did. This naturally irritated some more of the students who began to show sympathy with the strikers. The next morning, the strikers found the whole fencing removed from the hostel, entered the college premises and picketed by lying across the staircase passages and entrances to class-rooms. Shri Srinivasa Sastri then closed down the University for a long vacation of 1½ months, from November 29th to January 16th. He gave a statement to the Press, appealing to the students to come back from home in a chastened and happier mood for study.

"But the college re-opened with renewed activities on the part of the strikers who had extra advice during the vacation from..... They went to Rajaji, it appears, but he asked them to obey the Vice-Chancellor and declined to interfere. He sent two telegrams also to the strikers, through the Vice-Chancellor, appealing to them to give up the strike and attend college classes and settle down to quiet work. Though on the majority of good students these telegrams had a good effect, the strikers remained adamant.

"The picketing is still going on. It has almost become chronic. The strikers are about 35 to 45 in number. They have got about 50 sympathizers who dare not come into the open and strike with them but from within they create trouble. Every day they come in a body and lie down in front of entrances to classes, and on the stairs leading to classes on the first floor, and thus prevent the students from entering the classes. But the teachers shift from place to place and hold classes before the picketers can reach there! Each hour the venue of the classes is changed. Sometimes, classes are held in the open air, so that the picketers cannot block the entrance by lying down. On those occasions the strikers disturb the classes by shouting, and sometimes by haranguing the students who have assembled to hear lectures of their respective class teachers.

"Yesterday, there was a new development. The strikers came into the classes, rolled on the floor and uttered shouts. Some strikers, I heard, began writing on black-boards before the teacher could come. If any teachers are known to be meek, some of the strikers try to intimidate them also. In fact, they threatened the Vice-Chancellor with 'violence and bloodshed', if he did not accede to their demands.

"One other important point I ought to tell you is that the strikers get help from some outsiders, employ *goondas* to enter the University premises, and disturb the work there. As a matter of fact, I saw many such *goondas*—and people who are not students—

wandering about in the *verandahs*, and near the class-rooms also. Apart from it, the students use abusive language against the Vice-Chancellor.

"Now, the point I am driving at is this: We have all been feeling, *i.e.*, several teachers and a large number of students, that these activities are not truthful and non-violent and so are against the spirit of *Satyagraha*.

"I learn reliably that some of the striker students persist in calling this non-violent. They say that if Mahatmaji declares this to be violent, they will stop these activities."

The letter is dated 17th February (1939) and addressed to Kakasaheb Kalelkar whom the teacher knows intimately. The portion not printed by me seeks Kakasaheb's opinion whether the conduct of the students can be called non-violent, and deplores the attitude of unruliness which has become rampant among so many students in India.

The letter gives the names of those who are inciting the strikers to persist in their behaviour. On the publication of my opinion on the strike, someone, presumably a student, sent me an angry telegram saying that the behaviour of the strikers is perfectly non-violent. Assuming the correctness of the version reproduced by me, I have no hesitation in saying that the attitude of the students is essentially violent. Surely, if someone blocks the passage to my house, his action is violence just as much as if he pushed me bodily from the doorstep.

If students have a real grievance against their teachers, they may have the right to strike and even picket their school or college, but only to the extent of politely warning the unwary from attending their classes. They could do so by speaking or by distributing leaflets. But they may not obstruct the passage, or use any coercion against those who do not want to strike.

And, the students have struck against whom? Shri Srinivasa Sastri is one of India's best scholars. He had become renowned as a teacher before many of the students were born or were in their teens. Any university in the world will be proud to have him as Vice-Chancellor, as well for the greatness of his learning as for the

nobility of his character.

If the writer of the letter to Kakasaheb has given an accurate account of the happenings in the Annamalai University, Sastriar's handling of the situation seems to me to have been quite correct. In my opinion, the strikers are harming themselves by their conduct. I belong to the old school which believed in reverence for teachers. I can understand not going to a school for whose teachers I have no regard. But I cannot understand disrespect towards or vilification of my teachers. Such conduct is ungentlemanly, and all ungentlemanliness is violence.

STUDENTS AND POLITICAL STRIKES

"Students can play an effective part in the national struggle, if they will whole-heartedly come under discipline. But if they will act on their own and fritter away their energy in making ineffective demonstrations, they will hinder the national cause."

In a statement, deprecating political strikes by students and dissipation of their energy in ineffective demonstrations, Gandhiji said:

I have received several letters from students in Madras and the United Provinces regarding their demonstrations over Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's arrest and imprisonment and the threatened reprisals by the Governments concerned. The students now desire to have a strike of protest and ask for my advice.

When the whole world hangs its head in shame over the imprisonment of one of India's noblest and bravest sons, it is no wonder that the student world in India is shaken to its roots. Whilst, therefore, my sympathy is wholly with them, I must adhere to the view that the students were wrong in their walk-out as a mark of their resentment over Jawaharlal Nehru's imprisonment. The Governments of the two provinces are more than wrong in their threats of reprisals.

The students will, however, do well not to resort to the contemplated strike of protest. If they desire my advice they should send an authorized representative, who is in full possession of the facts of which I have but a very superficial knowledge. I shall gladly give guidance for what it may be worth. They know how much I would value their whole-hearted co-operation in the struggle I am endeavouring to lead. In any case, they will spoil

their own and damage the national cause by ill-conceived and hasty action.

In another statement, concerning the same subject, Gandhiji advised the students as follows:

My attention has been drawn to some paragraphs appearing in the Press, purporting to give my opinion about the questions agitating the students. I have not read all that has appeared in the Press, if only because I want to conserve my energy on which, of late, I have been obliged to put an unduly heavy strain. My opinion is firm. No provocation should be allowed to justify political strikes by students, unless they have made up their minds, once for all, to abandon their college or school studies. Unlike, as in free countries, our educational institutions are controlled by the rulers, from whom the nation is struggling to free itself. Self-suppression is, therefore, the price the students must pay for receiving the education evolved and controlled by the rulers. They cannot have the cake and eat it, too. If they want the education which the schools and the colleges impart, as evidently they do, they have to conform to the rules and regulations laid down for these institutions. Therefore, unless the heads of the institutions consent, there should be no political strikes. But I have suggested a way out. Students have ample time after school and college hours of which they are their own masters. They can hold meetings, express their sympathy with the national cause in an orderly manner, and they can have processions, too, if they like. Those who wish to take part in Civil Disobedience and accept my leadership can do so after suspending their studies for the time being, by conforming to the conditions laid down for offering Civil Disobedience and after receiving my permission.

Letters being received by me from individual students show that they have little faith in my leadership, for they have no faith in the constructive programme of which the centre and most visible part is *Khadi*. They do not believe

in spinning, and, if my correspondents are to be accepted as reliable witnesses, their belief in non-violence is also a doubtful quantity.

Students can play an effective part in the national struggle, if they will whole-heartedly come under discipline. But if they will act on their own and fritter away their energy in making ineffective demonstrations, they will hinder the national cause. I am glad to be able to testify that Congressmen are showing a measure of discipline which is an agreeable surprise to me. For, I was not prepared for it. Let it not be said of the student world that at the eleventh hour, they were found wanting. Let them remember that I am asking for greater steadfastness, greater courage and greater self-sacrifice than can be devoted by undisciplined and thoughtless demonstrations. The students should also realize that the number of civil resisters will always be confined to a few, compared with the 350 millions forming the nation. There is no limit to the number who should take part in working the constructive programme. I regard this the most useful and effective part of the movement for independence, without which civil resistance will cease to be civil and, therefore, utterly valueless.

STUDENTS AND POWER POLITICS

"Power politics should be unknown to the student world. Immediately they dabble in that class of work, they cease to be students and will, therefore, fail to serve the country in its crisis."

In the course of a letter to the General Secretary of the All-India Students' Federation in reply to the latter's communication to him about the split in the Federation, Gandhiji said:

I am fighting the country's struggle. The country includes students as much as the other parts of the body politic. I have, however, a special claim upon the students and they upon me, for I regard myself still as a student, and also because from the very commencement of my return to India I have been in close touch with them and many of them have served the cause of *Satyagraha*.

Therefore, even if the whole of the student world were to repudiate me for causes, which in their very nature must be temporary, I am not going to be deterred from tendering my advice for fear of rejection.

Students cannot afford to have party politics. They may hear all parties, as they read all sorts of books, but their business is to assimilate the truth of all and reject the balance. That is the only worthy attitude that they can take.

Power politics should be unknown to the student world. Immediately they dabble in that class of work, they cease to be students and will, therefore, fail to serve the country in its crisis.

And you, as General Secretary, would be ill-serving the cause of the students if you take part in power politics.

All Communists are not bad, as all Congressmen are

not angels. I have, therefore, no prejudice against Communists, as such.

Their philosophy, as they have declared it to me, I cannot subscribe to. I have great regard for Dr. Ashraf's abilities. I have never questioned his love of his country, but I am positive he will one day be sorry for the wrong guidance he is giving to the student world.

But inasmuch as he is enamoured of his views, as I am of mine and we are equally obstinate, I despair of convincing him of his error and, therefore, never enter into argument with him. And, he returns the compliment by avoiding me.

But let the students remember that at the present moment I am fighting the country's cause. I am not an inexperienced general, but a seasoned soldier of 50 years standing.

Let them, therefore, think 50 times before rejecting my advice which is that they must not dabble in strikes without reference to me.

I have never said or suggested that they may never resort to strikes. They should not forget my recent advice to the Christ Church College students. I do not repent of that advice. Let them take full benefit of it.

STUDENTS' NOBLE SATYAGRAHA

"Students hold in their pocket, as it were, the key to social reform and the protection of their religion, just as they have in their possession the key to *Swaraj*—though they may not be aware of it owing to their negligence or carelessness."

In referring to the universality of *Satyagraha*, I have time and again observed in these columns that it is capable of application in the social no less than in the political field. It may equally be employed against Government, society, or one's own family, father, mother, husband or wife, as the case may be. For, it is the beauty of this spiritual weapon that when it is completely free from the taint of *himsa*, and its use is actuated purely and solely by love, it may be used with absolute impunity in any connection and in any circumstances whatever. A concrete instance of its use against a social evil was furnished by the brave and spirited students of Dharmaj (in Kheda District) a few days back. The facts, as gleaned from the various communications about the incident received by me, were as follows:

A gentleman of Dharmaj, some days back, gave a caste dinner in connection with the twelfth day ceremony of the death of his mother. It was preceded by a keen controversy about the subject among the young men of the place, who shared with a number of other local inhabitants their strong dislike of this custom. They felt that on this occasion something must be done. Accordingly, most of them took all or some of the following three vows:

1. Not to join their elders at the dinner or otherwise partake of the food served on that occasion.

2. To observe fast on the day of the dinner as an emphatic protest against this practice.

3. To bear patiently and cheerfully any harsh treatment that might be accorded to them by their elders for taking this step.

In pursuance of this decision, quite a large number of students, including some children of tender age, fasted on the day on which the dinner was given and took upon themselves the wrath of their so-called elders. Nor was the step free from the danger of serious pecuniary consequences to the students. The 'elders' threatened to stop the allowances of their boys, and even to withdraw any financial aid that they were giving to local institutions, but the boys stood firm. As many as two hundred and eighty-five students thus refused to take part in the caste dinner, and most of them fasted.

I tender my congratulations to these boys and hope that everywhere students will take a prominent part in effecting social reform. They hold in their pocket, as it were, the key to social reform and the protection of their religion, just as they have in their possession the key to *Swaraj*—though they may not be aware of it owing to their negligence or carelessness. But I hope that the example set by the students of Dharmaj will awaken them to a sense of their power. In my opinion, the true *shraddha* of the deceased lady was performed by these young men fasting on that day, while those who gave the dinner wasted good money and set a bad example to the poor. The rich, monied class ought to use their God-given wealth for philanthropic purposes. They should understand that the poor cannot afford to give caste dinners on wedding or on funeral ceremonies. These bad practices have proved to be the ruin of many a poor man. If the money that was spent in Dharmaj on the caste dinner had been used for helping poor students or poor widows, or for *Khadi* or cow-protection, or the amelioration of the 'untouchables', it would have borne fruit and brought peace to the departed soul. But as it is, the dinner has already been forgotten, it has profited nobody and it has caused pain to the students and the sensible section of the

Dharmaj public.

Let no one imagine that the *Satyagraha* has gone in vain, because it did not succeed in preventing the dinner in question from taking place. The students themselves knew that there was little possibility of their *Satyagraha* producing any immediate tangible result. But we may safely take it that if they do not let their vigilance go to sleep, no *Sethia* will again dare to give a *post-mortem* dinner. A chronic and long standing social evil cannot be swept away at a stroke, it always requires patience and perseverance.

When will the 'elders' of our society learn to recognize the signs of the times? How long will they be slaves to custom instead of using it as a means for the amelioration of society and the country? How long will they keep their children divorced from a practical application of the knowledge which they are helping them to acquire? When will they rescue their sense of right and wrong from its present state of trance and wake up and be *Mahajans* in the true sense of the word?

THE DUTY OF STUDENTS

"Our students are weighed down with cares and worries when they should really be careful for nothing. They have simply to receive and to assimilate. They should know only to discriminate between what should be received and what rejected."

Addressing the students of the Samaldas College, Bhavnagar, Gandhiji said:

I have to speak to-day on the *dharma* or duty of students. That *dharma* is as easy as it is difficult. According to Hinduism, the student is a *brahmachari*, and *brahmacharaya-ashrama* is the student-state. Celibacy is a narrow interpretation of *brahmacharya*. The original meaning is the life or the state of a student. That means control of the senses. But the whole period of study or acquirement of knowledge by means of control of the senses came to be regarded as *brahmacharya-ashrama*. This period of life necessarily means very much taking and very little giving. We are mainly recipients in this state, taking whatever we can get from parents, teachers and from the world. But the taking, if it carries—as it did—no obligation of simultaneous repayment, it necessarily carries an obligation to repay the whole debt, with compound interest, at the proper time. That is why Hindus maintain *brahmacharya-ashrama* as a matter of religious duty.

The life of a *brahmachari* and a *sanyasi* are regarded as spiritually similar. The *brahmachari* must needs be a *sanyasi*, if he is to be a *brahmachari*. For the *sanyasi* it is a matter of choice. The four *ashramas* of Hinduism have now-a-days lost their sacred character and exist, if at all, in name. The life of the student *brahmachari* is poisoned at the very spring. Though there is nothing left of the

ashramas to-day, which we may hold up to the present generation as something to learn from and copy, we may still hark back to the ideals that inspired the original *ashramas*.

How can we understand the duty of students to-day? We have fallen so much from the ideal. The parents take the lead in giving the wrong direction. They feel that their children should be educated only in order that they may earn wealth and position. Education and knowledge are thus being prostituted and we look in vain for the peace, innocence and bliss that the life of student ought to be. Our students are weighed down with cares and worries when they should really be careful for nothing. They have simply to receive and to assimilate. They should know only to discriminate between what should be received and what rejected. It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils discrimination. If we go on taking in indiscriminately, we would be no better than machines. We are thinking, knowing beings, and we must in this period distinguish truth from untruth, sweet from bitter language, clean from unclean things, and so on. But the student's path to-day is strewn with more difficulties than the one of distinguishing good from bad things. He has to fight the hostile atmosphere around him. Instead of the sacred surroundings of *Rishi Guru's Ashrama* and his paternal care, he has the atmosphere of broken-down home and the artificial surroundings created by the modern system of education. The *Rishi* taught their pupils without books. They only gave them few *mantras*, which the pupils treasured in their memories and translated in practical life. The present-day student has to live in the midst of heaps of books, sufficient to choke him. In my own days, Reynold was much in vogue among students and I escaped him only because I was far from being a brilliant student and never cared to peep out of school text-books. When I went to England, however, I saw that these novels were tabooed in decent circles and that I had lost nothing by

having never read them. Similarly, there are many other things which a student might do worse than reject. One such thing is the craze for earning a career. Only the *grihastia*—householder—has to think of it; it is none of the *brahmachari* student's *dharma*. He has to acquaint himself with the condition of things in his own country, try to realize the magnitude of the crisis with which it is faced and the work that it requires of him. I dare say many amongst you read newspapers. I do not think I can ask you to eschew them altogether; but I would ask you to eschew everything of ephemeral interest, and I can tell you that newspapers afford nothing of permanent interest. They offer nothing to help the formation of character, and yet I know the craze for newspapers. It is pitiable, terrible. I am talking in this strain as I have myself made some experiments in education. Out of those experiments, I learnt the meaning of education. I discovered *Satyagraha* and Non-co-operation, and launched on these new experiments. I assure you I have never regretted having tried these last, nor have I undertaken them simply with the object of winning political *Swaraj*. I have ventured to place them even before students. For, they are innocent. They are to-day summed up in the spinning-wheel. First, it was hailed with ridicule; then, came scorn; and, presently, it will be received with joy. The Congress has adopted it, and I would not hesitate to offer it respectfully even to Lord Reading. I would not hesitate to do so, as I know that I would lose nothing in so doing. The loser would be Lord Reading, if he chose to reject it. I did not hesitate to deliver the message of the Wheel to the Bishop of Calcutta, when I had the honour to make his acquaintance in Delhi. I did the same with Colonel Maddock, and when Mrs. Maddock sailed for England I presented her with a *Khaddar* towel as a momento, and asked her to carry the message from house to house.

I am not tired of preaching the message of the Wheel on all occasions, at all hours, because it is such an innocent

thing, and yet so potent of good. It may not be relishing, but no health-giving food has the relish of spicy foods so detrimental to health. And so the Gita in a memorable text asks all thinking people to take things of which the first taste is bitter, but which are ultimately conducive to immortality. Such a thing to-day is the spinning-wheel and its product. There is no *yagna* (sacrifice) greater than spinning, calculated to bring peace to the troubled spirits, to soothe the distracted student's mind, to spiritualize his life. I have to-day no better prescription for the country—not even the *Gayatri*—in this practical age which looks for immediate results. *Gayatri* I would fain offer, but I cannot promise immediate result; whilst the thing I offer is such as you can take to with God's name on your lips and expect immediate result. An English friend wrote saying his English common sense told him that spinning-wheel was an excellent hobby. I said to him: 'It may be a hobby for you, for us it is the Tree of Plenty.' I do not like many Western ways, but there are certain things in them for which I cannot disguise my admiration. Their 'hobby' is a thing full of meaning. Col. Maddock, who was an efficient surgeon and took great delight in his task, did not devote all his hours to his work. Two hours he had set apart for his hobby which was gardening, and it was this gardening that lent zest and savour to his life.

I have pleasure, therefore, in placing the spinning-wheel before you, even as a hobby if you will, in order that your life may have zest and savour, in order that you may find peace and bliss. It will help you to lead a life of *brahmacharya*. Faith is a thing of great moment in the student state. There are so many things which you have to take for granted. You accept them simply because you get them from your teacher. Some propositions in geometry, for instance, were very difficult of comprehension for me. I took them for granted and to-day I, not only can understand them, but can lose myself in a study of geometry as easily as I can do in my present work.

If you have faith and ply the Wheel, take it from me that some day you will admit that what an old man once told you about it was literally true. No wonder that one learned in the lore applied the following text from the Gita to the spinning-wheel:

"In this there is no waste of effort; neither is there any obstacle. Even a little practice of this *dharma* saves a man from calamity."

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

"All our learning or recitation of the *Vedas*, correct knowledge of Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and what not, will avail us nothing, if they do not enable us to cultivate absolute purity of heart. The end of all knowledge must be building up of character."

Addressing the students of Vellore, Gandhiji said:

At the outset, I would like to express my very deep sorrow over the domestic affliction that has befallen your Principal. I heard of it as soon as I reached here. I appreciate, Mr. Principal, the very courteous consideration that you have shown, by not merely allowing this function to take place under your roof, but also, in spite of your overwhelming grief, gracing this function by your presence and presiding at it. I ask you to regard me as a partner in your grief.

I thank all the students and others for the address that has been presented to me this afternoon and the purse for the Khadi Fund. This demonstration of your personal affection for me and your identification with the poorest of the land does not surprise me now, because it has become a common feature wherever I go throughout the length and breadth of our beautiful country.

It has been a matter of the greatest joy to me and consolation, in the face of many difficulties, to find that the student world throughout India has a warm corner for me in their heart. The students have lightened my burden to a very great extent. But I cannot suppress from me the feeling that, in spite of this personal affection that the students have shown to me everywhere and even identification with the poorest of the land, the students have yet to cover a vast amount of ground. For, you are the hope of the future.

You will be called upon, when you are discharged from your colleges and schools, to enter upon public life, to lead the poor people of this country. I would, therefore, like you students to have a sense of responsibility and show it in a much more tangible manner. It is a remarkable fact, and a regrettable fact, that in the case of the vast majority of students, whilst they entertain noble impulses during their student days, these disappear when they finish their studies. The vast majority of them look out for loaves and fishes. Surely, there is something wrong in this. There is one reason which is obvious. Every educationist, every one who has had anything to do with the students, has realized that our educational system is faulty. It does not correspond to the requirements of the country, certainly not to the requirements of pauper India. There is no correspondence between the education that is given and the home life and the village life. But that is, I fear, a larger question than you and I can deal with in a meeting of this character.

Taking things as they are, we have to consider what is possible for the students to do and what more we can do in order to serve the country. The answer that has come to me and to many, who are eager to see that the student world gives a good account of itself, is that the students have to search within and look after their personal character. Purity of personal life is the one indispensable condition for building a sound education. And my meetings with thousands of students and the correspondence, which I continuously have with the students in which they pour out their innermost feelings and take me into their confidence, show me quite clearly that there is much left to be desired. I am sure that all of you understand thoroughly what I mean. In our languages, there is a beautiful word, equivalent for the word student, that is, *brahmachari*. *Vidyarthi* is a coined word and a poor equivalent for *brahmachari*. And I hope you know what the word *brahmachari* means. It means searcher after God, one who conducts himself so as to bring himself

nearest to God in the least possible time. And all the great religions of the world, however much they may differ, are absolutely one on this fundamental, that no man or woman with an impure heart can possibly appear before the Great White Throne. All our learning or recitation of the *Vedas*, correct knowledge of Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and what not, will avail us nothing, if they do not enable us to cultivate absolute purity of heart. The end of all knowledge must be building up of character.

An English friend in Shimoga, whom I did not know before, came up to me and asked me, why it was, if India was really a spiritually advanced country, he did not observe in the students a real yearning after knowledge of God, why was it that the students, many of them, did not even know what the Bhagvad Gita was. I gave, what appeared to me, an honest explanation and excuse for this discovery of his. But I do not propose to give that explanation to you nor seek to excuse this very great and grave defect. The very first earnest request that I would make to the students before me here is, that each one of you should search within, and wherever you find that my remarks are justified, you will begin to reform and rebuild yourself. And those of you who are Hindus, and the vast majority are Hindus, I know will endeavour to understand the very simple, beautiful, and to me soul-ful message of the Gita. The experience, and I think I can say the experience without a single exception of those who have really carried on this search after truth, to render their hearts pure, is that it is an utterly impossible effort, unless it is accompanied by a heart-prayer to the Almighty. Whatever, therefore, you do, do not lose faith in God. I cannot reason out the thing for you; because, really speaking, it is a fact which transcends reason. But I want you to cultivate a spirit of real humility and not summarily reject the experiences of so many teachers, R*ishis* and others of the world, and not regard them as so many superstitious men. And, if you will but do this, all the rest that I want to say will be as clear as

crystal to you. This will be to me the test of your sincerity of profession. If you have real faith in God, you cannot but feel for the humblest of His creation. And whether it is the spinning-wheel and *Khadi*, or untouchability, or total prohibition, or social reform in connection with child-widows or child-wives and many other similar things, you will find that all these activities are derived from the same source.

It is really the easiest thing in the world for you to make your choice once for all, and say to yourself that you shall use henceforth nothing but *Khadi*, since it puts a few coppers into the pockets of those who need them most. In this one institution alone, I understand, you are more than 1,400. Just think what the 1,400 by giving only half an hour to spinning can add materially to the wealth of the country. Think also what 1,400 can do on behalf of the so-called untouchables, and if all the 1,400 young men were to make a solemn resolve, and they can do so, that they are not going to have anything whatsoever to do with child-wives, imagine what a great reform you will make in society around you. If the 1,400 amongst you, or a respectable number even, devote your leisure hours or part of your Sundays to going amidst those who are given to drink, and in the kindliest manner possible steal into their hearts, imagine what service you will render to them and to the country.

All these things you can do in spite of the existing faulty education. Nor do you require much effort for doing these things except that you have got to change your heart, and, to use a current expression in the political world, alter the 'angle of vision.'

And I want you to turn this occasion to advantage, and you will do so if only you will consider the solemn circumstances under which we have met this evening and by reference to which I started my address. A mere man of the world would be justified, and he will be held justified by the world, if he excused himself from attending a function of this character on account of domestic

affliction. Surely, there is something noble and majestic when a man, instead of brooding over such sorrows, transmutes them into service for God and humanity. May God enable you to understand the words that I have spoken to you! I thank you once more for your address and the purse and all that you have said.

STUDENTS AND THE GITA

"If India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction."

The other day, in the course of a conversation, a missionary friend asked me, if India was really a spiritually advanced country, why it was that he found only a few students having any knowledge of their own religion, even of the Bhagvad Gita. In support of the statement the friend, who is himself an educationist, told me that he had made it a point to ask the students he met, whether they had any knowledge of their religion or of the Bhagvad Gita. A vast majority of them were found to be innocent of any such knowledge.

I do not propose to take up at the present moment the inference, that because certain students had no knowledge of their own religion, India was not a spiritually advanced country, beyond saying that the ignorance on the part of the students of religious books did not necessarily mean absence of all religious life, or want of spirituality among the people to which the students belonged. But there is no doubt that the vast majority of students, who pass through the Government educational institutions, are devoid of any religious instruction. The remark of the missionary had reference to the Mysore students, and I was somewhat pained to observe that even the students of Mysore had no religious instruction in the State schools. I know that there is a school of thought which believes in only secular instruction bèing given in public schools. I know also that in a country like India, where there are most religions of the world represented, and where there are so many denominations in the same reli-

gion there must be a difficulty about making provision for religious instruction. But if India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction. It is true, that knowledge of religious books is no equivalent of that religion. But if we cannot have religion, we must be satisfied with providing our boys and girls with what is next best. And whether there is such instruction given in the schools or not, grown-up students must cultivate the art of self-help about matters religious as about others. They may start their own class, just as they have their own debating, and, now, spinners' clubs.

Addressing the Collegiate High School students at Shimoga, I found upon enquiry at the meeting that out of a hundred or more Hindu boys, there were hardly eight who had read the Bhagvad Gita. None raised his hand in answer to the question, whether of the few who had read the Gita there was any who understood it. Out of five or six Mussalman boys, all raised their hands as having read the Quran. But only one could say that he knew its meaning. The Gita is, in my opinion, a very easy book to understand. It does present some fundamental problems, which are no doubt difficult of solution. But the general trend of the Gita is, in my opinion, unmistakable. It is accepted by all Hindu sects as authoritative. It is free from any form of dogma. In a short compass it gives a complete, reasoned, moral code. It satisfies both the intellect and the heart. It is thus both philosophical and devotional. Its appeal is universal. The language is incredibly simple. But, I, nevertheless, think that there should be an authoritative version in each vernacular, and the translations should be so prepared as to avoid technicalities, and in a manner that would make the teaching of the Gita intelligible to the average man. The suggestion is not intended in any way to supplement the original. For, I reiterate my opinion that every Hindu boy and girl should know Sanskrit. But for a long time to come, there will be millions without any know-

ledge of Sanskrit. It would be suicidal to keep them deprived of the teaching of the Bhagvad Gita, because they do not know Sanskrit.

HINDU STUDENTS AND THE GITA

"It is because I see the same God in the Bhagvad Gita, as I see in the Bible and the Quran, that I say to the Hindu boys that they will derive greater inspiration from the Bhagvad Gita, because they will be tuned to the Gita more than to any other book."

In the course of his address to the Mannargudy students, Gandhiji said:

Perfection is the exclusive attribute of God, and it is indescribable, untranslatable. I do believe that it is possible for every human being to become perfect. It is necessary for all to aspire after perfection, even as God is perfect. It is necessary for us all to aspire after perfection; but when that blessed state is attained, it becomes indescribable. And I, therefore, submit in all humility that even the *Vedas*, the Quran and the Bible are the perfect word of God; and imperfect beings that we are, we are swayed to and fro by a multitude of passions. It is impossible for us even to understand this word of God in its fullness. And so I say to a Hindu boy that he must not uproot the traditions in which he has been brought up, as I say to a Mussalman or a Christian boy that he must not uproot his traditions.

And so, whilst I would welcome your learning the Gospel and your learning the Quran, I would certainly insist on all of you Hindu boys, if I had the power of insistence, learning the Gita. It is my belief that the impurity that we see about boys in schools, the carelessness about things that matter in life, the levity with which the student world deals with the greatest and most fundamental questions of life, is due to this uprooting of tradition from which boys have hitherto derived their sustenance.

But I must not be misunderstood. I do not hold that everything ancient is good, because it is ancient. I do not advocate surrender of God-given reasoning faculty in the face of ancient tradition. Any tradition, however ancient, if inconsistent with morality, is fit to be banished from the land. Untouchability may be considered to be an ancient tradition, the institution of child-widowhood and child-marriage may be considered to be ancient tradition, and even so many an ancient horrible belief and superstitious practice. I would sweep them out of existence, if I had the power. When, therefore, I talk of respecting the ancient tradition, you now understand what I mean. And it is because I see the same God in the Bhagvad Gita, as I see in the Bible and the Quran, that I say to the Hindu boys that they will derive greater inspiration from the Bhagvad Gita, because they will be tuned to the Gita more than to any other book.

GITA—THE MOTHER

"The Gita is the Universal Mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. A true votary of the Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever lives in perennial joy and peace that passeth understanding."

I have been asked by Acharya Anand Shankar Dhruva to say a few words on the Gita to the students of the Kashi Vishva Vidyalaya. It is not without hesitation that I have accepted the invitation. What right can a layman like myself have to discourse on a theme like this in the presence of a *savant* like him? I have neither his profound scholarship, nor the deep study of our ancient religious lore which Pandit Malaviyaji, for instance, has. Sardar Vallabbhai, in his characteristic manner, asked me this morning whether scavengers, cultivators, and weavers like him and me were not altogether out of court in a city of *Pandits* like Kashi, and in the presence of such Pandits as Malaviyaji and Acharya Dhruva; and, in a way, he was right. But I have come here, not with any pretence to learning, but only to tell you what reaction the Gita had on lay natures like mine and the Sardar's. I wonder whether you have even a distant idea of how profoundly it affected the Sardar during his imprisonment. I am here to bear witness to the fact that in the Yeravda Prison it gave him more strength and sustenance than meat and drink. To read the Gita in the original, he set about learning Sanskrit with the help of Pandit Satavalekar's Sanskrit Self-Instructor, and once he had started on it, the book seldom left his hands. It occupied him from morning till night. It was not an obsession of an unoccupied mind, as you might be tempted to think, but the result of deep thought. 'Which is the one book

that can be to the Hindus what the Bible is to the Christians or the Quran to the Mussalmans ?'—we asked ourselves. Is it the *Vedas*? No. The Bhagavat? No. Devi Puran? No. Early in my childhood, I had felt the need of a scripture that would serve me as an unfailing guide through the trials and temptations of life. The *Vedas* could not supply that need, if only because to learn them would require fifteen to sixteen years of hard study at a place like Kashi, for which I was not ready then. But the Gita, I had read somewhere, gave within the compass of its 700 verses the quintessence of all the *Shastras* and the *Upanishads*. That decided me. I learnt Sanskrit to enable me to read Gita. To-day the Gita is not only my Bible or my Quran, it is more than that—it is my Mother. I lost my earthly mother who gave me birth long ago; but this Eternal Mother has completely filled her place by my side ever since. She has never changed, she has never failed me. When I am in difficulty or distress, I seek refuge in her bosom. Often in the course of my struggle against untouchability, I am confronted with conflicting opinions delivered by doctors of learning. Some of them tell me that untouchability, as it is practised to-day, has no sanction in Hinduism and they bless my efforts to eradicate it; but there are some others who maintain that untouchability has been an essential part of Hinduism from the very beginning. Which authority should I follow under the circumstances? I feel absolutely at sea. The *Vedas* and the *Smritis* are of no avail to me. I, then, approach the Mother and say: 'Mother, these learned Pandits have put me in a predicament. Help me out of my perplexity'. And the Mother, with a smile, says in reply: 'The assurance held out by me in the Ninth Chapter is not meant for the Brahmans only, but for the sinner and the out-caste, the down-trodden and the disinherited, too'. But, in order to be worthy of that promise, we must be obedient and devoted children of the Mother and not disobedient and disloyal children who only make a pretence of devotion.

It is sometimes alleged against the Gita that it is too difficult a work for the man in the street. The criticism, I venture to submit, is ill-founded. The Gita enabled the late Lokmanya, out of his encyclopædic learning and study, to produce a monumental commentary. For him it was a store-house of profound truths to exercise his intellect upon. But that need not scare away a lay reader. If you find all the 18 chapters too difficult to negotiate, make a careful study of the first three chapters only. They will give you in a nutshell what is propounded in greater detail and from different angles in the remaining fifteen chapters. Even these three chapters can be further epitomized in a few verses that can be selected from these chapters. Add to this the fact that at three distinct places the Gita goes even further and exhorts us to leave alone all '*isms*' and take refuge in the Lord alone, and it will be seen how baseless is the charge that the message of the Gita is too subtle or complicated for lay minds to understand. The Gita is the Universal Mother. She turns away no body. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. A true votary of the Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace that passeth understanding. But that peace and joy come not to the sceptic or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit, who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind. There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went back disappointed.

Our students are prone to be upset by trifles. A trivial thing like failure in an examination plunges them into the darkest despair. The Gita inculcates in them the duty of perseverance in the face of seeming failure. It teaches us that we have a right to actions only but not to the fruit thereof, and that success and failure are one and the same thing at bottom. It calls upon us to dedicate ourselves body, mind and soul to pure duty, and not to become mental voluptuaries at the mercy of all chance

desires and undisciplined impulses. As a *Satyagrahi*, I can declare that the Gita is ever presenting me with fresh lessons. If somebody tells me that this is my delusion, my reply to him would be that I shall hug this delusion as my richest treasure.

I would advise the students to begin their day with an early morning recitation of the Gita. I am a lover and devotee of Tulsidas. I adore the great spirit that gave to an aching world the all-healing *Mantra* of *Ramanama*. But I am here to-day, not to present Tulsidas to you, but to ask you to take up the study of the Gita, not in a carping or critical spirit, but in a devout and reverent spirit. Thus approached, she will grant your every wish. It is no joke, I admit, remembering by heart all the 18 chapters, but it is worthwhile to make the attempt. Once you have tasted of its sweet nectar, your attachment to it will grow from day to day. The recitation of the Gita verses will support you in your trials and console you in your distress, even in the darkness of solitary confinement. And, if with these verses on your lips you receive the final summons and deliver up your spirit, you will attain *Brahma Nirvan*—the Final Liberation. What that blessed state is, I leave it for your learned *Acharyas* to explain to you.

NO FAITH IN PRAYER

"God's existence cannot be, does not need to be, proved. God is. If He is not felt, so much the worse for us. The absence of feeling is a disease which we shall some day throw off *nolens volens*."

Here is a letter written by a student to the Principal of a national institution, asking to be excused from attending its prayer meetings:

> "I beg to state that I have no belief in prayer, as I do not believe in anything known as God to which I should pray. I never feel any necessity of supposing a God for myself. What do I lose if I do not care for Him, and calmly and sincerely work my own schemes?
>
> "So far as congregational prayer is concerned, it is of no use. Can such a huge mass of men enter into any mental concentration upon a thing, however trifling it may be? Are the little and ignorant children expected to fix their fickle attention on the subtlest ideas of our great scriptures, God and soul and equality of all men and many other high-sounding phrases? This great performance is required to be done at a particular time at the command of a particular man. Can love for the so-called Lord take its root in the hearts of boys by any such mechanical function? Nothing can be more repugnant to reason than to expect the same behaviour from men of every temperament. Therefore, prayer should not be a compulsion. Let those pray who have a taste for it, and those avoid who dislike it. Anything done without conviction is an immoral and degrading action."

Let us first examine the worth of the last idea. Is it an immoral and degrading act to submit to a discipline before one begins to have conviction about its necessity? Is it immoral and degrading to study subjects according to the school syllabus, if one has no conviction about its utility? May a boy be excused from studying his vernacular, if he has persuaded himself that it is use-

less? Is it not truer to say that a school boy has no conviction about the things he has to learn, or the discipline he has to go through? His choice is exhausted, if he had it, when he elected to belong to an institution. His joining one means that he will willingly submit to its rules and regulations. It is open to him to leave it, but he may not choose what or how he will learn.

It is for teachers to make attractive and intelligible, what to the pupils may, at first, appear repulsive or uninteresting.

It is easy enough to say: 'I do not believe in God'. For, God permits all things to be said of Him with impunity. He looks at our acts. And any breach of His Law carries with it, not its vindictive, but its purifying, compelling, punishment. God's existence cannot be, does not need to be, proved. God is. If He is not felt, so much the worse for us. The absence of feeling is a disease which we shall some day throw off *nolens volens*.

But the boy may not argue. He must, out of sense of discipline, attend prayer meetings, if the institution to which he belongs requires such attendance. He may respectfully put his doubts before his teachers. He need not believe what does not appeal to him. But if he has respect for his teachers, he will *do* without believing what he is asked to do, not out of fear, not out of churlishness, but with the knowledge that it is right for him so to do, and with the hope that what is dark to him to-day will some day be made clear to him.

Prayer is not an asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is a daily admission of one's weakness. The tallest among us has a perpetual reminder of his nothingness before death, disease, old age, accidents etc. We are living in the midst of death. What is the value of 'working for our own schemes' when they might be reduced to naught in the twinkling of an eye, or when we may, equally swiftly and unawares, be taken away from them? But we may feel strong as a rock, if we could truthfully say: 'We work for God and His schemes'. Then, all is

as clear as day-light. Then, nothing perishes. All perishing is, then, only what seems. Death and destruction have *then, but only then,* no reality about them. For, death or destruction is then but a change. An artist destroys his picture for creating a better one. A watch-maker throws away a bad spring to put in a new and a useful one.

A congregational prayer is a mighty thing. What we do not often do alone, we do together. Boys do not need conviction. If they merely attend in obedience to the call to prayer, without inward resistance, they feel the exaltation. But many do not. They are even mischievous. All the same, the unconscious effect cannot be resisted. Are there not boys who at the commencement of their career were scoffers, but who subsequently became mighty believers in the efficacy of congregational prayer? It is a common experience for men who have no robust faith, to seek the comfort of congregational prayer. All who flock to churches, temples, or mosques are not scoffers or humbugs. They are honest men and women. For them congregational prayer is like a daily bath, a necessity of their existence. These places of worship are not a mere idle superstition to be swept away at the opportunity. They have survived all attacks upto now, and are likely to persist to the end of time.

TYRANNY OF WORDS

"Works without faith and prayer are like an artificial flower that has no fragrance. I plead, not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason itself."

A correspondent thus writes on my article *No Faith in Prayer*:

"In your article bearing the above caption, you hardly do justice to the 'boy' or to your own position as a great thinker. It is true that the expressions used by the writer in his letter are not all happy, but of his clarity of thought there is no doubt. It is also *very* evident that he is not a boy as the word is ordinarily understood. I should be much surprised to find him under twenty. Even if he is young, he seems to show sufficient intellectual development not to be treated in the manner of 'a boy may not argue.' The writer of the letter is a rationalist while you are a believer, two age-old types with age-old conflict. The attitude of the one is: 'Let me be convinced and I shall believe'; that of the other is: 'Believe and conviction shall come.' The first appeals to reason, the second appeals to authority. You seem to think that agnosticism is but a passing phase among all young people, and that faith comes to them sooner or later. There is the well-known case of Swami Vivekananda to support your view. You, therefore, proceed to prescribe a compulsory dose of prayer to the 'boy' for his own good. Your reasons are two-fold. *Firstly*, prayer for its own sake, as a recognition of one's own littleness, and mightiness and goodness of the supposed higher being. *Secondly*, for its utility, for the solace it brings to those who want to be solaced. I shall dispose of the second argument first. Here, it is recommended as a sort of staff to the weak. Such are the trials of life, and such is their power to shatter reason of men that great many people need prayer and faith some time. They have a right to it and they are welcome to it. But there have been, and there are always, some true rationalists—few, no doubt—who have never felt the necessity of either. There is also the class of people who, while they are not aggressive doubters, are indifferent to religion.

"As all people do not ultimately require the help of prayer, and

as those who feel its necessity are *free* to take to it, and *do* take to it when required, compulsion in prayer, from the point of utility, cannot be upheld. Compulsory physical exercise and education may be necessary for physical and mental development of a person, not so the belief in God and prayer for the moral side. Some of the world's greatest agnostics have been the most moral men. To these, I suppose, you would recommend prayer for its own sake, as an expression of humility, in fact, your first argument. Too much has been made of this humility. So vast is knowledge that even the greatest scientists have felt humble sometimes, but their general trait has been that of *masterful* enquiry, their faith in their own powers has been as great as their conquest of nature. Had it not been so, we should still be scratching earth with bare fingers for roots, nay, we should have been wiped out of the surface of the earth.

"During the Ice Age, when human beings were dying of cold and fire was first discovered, your prototype in that age must have taunted the discoverer with: 'What is the use of your schemes, of what avail are they against the power and wrath of God?' The humble have been promised the Kingdom of God hereafter. We do not know whether they will get it, but here on this earth their portion is serfdom. To revert to the main point, your assertion about 'accept the belief and the faith shall come' is too true, terribly true. Much of religious fanaticism of this world can be traced directly to this kind of teaching. Provided you catch them young enough, you can make a good majority of human beings believe in *anything*. That is how your orthodox Hindu, or fanatical Mahomedan, is manufactured. There are, of course, always a small few in either community who will outgrow these beliefs that have been forced upon them. Do you know that if the Hindus and the Mahomedans stopped studying their scriptures, until they reached maturity, they would not be such fanatical believers in their dogmas, and would cease to quarrel for their sake? Secular education is the remedy for Hindu-Muslim riots, but you are not made that way.

"Great as our debt is to you for setting an unprecedented example in courage, action and sacrifice in this country where people have been always *much* afraid, when the final judgment is passed on your work, it will be said that your influence gave a great set-back to intellectual progress in this country."

I do not know the meaning of boy 'as the word is ordinarily understood', if the 20 year old lad is not a boy. Indeed, I would call all school-going persons, boys and girls, irrespective of their ages. But whether the doubting

student may be called a boy or a man, my arguments must stand. A student is like a soldier (and a soldier may be 40 years old) who may not argue about matters of discipline, when he has put himself and chooses to remain under it. A soldier may not remain a unit in his regiment and have the option of doing or not doing things he is asked to do. Similarly, a student, no matter how wise or old he is, surrenders when he joins a school or a college the right of rejecting its discipline. Here, there is no underrating or despising the intelligence of the student. It is an aid to his intelligence for him to come voluntarily under discipline. But my correspondent willingly bears the heavy yoke of the tyranny of words. He scents 'compulsion' in every act that displeases the doer. But there is compulsion and compulsion. We call self-imposed compulsion self-restraint. We hug it and grow under it. But compulsion to be shunned, even at the cost of life, is restraint superimposed upon us against our wills, and often with the object of humiliating us and robbing us of our dignity as men and boys, if you will. Social restraints generally are healthy, and we reject them to our own undoing. Submission to crawling orders is unmanly and cowardly. Worse still is submission to the multitude of passions that crowd around us every moment of our lives, ready to hold us their slaves.

But the correspondent has yet another word that holds him in its chains. It is the mighty word 'rationalism'. Well, I had a full dose of it. Experience has humbled me enough to let me realize the specific limitations of reason. Just as matter misplaced becomes dirt, reason misused becomes lunacy. If we would but render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, all would be well.

Rationalists are admirable beings. Rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of omnipotence to reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as is worship of stock and stone, believing it to be God.

Who has reasoned out the use of prayer? Its use is

felt after practice. Such is the world's testimony. Cardinal Newman never surrendered his reason, but he yielded a better place to prayer when he humbly sang: 'One step enough for me'. Shankar was a prince among reasoners. There is hardly anything in the world's literature to surpass Shankar's rationalism. But he yielded the first place to prayer and faith.

The correspondent has made a hasty generalization from the fleeting and disturbing events that are happening before us. But everything on this earth lends itself to abuse. It seems to be a law governing everything pertaining to man. No doubt, religion has to answer for some of the most terrible crimes in History. But that is the fault not of religion, but of the ungovernable brute in man. He has not yet shed the effects of his brute ancestry.

I do not know a single rationalist who has never done anything in simple faith, and has based every one of his acts on reason. But we all know millions of human beings, living their more or less orderly lives because of their child-like faith in the Maker of us all. That very faith is a prayer. The 'boy', on whose letter I based my article, belongs to that vast mass of humanity; and the article was written to steady him and his fellow-searchers, not to disturb the happiness of rationalists like the correspondent.

But he quarrels even with the bent that is given to the youth of the world by their elders and teachers. But that, it seems, is an inseparable handicap (if it be one) of impressionable age. Purely secular education is also an attempt to mould the young mind after a fashion. The correspondent is good enough to grant that the body and the mind may be trained and directed. Of the soul, which makes the body and the mind possible, he has no care or, perhaps, he is in doubt as to its existence. But this belief cannot avail him. He cannot escape the consequence of his reasoning. For, why may not a believer argue, on the correspondent's own ground, and say he must influence the soul of boys and girls, even as the others

influence the body and the intelligence? The evils of religious instruction will vanish with the evolution of the true religious spirit. To give up religious instruction is like letting a field lie fallow, and grow weeds for want of the tiller's knowledge of the proper use of the field.

The correspondent's excursion into the great discoveries of the ancients is really irrelevant to the subject under discussion. No one questions, I do not, the utility or the brilliance of those discoveries. They were generally a proper field for the use and exercise of reason. But they, the ancients, did not delete from their lives the predominant function of faith and prayer. Works, without faith and prayer, are like an artificial flower that has no fragrance. I plead, not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason itself.

A DISCOURSE ON PRAYER

> "There is an eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he, who has not the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon, will be a victim to the powers of darkness."

Here is a substance of the discourse on prayer which Gandhiji gave at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, to the Chhatra Sammelan—Conference of Hostel Boys from Gujarat:

I am glad that you all want me to speak to you on the meaning of, and the necessity for, prayer. I believe that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and, therefore, prayer must be the very core of the life of man; for, no man can live without religion. There are some who in the egotism of their reason declare that they have nothing to do with religion. But it is like a man saying that he breathes but that he has no nose. Whether by reason, or by instinct, or by superstition, man acknowledges some sort of relationship with the Divine. The rankest agnostic or atheist does acknowledge the need of moral principle, and associates something good with its observance and something bad with its non-observance. Bradlaugh, whose atheism is well-known, always insisted on proclaiming his innermost conviction. He had to suffer a lot for thus speaking the truth, but he delighted in it and said that truth is its own reward. Not that he was quite insensible to the joy resulting from the observance of truth. This joy, however, is not at all worldly, but springs out of communion with the Divine. That is why I have said that even a man who disowns religion cannot, and does not, live without religion.

Now, I come to the next thing, *viz.*, that prayer is the very core of man's life, as it is the most vital part of

religion. Prayer is either petitional, or, in its wider sense, is inward communion. In either case, the ultimate result is the same. Even when it is petitional, the petition should be for the cleansing and purification of the soul, for freeing it from the layers of ignorance and darkness that envelop it. He, therefore, who hungers for the awakening of the Divine in him, must fall back on prayer. But prayer is no mere exercise of words or of the ears, it is no mere repetition of empty formula. Any amount of repetition of *Ramanama* is futile, if it fails to stir the soul. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words, than words without a heart. It must be in clear response to the spirit which hungers for it. And even as a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, a hungry soul will relish a heartfelt prayer. And I am giving you a bit of my experience, and that of my companions, when I say that he who has experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together, but not a single moment without prayer. For, without prayer there is no inward peace.

If that is the case, someone will say, we should be offering our prayers every minute of our lives. There is no doubt about it. But we erring mortals, who find it difficult to retire within ourselves for inward communion even for a single moment, will find it impossible to remain perpetually in communion with the Divine. We, therefore, fix some hours when we make a serious effort to throw off the attachments of the world for a while, we make a serious endeavour to remain, so to say, out of the flesh. You have heard Surdas' hymn.[1] It is the passionate cry of a soul hungering for union with the Divine. According to our standards, he was a saint; but according to his own, he was a proclaimed sinner. Spiritually, he was miles ahead of us, but he felt the separation from the

[1] 'Where is there a wretch
So loathsome and wicked as I?
I have forsaken my Maker,
So faithless have I been.'

Divine so keenly that he has uttered that anguished cry in loathing and despair.

I have talked of the necessity for prayer, and therethrough I have dealt with the essence of prayer. We are born to serve our fellow-men, and we cannot properly do so unless we are wide awake. There is an eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he, who has not the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon, will be a victim to the powers of darkness. The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world; the man who goes about the affairs of the world, without a prayerful heart, will be miserable and will make the world also miserable. Apart, therefore, from its bearing on man's condition after death, prayer has incalculable value for man in this world of living. Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts. We, inmates of the Ashram, who came here in search of Truth and for insistence on Truth, professed to believe in the efficacy of prayer, but had never upto now made it a matter of vital concern. We did not bestow on it the care that we did on other matters. I awoke from my slumber one day and realized that I had been woefully negligent of my duty in the matter. I have, therefore, suggested measures of stern discipline, and far from being any the worse, I hope, we are the better for it. For, it is so obvious. Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify one angle of a square and the other angles will be automatically right.

Begin, therefore, your day with prayer, and make it so soulful that it may remain with you until the evening. Close the day with prayer, so that you may have a peaceful night free from dreams and nightmares. Do not worry about the form of prayer. Let it be any form; it should be such as can put us in communion with the Divine. Only, whatever be the form, let not the spirit wander while the words of prayer run on out of your mouth.

If what I have said has gone home to you, you will

not be at peace until you have compelled your hostel superintendents to interest themselves in your prayer and to make it obligatory. Restraint self-imposed is no compulsion. A man who chooses the path of freedom from restraint, *i.e.*, of self-indulgence, will be a bond slave of passions; whilst the man who binds himself to rules and restraints releases himself. All things in the universe, including the sun and the moon and the stars, obey certain laws. Without the restraining influence of these laws, the world will not go on for a single moment. You, whose mission in life is service of your fellow-men, will go to pieces if you do not impose on yourselves some sort of discipline, and prayer is a necessary spiritual discipline. It is discipline and restraint that separate us from the brute. If we will be men walking with our heads erect, and not walking on all fours, let us understand and put ourselves under voluntary discipline and restraint.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

"For those who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. Their life is one continuous prayer or act of worship."

A Medical graduate asks:

"What is the best form of prayer? How much time should be spent at it? In my opinion, to do justice is the best form of prayer, and one who is sincere about doing justice to all does not need to do any more praying. Some people spend a long time over *Sandhya* and 95% of them do not understand the meaning of what they say. In my opinion, prayer should be said in one's mother-tongue. It alone can affect the soul best. I should say that a sincere prayer for one minute is enough. It should suffice to promise God not to sin."

Prayer means asking God for something in a reverent attitude. But the word is used also to denote any devotional act. Worship is a better term to use for what the correspondent has in mind. But definition apart, what is it that millions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Jews and others do every day during the time set apart for the adoration of the Maker? It seems to me that it is a yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessing. It is in this case the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered. Often, the association of words that have been handed down from ancient times has an effect which, in their rendering into one's mother-tongue, they will lose altogether. Thus the *Gayatri*, translated and recited in, say, Gujarati, will not have the same effect as the original. The utterance of the word *Rama* will instantaneously affect millions of Hindus when the word God, although they may understand the meaning, will leave them untouched. Words, after all, acquire a power by a long usage and sacredness

associated with their use. There is much, therefore, to be said for the retention of the old Sanskrit formulæ for the most prevalent *mantras* or verses. That the meaning of them should be properly understood goes without saying.

There can be no fixed rule laid down as to the time these devotional acts should take. It depends upon individual temperament. These are precious moments in one's daily life. The exercises are intended to sober and humble us, and enable us to realize that nothing happens without His will, and that we are but 'clay in the hands of the Potter'. There are moments when one reviews his immediate past confessing one's weakness, asks for forgiveness and strength to be and do better. One minute may be enough for some, twenty-four hours may be too little for others. For those who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. Their life is one continuous prayer, or act of worship. For those others who act only to sin, to indulge themselves, and live for self, no time is too much. If they had patience and faith and the will to be pure, they would pray till they feel the definite purifying presence of God within them. For us ordinary mortals, there must be a middle path between these two extremes. We are not so exalted as to be able to say that all our acts are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone as to be living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately, these have now-a-days become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary, therefore, is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions.

For definite personal prayer, in the sense of asking God for something, it should certainly be in one's own tongue. Nothing can be grander than to ask God to make us act justly towards everything that lives.

INFLUENCE OF MUSIC

"Music has given me peace. I can remember occasions when music instantly tranquillized my mind, when I was greatly agitated over something."

A student of the Gujarat Vidyapith asks:

"What has been the influence of music on your life?"

Music has given me peace. I can remember occasions when music instantly tranquillized my mind, when I was greatly agitated over something. Music has helped me to overcome anger. I can recall occasions when a hymn sank deep into me, though the same thing expressed in prose had failed to touch me. I also found that the meaning of hymns, discordantly sung, has failed to come home to me, and that it burns itself on my mind when they have been properly sung. When I hear Gita verses melodiously recited, I never grow weary of hearing; and the more I hear, the deeper sinks the meaning into my heart. Melodious recitations of the Ramayana, which I heard in my childhood, left on me an impression which years have not obliterated or weakened. I distinctly remember how when once the hymn '*The path of the Lord is meant for the brave, not the coward*' was sung to me in an extraordinarily sweet tune, it moved me as it had never before. In 1907, while in Transvaal, I was almost fatally assaulted, the pain of the wounds was relieved when, at my instance, Olive Doke gently sang to me '*Lead kindly Light.*'

Let no one infer from this that I know music. On the contrary, it would be more correct to say that my knowledge of music is very elementary. I cannot critically judge music. All I can claim is that I have a natural ear for good homely music.

I do not mean to suggest either, that because the influence of music has been uniformly good on me, it must act similarly on others. On the contrary, I know, that many people employ music to feed their carnal passions. To sum up, therefore, we may say that the influence of music will differ according to temperaments. As Tulsidas has sung:

> "The Lord of Creation created everything in this world as an admixture of good and evil. But a good man selects the good and rejects the evil, even as the fabled swan is said to help himself to cream, leaving the water in the milk."

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

"A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose, the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world, in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance."

A student of the Gujarat Vidyapith writes:

"What concrete form ought religious instruction to take in the Vidyapith?"

To me, religion means truth and *ahimsa* or rather truth alone, because truth includes *ahimsa*, *ahimsa* being the necessary and indispensable means for its discovery. Therefore, anything that promotes the practice of these virtues is a means for imparting religious education, and the best way to do this, in my opinion, is for the teachers rigorously to practise these virtues in their own person. Their very association with the boys, whether on the playground or in the class-room, will, then, give the pupils a fine training in these fundamental virtues.

So much for instruction in the universal essentials of religion. A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose, the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world, in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance. This, if properly done, would help to give them a spiritual assurance and a better appreciation of their own religion. There is one rule, however, which should always be kept in mind while studying all great religions, and that is, that one should study them only through the writings of known

votaries of the respective religions. For instance, if one wants to study the Bhagavat one should do so, not through a translation of it made by a hostile critic, but one prepared by a lover of the Bhagavat. Similarly, to study the Bible one should study it through the commentaries of devoted Christians. This study of other religions, besides one's own, will give one a grasp of the rock-bottom unity of all religions and afford a glimpse also of that universal and absolute truth which lies beyond the 'dust of creeds and faiths.'

Let no one, even for a moment, entertain the fear that a reverent study of other religions is likely to weaken or shake one's faith in one's own. The Hindu system of philosophy regards all religions as containing the elements of truth in them, and enjoins an attitude of respect and reverence towards them all. This, of course, presupposes regard for one's own religion. Study and appreciation of other religions need not cause a weakening of that regard; it should mean extension of that regard to other religions.

In this respect, religion stands on the same footing as culture. Just as preservation of one's own culture does not mean contempt for that of others, but requires assimilation of the best that there may be in all the other cultures, even so should be the case with religion. Our present fears and apprehensions are a result of the poisonous atmosphere that has been generated in the country, the atmosphere of mutual hatred, ill-will and distrust. We are constantly labouring under a nightmare of fear, lest some one should stealthily undermine our faith, or the faith of those who are dear and near to us. But this unnatural state will cease when we have learnt to cultivate respect and tolerance towards other religions and their votaries.

AHIMSA IN EDUCATION

"The sun of *ahimsa* carries all the hosts of darkness such as hatred, anger and malice before himself. *Ahimsa* in education shines clear and far, and can no more be hidden, even as the sun cannot be hidden by any means."

In one of his weekly talks to the students of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Gandhiji was asked the following question :

"The moment one begins to talk of *ahimsa*, a series of trifling questions are mooted, *e.g.*, whether it is permissible to kill dogs, tigers and wolves, snakes, lice etc., and whether one may eat brinjals or potatoes. Or else, the questioner engages in a disputation over the question of maintaining an army or of offering an armed resistance. Nobody seems to trouble to inquire how the principle of *ahimsa* should be worked out as part of education. Will you kindly shed some light on this question ?"

The introductory part of the question shows that questions betraying a narrow outlook are often put. By unnecessarily exercizing ourselves over conundrums about the justifiability of man's killing creatures and animals of a lower order, we often seem to forget our primary duties. Everyone of us is not faced every day with the question of killing obnoxious animals. Most of us have not developed courage and love enough to practise *ahimsa* with regard to dangerous reptiles. We do not destroy the vipers of ill-will and anger in our own bosom, but we dare to raise futile discussions about the propriety of killing obnoxious creatures, and we thus move in a vicious circle. We fail in the primary duty and lay the unction to our souls that we are refraining from killing obnoxious life. One who desires to practise *ahimsa* must, for the time being, forget all about snakes etc. Let him not worry if he cannot avoid killing them, but try for all he is worth to overcome the anger and

ill-will of men by his patient endeavour as a first step towards cultivating universal love. Abjure brinjals or potatoes by all means, if you will, but do not for heaven's sake begin to feel yourself self-righteous, or flatter yourself that you are practising *ahimsa* on that account. The very idea is enough to make one blush. *Ahimsa* is not a mere matter of dietetics, it transcends it. What a man eats or drinks matters little; it is the self-denial, the self-restraint behind it that matters. By all means practise as much self-restraint in the choice of the articles of your diet as you like. The restraint is commendable, even necessary, but it touches only the fringe of *ahimsa*. A man may allow himself a wide latitude in the matter of diet and yet may be a personification of *ahimsa* and compel our homage, if his heart overflows with love and melts at another's woe, and has been purged of all passions. On the other hand, a man always over-scrupulous in diet is an utter stranger to *ahimsa* and pitiful wretch, if he is a slave to selfishness and passions and is hard of heart.

Whether India should have an army or not, one may offer armed resistance to Government or not,—these are momentous questions that we shall have to solve one day. The Congress has in its creed already furnished an answer to them in part. But, important as these questions are, they do not much concern the man in the street, they do not touch the aspect of *ahimsa* with which an educationist or a student is concerned. *Ahimsa*, in relation to the life of a student, stands quite apart from these questions of high politics. *Ahimsa* in education must have an obvious bearing on the mutual relations of the students. Where the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of *ahimsa*, boys and girls studying together will live like brothers and sisters in freedom, and yet in self-imposed restraint; the students will be bound to the teachers in ties of filial love, mutual respect and mutual trust. This pure atmosphere will of itself be a continual object lesson in *ahimsa*. The students brought up in

such an atmosphere will always distinguish themselves by their charity and breadth of view, and a special talent for service. Social evils will cease to present any difficulty to them, the very intensity of their love being enough to burn out those evils. For instance, the very idea of child-marriage will appear repugnant to them. They will not even think of penalizing the parents of brides by demanding dowries from them. And, how dare they after marriage regard their wives as chattel or simply a means of gratifying their lust? How will a young man, brought up in such an environment of *ahimsa*, ever think of fighting a brother of his own or of a different faith? At any rate, no one will think of calling himself a votary of *ahimsa* and do all or any of these things.

To sum up, *ahimsa* is a weapon of matchless potency. It is the *summum bonum* of life. It is an attribute of the brave; in fact, it is their all. It does not come within reach of the coward. It is no wooden or lifeless dogma, but a living and life-giving force. It is the special attribute of the soul. That is why it has been described as the highest *dharma* (law). In the hands of the educationist, therefore, it ought to take the form of the purest love, ever fresh and ever gushing spring of life, expressing itself in every act. Ill-will cannot stand in its presence. The sun of *ahimsa* carries all the hosts of darkness such as hatred, anger and malice before himself. *Ahimsa* in education shines clear and far, and can no more be hidden by any means. One may be sure that when the Vidyapith is filled with the atmosphere of this *ahimsa*, its students will no more be troubled by puzzling conundrums.

THE STUDENTS' SHARE

"You may get the finest constitution that is conceivable dropping upon you from the House of Commons. It will be worthless, if there are not men and women fit enough to work that constitution."

Speaking at Pachiappa's College, Madras, Gandhiji said:

I thank you sincerely for all the gifts you have given me for *Daridranarayan*. This is not the first time I enter this Hall. It was in 1896, that I entered this Hall in connection with the struggle in South Africa. Dr. Subramania Aiyar of revered memory presided at the function. The reason why I recall this meeting is that I made the acquaintance of the students of India, then, for the first time. As you may know, I am a matriculate, and, therefore, never had any college education worth the name in India. But when, after the address was finished and thanksgiving completed, I went out to students who were lying in wait for me, they took away from me all the copies of the *Green Pamphlet* that I was then circulating throughout India, and, it was for the sake of those students that I asked the late Mr. G. Parameshwaran Pillai, who befriended the cause and me as no one else did, to print copies and circulate them. With supreme pleasure he printed 10,000 copies of the *Pamphlet*. Such was the demand on the part of the students for understanding the situation in South Africa, and it pleased me immensely, and I said to myself: 'Yes, India may be proud of her children and may have all her hopes upon them.' Since that time, my acquaintance with students has been growing in volume and intensity. As I said in Bangalore, more is expected from those who give much, and since you have given me

so much, you have also given me the right to expect much more. I shall never be satisfied with all that you could give me. You have endorsed some of the work that it has been my privilege to do. You have mentioned with affection and reverence in your address the name of *Daridranarayan*, and, you, Sir (Principal), have—and I have no doubt with utmost sincerity—endorsed the claim that I have made on behalf of the spinning-wheel. Many of my distinguished and learned countrymen, I know, have rejected that claim, saying that little bit of a wheel, which was happily put away by our sisters and our mothers, should never lead to the attainment of *Swaraj*. And yet you have endorsed that claim and pleased me immensely. Though you, students, have not said as much in your address, yet you have said sufficient in it to warrant the belief that you have in your hearts a real corner for the spinning-wheel. Let not, therefore, this purse be the first and last demonstration of your affection for the spinning-wheel. I tell you it would be an embarrassment for me, if it is the last demonstration of your affection; for, I shall have no use for the money if the *Khadi*, that may be produced through the distribution of that money amongst the starving millions, is not used by you. After all, a lip profession of faith in the *Charkha*, and the throwing of a few rupees at me in a patronizing manner, won't bring *Swaraj* and won't solve the problem of the ever-deepening poverty of the toiling and starving millions. I want to correct myself. I have said 'toiling millions'. I wish that it was a true description. Unfortunately, as we have not revised our tastes about clothing, we have made it impossible for these starving millions to toil throughout the year. We have imposed upon them a vacation, which they do not need, for at least four months in the year. This is not a figment of my imagination, but it is a truth repeated by many English administrators, if you reject the testimony of your own countrymen who have moved in the midst of these masses. So, then, if I take this purse away and distribute it amongst the starv-

ing sisters, it does not solve the question. On the contrary, it will impoverish their soul. They will become beggars and get into the habit of living upon charity. Heaven help the man, the woman or the nation that learns to live on charity. What you and I want to do is to provide work for those sisters of ours living protected in their own homes, and this is the only work that you can provide them with. It is dignified and honest work, and it is good enough work. One anna may mean nothing to you. You will throw it away in getting into a tramcar and lazily passing your time, instead of taking exercise for two, three, four, or five miles, as the case may be. But when it finds its way into the pockets of one poor sister, it fructifies. She labours for it, and she gives me beautiful yarn spun by her sacred hands, a yarn that has a history behind it. It is a thread worth weaving a garment out of, for princes and potentates. A piece of calico from a mill has no such history behind it. I must not detain you over this one theme, great as it is for me, and though it engrosses practically the whole of my time. This purse of yours will not be a help but a hindrance to me, if it is not an earnest of your determination henceforth, if you have not it already, that you are not going to wear anything else but *Khadi*.

Let me not be deluded into the belief that you believe in this gospel of *Khadi*, because you give me the purse and because you applaud me. I want you to act upto your profession. I do not want it to be said of you,—the salt of India,—that you gave this money merely to bamboozle me, that you do not want to wear *Khadi*, and that you have no belief in it. Do not fulfil the prophecy that had been made by a distinguished son of Tamil Nad and a friend of mine. He has said that when I die, I will not need any other firewood to reduce my corpse to ashes but the wood that will be collected out of the spinning-wheels that I am now distributing. He has no faith in the *Charkha*, and he thinks that those who utter the name of the *Charkha* do so merely out of

respect for me. It is an honest opinion. It will be a great national tragedy if the *Khadi* movement turns out to be that, and you will have been direct contributors to the tragedy and participators in the crime. It will be a national suicide. If you have no living faith in the *Charkha*, reject it. It would be a truer demonstration of your love, you will open my eyes, and I shall go about my way, crying hoarse in the wilderness: 'You have rejected the *Charkha* and thereby you have rejected *Daridranarayan*.' But save me and save yourselves the pain, the degradation and the humiliation that await us, if there is any illusion or camouflage about this. This is one thing. But there are many things more in your address.

You have mentioned these child-marriages and child-widows. A learned Tamilian has written to me to address students on child-widows. He has said that the hardships of child-widows in this presidency are far greater than those of child-widows in other parts of India. I have not been able to test the truth of this statement. You should know that better than I do. But what I would like you, young men, to do is that you should have a touch of chivalry about you. If you have that, I have a great suggestion to offer. I hope the majority of you are unmarried, and a fair number of you are also *brahmacharis*. I have to say 'a fair number' because I know students; a student who casts his lustful eyes upon his sister is not a *brahmachari*. I want you to make this sacred resolve that you are not going to marry a girl who is not a widow, you will seek out a widow-girl and, if you cannot get a widow-girl, you are not going to marry at all. Make that determination, announce it to your parents if you have them or to your sisters. I call them widow-girls by way of correction, because I believe that a child ten or fifteen years old who was no consenting party to the so-called marriage, who having married, having never lived with the so-called husband, is suddenly declared to be a widow, is not a widow. It is an abuse of the term, abuse of language and a sacrilege. The word 'widow' in Hin-

duism has a sacred odour about it. I am a worshipper of true widow like the late Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, who knew what it was to be a widow. But a child 9 years old knows nothing of what a husband should be. If it is not true that there are such child-widows in the presidency, then my case falls to the ground. But if there are such child-widows, it becomes your sacred duty to make the determination to marry a girl-widow if you want to rid ourselves of this curse. I am superstitious even to believe that all such sins that a nation commits react upon it physically. I believe that all these sins of ours have accumulated together to reduce us to a state of slavery. You may get the finest constitution, that is conceivable, dropping upon you from the House of Commons. It will be worthless, if there are not men and women fit enough to work that constitution. Do you suppose that we can possibly call ourselves men worthy of ruling ourselves or others, or shaping the destiny of a nation containing 30 crores, so long as there is one single widow who wishes to fulfil her fundamental wants but is violently prevented from doing so? It is not religion, but irreligion. I say that, saturated as I am with the spirit of Hinduism. Do not make the mistake that it is the Western spirit in me that is speaking. I claim to be full to overflowing with the spirit of India undefiled. I have assimilated many things from the West, but not this. There is no warrant for this kind of widowhood in Hinduism.

All I have said about child-widows necessarily applies to child-wives. You must be able, surely, to control your lust to this extent, that you are not going to marry a girl that is under 16 years of age. If I could do so, I would lay down 20 as minimum. Twenty years is early enough even in India. It is we who are responsible for the precocity of girls, not even the Indian climate, because I know girls of the age of 20 who are pure and undefiled and able to stand the storm that may rage round. Let us not hug that precocity to ourselves. Some Brahman students tell me that they cannot get Brahman girls 16

years old, very few Brahmans keep their daughters unmarried till that age, the Brahman girls are married mostly before 10, 12 and 13 years. Then, I say to the Brahman youth: 'Cease to be a Brahman, if you cannot possibly control yourself. Choose a grown-up girl of 16 who became a widow when she was a child. If you cannot get a Brahman widow who has reached that age, then go and take any girl you like.' And, I tell you that the God of Hindus will pardon that boy who has preferred to marry out of his caste, rather than ravish a girl of twelve. When your heart is not pure, and you cannot master your passions, you cease to be an educated man. You have called your institution a premier institution. I want you to live up to the name of the premier institution which must produce boys who will occupy the front rank in character. And what is education without character, and what is character without elementary personal purity? Brahmanism I adore, I have defended *Varnashrama Dharma*. But Brahmanism that can tolerate untouchability, virgin widowhood, spoliation of virgins, stinks in my nostrils. It is a parody of Brahmanism. There is no knowledge of Brahman therein. There is no true interpretation of the scriptures. It is undiluted animalism. Brahmanism is made of sterner stuff. I want these few remarks of mine to go deep into your hearts. I am watching the boys whilst I am speaking, and it hurts me to hear a single giggle whilst I am pouring out my heart. I have not come to appeal to your intellects, but to your hearts. You are the hope of the country, and what I have said is of primary importance for you.

In response to the request of a Calicut professor, I shall now proceed to say something about cigarette smoking and coffee and tea drinking. These are not necessities of life. There are some who manage to take ten cups of coffee a day. Is it necessary for their healthy development and for keeping them awake for the performance of their duties? If it is necessary to take coffee or tea to keep them awake, let them not drink coffee or tea but go

to sleep. We must not become slaves to these things, But the majority of the people, who drink coffee or tea, are slaves to them. Cigars and cigarettes, whether foreign or indigenous, must be avoided. Cigarette smoking is like an opiate, and the cigars that you smoke have a touch of opium about them. They get to your nerves and you cannot leave them afterwards. How can a single student foul his mouth by converting it into a chimney? If you give up these habits of smoking cigars and cigarettes and drinking coffee and tea, you will find out for yourselves how much you are able to save. A drunkard in Tolstoy's story is hesitating to execute his design of murder so long as he has not smoked his cigar. But he puffs it, and then gets up smiling and saying: 'What a coward am I,' takes the dagger and does the deed. Tolstoy spoke from experience. He has written nothing without having had personal experience of it. And, he is much more against cigars and cigarettes than against drink. But do not make the mistake that between drink and tobacco, drink is lesser evil. No. If cigarette is Beelzebub, then drink is Satan.

'AN INDIGNANT PROTEST'

"More things are necessary than mere *brahmacharya* for the attainment of the final bliss. *Brahmacharya* that is superimposed carries no merit with it, and often gives rise to secret vice that saps the morals of the society in which that vice exists."

The Headmaster of a Bengali school writes:

"Your advice and utterances to students at Madras, asking them to marry widowed girls only, have horrified us and I send forth my humble but indignant protest.

"This kind of advice will tend to destroy the tendency of the widows to observe life-long *brahmacharya*, which has given Indian womanhood the greatest or rather the highest place in the world, and destroy their chances of attaining salvation through *brahmacharya* in a single birth, throwing them on the filthy path of worldly happiness. Thus, this kind of keen sympathy for widows will do a great disservice to them, and an injustice to the maidens whose marriage problem has become, at present, one of complexity and difficulty. Your theory of marriage will overturn the Hindu theory of transmigration, rebirth and even *mukti*, and will bring down Hindu society on the same level with other societies which we do not like. Our society has been demoralized no doubt, but we must have our eyes open to Hindu ideals and try to go up as we can, and not be influenced by the examples of other societies and ideals. Examples of Ahalyabai, Rani Bhavani, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti will guide the Hindu society, and we must direct it according to their ideals. I beg most humbly, therefore, that you will refrain from giving your opinions on these knotty questions and allow the society to do what it thinks best."

The 'indignant protest' leaves me unconverted and unrepentant. My advice will not wean from her purpose a single widow who has a will of her own, and who knows *brahmacharya* and is bent upon observing it. But, if the advice is followed, it will certainly bring great relief to those girls of tender age who know not the meaning of

marriage when they were put through the ceremony. The use of the term 'widow' in their connection is a violent abuse of a name with sacred associations. It is precisely for the very object, that my correspondent has in view, that I advise the youth of the country to marry these so-called widows, or not at all. The sacredness of the institution can be preserved only when it is purged of the curse of child-widowhood.

The statement, that the widows attain *moksha* if they observe *brahmacharya*, has no foundation whatsoever in experience. More things are necessary than mere *brahmacharya* for the attainment of the final bliss. And, *brahmacharya* that is super-imposed carries no merit with it, and often gives rise to secret vice that saps the morals of the society in which that vice exists. Let the correspondent know that I am writing from personal observation.

I should be glad, indeed, if my advice results in elementary justice being done to the maiden widows, and, if for that reason, the other maidens, instead of being prematurely sold to man's lust, are given an opportunity of waiting for maturity in age and wisdom.

I have no theory of marriage that is inconsistent with belief in transmigration, rebirth, or *mukti*. The readers should know that millions of Hindus, whom he arrogantly describes as belonging to the lower order, have no ban on widow-remarriage. And I do not see how if re-marriage of old widowers does not interfere with that belief, real marriage of girls wrongly described as widows can interfere with that grand belief. I may mention, for the edification of the correspondent, that transmigration and rebirth are not mere theories with me, but facts as patent as the daily rise of the sun. *Mukti* is a fact to realize which I am striving with all my might. And, it is the contemplation of *mukti* which has given me a vivid consciousness of the wrong that is being done to these maiden widows. Let us not in our emasculation mention in the same breath, as these modern injured maiden widows, the immortal names of Sita and others

referred to by the correspondent.

Lastly, whilst there is, and very properly, glorification of real widowhood in Hinduism, there is, so far as I am aware, no warrant for the belief that in the Vedic times there was any absolute ban upon re-marriage of widows. But my crusade is not against real widowhood. It is against its atrocious caricature. The better way is not to regard as widows at all the girls I have in view, and whom every Hindu, who has a spark of chivalry in him, is bound to relieve from their intolerable yoke. I, therefore, humbly, but emphatically, repeat the advice to every young Hindu to refuse to marry any but these maidens, miscalled widows.

STUDENTS IN CONFERENCE

"Sind has got its Sadhu Vaswani. It can boast of a number of great reformers. But the students will put themselves in the wrong, if they will be contented with appropriation of the merit gained by the *Sadhus* and reformers of Sind."

The Secretary of the 6th Sind Students' Conference sent me a printed circular asking for a message. I received a wire also asking for the same thing. But being in a somewhat inaccessible place, both circular letter and telegram were received too late for me to send a message. Nor am I in a position to comply with numerous requests for messages, articles, and what not. But as I profess to be interested in everything connected with students, as I am somewhat in touch with the student world all over India, I could not help criticizing within myself the programme sketched in the circular letter. Thinking that it might be helpful, I reduce some of it to writing and present it to the student world. I take the following from the circular letter which, by the way, is badly printed and contains mistakes which are hardly pardonable for a students' society:

> "The organizers of this Conference are endeavouring their utmost to make this Conference as interesting and instructive as possible .....We intend organizing a series of educational discourses and we request you to give us the benefit.....The problem of female education here in Sind deserves a special consideration .....We are not blind to the other necessities of students. Sports competitions are being organized and along with elocution competitions they will, it is hoped, make the Conference more interesting. Nor have we eliminated drama and music from our programme....Pieces in Urdu and English will also be staged."

I have not omitted a single operative sentence that would give one an idea of what the Conference was ex-

pected to do, and yet one fails to find a single reference to things of permanent interest to the student world. I have no doubt that the dramatic and musical and gymnastic performances were all provided on a 'grand scale'. I take the phrase in inverted commas from the circular. I have no doubt also that the Conference had attractive papers on female education. But, so far as the circular is concerned, there is no mention of the disgraceful *deti-leti* (dowry) practice, from which the students have not freed themselves and which, in many respects, makes the lives of Sindhi girls a hell upon earth and of parents of daughters a torture. There is nothing in the circular to show that the Conference intended to tackle the question of the morals of the students. Nor is there anything to show that the Conference was to do anything to show the students the way to become fearless nation-builders. It is a matter of no small credit to Sind that it is supplying so many institutions with brilliant professors, but more is always expected from those who give much. And I, who have every reason to be grateful to Sindhi friends for giving me fine co-workers for the Gujarat Vidyapith, am not going to be satisfied with getting professors and *Khadi* workers. Sind has got its Sadhu Vaswani. It can boast of a number of great reformers. But the students will put themselves in the wrong, if they will be contented with appropriation of the merit gained by the *Sadhus* and reformers of Sind. They have got to become nation-builders. The base imitation of the West, the ability to speak and write correct and polished English, will not add one brick to the Temple of Freedom. The student world, which is receiving an education far too expensive for starving India, and an education which only a microscopic minority can ever hope to receive, is expected to qualify itself for it by givng its life-blood to the nation. Students must become pioneers in conservative reform, conserving all that is good in the nation and fearlessly ridding society of the innumerable abuses that have crept into it.

These conferences should open the eyes of students to the realities before them. They should result in making them think of things which, in the class-room adapted to its foreign setting, they do not get an apportunity of learning. They may not be able, in these conferences, to discuss questions regarded as purely political. But they can, and they must, study and discuss social and economic questions, which are as important to our generation as the highest political question. A nation-building programme can leave no part of the nation untouched. Students have to react upon the dumb millions. They have to learn to think, not in terms of a province, or a town, or a class, or a caste, but in terms of a continent and of the millions who include untouchables, drunkards, hooligans and even prostitutes, for whose existence in our midst every one of us is responsible. Students in olden times were called *brahmacharis*, that is, those who walked with and in the fear of God. They were honoured by kings and elders. They were a voluntary charge on the nation, and in return they gave to the nation hundredfold strong souls, strong brains, strong arms. Students in the modern world, wherever they are to be found among fallen nations, are considered to be their hope, and have become the self-sacrificing leaders of reforms in every department. Not that we have no such examples in India: but they are far too few. What I plead for is, that students' conferences should stand for this kind of organized work, befitting the status of *brahmacharis*.

A SHAME UPON YOUNG MEN

"Any young man who makes dowry a condition of marriage, discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood."

A correspondent sends me a newspaper cutting, showing that recently in Hyderabad (Sind) the demand for bridegrooms has been increasing at an alarming rate, an employee of the Imperial Telegraph Engineering Service having exacted Rs. 20,000 as cash dowry during betrothal, and promises of heavy payments on the wedding day and on special occasions thereafter. Any young man who makes dowry a condition of marriage, discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood. There are many youth movements in the country. I wish that these movements would deal with questions of this character. Such associations often become self-adulation societies, instead of becoming, as they should be, bodies representing solid reform from within. Good as the work of these bodies is at times in helping public movements, it should be remembered that the youth of the country have their reward in the public appreciation they get. Such work, if it is not backed by internal reform, is likely to demoralize the youth by creating in them a sense of unwarranted self-satisfaction. A strong public opinion should be created in condemnation of the degrading practice of dowry, and young men, who soil their fingers with such ill-gotten gold, should be ex-communicated from society. Parents of girls should cease to be dazzled by English degrees, and should not hesitate to travel outside their little castes and provinces to secure true gallant young men for their daughters.

A SIND CURSE

"The parents should so educate their daughters that they would refuse to marry a young man who wanted a price for marrying, and would rather remain spinsters than be party to the degrading terms."

The Amils of Sind are probably the most advanced community in that province. But in spite of all their advance, there are some serious abuses of which they seem to have a monopoly. Of these, the custom of *deti-leti* is not the least serious. My attention was drawn to this abuse during my very first visit to Sind, and I was invited to speak to the Amil friends about it. Though, no doubt, isolated work has been done in the direction of removing this abuse, no organized effort seems to have been made to end the evil. The Amils are a compact little community. The seriousness of the evil is not questioned by anybody. I have not known a single Amil to defend the vile custom. It has persisted, because it is the custom patronized by the educated youth among the Amils. Their mode of life is above the means they can honestly command. Hence, they have thrown all scruples to the wind, degrading themselves by prostituting the institution of marriage for their own base ends. And this one vicious habit has told upon the quality of their national work, which otherwise by their intellect and education they are capable of doing to the great benefit of the country.

Young educated Amils are able to squeeze the poor parents of marriageable girls, only because there is no active public opinion against the custom. There should be work done in the schools and colleges and amongst the parents of girls. The parents should so educate their daughters that they would refuse to marry a young man who wanted a price for marrying, and would rather remain spinsters

than be party to the degrading terms. The only honourable terms in marriage are mutual love and mutual consent.

AMONG SINDHI STUDENTS

"*Swaraj* is not meant for cowards; but for those who would mount smilingly to the gallows and refuse even to allow their eyes to be bandaged."

In reply to a joint address (in English) which was presented to him at the D.J. Sind College Hall on behalf of the students of the Law College, the Engineering College and the Arts College of Karachi, Gandhiji said:

"Well, young men, an English proverb says: 'Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.' But whilst you have waxed eloquent in praise of me in your address, I find that in practice you are violating all those things for which I stand. It looks almost as if you meant to say: 'We know what you want, but all the same we are going to do just the contrary.' You could not possibly have meant to offer me a deliberate insult. Then, was it that you wanted to pull my leg, by translating me to the frozen Himalayan heights of *Mahatmaship*, and claiming for yourselves absolution from having to follow my precepts? But be that as it may, now that you have called me here, you shall render me an account for all your misdeeds."

And call them to account he did, as probably they never had been called in their life, speaking 'daggers' to them, only the 'daggers' here were calculated not to wound, but to heal like a surgeon's knife. He first twitted them for preparing their address in a foreign tongue, which they ought to have done, if only out of a sense of courtesy, in Hindi, or failing that in Sindhi, in which case he would have appreciated their delicacy. Even foreigners, when they came to see him, tried to use as many Hindustani words in his presence as their vocabulary allowed, because they knew that it would please him. What excuse had

they, then, to use any other than their mother-tongue on the present occasion? The Nehru Committee Report had recommended that Hindustani should be the *lingua franca* and official language of India under *Swaraj*. "But probably you will perhaps say," he humorously observed, "'we are Independence-wallas.' Well, then, I would remind you of the example of General Botha, who refused to speak in English even in the presence of the King at the time of the South African Settlement after the Boer War, but preferred to use Dutch only taking the help of an interpreter. That was the only thing that a representative of a freedom-loving people could do."

Referring to their foreign fripperies and their extravagant ways of living, he said:

"As students of economics, you ought to know that the fees that you pay do not cover even a fraction of the amount that is spent on your education from the public exchequer. Has it ever occurred to you, my fine young men, as to where the rest of the money comes from? It comes from the pockets of the poor, the living skeletons of Orissa, who go about with lack-lustre eyes and despair written on their face, and a gnawing hunger in their stomach from year's end to year's end, eking out their existence on a handful of rotten rice and a pinch of dirty salt flung at them by the insulting munificence of the rich Gujaratis and Marwadis? What have you done for these brethren of yours? Instead of wearing homespun *Khadi*, prepared by the pure hands of your sisters, that brings them a few additional coppers, you go in for foreign stuffs, thereby helping to send 60 crores of rupees out of the country annually and to snatch away the bread from the mouths of the poor of India. The result is, that the country is ground to powder. Our commerce, instead of enriching our country, has become an instrument of our exploitation, and our commercial classes have been reduced to the position of commission agents for Lancashire and Manchester, getting hardly 5 per cent as their share of the profits of the trade, out of which is built all

the seeming magnificence of our big cities."

It was Lord Salisbury, he continued, who had observed on a historic occasion that since India had to be bled, the lancet must be applied to the congested parts. And, if revenue had to be derived by the process of bleeding in Lord Salisbury's time, how much more so it must be now when India had become poorer as a result of all these years of exploitation? They should not forget that it was out of this revenue, which represented the life-blood of the Indian masses, that their education was financed. And again, did they realize that the education which they received was at the expense of the degradation of their countrymen, since money spent on it was derived from the notorious liquor revenue? Before God's judgment seat, therefore, they would have to answer the dread question: 'What hast thou done with thine brothers?' What answer would they then make, he asked them. He then went on to cite to them the instance of Hazrat Omar who, when the Mussalman nobles fell in luxurious ways of living and took to wearing fine clothes, asked them to take themselves away from him saying, that they were no true followers of the Prophet who did not always use bread prepared from coarse flour, and wear coarse clothes. He wished that they would take a leaf out of the life of that God-fearing Caliph.

And again, was it not a shame that when Narayandas Malkani wanted young men to help him in the flood relief work in Sind, he had to go abegging for assistance to Gujarat? And lastly, what had they to say with regard to the scandalous custom of *deti-leti*? Instead of making their wives the queens of their homes and of their hearts, they had converted them into chattels to be bought and sold! Was this the lesson that they had imbibed from the reading of English literature? Woman had been described as the *ardhangana*, or the better half of man. But they had reduced her to the position of a slave, and the result was the state of paralysis in which they found their country. "*Swaraj* is not meant for cowards," he concluded.

ed, "but for those who would mount smilingly to the gallows, and refuse even to allow their eyes to be bandaged. Promise that you will wipe off the stain of *deti-leti*, that you will die to restore your sisters and wives to their full dignity and freedom. Then, I shall understand that you are ready for the freedom of your country."

Addressing next the girl students, who were present there, he said:

"As for you, young girls, to you I will only say that if I had a girl under my charge, I would rather keep her a maiden all her life, than give her away to one who expected a single pice for taking her for his wife."—*Pyarelal.*

BE TRUE

"Real affection is not shown through praise, but through service. Self-purification is a preliminary process, an indispensable condition of real service."

I promised to give a free rendering of a remarkable address in Sindhi, presented to me by the students of Hyderabad. Much other work crowded it out. I now give it below:

"We welcome you heartily on behalf of the Hyderabad students. We are aware that we are not entitled to have you in our midst, as we have not carried out your precepts; but we hope that our hearts would respond after having heard your spoken word. We will not deceive you. We, therefore, propose to open out our hearts to you.

"Our town is a centre of education. Compared with the other towns, we have a larger proportion of those who have passed the I.C.S. Examination. We have one college here, three high schools for boys, two for girls and numerous other English and Sindhi schools. In the English schools alone, there are 4,000 students. But out of these, unfortunately, there are not more than 22 or 25 students wearing pure *Khadi*, and there cannot be more than 3 or 4 percent wearing indigenous mill cloth. The others wear indifferently *Swadeshi* and *Videshi*. The vast majority only wear *Videshi*. You know well enough that our living is extravagant. We incline towards English language and Western civilization, rather than towards our mother-tongue and our own culture. We cannot show much of service or simplicity, aware as we are of the poverty of our country. We know that it is good for the country that we should use *Khadi* and *Swadeshi* articles; but we regret that we were unmoved even when the heart-rending cry of the flood-striken fell on our ears. And, this indifference is the cause of the absence of our response to the general distress surrounding us. Our Association has been doing some work during the last four years. But there is not much in it, of which we can make any boast.

"We are ashamed to have to refer to the evil custom of *deti-leti*. In spite of having received higher education, we do not hesitate to

squeeze thousands of rupees from the wife's relations. Some of us regard it as our birth-right to obtain money through our wives. Many have no sense of self-respect. In spite of the higher education amongst girls, hardly half-a-dozen have been courageous enough to resent it as an insult to have to buy their husbands. Recently, there has been a boycott resolution against those who countenance *deti-leti*. But people have not yet freed themselves from the evil.

"But we do not want to give you only the dark side of the picture. There is a bright side also. You may feel sure that our capacity for good is limitless. We can become torch-bearers throughout Sindh; for we are the inheritors of traditions left in this very town by Sadhu Hiranand, Diwan Navalrai, Bhai Balachandra, Diwan Dayaram, and other such heroes. Even at the present moment, we have in our town men who are noted for the organizing capacity and discipline. We have in our midst men who have shown capacity for leadership in the political, the social, the educational and the literary field. They have taken a leading part in all patriotic endeavours. Merchants of Hyderabad are to be found carrying on their enterprise in all parts of the globe. We wish to make no parade of these things, but we want to show that we are not devoid of capacity for work or service. If our energies can be once organized, it is possible to show good progress. We want to feel, that we have not forfeited the right to your affection because we have not acted up to your precepts, because we know that it would be only through your affection that our hearts will expand."

I have given a free rendering of this address, firstly because I want to keep the students to their promise, and secondly, because it may serve as an example to other students. Let me remind the students of Hyderabad that although they did not know the contents of the address before it was read to me, in answer to the question deliberately put by me, they with one voice endorsed the sentiments expressed in the address, and promised that they would make every endeavour to make up for the past indifference and neglect. I, therefore, expect them to boycott completely foreign cloth and take to *Khadi*. I expect them, too, to boycott *deti-leti* once for all.

For the other students, let this address be a model. Addresses, containing mere praise of leaders, are really useless. Those who need such praise should not have any address presented to them. If addresses are presented

to those whom students really love and honour, they should contain references that might be of some service to them. I do not wish to suggest that every address should be like this one. But I do suggest that every address should have a local touch, a local significance and should refer to some matter of importance. Real affection is not shown through praise, but through service. Self-purification is a preliminary process, an indispensable condition of real service. I have, therefore, welcomed this address as a token of sincere desire on the part of the students of Hyderabad to go through this preliminary process of self-purification—a consummation, much to be desired during this year of grace and preparation.

AMONG U. P. STUDENTS

"All your scholarship, all your study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth would be in vain, if at the same time you do not build your character, and attain mastery over your thoughts and actions."

At a joint meeting of the students of the Agra College and the St. John's College, Agra, Gandhiji was presented with an adderess in which the students, while expressing their faith in the ideals for which he stood, confessed their inability to put them into practice and they, therefore, contented themselves with offering him only their hearts. This confession of helplessness and despair pained Gandhiji and he said:

I am not prepared to hear this confession of incapacity from the students. All your scholarship, all your study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth would be in vain, if at the same time you do not build your character, and attain mastery over your thoughts and actions. When you have attained self-mastery, and learnt to control your passions, you will not utter notes of despair. You cannot give your hearts and profess poverty of action. To give one's heart is to give all. You must, to start with, have hearts to give. And this you can do if you will cultivate them.

But what is it instead that we find to-day? The students in the U.P. to-day get married, not under compulsion from the parents I am told, but out of their own insistent desire. During student days, you are expected not to dissipate energy but to conserve it. I observe that over 50 p.c. of you are married. If you will make the best of a bad job, you will, in spite of your marriage, put a severe restraint upon your passions and lead, whilst you are prosecuting your studies, a life of pure *brahmacharya*.

And you will find that at the end of your studies, you are all the better for that restraint physically, mentally and spiritually. Do not by any means consider that I am presenting to you something that is utterly impossible for execution. The cult of those, who, though they may be married, are exercizing perfect self-restraint on themselves, is increasing with much profit to themselves and to the general benefit of mankind. To those who are unmarried, I would appeal to resist temptation. After all, we are a slave nation struggling to break asunder the fetters that keep us in that condition. Surely, you at least should realize the sinfulness of bringing slave children into the world. Many young men from various colleges, not excluding your own, write to me pathetic letters, asking me to tell them how they can get rid of their mental weakness. I have suggested to them the age-old prescription. They will no longer feel helpless if they will seek the help of God through all their weakness. The same friend, that told me about the marriage evil, also complained to me that students were guilty of involving their parents in extravagant expenditure on marriage ceremonies. Surely, marriage, you ought to know, is a sacrament and ought not to carry any expenditure with it. If those who have money will not curb the desire to spend it on feasting and revelry, the poor people will want to copy them and incur debts in so doing. You will, if you are brave, rise in revolt against any extravagant expenditure when you are ready to be married.

MARRIAGE BY PURCHASE

"The dowry system is intimately connected with caste. The girls or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste, if the evil is to be eradicated."

Some months ago, *The Statesman* opened its columns to a discussion of the dowry system prevalent among many castes, almost all over India, and dealt with it editorially. I used to write on the cruel custom often enough in the columns of the *Young India*. The cuttings from *The Statesman* revived the cruel memories of what I used to know, then. My remarks were aimed at *deti-leti*, as the custom is known in Sind. Enough educated Sindhis were found who exacted large sums of money from parents, who were anxious to see their daughters well married. *The Statesman* has carried on a crusade against the custom in general. There is no doubt that the custom is heartless. But, so far as I am aware, it does not touch the millions. The custom is confined to the middle class, who are but a drop in the ocean of Indian humanity. Whenever we talk of evil customs, we usually talk of the middle class. The millions living in the villages have their customs and woes of which we have as yet but little knowledge.

This, however, does not mean that one may ignore the dowry evil because it is confined to a comparatively small number of the people of this country. The system has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste. So long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste, if the evil is to be eradi-

cated. Then, the age for marrying has also to be raised, and the girls have to dare to remain spinsters, if need be, *i.e.*, if they do not get a suitable match. All this means education of a character that will revolutionize the mentality of the youth of the nation. Unfortunately, the system of education has no connection with our surroundings which, therefore, remain practically untouched by the education received by a microscopic minority of the boys and girls of the nation. Whilst, therefore, whatever can be done to abate the evil must be done, it is clear to me that this evil, and many others which can be named, can only be tackled if there is education which responds to the rapidly changing conditions of the country. How is it that so many boys and girls, who have even passed through colleges, are found unable or unwilling to resist the manifestly evil custom which affects their future so intimately as marriage does? Why should educated girls be found to commit suicide because they are not suited? Of what value is their education, if it does not enable them to dare to defy a custom which is wholly indefensible, and repugnant to one's moral sense? The answer is clear. There is something radically wrong in the system of education that fails to arm girls and boys to fight against social or other evils. That education alone is of value which draws out the faculties of a student, so as to enable him or her to solve correctly the problems of life in every department.

AVOIDABLE MISERY

"There must be a breach in the double wall of caste and province. If India is one and indivisible, surely, there should be no artificial divisions creating innumerable little groups, which would neither interdine nor intermarry."

From a correspondent's long letter of wail, I take the following:

"I am a schoolmaster (aged 67) with life-long service (46 years) in the educational line, born of a poor but highly respectable Kayastha family in Bengal, which knew better days but is now reduced to poverty. I am blessed(?) with 7 daughters and two sons; the eldest son aged 20 died in October last, leaving behind him his miserable and helpless parents to mourn his loss. He was a promising youth—the only hope of my life. Of my 7 daughters, 5 have already been given in marriage. My sixth and seventh daughters (aged 18 and 16) are yet unmarried. My younger son is a minor, aged 11 years. My pay is Rs. 60. It hardly allows me to make the two ends meet. I have no savings. I have less than nothing, being in debt. The match of my sixth daughter has been settled. The cost of the marriage will be not less than Rs. 900 in ornaments and dowry (Rs. 300). I have a life policy in the Sun Life Assurance of Canada for Rs. 2000. The policy was issued in 1914. The company has agreed to give me a loan of Rs. 400 only. It is only half the amount required. I am absolutely helpless in respect of the other half. Could you not help this poor father with the other half?"

This letter is one of many such. The majority of letters are written in Hindi. But we know that English education has made things no better for parents of daughters. In some cases they have become worse, in that the market price of possible young men, who would suit an English educated daughter of an English educated father, suffers an appreciable increase.

In a case like the Bengali father's, the best help that can be rendered is not a loan or a gift of the required sum,

but it should consist in persuading and strengthening the parent to refuse to purchase a match for his daughter, but choose, or let the daugher choose, one who would marry her for love, not for money. This means a voluntary extension of the field of choice. There must be a breach in the double wall of caste and province. If India is one and indivisible, surely, there should be no artificial divisions creating innumerable little groups, which would neither interdine nor intermarry. There is no religion in this cruel custom. It would not do to plead that individuals cannot make the commencement, and that they must wait till the whole society is ripe for the change. No reform has ever been brought about except through intrepid individuals breaking down inhuman customs or usages. And, after all, what hardships can the schoolmaster suffer if he and his daughters refused to treat marriage as a marketable transaction, instead of a status or a sacrament which it undoubtedly is. I would, therefore, advise my correspondent courageously to give up the idea of borrowing or begging, and to save the four hundred rupees he can get on his life policy by choosing, in consultation with his daughter, a suitable husband, no matter to what caste or province he belongs.

WHAT A GIRL NEEDS

"It is our misfortune that the sordidness of exacting a price for marrying a girl is not regarded as a decided disqualification. An altogether artificial value is put upon English collegiate education. It covers a multitude of sins."

A fair correspondent writes:

"Your article *Avoidable Misery* seems to me to be incomplete. Why should parents insist on marrying their daughters, and for that reason undergo nameless difficulties? If parents were to educate their daughters, as they educate their sons, so as to enable them to earn an independent living, they won't have to worry themselves over the selection of husbands for their daughters. My own experience is, that when girls have had the opportunity of developing their minds fairly and are able to support themselves in a dignified manner, they have no difficulty, when they are desirous of marrying, in being suitably matched. I must not be understood to be advocating what is called higher education for our girls. I know it is not possible for thousands of girls. What I plead for is a training of girls in useful knowledge and some calling that would make them fully confident about their ability to face the world, and not to feel dependent upon parents or their future husbands. Indeed, I know some girls who, having been deserted by their husbands, are to-day living a dignified life with their husbands, because, during the period of their desertion, they had the good fortune to become self-dependent and to receive a general training. I wish you could emphasize this aspect of the question in considering the difficulties of parents having on their hands daughters of marriageable age!"

I heartily endorse the sentiments expressed by my correspondent. Only I had to deal with the case of a parent who had made himself miserable, not because he had an incompetent daughter, but because he, and perhaps even his daughter, wanted to restrict themselves in the choice of a husband to their own little caste. The 'accomplishment' of the girl was itself a hindrance in this

case. If the girl were illiterate, she could have accommodated herself to any young man. But being an accomplished girl, naturally she would need an equally 'accomplished' husband. It is our misfortune that the sordidness of exacting a price for marrying a girl is not regarded as a decided disqualification. An altogether artificial value is put upon English collegiate education. It covers a multitude of sins. If the definition of 'accomplishment' was more sensible than it has become among the classes whose educated young men exact a price for accepting marriage proposals on behalf of girls, the difficulty of selecting suitable matches for girls would be much lessened, if not entirely removed. Whilst, therefore, I commend the proposal of my fair correspondent to the attention of parents, I must insist on the necessity of breaking down the highly injurious caste barriers. Breaking down the barriers will widen the range of choice, and thus, in a great measure, prevent exactions.

STUDENTS' SHAME

"I have a fear that the modern girl loves to be Juliet to half a dozen Romeos. She loves adventure...She dresses not to protect herself from wind, rain and sun, but to attract attention."

There is a most pathetic letter from a college girl in the Punjab, lying on my file for nearly two months. Want of time was but an excuse for shirking the answer to the girl's question. Somehow or other, I was avoiding the task, though I knew the answer. Meanwhile, I received another letter from a sister of great experience, and I felt that I could no longer evade the duty of dealing with the college girl's very real difficulty. Her letter is written in chaste Hindustani. I must try to do as much justice as I can to the letter, which gives me a perfect picture of her deep feeling. Here is my rendering of a portion of the letter:

"To girls and grown-up women there come times, in spite of their wish to the contrary, when they have to venture out alone, whether they are going from one place to another in the same city, or from one town to another. And when they are thus found alone, evil-minded people pester them. They use improper or even indecent language, whilst they are passing by. And if fear does not check them, they do not hesitate to take further liberty. I should like to know what part non-violence can play on such occasions. The use of violence is, of course, there. If the girl or the woman has sufficient courage, she will use what resources she has and teach miscreants a lesson. They can at least kick up a row that would draw the attention of the people around, resulting in the miscreants being horse-whipped. But I know that the result of such treatment would be merely to postpone the agony, not a permanent cure. Where you know the people who misbehave, I feel sure that they will listen to reason, to the gesture of love and humility. But what about a fellow cycling by, using foul language on seeing a girl or a woman un-

accompanied by a male companion? You have no opportunity of reasoning with him. There is no likelihood of your meeting him again. You may not even recognize him. You do not know his address. What is a poor girl or a woman to do in such cases?

"By way of example, I want to give you my own experience of last night (26th October, 1938). I was going with a girl companion of mine, on a very special errand, at about 7-30 p. m. It was impossible to secure a male companion at the time, and the errand could not be put off. On the way, a Sikh young man passed by on his cycle, and continued to murmur something till we were within hearing distance. We knew that it was aimed at us. We felt hurt and uneasy. There was no crowd on the road. Before we had gone a few paces, the cyclist returned. We recognized him at once, whilst he was still at a respectful distance. He wheeled towards us, Heaven knows whether he had intended to get down or merely pass by us. We felt that we were in danger. We had no faith in our physical prowess. I myself am weaker than the average girl. But in my hands I had a big book. Somehow or other, courage came to me all of a sudden. I hurled the heavy book at the cycle and roared out: 'Dare you repeat your pranks?' He could with difficulty keep his balance, put on speed and fled from us. Now, if I had not flung the book at his cycle, he might have harassed us by his filthy language to the end of our journey. This was an ordinary, perhaps insignificant, occurrence; but I wish you could come to Lahore and listen to the difficulties of us, unfortunate girls. First of all, tell me how, in the circumstances mentioned above, can girls apply the principle of *ahimsa* and save themselves. Secondly, what is the remedy of curing youth of the abominable habit of insulting womenfolk? You would not suggest that we should wait and suffer till a new generation, taught from the childhood to be polite to their womenfolk, comes into being. The Government is either unwilling or unable to deal with this social evil. The big leaders have no time for such questions. Some, when they hear of a girl bravely castigating ill-behaved youth, say: 'Well done. That is the way all girls should behave.' Sometimes, a leader is found eloquently lecturing against such misbehaviour of students. But no one applies himself continuously to the solution of this serious problem. You will be painfully surprised to know that during *Diwali*, and such other holidays, newspapers come out with notices warning women from venturing outdoors, even to see the illuminations. This one fact should enable you to know to what straits we are reduced in this part of the world. Neither the writers, nor the readers, of such warnings have any sense of shame that they should have to be issued."

Another Punjabi girl, to whom I gave the letter to read, supports the narrative from her own experience of her college days and tells me that what my correspondent has related is the common experience of most girls.

The other letter from an experienced woman relates the experiences of her girl friends in Lucknow. They are molested in cinema theatres by boys sitting in the row behind them, using all kinds of language which I can only call indecent. They are stated to resort even to practical jokes, which have been described by my correspondent but which I must not reproduce here.

If the immediate personal relief was all that was needed, no doubt the remedy that the girl, who describes herself to be physically weak, adopted, *i.e.*, of flinging her book at the cyclist, was quite correct. It is an age-long remedy. And I have said in these columns that, when a person wants to become violent, physical weakness does not come in the way of its effective use, even against a physically powerful opponent. And we know that in the present age there have been invented so many methods of using physical force, that even a little girl with sufficient intelligence can deal death and destruction. The fashion now-a-days is growing of training girls to defend themselves in situations such as the one described by my correspondent. But she is wise enough to know that even though she was able to make effective use for the moment of the book she had in her hand as a weapon of defence, it was no remedy for the growing evil. In the cases of rude remarks, there need be no perturbation, but there should be no indifference. All such cases should be published in the papers. Names of the offenders should be published when they are traced. There should be no false modesty about exposing the evil. There is nothing like public opinion for castigating public misconduct. There is no doubt that, as the correspondent says, there is great public apathy about such matters. But it is not the public alone that are to blame. They must have before them examples of rudeness. Even as

stealing cannot be dealt with unless cases of thieving are published and followed up, so also is it impossible to deal with cases of rude behaviour if they are suppressed. Crime and vice generally require darkness for prowling. They disappear when light plays upon them.

But I have a fear that the modern girl loves to be Juliet to half a dozen Romeos. She loves adventure. My correspondent seems to represent the unusual type. The modern girl dresses, not to protect herself from wind, rain and sun, but to attract attention. She improves upon nature by painting herself and looking extraordinary. The non-violent way is not for such girls. I have often remarked in these columns that definite rules govern the development of the non-violent spirit in us. It is a strenuous effort. It makes a revolution in the way of thinking and living. If my correspondent, and the girls of her way of thinking, will revolutionize their life in the prescribed manner, they will soon find that young men, who at all come in contact with them, will learn to respect them and to put on their best behaviour in their presence. But if, perchance, they find, as they may, that their very chastity is in danger of being violated, they must develop courage enough to die rather than yield to the brute in man. It has been suggested that a girl, who is gagged or bound so as to make her powerless even for struggling, cannot die as easily as I seem to think. I venture to assert that a girl, who has the will to resist, can burst all the bonds that may have been used to render her powerless. The resolute will gives her the strength to die.

But this heroism is possible only for those who have trained themselves for it. Those who have not a living faith in non-violence, will learn the art of ordinary self-defence and protect themselves from indecent behaviour of unchivalrous youth.

The great question, however, is why should young men be devoid of elementary good manners so as to make decent girls be in perpetual fear of molestation from them. I should be sorry to discover that the majority

of young men have lost all sense of chivalry. But they should, as a class, be jealous of their reputation and deal with every case of impropriety occurring among their mates. They must learn to hold the honour of every woman as dear as that of their own sisters and mothers. All the education they receive will be in vain, if they do not learn good manners.

And, is it not as much the concern of professors and schoolmasters to ensure gentlemanliness among their pupils, as to prepare them for the subjects prescribed for the class room?

THE MODERN GIRL

"The modern girl has a special meaning...But all the girls who receive English education are not modern girls. I know many who are not at all touched by the 'modern girl' spirit. But there are some who have become modern girls."

I have received a letter written on behalf of eleven girls, whose names and addresses have been sent to me. I give it below with changes that make it more readable, without in any way altering the meaning:

"Your comments on the letter of a lady student captioned *Students' Shame* and published in *Harijan* of the 31st December, 1938 deserve special attention. The modern girl, it seems, has provoked you to the extent that you have disposed of her finally as one playing Juliet to half a dozen Romeos. This remark, which betrays your idea about women in general, is not very inspiring.

"In these days, when women are coming out of closed doors to help men and take an equal share of the burden of life, it is indeed strange that they are still blamed, even when they are maltreated by men. It cannot be denied that instances can be cited where the fault is equally divided. There may be a few girls playing Juliets to half a dozen Romeos. But such cases presuppose the existence of half a dozen Romeos, moving about the streets in quest of a Juliet. And it cannot or should never be taken that modern girls are categorically all Juliets, or modern youths all Romeos. You yourself have come in contact with quite a number of modern girls, and may have been struck by their resolution, sacrifice and other sterling womanly virtues.

"As for forming public opinion against such misdemeanours, as pointed out by your correspondent, it is not for girls to do it, not so much out of false shame as from its ineffectiveness.

"But a statement like this, from one revered all over the world, seems to hold a brief once more for that worn-out and unbecoming saying: 'Woman is the Gate of Hell'.

"From the foregoing remarks, however, please do not conclude that modern girls have no respect for you. They hold you in as

much respect as every young man does. To be hated or pitied is what they resent much. They are ready to mend their ways, if they are really guilty. Their guilt, if any, must be conclusively proved before they are anathematized. In this respect, they would neither desire to take shelter under the covering of 'ladies please', nor would they silently stand and allow the judge to condemn them in his own way. Truth must be faced; the modern girl or 'Juliet', as you have called her, has courage enough to face it."

My correspondents do not, perhaps, know that I began service of India's women in South Africa more than forty years ago, when perhaps none of them was born. I hold myself to be incapable of writing anything derogatory to womanhood. My regard for the fair sex is too great to permit me to think ill of them. She is, what she has been described to be in English, the better half of mankind. And my article was written to expose students' shame, not to advertize the frailties of girls. But, in giving the diagnosis of the disease, I was bound, if I was to prescribe the right remedy, to mention all the factors which induced the disease.

The modern girl has a special meaning. Therefore, there was no question of my restricting the scope of my remark to some. But all the girls who receive English education are not modern girls. I know many who are not at all touched by the 'modern girl' spirit. But there are some who have become modern girls. My remark was meant to warn India's girl students against copying the modern girl, and complicating a problem that has become a serious menace. For, at the time I received the letter referred to, I received also a letter from an Andhra girl student, bitterly complaining of the behaviour of Andhra students which, from the description given, is worse than what was described by the Lahore girl. This daughter of Andhra tells me, the simple dress of her girl friends gives them no protection, but they lack the courage to expose the barbarism of the boys who are a disgrace to the institution they belong to. I commend this complaint to the authorities of the Andhra University.

The eleven girls I invite to initiate a crusade against the rude behaviour of students. God helps only those who help themselves. The girls must learn the art of protecting themselves against the ruffianly behaviour of man.

FOR THE YOUNG

"Sex urge is a fine and noble thing. There is nothing to be ashamed of it. But it is meant only for the act of creation. Any other use of it, is a sin against God and humanity."

It is the fashion in some quarters now-a-days for the young to discredit whatever may be said by old people. I am not prepared to say that there is absolutely no justification for this belief. But I warn the youth of the country against always discounting whatever old men or women may say, for the mere fact that it is said by such persons. Even as wisdom often comes from the mouths of babes, so does it often come from the mouths of old people. The golden rule is to test everything in the light of reason and experience, no matter from whom it comes. I want to revert to the subject of birth control by contraceptives. It is dinned into one's ears that gratification of the sex urge is a solemn obligation, like the obligation of discharging debts lawfully incurred, and that not to do so would involve the penalty of intellectual decay. This sex urge has been isolated from the desire for progeny, and it is said by the protagonists of the use of contraceptives that conception is an accident to be prevented, except when the parties desire to have children. I venture to suggest that this is a most dangerous doctrine to preach anywhere, much more so in a country like India where the middle class male population has become imbecile through abuse of the creative function. If satisfaction of the sex urge is a duty, the unnatural vice (sodomy) of which I wrote some time ago, and several other ways of gratification, would be commendable. The reader should know that even persons of note have been known to approve of what is commonly known as sexual perversion.

He may be shocked at the statement. But if it somehow or the other gains the stamp of respectability, it will be the rage among boys and girls to satisfy their urge among members of their own sex. For me, the use of contraceptives is not far removed from the means to which persons have hitherto resorted for the gratification of their sexual desire, with the results that very few know. I know what havocs secret vice has played among school boys and school girls. The introduction of contraceptives under the name of science and the *imprimatur* of known leaders of society, has intensified complication and made the task of reformers, who work for purity of social life, well-nigh impossible for the moment. I betray no confidence when I inform the readers, that there are unmarried girls of impressionable age studying in schools and colleges who study birth control literature and magazines with avidity, and even possess contraceptives. It is impossible to confine their use to married women. Marriage loses its sanctity when its purpose and highest use is conceived to be the satisfaction of the animal passion, without contemplating the natural result of such satisfaction.

I have no doubt that those learned men and women, who are carrying on propaganda with missionary zeal in favour of the use of contraceptives, are doing irreparable harm to the youth of the country, under the false belief that they will be saving thereby the poor women who may be obliged to bear children against their will. Those who need to limit their children will not be easily reached by them. Our poor women have not the knowledge or the training that the women of the West have. Surely, the propaganda is not carried on on behlf of middle class women, for they do not need the knowledge, at any rate, so much as the poor classes do.

The greatest harm, however, done by that propaganda lies in its rejection of the old ideal and substitution in its place of one which, if carried out, must spell the moral and physical extinction of the race. The horror, with

which ancient literature has regarded fruitless use of the vital fluid, was not a superstition born of ignorance. What shall we say of a husbandman who will sow the finest seed in his possession on stony ground, or of the owner of a field who will receive in his field, rich with fine soil, good seed under conditions that will make it impossible for it to grow? God has blessed man with seed that has the highest potency, and woman with a field richer than the richest earth to be found anywhere on this globe. Surely, it is criminal folly for man to allow his most precious possession to run to waste. He must guard it with a care greater than he will bestow upon the richest pearls in his possession. And so is a woman guilty of ciminal folly, who will receive the seed in her life-producing field with the deliberate intention of letting it run to waste. Both he and she will be judged guilty of misuse of the talents given to them, and they will be dispossessed of what they have been given. Sex urge is a fine and noble thing. There is nothing to be ashamed of in it. But it is meant only for the act of creation. Any other use of it, is a sin against God and humanity. Contraceptives of a kind there were before, and there will be hereafter, but the use of them was formerly regarded as sinful. It was reserved for our generation to glorify vice by calling it virtue. The greatest disservice protagonists of contraceptives are rendering to the youth of India, is to fill their minds with what appears to me to be wrong ideology. Let the young men and women of India, who hold her destiny in their hands, beware of this false god, and guard the treasure with which God has blessed them and use it, if they wish, for the only purpose for which it is intended.

A YOUTH'S DIFFICULTY

"I must confess that the observance of the law of continence is impossible without a living faith in God, which is living Truth."

A correspondent, who prefers to remain anonymous, seeks an answer to a question arising out of my article in *Harijan* addressed to the young. Although it is a sound rule to ignore anonymous correspondence, I do sometimes make an exception when the question put is substantial, as in the present case.

The letter is in Hindi and is longer than it need have been. Its purport is:

"From your writing, I doubt if you understand the young mind. What has been possible for you, is not possible for all young men. I happen to be married. I can restrain myself. My wife cannot. She does not want children, but she does want to enjoy herself. What am I to do? Is it not my duty to satisfy her? I am not generous enough to look upon her satisfying her desire through other channels. I read from papers that you are not averse to promoting marriages and blessing them. Surely, you know, or ought to know, that they are not contracted with the high purpose that you have mentioned."

The correspondent is right. The fact that I bless so many marriages, when they satisfy the tests that I have set as to age, economy, etc., perhaps shows somewhat that I know the youth of the country to an extent that would justify my guiding them, when they seek my guidance.

My correspondent's case is typical. He deserves sympathy. That the sole purpose of sexual connection is procreation, is in the nature of a new discovery for me. Though I had known the rule, I had never before given it the weight it deserved. I must have till recently regarded it as a mere pious wish. I now regard it as a fundamental

law of married state, which is easy of observance if its permanent importance is duly recognized. My object will be fulfilled when the law is given its due place in society. To me, it is a living law. We break it always, and pay heavily for its breach. If my correspondent realizes its inestimable value, and if he has love for her and has faith in himself, he will convert his wife to his view. Is he sincere when he says he can restrain himself? Has the animal passion become transmuted in his case into a higher passion, say, for service of fellow beings? Does he naturally refrain from doing anything to excite the passion in his wife? Let him know that Hindu science denotes eight kinds of unions which include sexual suggestions made even by signs. Is the correspondent free from these? If he is not, and if he is sincerely desirous that his wife should be weaned from the sexual desire, let him surround her with the purest love, let him explain the physical effects of union without the desire for procreation, let him tell her what the vital fluid means. Let him further engage his wife in healthy pursuits, and strive to regulate her diet, exercise, etc., so as to still the passion in her. Above all, if he is a man of religion, he will try to transmit to his companion his own living faith. For, I must confess that the observance of the law of continence is impossible without a living faith in God, which is living Truth. It is the fashion, now-a-days, to dismiss God from life altogether and insist on the possibility of reaching the highest kind of life without the necessity of a living faith in a living God. I must confess my inability to drive the truth of the law home to those who have no faith in, and no need for, a Power infinitely higher than themselves. My own experience has led me to the knowledge that fullest life is impossible without an immovable belief in a living Law, in obedience to which the whole universe moves. A man without that faith is like a drop thrown out of the ocean bound to perish. Every drop in the ocean shares its majesty, and has the honour of giving us the ozone of life.

SEX EDUCATION

"The conquest of lust is the highest endeavour of a man or woman's existence. Without overcoming lust, man cannot hope to rule over self."

Sex complex is to-day steadily gaining ground in Gujarat, as in the rest of India. And what is more, those who fall under its sway feel as if there is something meritorious about it. When a slave begins to take pride in his fetters and hugs them like precious ornaments, the triumph of the slave-owner is complete. But this success of Cupid, spectacular though it may be, will, I am convinced, prove to be short-lived and ignoble, and at long last end in inanition, even like a scorpion whose venom is spent. But that does not mean that we can, in the meantime, afford to sit with folded hands. The certainty of its defeat need not, must not, lull us into a false sense of security. The conquest of lust is the highest endeavour of a man or woman's existence. Without overcoming lust, man cannot hope to rule over self. And without rule over self, there can be no *Swaraj* or *Rama Raj*. Rule of all without rule of oneself, would prove to be as deceptive and disappointing as a painted toy mango, charming to look at outwardly but hollow and empty from within. No worker, who has not overcome lust, can hope to render any genuine service to the cause of Harijans, communal unity, *Khadi*, cow-protection or village reconstruction. Great causes like these cannot be served by intellectual equipment alone, they call for spiritual effort or soul-force. Soul-force comes only through God's grace, and God's grace never descends upon a man who is a slave to lust.

What place has, then, instruction in Sexual Science

in our educational system, or has it any place there at all? Sexual Science is of two kinds, that which is used for controlling or overcoming the sexual passion, and that which is used to stimulate and feed it. Instruction in the former is as necessary a part of a child's education as the latter is harmful and dangerous, and fit, therefore, only to be shunned. All great religions have rightly regarded *Kama* as the arch-enemy of man, anger or hatred coming only in the second place. According to the Gita, the latter is an offspring of the former. The Gita, of course, uses the word *Kama* in its wider sense of desire. But the same holds good of the narrow sense in which it is used here.

This, however, still leaves unanswered the question, *i.e.*, whether it is desirable to impart to young pupils a knowledge about the use and function of generative organs. It seems to me that it is necessary to impart such knowledge to a certain extent. At present they are often left to pick up such knowledge anyhow, with the result that they are misled into abusive practices. We cannot properly control or conquer the sexual passion by turning a blind eye to it. I am, therefore, strongly in favour of teaching young boys and girls the significance and right use of their generative organs. And, in my own way, I have tried to impart this knowledge to young children of both sexes, for whose training I was responsible.

But the sex education that I stand for, must have for its object the conquest and sublimation of the sex passion. Such education should automatically serve to bring home to children the essential distinction between man and brute, to make them realize that it is man's special privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart both, that he is a thinking no less than a feeling animal, as the very derivation of the word मनुष्य shows; and to renounce the sovereignty of reason over the blind instincts is, therefore, to renounce a man's estate. In man, reason quickens and guides the feeling; in brute, the soul lies ever dormant. To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason, and to

inculcate discrimination between good and evil.

Who should teach this true Science of Sex? Clearly, he who has attained mastery over his passions. To teach Astronomy and kindred sciences, we have teachers who have gone through a course of training in them, and are masters of their art. Even so, must we have as teachers of Sexual Science, *i. e.*, the Science of Sex Control, those who have studied it and have acquired mastery over self. Even a lofty utterance, that has not the backing of sincerity and experience, will be inert and lifeless, and will utterly fail to penetrate and quicken the hearts of man, while the speech that springs from self-realization and genuine experience is always fruitful.

To-day our entire environment—our reading, our thinking, our social behaviour—is generally calculated to subserve and cater for the sex-urge. To break through its coils is no easy task. But it is a task worthy of our highest endeavour. Even if there are a handful of teachers endowed with practical experience, who accept the ideal of attaining self-control as the highest duty of man, and are fired by a genuine and undying faith in their mission, and are sleeplessly vigilant and active, their labour will light the path of the children of Gujarat, save the unwary from falling into the mire of sexuality, and rescue those who might be already engulfed in it.

HEADING FOR PROMISCUITY

"Without continence a man or woman is undone. To have no control over the senses is like sailing in a rudderless ship, bound to break to pieces on coming in contact with the very first rock."

Thus writes a young man:

"You want everyone to become moral in order to change the world. I do not exactly know what you mean by morality—whether you confine it to matters sexual, or whether it covers the whole field of human conduct. I suspect the former, because I do not see you pointing out to your capitalist and landlord friends the great injustice and harm they are doing by making huge profits at the expense of labourers and tenants, while you are never tired of castigating young men and women for their moral lapses in sexual matters, and upholding before them the virtues of celibacy. You claim to know the mind of Indian youth. I do not claim to represent anybody, but as a solitary young man I beg to challenge your claim. You do not seem to know through what environment the modern middle-class youth is passing, what with long spells of unemployment, crushing social customs and traditions, and temptations of co-education! It is all a conflict between the old and the new ideas, resulting usually in the defeat and misery of youth. I humbly request you to be kind and compassionate to the youth, and not to judge them by your puritanic standards of morality. After all, I think every act, when it is performed with mutual consent and mutual love, is moral whether it is performed within marriage or without. Since the invention of contraceptives, the sexual basis of the institution of marriage has been knocked down. It has now become an institution mainly for the protection and welfare of children. You will, perhaps, be shocked at these ideas. I would here venture to ask you not to forget your own youth when judging the present youth. You were an over-sexed individual given to excessive indulgence, which seems to have created in you a sort of disgust towards the sexual act, and hence your asceticism and the idea of sin. Compared to you, I think, many young men of to-day are better in this respect."

This is from a typical letter. To my knowledge, the writer has gone through several changes even during the past three months that I have known him. He is still passing through a crisis. The extract quoted is from a long letter which, together with many of his other writings, he would gladly have me publish. But what I have quoted just represents the attitude of many a youth.

Of course, my sympathies are with young men and young women. I have a vivid recollection of the days of my own youth. And it is because of my faith in the youth of the country, that I am never tired of dealing with problems that face them.

For the morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms. A moral life, without reference to religion, is like a house built upon sand. And religion, divorced from morality, is like 'sounding brass, good only for making a noise and breaking heads.' Morality includes truth, *ahimsa* and continence. Every virtue that mankind has ever practised is referable to, and derived from, these three fundamental virtues. Non-violence and continence are again derivable from Truth, which for me is God.

Without continence, a man or woman is undone. To have no control over the senses is like sailing in a rudderless ship, bound to break to pieces on coming in contact with the very first rock. Hence, my constant insistence on continence. My correspondent is right in saying in effect that the coming in of contraceptives has changed the ideas about sexual relations. If mutual consent makes a sexual act moral, whether within marriage or without, and, by parity of reasoning, even between members of the same sex, the whole basis of sexual morality is gone and nothing but 'misery' and 'defeat' awaits the youth of the country. Many young men and women are to be found in India, who would be glad to be free from the craving for mutual intercourse in whose grip they find themselves. This craving is stronger than the strongest intoxicant which has ever enslaved man. It is futile to hope that the use of contraceptives will be restricted

to the mere regulation of progeny. There is hope for a decent life only so long as the sexual act is definitely related to the conception of precious life. This rules out of court perverted sexuality, and, to a lesser degree, promiscuity. Divorce of the sexual act from its natural consequence must lead to hideous promiscuity and condonation, if not endorsement, of unnatural vice.

Since my own experiences are relevant to the consideration of the sex problem, let me just warn the reader, who has not read my autobiographical chapters, against drawing the conclusion that my correspondent has drawn about my sins of indulgence.

Whatever over-indulgence there was with me, it was strictly restricted to my wife. And I was living in a joint family where there was hardly any privacy except for a few hours at night. I awoke to the folly of indulgence for the sake of it even when I was twenty-three years old, and decided upon total *brahmacharya* in 1899, *i.e.*, when I was thirty years old. It is wrong to call me an ascetic. The ideals that regulate my life are presented for acceptance by mankind in general. I have arrived at them by gradual evolution. Every step was thought out, well considered, and taken with greatest deliberation. Both my continence and non-violence were derived from personal experience, and became necessary in response to the calls of public duty. The isolated life I had to lead in South Africa, whether as a householder, legal practitioner, social reformer or politician, required, for the due fulfilment of these duties, the strictest regulation of sexual life and a rigid practice of non-violence and truth in human relations, whether with my own countrymen or with the Europeans. I claim to be no more than an average man, with less than average ability. Nor can I claim any special merit for such non-violence or continence as I have been able to reach with laborious research. I have not the shadow of doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith. Work

without faith is like an attempt to reach the bottom of a bottomless pit.

A STUDENT'S DIFFICULTY

"Students should learn the art of standing alone and resisting in every legitimate manner any attempt to force them to do anything against their will, much more so to marry them against their will."

A student asks:

> "What should a matriculate or an undergraduate, who is unfortunately father of two or three children, do in order to procure a living wage, and what should he do when he is forced to marry against his will, and before even the age of twenty-five?"

The simplest answer that occurs to me is, that a student who does not know how to support his wife and children, or who marries against his will, has studied to no purpose. But that is past history for him. The perplexed student deserves a helpful answer. He does not say what is his requirement. If he does not pitch it high because he is a matriculate, and will put himself on a level with the ordinary labourer, he should have no difficulty in earning a livelihood. His intelligence should help his hands and feet, and enable him to do better than the labourer who has had no opportunity of developing his intelligence. This is not to say that a labourer who has never learnt English is devoid of intelligence. Unfortunately, labour has never been helped to develop the mind, and those who pass through schools do have their minds opened, even though under a handicap not to be found in any other part of the world. Even this mental equipment is counterbalanced by false notions of dignity, inculcated during school and college days. And so students think that they can earn their living only at the desk. The inquirer has, therefore, to realize the dignity of labour and seek the maintenance of himself and his family in that field.

And, there is no reason why his wife should not add to the family income by utilizing her spare hours. Similarly, if the children are at all able to do any work, they, too, should be inspanned for productive work. The utterly false idea, that intelligence can be developed only through book-reading, should give place to the truth that the quickest development of the mind can be achieved by artisan's work being learnt in a scientific manner. True development of the mind commences immediately the apprentice is taught, at every step, why a particular manipulation of hand or a tool is required. The problem of the unemployment of students can be solved without difficulty, if they will rank themselves among the common labourers.

As for marriage against one's will, all I can say is that students should develop sufficient strength of purpose to resist any marriage that is sought to be forced on them. Students should learn the art of standing alone, and resisting in every legitimate manner any attempt to force them to do anything against their will, much more so to marry them against their will.

FOR STUDENTS

"It is cowardly to refuse to face the consequences of one's acts. Persons who use contraceptives will never learn the virtue of self-restraint. They will not need it."

"With reference to your note entitled *A Student's Difficulty*, I submit the following in all humility for your kind consideration.

"I feel you have not done justice to the student in question. The problem defies every solution. Your reply to his question is vague and general. You ask students to shake off false notions of dignity and rank themselves among the common labourers. All this general talk does not carry one far, and is certainly not worthy of a supremely practical man like you.

"Please consider the problem at greater length and offer a detailed, practical, and comprehensive solution with special reference to the following case:

"I am a student of M.A. (Ancient Indian History) in the University of Lucknow. I am about 21 years of age. I have a love for learning and want to do as much of it as possible in my life-time. I am also inspired by your ideology of life. In about a month's time, when the final M.A. Examinations come off, I will have to enter life, as they say.

"Besides a wife, I have four brothers (all younger, one of them married), two sisters (both below 12 years of age) and my parents to support. There is no capital to fall back upon. The landed property is very small.

"What should I do for the education of the sisters and brothers? Then, the sisters will have to be married sooner, rather than later. Above all, where are the food and the clothing to come from?

"I am a lover of the so-called standard of living. I want just a healthy condition of life, besides provision for emergencies, for myself and for those who depend on me. It is, more or less, only a question of two healthy meals and tidy clothes.

"I want to lead an economically honest life. I don't want to earn a living by usury or by selling flesh. I have an ambition for patriotic service also. I am willing to fulfil your conditions laid down in the note, referred to above, to the best of my ability.

"But I do not know what to do! Where and how to begin? My education has been ruinously academic and theoretical. I

sometimes think of spinning, your pet panacea, but, then, do not know how to learn it and what to do with the spun yarn, etc.

"Yes, under the circumstances in which I am placed, will you suggest my adopting contraceptive methods? I may assure you, I believe in self-control and *brahmacharya*. But, then, it will be some time before I become a *brahmachari*. I am afraid unless I adopt artificial contraceptive methods, during the period before the desired consummation of full self-control, I may get children and invite economic ruination thereby. And, moreover, I feel that just now it is not quite proper in the interests of a normally healthy emotional life of my wife to impose on her a life of rigorous self-control. After all, sex has its place in the lives of normal men and women. I am not an exception to it, much less my wife who has not the equipment to read and understand your great writings on *brahmacharya* or dangers of indulgence, etc.

"I regret the letter has been a little too lengthy. But, then, I wanted to avoid brevity at the cost of clarity.

"You are at liberty to make what use you like of this letter."

The very difficulties the student raises, though serious in their setting, are of his own making. The very mention of them must show the falsity of his position and of the educational system in our country. It turns education into a purely commercial product to be converted into money. For me, education has a much nobler purpose. Let the student count himself as one among the millions, and he will discover that millions of young men and women of his age cannot fulfil the conditions which he will have his degree to do. Why should he make himself responsible for the maintenance of all the relatives he mentions? Why should the grown-up ones, if of sound body, not labour for their maintenance? He is wrong to have many drones to one busy bee—though a male.

The remedy lies in his unlearning many things. He must revise his ideas of education. His sisters ought not to repeat the expensive education that he had. They can develop their intellect through learning some handicraft in a scientific manner. The moment they do so, they have development of the mind side by side with that of the body. And, if they will learn to regard themselves as

servants of humanity rather than its exploiters, they will have development of the heart, *i.e.*, the soul as well. And they will become equal earners of bread with their brother.

I might as well discuss here his sisters' marriage, to which reference has been made in the letter. I do not know what is meant by marriage taking place 'sooner than later'. In no case need it take place before they are 20 years old. It is no use thinking so many years in advance. And if he will revise the whole scheme of life, he will have the sisters to choose their partners, and the ceremony need never cost more than five rupees each, if that. I have been present at several such ceremonies. And the husbands or their elders have been graduates in fair circumstances.

It is pathetic to find the student so helpless as not to know how and where to have spinning lessons. Let him make a diligent search in Lucknow, and he will find that there are young men enough to teach him. But he need not confine himself to spinning, though it, too, is fast becoming a full time occupation, able to give a village-minded man or woman his or her livelihood. I hope I have said here sufficient to enable him to dot the *i*'s and cross the *t*'s.

And, now for contraceptives. Even there, the difficulty is imaginary. He is wrong in underrating his wife's intelligence. I have no doubt whatsoever that if she is the ordinary type of womanhood, she will readily respond to his self-restraint. Let him be true to himself and ask himself whether he has enough of it. All the evidence in my possession goes to show that it is man who lacks the power of self-restraint more than woman. But there is no need for belittling his own ability to exercise self-restraint. He must manfully face the prospect of a large family, and discover the best means of supporting them. He must know that against the millions who are strangers to the use of contraceptives, there are possibly a few thousand who use them. The millions are in no dread of having to breed their children, though the latter

may not at all be wanted. I suggest that it is cowardly to refuse to face the consequences of one's acts. Persons who use contraceptives will never learn the virtue of self-restraint. They will not need it. Self-indulgence with contraceptives may prevent the coming of children, but will sap the vitality of both men and women—perhaps, more of men than of women. It is unmanly to refuse battle with the devil. Let my correspondent resolve upon self-restraint as the only sure and honourable method of avoiding unwanted children. What though he and his fail in the effort a hundred times? Joy is in the battle. The result comes by the grace of God.

TO THE CEYLONESE STUDENTS

"If you will render something unto Gautama's countrymen for the great message of mercy that he delivered to you and to me, you will certainly wear *Khadi*."

Speaking at the Ananda College, Colombo, Gandhiji said:

It has given me great pleasure to be able to come to Colombo and Ceylon and to make your acquaintance. Wherever I go, I love to see school children.

Here, in Ceylon, the majority of boys come under the influence of Buddhist teaching. That great master taught us what is known as the right path, and you, boys, come to institutions of this character to learn the right path, and to learn the right path is not merely to pack your brains with many things that sound nice and sweet, but to do the right things.

The first maxim of the right path is to tell the truth, to think the truth, and to act the truth; and the second maxim is to love all that lives. Gautama Buddha was so filled with mercy and kindness that it was he who taught us to love, not only the members of the human family, but to love all the animal world. He taught us also personal purity of life. Therefore, if you, boys, are not truthful, merciful and kind, if you are not pure in your personal conduct, you have to learn nothing in this institution.

Which of you can tell me where Gautama Buddha was born? (*A boy promptly answered: He was born in Kapilavastu in India*).

I suggest to all of you, boys, that you owe something to Gautama's countrymen. I am sorry to have to tell you, boys, if you do not know already, that in the land where Gautama lived and taught, and which is hallowed

by his sacred feet, there is dire distress and poverty.

The one reason, why the millions in India are so poor, is because they left their ancient industry or have been deprived of it, and that was the spinning-wheel. Now they can revive the spinning-wheel, if everybody in India and others will wear the clothes that can be spun out and woven from it. The cloth is called *Khadi*.

If you will render something unto Gautama's countrymen for the great message of mercy that he delivered to you and to me, you will certainly wear *Khadi*. So far as I know, all the cloth that you little boys and others have worn has not been produced in Colombo or Ceylon, and seeing that you must buy some cloth in order to cover yourselves, it is your primary duty to buy that cloth which is woven by the famishing millions who are the countrymen of Gautama. If you will do so, you will then be in a position to act according to the second maxim in the right path that I mentioned to you, and what I have told you naturally applies with double force to your teachers and parents.

If you are clever, good, and brave boys, you will discuss this thing with your teachers and with your parents and ask them what it was that this strange man called Gandhi from India told you, and if I am not mistaken, they will endorse every word of what I have said to you. You have given this money to me for that very purpose, and I thank you and the teachers for giving me this money and thinking of the famishing millions of India. To wear *Khadi* is merely to follow up the step that you have taken to-day.

May God bless you all!

Speaking on the same subject at the Nalanda Vidyalaya, Colombo, Gandhiji said:

I thank you very much for giving me this donation for the work which has brought me to this beautiful Island. It gives me great pleasure to be able to make

your acquaintance.

I propose to say to you, what I have been just now saying to the boys of Ananda College. You are here being taught the path that the Great Buddha gave to the world. And if you do not represent the teaching of the Buddha in your own lives, your having belonged to this institution will be considered useless, and you will not be true representatives of Buddha's teachings. Everything else that you will learn here will be perfectly useless, unless you can reproduce the central teaching of Gautama in your own lives. His was the right path, right speech, right thought, and right conduct. He gave us the unadulterated law of human family. His love, his boundless love, went out as much to the lower animals, to the lowest life, as to the human beings. And he insisted upon purity of life.

I want to suggest to you that if you are fulfilling this law of mercy, love, kindness and human sympathy, the least you can do is to render something unto the countrymen of the Buddha.

You know that he was an Indian, and his message was delivered first of all to India. Painful though the fact is, nevertheless, it is unfortunately true that it is his countrymen who are to-day the poorest in the world. Millions are famishing, but they need not famish if they will work at the spinning-wheel, and if we Indians and you people of Ceylon will wear *Khadi* which can be produced from the spinning-wheel.

You do not manufacture, so far as I am aware, any cloth in Ceylon. Every yard of cloth that you are wearing is imported from outside. And I suggest to you that if you will carry out this law of mercy that the Buddha taught, and if you will make some return for the debt that you owe to Gautama, you will, until you are able to produce your own *Khadi*, wear *Khadi* that is manufactured in India.

My friend, the translator, (Shri Jairamdas Jayavardana), proudly pointed out that the cloth he was wearing

was manufactured in Ceylon. I would prohibit you from buying a single yard of *Khadi* manufactured in India, if he should be able to supply you with *Khadi*. And you will certainly be still better followers of the Buddha, if you will work with your own hands and manufacture *Khadi*. If you will do that, you will not only help India, but you will help the whole world by setting a noble example. But, meanwhile, I suggest to you that you will be doing the right thing by following up your gift by yourselves wearing *Khadi*.

Teachers and boys, I thank you once more for this gift of yours and for inviting me to this school. And I pray that God may bless you.

ADVICE TO LAW STUDENTS

"The first thing which you must always bear in mind, if you would spiritualize the practice of law, is not to make your profession subservient to the interests of your purse, as is unfortunately but too often the case at present, but to use your profession for the service of your country."

In the course of his speech at the Law College, Colombo, on "How to spiritualize the legal profession", Gandhiji said:

I am glad you have put this question. For, I may say that if I cannot speak on this subject with authority, no one else can. For, throughout my career at the bar, I never once departed from the strictest truth and honesty.

Well, then, the first thing which you must always bear in mind, if you would spiritualize the practice of law, is not to make your profession subservient to the interests of your purse, as is unfortunately but too often the case at present, but to use your profession for the service of your country. There are instances of eminent lawyers in all countries who led a life of self-sacrifice, who devoted their brilliant legal talents entirely to the service of their country, although it spelt almost pauperism for them. In India, you have the instance of the late Mana Mohan Ghose. He took up the fight against the indigo planters and served his poor clients at the cost of his health, even at the risk of his life, without charging them a single pie for his labours. He was a most brilliant lawyer, yet he was a great philanthropist. That is an example that you should have before you. Or, better still, you can follow Ruskin's precept given in his book *Unto This Last*. 'Why should a lawyer charge fifteen pounds for his work', he asks, 'whilst a carpenter, for instance, hardly gets as many shillings for his work?' The fees charged by lawyers are

unconscionable everywhere. I confess, I myself have charged what I would now call high fees. But even whilst I was engaged in my practice, let me tell you I never let my profession stand in the way of my public service.

And, there is another thing which I would like to warn you against. In England, in South Africa, almost everywhere I have found that, in the practice of their profession, lawyers are consciously or unconsciously led into untruth for the sake of their clients. An eminent English lawyer has gone so far as to say that it may even be the duty of a lawyer to defend a client whom he knows to be guilty. There I disagree. The duty of a lawyer is always to place before the judges and to help them to arrive at the truth, never to prove the guilty as innocent. It is up to *you* to maintain the dignity of your profession. If you fail in your duty, what shall become of the other professions? You, young men, claiming as you have just done to be the fathers of to-morrow, should be the salt of the nation. If the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

PLEA FOR PERSONAL PURITY

"Your education is absolutely worthless, if it is not built on a solid foundation of truth and purity. If you are not careful about the personal purity of your lives.....then, I tell you that you are lost, although you may become perfect, finished scholars."

In the course of his speech at the Dharmaraja College, Kandy, Gandhiji said:

It has been my good fortune to feel at home, and make myself at home, wherever I have gone in any part of the world, and had I not been able to do so, probably, I should have died without having had to commit suicide long ago. But I feel doubly at home when I see my Parsi friends. You cannot understand this, really. And, you might also think that I am joking. It is not joking. It is serious because of my having been in closest association with Parsis in South Africa and in India, and having had personally nothing but treasures of love from them. Even now you do not know, of course, but it gives me great pleasure to own before you, that some of my best workers are Parsis, and they are those three grand-daughters of the Grand Old Man of India[1]

But I must not detain you on my personal and family affairs. I thank you very much for this purse, and I like this opportunity of having come to you.

As I told the boys of the Trinity College a little while ago, your education is absolutely worthless, if it is not built on a solid foundation of truth and purity. If you, boys, are not careful about the personal purity of your lives, and if you are not careful about being pure in thought, speech, and deed, then I tell you that you are lost, although you

[1]Dadabhai Naoroji.

may become perfect, finished scholars.

I have been asked to draw your attention to one thing. Purity consists first of all in possessing a pure heart, but what there is in the heart really comes out also and is shown in outward acts and outward behaviour. And a boy who wants to keep his mouth pure, will never utter a bad word. Of course, that is quite clear. But he neither will put anything into his mouth that will cloud his intellect, cloud his mind, and damage his friends also.

I know that there are boys who smoke, and in Ceylon, perhaps, you are as bad as they are in Burma, though boys are becoming bad everywhere so far as this wretched habit of smoking is concerned. And, of course, Parsis as you know are called or rather miscalled fire-worshippers. They are no more fire-worshippers than you, and though they see God through that great manifestation, the Sun, which is nothing but the God of Fire.

Some of you good Parsis never smoke, and you make it a point, whenever you have a number of boys in your care, to train the boys not to foul their mouths by smoke.

If any of you are smoking, you will henceforth give up that bad habit. Smoking fouls one's breath. It is a disgusting habit. When he is in railway carriage, the smoker never cares whether there are ladies or men sitting about him who never smoke, and that the stench that comes out from his mouth may be disgusting to them.

The cigarette might be a small thing from a distance, but when the cigarette smoke goes into one's mouth and then comes out, it is poison. Smokers do not care where they spit.

Here, Gandhiji related a story from Tolstoy to explain how the tobacco habit was more disastrous in its effects than drink, and proceeded:

Smoking clouds one's intellect and it is a bad habit. If you ask doctors, and they happen to be good doctors, they will tell you that smoke has been the cause of cancer in many cases, or at least that smoke is at the bottom of it.

Why smoke, when there is no necessity for it? It is no food. There is no enjoyment in it except, in the first instance, through suggestion from outside.

You, boys, if you are good boys, if you are obedient to your teachers and parents, omit smoking, and whatever you save out of this, please send on to me for the famishing millions of India.

STUDENTS AND CHARACTER BUILDING

"The Principal and the Professors cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character building comes from their very lives, and, really speaking, it must come from within yourselves."

In the course of his speech at the Zahira College, Colombo, Gandhiji said :

It has, indeed, given me great pleasure to be able to visit this College.

You have reminded me of the happy days I spent in South Africa. Those were days when my life was almost wholly cast in the midst of my Mussalman countrymen, and it was early in 1893, that I found myself in the company of some of the finest Mussalmans it has been my good fortune to meet, as also to influence. It, therefore, does not surprise me that you have invited me to meet you in this hall.

Moulana Shaukat Ali, when he returned from Ceylon, gave me what he said was a message from the Mussalmans of Ceylon to hasten to Ceylon as soon as possible. But the work, in which both he and I were engaged, made it impossible for me to come here at that time.

Those of you, who are in the habit of reading Indian newspapers, will know that just before I embarked for Colombo, I had the pleasure of meeting the Professors and boys of the Jamia College at Delhi. I have not got the time to give you a set speech, because there are other appointments waiting for me, but I would summarize the speech I gave to the boys in Delhi.

All the education that you are receiving in this great College will be reduced to nothing, if it is not built on the foundation of a pure character.

As I was reading your magazines, I could not help

admiring the zeal with which the work was done here, and the marvellous progress that has been made in a few years. But as I was reading the report, that was read before the Governor on the occasion of the foundation laying ceremony, I could not help feeling how nice it would be if we could raise a foundation of good character, so that stones on stones might be raised thereon, and we might look back with joy and pride upon the edifice. But character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by other hands than your own. The Principal and the Professors cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character building comes from their very lives, and, really speaking, it must come from within yourselves.

As I was studying Christianity, Hinduism and other great faiths of the world, I saw that there was a fundamental unity moving amidst the endless variety that we see in all religions, *viz.*, Truth and Innocence. You must take the word 'Innocence' literally, that is to mean non-killing and non-violence, and if you, boys, will take your stand defiantly always on Truth and Innocence, you will feel that you have built on solid foundation.

I am grateful for the generous purse you have presented to me. It is meant for finding work for the starving millions of India. These consist of Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians. Therefore, you have, by giving me this donation, established a link between these starving millions and yourselves, and in doing so you have done a thing which is pleasing to God. It will be a very feeble link if you do not know the purpose for which this is going to be used. These monies are utilized for finding work among men and women for the production of cloth like that you find on my person. But all this money will be useless, if you cannot find the people to wear *Khadi* so manufactured.

It is possible now for us to satisfy every taste and fashion. If you will forge a lasting and continuing link with the masses of India, you will henceforth clothe yourselves in *Khadi*.

AT MAHINDA COLLEGE

"I have found that boys imbibe more from the teachers' own lives than they do from the books that they read to them, or the lectures that they deliver to them.....Woe to the teacher who teaches one thing with his lips and carries another in his breast."

On the occasion of the Prize Distribution at Mahinda College, Galle, Gandhiji delivered the following speech:

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be able to be present at this very pleasant function. You have paid me, indeed, a very great compliment, and conferred on me a great honour by allowing me to witness your proceedings and making the acquaintance of so many boys.

I hope that this institution will progressively expand, as, I have no doubt, it deserves. I have come to know enough of this beautiful Island and its people to understand that there are Buddhists enough in this country, not merely to support one such institution, but many such institutions. I hope, therefore, that this institution will never have to pine for want of material support, but having known something of the educational institutions both in South Africa and India, let me tell you that scholastic education is not merely brick and mortar. It is true boys and true girls who build such institutions from day today. I know some huge, architecturally perfect buildings going under the name of sholastic institutions, but they are nothing but whited sepulchres. Conversely, I know also some institutions which have to struggle from day to day for their material existence, but which, because of this very want, are spiritually making advance from day to day. One of the greatest teachers that mankind has ever seen, and one whom you have enthroned as the only Royal

Monarch in your hearts, delivered his living message not from a man-made building, but under the shadow of a magnificent tree. May I also venture to suggest that the aim of a great institution like this should be to impart such instruction, and in such ways that it may be open to any boy or girl in Ceylon.

I notice already that, as in India, so in this country, you are making education daily more and more expensive, so as to be beyond the reach of the poorest children. Let us all beware of making that serious blunder and incurring the deserved reproach of posterity. To that end, let me put the greatest stress upon the desirability of giving these boys instruction from A to Z through the Sinhalese language. I am certain that the children of the nation, that receive instruction in a tongue other than their own, commit suicide. It robs them of their birth right. A foreign medium means an undue strain upon the youngsters, it robs them of all originality. It stunts their growth and isolates them from their home. I regard, therefore, such a thing as a national tragedy of first importance, and I would like also to suggest that since I have known Sanskrit in India as the mother language, and since you have received all religious instruction from the teachings of one who was himself an Indian amongst Indians, and who had derived his inspiration from Sanskrit writings, that it would be but right on your part to introduce Sanskrit as one of the languages that should be diligently studied. I should expect an institution of this kind to supply the whole of the Buddhist community in Ceylon with text-books written in Sinhalese, and giving all the best from the treasures of old.

I hope that you will not consider that I have placed before you an unattainable ideal. Instances occur to me from history where teachers have made Herculean efforts in order to restore the dignity of the mother-tongue, and to restore the dignity of the old treasures which were about to be forgotten.

I am glad, indeed, that you are giving due attention to

athletics, and I congratulate you upon acquitting yourselves with distinction in games. I do not know whether you had any indigenous games or not. I should, however, be exceedingly surprised, and even painfully surprised, if I were told that before cricket and football descended upon your sacred soil, your boys were devoid of all games. If you have national games, I would urge upon you that yours is an institution that should lead in reviving old games. I know that we have in India many noble indigenous games, just as interesting and exciting as cricket or football, also as much attended with risks as football is, but with the added advantage that they are inexpensive, because the cost is practically next to nothing.

I am no indiscriminate, superstitious worshipper of all that goes under the name of ancient! I never hesitate to endeavour to demolish all that is evil or immoral, no matter how ancient it may be, but with that reservation. I must confess to you that I am an adorer of ancient institutions and it hurts me to think that a people, in their rush for everything modern, despise all their ancient traditions and ignore them in their lives.

We of the East, very often, hastily consider that all that our ancestors laid down for us was nothing but a bundle of superstitions, but my own experience, extending now over a fairly long period, of the inestimable treasures of the East, has led me to the conclusion that, whilst there may be much that was superstitious, there is infinitely more which is not only not superstitious, but if we understand it correctly and reduce it to practice, gives life and ennobles one. Let us not, therefore, be blinded by the hypnotic dazzle of the West.

Again, I wish to utter a word of caution against your believing that I am an indiscriminate despiser of everything that comes from the West. There are many things which I have myself assimilated from the West. There is a very great and effective Sanskrit word for that particular faculty which enables a man always to distinguish between what is desirable and what is undesirable, what

is right and what is wrong, that word is known as *viveka*. Translated into English, the nearest approach is discrimination. I do hope that you will incorporate this word into Pali and Sinhalese.

There is one thing more which I would like to say in connection with your syllabus. I had hoped that I should see some mention made of handicrafts, and if you are not seriously teaching the boys under your care some handicrafts, I would urge you, if it is not too late, to introduce the necessary handicrafts known to this Island. Surely, all the boys who go out from this institution will not expect or will not desire to be clerks or employees of the Government. If they would add to the national strength, they must learn with great skill all the indigenous crafts, and as cultural training and as the symbol of identification with the poorest among the poor, I know nothing so ennobling as hand-spinning. Simple as it is, it is easily learnt. When you combine with hand-spinning the idea that you are learning it not for your own individual self, but for the poorest among the nation, it becomes an ennobling sacrament. There must be added to this sacrament some occupation, some handicraft which a boy may consider will enable him to earn his living in after life.

You have rightly found place for religious instruction. I have experimented with quite a number of boys in order to understand how best to impart religious instruction, and whilst I found that book instruction was somewhat of an aid, by itself it was useless. Religious instruction, I discovered, was imparted by teachers living the religion themselves. I have found that boys imbibe more from the teachers' own lives than they do from the books that they read to them, or the lectures that they deliver to them with their lips. I have discovered to my great joy that boys and girls have unconsciously a faculty of penetration whereby they read the thoughts of their teachers. Woe to the teacher who teaches one thing with his lips, and carries another in his breast.

Now, just one or two sentences to boys only and I have done.

As father of, you might say, many boys and girls, you might almost say of thousands of boys and girls, I want to tell you, boys, that after all you hold your destiny in your own hands. I do not care what you learn or what you do not learn in your school, if you will observe two conditions. One condition is that you must be fearlessly truthful against heaviest odds, under every circumstance imaginable. A truthful boy, a brave boy, will never think of hurting even a fly. He will defend all the weak boys in his own school and help, whether inside school or outside the school, all those who need his help. A boy, who does not observe personal purity of mind and body and action, is a boy who should be driven out of any school. A chivalrous boy would always keep his mind pure, his eyes straight, and his hands unpolluted. You do not need to go to any school to learn these fundamental maxims of life, and if you will have this triple character with you, you will build on a solid foundation.

May, then, true *ahimsa* and purity be your shield for ever in your life! May God help you to realize all your noble ambition! I thank you once more for inviting me to take part in this function.

JAFFNA STUDENTS' CONGRESS

"It is because I see in the spinning-wheel the hand of God working, it is because I see in the spinning-wheel the satisfaction of the needs of the meanest of human beings that, in season and out of season, I think about it, work at it, pray about it and speak about it."

Gandhiji addressed as follows the Jaffna Students' Congress:

I thank you for the beautiful address that you have presented to me this evening.

You have taken upon yourselves, and very rightly, the credit of bringing me to this fair Island, but you must remember also that those who take credit for anything have also to take discredit, if any mishap occurs.

It is very difficult for me this evening to give you a message, for the simple reason that I do not know your Congress sufficiently, nor do I know sufficiently the composition of my audience, but your worthy Chairman has informed me of the objects of your Congress. I shall try to give you some thoughts that occur to me on some of those objects.

If I understood him rightly, your first object is to revive ancient culture. You have, then, to understand what that ancient culture is, and it must be necessarily culture which all students, whether they be Hindus, Christians, Buddhists or of any other faith, would be interested in reviving, because I take it that by ancient culture you do not want to confine yourselves purely to Hindu students.

I take it that this Students' Congress includes all students, Hindus, Christians, Moslems and Buddhists. Though to-day it has on its rolls no Muslim student or Buddhist student, it does not much matter for my argument,

for the simple reason that your ultimate object is attainment of *Swaraj*, not merely for the Hindus and Christians of Jaffna, but for all the inhabitants of this Island of which Jaffna is but a part. What I have said with reference to the inclusion of students belonging to these religions must hold good. That being so, we hark back to the question, what ancient culture it is we want to revive. It must, therefore, be such as to be common to all these elements. Therefore, whilst that culture will undoubtedly be predominantly Hindu culture, it can never be exclusively Hindu. The reason why I say that it must be predominantly Hindu is because you, who are seeking to revive ancient culture, are predominantly Hindu, and are all the while thinking of that country which you rightly and proudly delight to call your Motherland.

In Hindu culture, I venture to submit, Buddhistic culture is necessarily included, for the simple reason that Buddha himself was an Indian, not only an Indian, but a Hindu amongst Hindus. I have never seen anything in the life of Gautama to warrant the belief that he renounced Hinduism and adopted a new faith. My task becomes easy when I consider also that Jesus himself was an Asiatic, and, therefore, it becomes a question really to consider what Asiatic or ancient Asiatic culture is. For that matter, then, Mahomed was also an Asiatic.

Since you can only wish to revive all that is noble and all that is permanent in ancient culture, your revival, necessarily, must not be antagonistic to any of these faiths. The question, then, is to find out the common factor, the greatest common measure belonging to all these great faiths. And thus you will come, according to my own estimate of things noble and great, to this very simple factor, *viz.*, that you want to be truthful and non-violent, for, truth and non-violence are common to all these great faiths.

You cannot possibly wish to revive many of the customs that you and I might have forgotten, that may have at one time formed part of Hinduism.

I recall one great thought that the late Justice Ranade expressed when he was speaking of the revival of ancient culture, and he told his audience that it would be difficult for any single person in the audience to say exactly what ancient culture was, and when that culture ceased to be ancient and began to be modern. He also said that a prudent man would not swear by anything because it was ancient, but he told the audience that any culture, ancient or modern, must be submitted to the test of reason and experience.

I am obliged to utter this warning to this Congress of Students, who are to be the makers of the destinies of this Island, because of so many reactionary forces gathering round us not only here, but throughout the world. I see from my own experience in India, that many who are professing to revive ancient culture do not hesitate under the name of that revival to revive old superstitions and prejudices.

Ancient traditions and ancient lore have been dragged, almost out of the tomb, to justify the hideous doctrine of untouchability. A similar attempt, some of you may know, is now being made to justify the institution of *Devadasis*.

You will not, therefore, consider that I have given you a laboured statement in warning you against being misled into wrong doing, under the name of revival of ancient culture. Perhaps, you will understand the significance of this warning, coming as it does from a man who is himself not only a lover of ancient culture but has been endeavouring to reproduce in his own life, to the best of his ability, all that is noble, that is permanent in ancient culture.

In trying to explore the hidden treasures of ancient culture, I have come upon this inestimable boon that all that is permanent in ancient Hindu culture is also to be found in the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Mahomed and Zoroaster. So, I have come to this workable arrangement for myself. If I find anything in Hinduism which

is ancient but repugnant to my Christian brother or my Mussalman brother, I immediately begin to fidget and doubt the ancientness of that claim. So I came, by a process of examination, to this irresistible conclusion, that there was nothing so very ancient in this world as these two good old things—truth and non-violence. And working along these lines of truth and non-violence, I also discovered that I must not attempt to revive ancient practices if they were inconsistent with, call it if you will, modern life as it must be lived. Ancient practices may have been perfectly good and, perhaps, absolutely necessary at the time when those practices were adopted, but they might be entirely out of date with modern needs and still not be contrary to truth or non-violence.

Then, you can see how safe the road becomes in front of you and me when we summarily and mercilessly reject untouchability, *Devadasi* institution, drunkenness, sacrifice of animals in the very name of God whom we call Compassionate, All-merciful, Forgiving. We can unhesitatingly and summarily reject all these things, because they do not appeal to our moral sense. So much with reference to the negative side of it, but there is a positive side to it which is just as important as the negative.

In putting before you the positive side, let me draw for you one very necessary corollary to the doctrine of non-violence. I put it before my very dear friends, the reformers, a very small body of staunch workers in Chettinad. The corollary or the deduction is this: that if we are to be non-violent, we must, then, not wish for anything on this earth which the meanest or the lowest of human beings cannot have. If that is a sound proposition—and I claim that it is a direct corollary from the doctrine of non-violence—then, if you accept it, then it follows that we may not barter away our ancient simplicity for anything on this earth. Now, you will, perhaps, understand my determined opposition to the modern rush, the hypnotic dazzle that seems almost to overcome us and overtake us; and that is coming to us with such violent force from

the West.

I have taken great pains in my writings, as also in my speeches, to distinguish between the modern methods adopted in the West, the multiplicity of wants and material comforts, and the essential teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. So, in the opening sentences of my speech, I threw out the hint of what was to come when I told you that after all Jesus was an Asiatic, Mahomed was an Asiatic; but drawing that sharp distinction between the teachings and message of Jesus and what is to-day going on in America, in England and other parts of the West, I have been able to live at peace with thousands upon thousands of my Christian friends in South Africa and now, because the circle is growing ever larger, throughout the world.

So, you Hindus and Buddhists here—if there is even a handful of Buddhists—if you will be true to your ancient culture, you will refuse to have anything whatsoever to do with this hypnotic dazzle, even though it may come to you in the so-called Christian garb.

If you have an immovable faith in yourselves, if you will also cultivate inexhaustible patience, you will find that the Christian friends, even though they may come to you with the Western dazzle behind them, will shed all that dazzle and be converted to the doctrine of simplicity, which alone can satisfy the test of the corollary that I have ventured to draw before this audience.

If you have closely followed my reasoning, you will at once understand the message, the imperishable message of the spinning-wheel. It is because I see in the spinning-wheel the hand of God working, it is because I see in the spinning-wheel the satisfaction of the needs of the meanest of human beings that, in season and out of season, I think about it, work at it, pray about it and speak about it. If there is any other thing which can bring you nearer to the famishing people of the earth (let alone India for the time being), that can put you at once on a level with the scavenger, I will withdraw the spinning-wheel and hug

that other thing in a moment. Now, you will, perhaps. also understand why I go about from door to door shamelessly and ceaselessly with the begging bowl, and beg of every one to put something into it if they will do so with a willing heart.

I have now overstayed my time. I must not exhaust your patience and I must now, therefore, leave you to dot the *i's* and cross the *t's* of the speech that I have given you. I have to talk to the student world about several other things, because I have the honour of enjoying their confidence, but to-night I must not go any further with my remarks.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you have done and are doing, and if you will act in accordance with the paper that some of you sent to me when I was in Colombo, you will certainly have done a great thing.

WITH STUDENTS IN JAFFNA

"What can be better or nobler than that from your youth, whilst you are shouldering no responsibility, you become accustomed to thinking not merely of yourselves, but of those who are much poorer and much more unfortunately placed than you are."

Gandhiji delivered the following speech at St. John's College, Jaffna:

If you had been looking forward to meeting me under this roof, I can say that I was no less looking forward to meeting you. Though I receive, and receive with thankfulness, money from millionaires, it is a source of much greater pleasure to me to receive small gifts, no matter how small they may be, from boys and girls who are still making their lives. It gives me greater pleasure for two reasons. One is, the gift which springs from innocent boys and girls fructifies much more than gifts of those who may be considered wordly-wise men. The second reason is, that gifts such as yours give me a keener sense of responsibility than, perhaps, I should otherwise have.

You may know, that each rupee that is to be found in this purse will go to find work for 16 semi-starving women in the remote villages of India, and give them one anna per day for the work that they may do. Remember, that they and their children do not get anything like two full meals per day, and that is what I can tell you from my own experience of hundreds of Indian villages. Your gift, therefore, is really an object lesson in true charity. What can be better or nobler than that from your youth, whilst you are shouldering no responsibility, you become accustomed to thinking not merely of yourselves, but of

those who are much poorer and much more unfortunately placed than you are.

It is undoubtedly a great thing that in your college there are no distinctions, and no one is considered to be an untouchable. What you have done, in giving me this generous purse, is really following along the lines that you are going, for, these children and these women, on whose behalf you have given this purse, are more unfortunately placed than even the so-called untouchables. I have not the power to make any return for your kindness and your generosity. I can only pray to God that He may bless you for all the good things that you may do in life, for, I know that mere mental training is nothing if it is not accompanied by a true training of the heart, and may your hearts extend in the manner that your minds may!

I thank you once more.

THE PLACE OF JESUS

"The great teachers of mankind have had the places not given to them, but the place has belonged to them as a matter of right, as a matter of service that they have rendered."

Addressing the students at Jaffna Central College, Gandhiji said:

I am deeply grateful to you for the generous purse that you have given me, on behalf of the semi-starving millions of India.

You, Sir, sent me due notice yesterday of the very important question that you have repeated this morning, *viz.*, the place of Christ among the great teachers of the world. I have many engagements between now and 10-30; therefore, and also for other reason into which I do not want to enter, I would fain have avoided this question. But on the principle that has guided my life, that I must take things as they come to me, unless I find it utterly impossible for me to cope with them, I propose to devote the very few minutes that I have at my disposal to answering that question.

I say in one sentence that for many many years I have regarded Jesus of Nazareth as one amongst the mighty teachers that the world has had, and I say this in all humility. I claim humility for this expression for the simple reason that this is exactly what I feel. Of course, Christians claim a higher place for Jesus of Nazareth than as a non-Christian and as a Hindu I have been able to feel. I purposely use the word 'feel', instead of give, because I consider that neither I, nor anybody else can possibly arrogate to himself the claim of giving place to a great man. The great teachers of mankind have had the places not given to them, but the place has belonged to them as

a matter of right, as a matter of service that they have rendered; but it is given to the lowest and humblest amongst us to feel certain things about certain people.

The relation between great teachers and ourselves is somewhat after the style of relation between a husband and wife. It would be a most terrible thing, a tragic thing, if I was to argue out intellectually for myself what place I was to give to my wife in my heart. It is not in my giving, but she takes the place that belongs to her as a matter of right in my heart. It is a matter purely for feeling. Then, I can say that Jesus occupies in my heart the place of one of the great teachers who have made a considerable influence on my life.

Leave the Christians alone for the present. I shall say to the 75 per cent Hindus receiving instruction in this College, that your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teaching of Jesus. I have come to the conclusion, in my own experience, that those, who no matter to what faith they belong, reverently study the teaching of other faiths, broaden their own instead of narrowing their hearts. Personally, I do not regard any of the great religions of the world as false. All have served in enriching mankind and are now even serving their purpose. A liberal education to all should include, as I have put it, a reverent study of other faiths, but I do not want to labour this point, nor have I the time to do so.

There is one thing which, as I am speaking to you, occurs to me, which came to me in my early studies of the Bible. It seized me immediately I read the passage: 'Make this world the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and everything will be added unto you.' I tell you that if you will understand, appreciate, and act up to the spirit of this passage, you won't even need to know what place Jesus or any other teacher occupies in your heart. If you will do the proper scavenger's work, clean and purify your hearts and get them ready, you will find that all these mighty teachers will take their places without invitation from us. That, to my mind, is the basis of all sound

education. Culture of the mind must be subservient to the culture of the heart. May God help you to become pure !

TO THE GIRL STUDENTS—I

"Your parents do not send you to school to become dolls; on the contrary, you are expected to become Sisters of Mercy... She becomes a Sister of Mercy immediately she thinks less of herself, and more of those who are poorer and more unfortunate than herself."

Speaking at the Udivil Girls' College in Jaffna, Gandhiji said :

It has given me very great pleasure, indeed, to meet you this morning.

I do not at all appreciate the idea of your little gifts, which have come right from the bottom of your hearts, having been merged in the general purse; but I am going to put the best construction possible upon the fact of your purse having been merged in the general purse; you, being more modest than boys, do not want me to know that you had given anything at all; but having met thousands or tens of thousands of girls throughout India, it is difficult for girls now-a-days to hide from me any good things that they may do.

Now, there are some girls who do not mind even telling me the bad things that they do. Let me hope that of all these girls before me, there is not one single girl who does a bad thing. Not having the time to cross-examine you, I am not going to weary you with questions, but if there are any girls in our midst who do bad things, I would fain let them know that, if that is the case, their education is useless.

Your parents do not send you to school to become dolls; on the contrary, you are expected to become Sisters of Mercy. Do not make the mistake of thinking that only those may be called Sisters of Mercy who wear a

particular dress. She becomes a Sister of Mercy immediately she thinks less of herself, and more of those who are poorer and more unfortunate than herself. And you have done the work of Sisters of Mercy in giving your mite to the purse that has been presented to me, because that purse has been presented for those who are unfortunately poorer than yourselves.

To give a little bit of money is easy enough, to do a little thing one's self is more difficult. If you really feel for the people for whom you are giving money, you must go a step further and wear *Khadi* that these people manufacture. If, when *Khadi* is brought before you, you say: '*Khadi* is a bit coarse, we cannot wear it', then, I know, you have not the spirit of self sacrifice in you.

It is such a very nice thing that here there is no distinction between high class and low class, touchables and untouchables, and if your hearts are also working in that direction, and you do not consider yourselves superior to some other girls, it is a very good thing, indeed.

May God bless you!

TO THE GIRL STUDENTS—II

"Every girl, every Indian girl, is not born to marry. I can show many girls who are to-day dedicating themselves to service, instead of serving one man. It is high time that the Hindu girls produce or reproduce an edition and, if possible, a glorified edition of Parvati and Sita."

In his speech at Ramanathan Girls' College in Jaffna, Gandhiji said :

It has, indeed, given me great joy to be able to come here this morning, as if to put a finishing touch to the whole round of visits to different scholastic institutions in Jaffna.

Your promise in your address that you are going to observe this day as an annual function, and devote it to collections for *Khadi* work, has touched me to the core. I know that this is no idle promise on your part, but that you are going to fulfil that promise religiously. If the famishing millions, on whose behalf I am touring, could possibly understand this determination on the part of their sisters, I know it would gladden their hearts, but you will be pained to be informed by me that these dumb millions in whose behalf you have given me this purse—and so many purses have been given in Ceylon—would not even understand such things, if I attempted to tell them. No description that I can give you of their miserable life can possibly give you a proper perspective of what that position means.

This immediately brings me to the question—what are you to do for these and such other people? It is easy enough to suggest a little more simplicity, a little more hardness in life, but that would be merely playing with the question.

Thoughts and thoughts like these brought me to the

spinning-wheel. I said to myself, as I say to you now, that if you could but establish a living link between those famishing millions and yourselves, there is some hope for you, for them and for the world.

Religious instruction you have, and very properly, in this institution. You have got also a beautiful temple. I see from your time-table that you begin the day by offering worship, all of which is good and elevating, but it may easily amount to a beautiful ceremonial and nothing else, if that worship is not translated day after day into some practical work. So, I say, in order to follow out that act of worship, take up the spinning-wheel, sit at it for half an hour and think of these millions that I have described to you, and say in the name of God: 'I spin for the sake of them.' If you do it with your heart, with the knowledge that you are the humbler and the richer for that real act of devotion, if you will dress not for show, but for covering your limbs, you will certainly not have any hesitation in wearing *Khadi* and establish that bond between yourselves and the millions.

This is not all that I want to say to the girls of this institution.

If you will be deserving of the care and attention that Sir Ramanathan has bestowed upon you, and that is being bestowed on you by Lady Ramanathan and the staff working under her care, you will have to do many more things. I saw in your magazines mention made with some degree of pardonable pride of what some of the old school girls had been doing. I saw notices after this style. So and so married so and so—4 or 5 notices. There is, I know, nothing wrong in a girl who has come of age, about 25 or even 22 years old, in getting married. But I miss in these notices a single mention of a girl who had dedicated herself to service only. So, I propose to tell you what I told the girls of H. H. the Maharajah's College for Girls in Bangalore, that we get a poor return for the great efforts that are being made by educationists and by lavish charities, if you all become mere dolls and disappear from life,

as sooon as you are discharged from such institutions.

A vast majority of girls disappear from public life as soon as they are discharged from schools and colleges. You of this institution have no such business. You have the example of Miss Emery, and the example of others who have been superintending, and who have been, if I am not speaking incorrectly, maidens.

Every girl, every Indian girl, is not born to marry. I can show many girls who are to-day dedicating themselves to service, instead of serving one man. It is high time that Hindu girls produce or reproduce an edition and, if possible, a glorified edition of Parvati and Sita.

You claim to be Saivites. You know what Parvati did. She did not spend money for a husband, nor would she allow herself to be bought, and she to-day adorns the Hindu firmament by being classed with one of the Seven *Satis*—not because of the degrees in an educational institution that she received, but because of her unheard of *tapasya* (penance).

Here, I understand that there is the hateful system of dowry, whereby it becomes most difficult for young women to get suitable matches. The grown up girls—some of you are grown up—are expected to resist all such temptations. If you will resist these evil customs, some of you will have to begin by remaining maidens either for life, or at least for a number of years. Then, when it is time for you to marry, and you feel that you must have a partner in life, you will not be in thirst of one who has money or fame, or beauty of person, but you will be in search of one—even as Parvati was—who has got all the matchless qualities which go to make good character. You know how Naradji described Siva to Parvati—a mere pauper smeared with ashes, no handsomeness about him, and a *brahmachari*, and Parvati said: 'Yes, he will be my husband'. You won't have several editions of Siva unless some of you will be content to offer *tapasya*, not for thousands of years as Parvati did. We, frail human beings, cannot afford to do it, but you can do at least

during your lifetime.

If you will accept these conditions, you will refuse to disappear into the kingdom of dolls, but will aspire to be *Satis* like Parvati, Damayanti, Sita and Savitri. Then, and not till then, in my humble opinion, will you have deserved an institution of this character.

May God fire you with this ambition, and if you are inspired, may He help you to realize this ambition!

TO THE BURMESE STUDENTS

"If you want to become patriots, real patriots and protectors of the weak, espousers of the cause of the poor and the oppressed, purify your hearts first."

At the students' meeting in the Jubilee Hall, Rangoon, Gandhiji was presented with a purse and an address which honoured him with the title of the undisputed 'President of the Great Republic of the Youth of India and Burma, of the East, nay, of the whole World,' and claimed that the privilege of youth was to be self-assertive and irresponsible within limits, and asked for Gandhiji's advice and blessings. Addressing the meeting, Gandhiji delivered himself of a message to the Youth of the World as follows:

Fellow Students and Friends,

I tender my hearty thanks for your address, as also for what I hope is a generous purse for *Daridranarayan*. Those of you who are Indians are not unaware of the meaning of *Daridranarayan*, but the Burmese students may not, perhaps, know its significance.

Daridranarayan is one of the millions of names by which humanity knows God, who is unnamable and unfathomable by human understanding, and it means God of the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor. It was the name used in one of his intuitive and sacred moments by the late Deshabandhu Das. It is not a name adopted by me out of my own experience, but it is a heritage from Deshabandhu. He used the word in connection with the mission to which, among several others, my life is dedicated, I mean the Gospel of the Charkha or the Spinning Wheel. I know there are still many who laugh at this little wheel, and regard this particular activity of mine as an aberration. In spite of the criticizm and ridicule which is levelled at it,

I adhere to the Gospel of the Spinning Wheel as one of my most substantial activities, and I feel certain—as I am certain that I am addressing you at the present moment—that a time is coming when all the scoffing will cease, and the scoffers will kneel and pray with me that the Spinning Wheel may find an abiding place in the desolate homes of the under-fed, starving millions of India. I have not hesitated to bring that message to the Indians who have found their home here. I have no right to approach the Burmans with an appeal for funds for *Khadi*, but I think I have a right to approach the Indians who find their livelihood and more in this land of yours, and to ask them to part with their substance for feeding *Daridranarayan*.

A friend told me, I do not know with how much authority, that there was a talk amongst the students that it was not proper for me to make collections for *Khadi* in Burma, and that I must devote something for some work to be done in Burma for the Burmans. If there is any Burman here with that conviction, he will, I hope, go away at the end of the meeting convinced that it will not be right on my part to use any part of the monies here to purposes in Burma. It should hurt your dignity, it will hurt your self-respect to bring a man all the way from Sabarmati to raise funds for local enterprise. You should be able to find the wherewithal for those purposes, and leave me free to do whatever I can for my mission on behalf of the starving millions of India.

You have claimed for me an honour in connection with the student world which I dare not appropriate. But, I am endeavouring to claim another honour and that is to become a servant of the student world—not only of India, not only of Burma, but, if it is not too high a claim, the student world throughout the universe. I am in touch with some students in the remotest corners of the earth, and, if God gives me a few more years, I might be able to make good that claim. I know that I have established a vital connection with thousands and thou-

sands of students in India. I was wondering whether the majority of students here would be Indians or Burmese—I should have been glad to know the percentage of Indians, I should have loved to know something of the life of the students here. But it does not matter whether you are Burmese or Indians, you have used the proper word for the mass of students all over the world—the Students' Republic.

You have claimed for yourselves irresponsibility. May it be yours, if it be within limits. The moment the limits are crossed, you will cease to be students. A student does not cease to be a student, the moment he leaves his scholastic career. At any rate, looking back 40 years I find that when I left my studies I was entering the threshold of the student's career. And as one who has had some experience of life, take it from me that mere book-reading will be of little help to you in after-life. I know from correspondence with the students all over India, what wrecks they have become by having stuffed their brains with information derived from a cartload of books. Some have become unhinged, others have become lunatics, some have been leading a life of helpless impurity. My heart goes out to them when they say that, try as much as they might, they are what they are, because they cannot overpower the devil. 'Tell us,' they plaintively ask, 'how to get rid of the devil, how to get rid of the impurity that has seized us.' When I ask them to take *Ramanama* and kneel before God and seek His help, they come to me and say: 'We do not know where God is. We do not know what it is to pray.' That is the state to which they have been reduced.

I have, therefore, been asking the students to be on their guard, not to read all the literature that is within their reach, and I ask their teachers to cultivate their hearts and establish with the students a heart-contact. I have felt that the teachers' work lies more outside than inside the lecture room. In this work-a-day life, where

teachers and professors work for the wages they get, they have no time to give to the students outside the class room, and that is the greatest stumbling block in the development of the life and character of students to-day. But unless the teachers are prepared to give all their time outside the class-room to their students, not much can be done. Let them fashion their hearts rather than their brains. Let them help them to erase every word which means disappointment and despair out of their dictionary. (*Applause*).

I am trying to put before you all that is welling up in my breast. Pray don't interrupt it with your applause. It will stand between yourselves and your hearts. Never own a defeat in a sacred cause, and make up your minds henceforth that you *will* be pure, and that you *will* find a response from God. But God never answers the prayers of the arrogant, nor the prayers of those who bargain with Him.

Have you heard the story of *Gajendra Moksha*? I ask the Burmese students here, who do not know one of the greatest of all poems, one of the divinest things of the world, to learn it from their Indian friends. A Tamil saying has always remained in my memory, and it means 'God is the help of the helpless.' If you would ask Him to help you, you would go to Him in all your nakedness, approach Him without reservations, also without fear or doubts as to how He can help a fallen being like you. He who has helped millions who have approached Him, is He going to desert you? He makes no exception whatsoever, and you will find that everyone of your prayers will be answered. The prayer of even the most impure will be answered. I am telling this out of my personal experience. I have gone through the purgatory. Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything will be added unto you. Do not go to your books or to your teachers with impure hearts. Go with the purest hearts, and you will get from them what you want. If you want to become patriots, real patriots and protectors of the

weak, espousers of the cause of the poor and the oppressed to whom the education you get is not available, if you want to become guardians of the purity of every girl and woman in Burma, purify your hearts first. If you approach your mission in life in that spirit, all will be well.

TO THE ENGLISH STUDENTS—I

"It can be no pride to you that your nation is ruling over ours. No one chained himself. And no nation kept another in subjection without herself turning into a subject nation."

During his last trip to England in 1931, *in connection with the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji took the opportunity of visiting Eton when he was asked by students to give them the 'Hindu case', as Moulana Shaukat Ali had given them the Muslim one. The following is a bare summary of his speech on the occasion:*

You occupy a big place in England. Some of you will become Prime Ministers and Generals in future, and I am anxious to enter your hearts whilst your character is still being moulded, and whilst it is easy yet to enter your hearts. I should place before you certain facts as opposed to the false history traditionally imparted to you. Among high officials I find ignorance, meaning not absence of knowledge but knowledge based on false data, and I want you to have true data before you, as I think of you, not as Empire builders, but as members of a nation which will have ceased exploiting other nations and become the guardian of the peace of the world, not by force of arms but by its moral strength. Well, then, I tell you that there is nothing like a Hindu case, at least so far as I am concerned, for, in the matter of my country's freedom, I am no more a Hindu than you are. There is a Hindu case put up by the Hindu Mahasabha representatives who claim to represent the Hindu mind, but who, in my opinion, do not do so. They will have a national solution of the question, not because they are nationalists but because it suits them. I call that destructive tactics, and am pleading with them that, representing as they do

the great majority, they must step out and give to the smaller communities what they want, and the atmosphere would be as clear as if by magic. What the vast mass of Hindus feel and want nobody knows, but claiming as I do to have moved amongst them all these years, I think they do not care for these petty-fogging things, they are not troubled by the question of loaves and fishes in the shape of electoral seats and administrative posts. This bugbear of communalism is confined largely to the cities which are not India, but which are the blotting sheets of London and other Western cities, which consciously prey upon villages and share with you in exploiting them by becoming the commission agents of England. This communal question is of no importance before the great question of Indian freedom, of which the British ministers are studiously fighting shy. They forget that they cannot go on for long with a discontented, rebellious India—true, ours is a non-violent rebellion, but it is rebellion none the less. Freedom of India is superior to the disease which for the time is corroding some portions of the community, and if the constitutional question is satisfactorily solved, the communal distemper will immediately vanish. The moment the alien wedge is removed, the divided communities are bound to unite. There is, therefore, no Hindu case, and if there is one, it must go by the board. If you study this question it will profit you nothing, and when you go into its exasperating details you will, very likely, prefer to see us drowned in the Thames.

I am telling you God's truth when I say that the communal question does not matter and should not worry you at all. But if you will study history, study the much bigger question—How did millions of people make up their minds to adopt non-violence, and how they adhered to it? Study, not man in his animal nature, man following the law of the jungle, but study man in all his glory. Those engaged in communal squabbles are like specimens in a lunatic asylum. But study men laying down their lives, without hurting anyone, in the cause

of their country's freedom. Study man following the law of his higher nature, the law of love, so that when you grow to manhood you will have improved your heritage. It can be no pride to you that your nation is ruling over ours. No one chained himself. And no nation kept another in subjection without herself turning into a subject nation. It is a most sinful connection, a most unnatural connection that is existing at present between England and India, and I want you to bless our mission because we are naturally entitled to our freedom which is our birth-right, and we are doubly entitled to it by virtue of the penance and suffering we have undergone. I want you, when you grow up, to make a unique contribution to the glory of your nation, by emancipating it from its sin of exploitation, and thus contribute to the progress of mankind.

TO THE ENGLISH STUDENTS—II

"If we are all sons of the same God and partake of the same divine essence, we must partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race."

Addressing a meeting of students in London, where a Negro student from the Gold Coast, a Russian student, a Korean student and an English student asked questions, Gandhiji referred to the out-of-the-Conference work that he was doing and said:

It may be that the seed which is being sown now may result in softening the British spirit, and that it may result in the prevention of the brutalization of human beings. I have known the English nature in its hideous form in the Punjab. I have known it elsewhere also during these fifteen years of experience and through history. I have known the same thing happening. It is my purpose, by every means at my command, to prevent such a catastrophe occurring again. I am more concerned in preventing the brutalization of human nature than in preventing the sufferings of my own people. I have often gloated over the sufferings of my own people. I know that people who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity, but I also know that people, who become brutalized in their desperate efforts to get victory over their opponents, or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also. And, it cannot be a matter of pleasure to me or anyone else to see human nature dragged in the mire. If we are all sons of the same God and partake of the same divine essence, we must partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race. You can understand how repugnant it must be to invoke the beast in any human being, how much more so in

Englishmen amongst whom I count numerous friends. I invite you to give all the help you can in the endeavour that I am making.

To the Indian students, my appeal is to study this question in all thoroughness and if you really believe in the power of non-violence and truth, then, for God's sake express these two things in your daily life—not merely in the political field—and you will find that whatever you do in this direction, will help me in the struggle. It is possible that Englishmen and Englishwomen, who come into close touch with you, will assure the world that they have never seen students so good, so truthful as Indian students. Don't you think that that would go a long way towards vindicating our nation? The word 'self-purification' occurred in a Congress Resolution in 1920. From that moment the Congress realized that we were to purify ourselves. We were by self-sacrifice to purify ourselves so that we would deserve liberty, and so that God would also be with us. If that is the case, every Indian, whose life bears testimoney to the spirit of self-sacrifice, helps his country without having to do anything more. Such, in my opinion, is the strength of the means which the Congress adopted. Therefore, in the battle for freedom, every student here need to do nothing more than that he should purify himself and present a character above reproach and above suspicion.

WITH INDIAN STUDENTS IN ENGLAND

"India, as an independent partner, would have a special contribution to make in a world which is getting weary of war and bloodshed. In case of an outbreak of war, it would be the common effort of India and Great Britain to prevent war, not, indeed, by force of arms, but by the irresistible force of example."

In answer to a question asked by a student at the meeting held under the auspices of the Indian Students' Central Union in London, Gandhiji, explaining the Congress Demand for Complete Independence, said:

The Lahore resolution and the Karachi resolution are identical. The Karachi resolution mentions and reaffirms the Lahore resolution, but makes it clear that complete independence cannot possibly exclude an honourable partnership with Great Britain. Just as there can be a partnership between America and England, in the same way we can have a partnership between England and India. The Karachi resolution does contemplate severance, inasmuch as we do not want to belong to the Empire. But it is easy to conceive India as a partner of Great Britain.....

There was a time when I was enamoured of Dominion Status, but I found that Dominion Status is a status common to members of the same family—Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand etc. These are daughter states in a sense that India is not. The bulk of the population of these countries is English speaking, and their status implies some kind of relationship with Britain. The Lahore Congress erased the idea of the Empire from the minds of Indians, and placed independence in front of them. Karachi provided the interpretation which is

this, that even as an independent people we could have partnership with Great Britain, if, of course, she wants it. So long as the Empire idea persists, the centre will be Downing Street; but with India as an independent partner with Britain, the centre of policies would change from Downing Street to Delhi. India, as an independent partner, would have a special contribution to make in a world which is getting weary of war and bloodshed. In case of an outbreak of war, it would be the commmon effort of India and Great Britain to prevent war, not, indeed, by force of arms, but by the irresistible force of example. This may appear to you to be an extravagant claim and make you laugh at it. But here is the representative of the nation come to put forward that claim, and he is not prepared to subscribe to anything less, and you will find that if that is not gained I shall go away defeated, but not humiliated. But I shall have nothing less, and if the demand is not granted, I shall invite the country to go through a long fiery ordeal and write you, too, to give your hearty co-operation.

AT THE RALEIGH CLUB

"The British Empire is an Empire only because of India. That Emperorship must go, and I should love to be equal partner with Britain sharing her joys and sorrows, and equal partner with all Dominions. But it must be a partnership on equal terms."

In an absorbing talk with the members of the Raleigh Club, Oxford, who were all students from the Dominions, saturated with the Empire idea and keen students of politics, Gandhiji answered a number of questions, every one of which was straight and to the point. Following are some of them:

The Empire and Partnership

Q. How far would you cut India off from the Empire?

A. From the Empire entirely; from the British nation not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve. The British Empire is an Empire only because of India. That Emperoship must go, and I should love to be equal partner with Britain sharing her joys and sorrows, and equal partner with all Dominions. But it must be a partnership on equal terms.

Q. To what extent would India be prepared to share the sorrows of England?

A. To the fullest extent.

Q. Do you think India would unite her fortunes inextricably with England?

A. Yes, so long as she remains a partner. But if she discovers that the partnership is like one between a giant and a dwarf, or if it is utilized for exploitation of the other races of the earth, she would dissolve it. The aim is the common good of all nations of the earth, and if

it cannot be achieved, I have patience enough to wait for ages rather than patch up an unreal partnership.

Exploitation *vs.* Trading

Q. How would you distinguish exploitation from trading with a nation?

A. There are two tests:

(*i*) The other nation must want our goods which should in no case be dumped on it against its will.
(*ii*) The trade should not be backed by the navy.

And, whilst in this connection I may say that when you realize what wrong has been done by England to nations like us Indians, you will not sing *Britannia rules the waves* with any kind of pride. Things in English Readers which are matters for pride to-day, will have to be matters for shame, and you will have to cease to take any pride over the defeat or humiliation of other nations.

Communal Question

Q. How far is the British attitude towards the communal question an obstacle in your path?

A. Largely, or I should say half and half. There has been, consciously or unconsciously, that policy of divide and rule working here, as in India. The British officials have sometimes coquetted with one party, sometimes with another. Of course, if I were a British official, I would probably do the same and take advantage of dissensions to consolidate the rule. Our share of responsibility lies in the fact that we fall easy victims to the game.

Q. You think the British Government should suggest a solution of the communal question?

A. No. But I am the only party to say no. It is a humiliating thing, and neither the Congress nor I can be party to it. But I have suggested a Judicial Tribunal. There are some committals on the side of Government in Government of India and Provincial Government

despatches, though all Government solutions are tinged by political considerations. As for us, each party, though talking of justice, fights shy of arbitration, which shows that there is a good deal of expediency and it is a question of degree who is wrong and who is right. The Judicial Tribunal can certainly be trusted to adjudicate between the various claims.

Q. Could you tell us anything about the personnel?

A. They may be non-Hindu and non-Muslim judges of the Indian High Courts, or judges from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Q. Would their decision be accepted?

A. There can be no question of accepting the decision of a court. I may confess that there is a trick at the back of the suggestion. If Government will play the game and adopt my suggestion, the whole atmosphere will change and before the Judicial Committee comes into being, the communities will come out with a solution. For, there is sufficient material in the advances already made to satisfy the politically minded, and each one knows the flaws in his own claim.

SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS

"After all, what may suit England and the Western world need not necessarily suit us. Why should we be blotting sheets of Western civilization? Ours is a country governed by entirely different conditions."

Following are some of the most interesting questions that were asked by Indian students at the meeting in London, and Gandhiji's replies thereto:

Communal Problem

Q. Is not your demand of unity from the Mussalmans as absurd as the demand of unity that our Government makes of us? Why not give up everything rather than prevent the solution of such a big question?

A. You have made a double mistake. First, in comparing what I have said to the Mussalmans with what Government are saying to us. Seemingly, one would think, it was a substantial analogy, but if you look deeper you will find that there is no point of comparison. The British attitude is backed by the bayonet, whereas what I say proceeds from the heart and has nothing but affection to back it. The surgeon and the tyrant assassin use the same instruments with contrary results. What I have said is, that I could not possibly carry any demand which has not the backing of all Mussalman parties. How can I be guided by a mere majority? The deeper question is that whilst there are one set of friends asking for one thing, I have got another set of comrades with whom I have worked at this very thing, and who some time ago were introduced by the other set of friends as the most estimable co-workers. Am I to be guilty of disloyalty to them?

And, you must understand that there is nothing in my power to grant. I only told them that I would champion their demand, if it had a unanimous backing. As for my position of surrender to those who ask for rights, it has been a conviction of a life-time. If I could persuade the Hindus to adopt my attitude, there would be an immediate solution of the question,—but there, I have a Mt. Everest to climb. So, what I have said is not so foolish as you may imagine. If I alone had anything in my power, I should not have allowed the miserable question to hang on and make us an object of humiliation before the whole world.

Lastly, I have no religion so far as this question is concerned. That does not mean that I am not a Hindu, but my Hinduism is not tarnished or harmed by the surrender I propose. When I took upon myself alone to represent the Congress, I said to myself that I could not consider the question in terms of Hinduism, but in terms of nationalism, in terms of the rights and interests of all Indians. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that the Congress claims to be the custodian of all interests—even of English interests, in so far as they would regard India as their home and not claim any interests in conflict with those of the dumb millions.

States' Subjects and the R.T.C.

Q. Why did you say nothing about the subjects of the Native States at the Conference? I am afraid you have sacrificed their interests.

A. Well, those people did not expect me to make wordy declarations before the R.T.C., but they certainly expect me to place certain things before the Princes, which I have done. There would be time to criticize my action when it fails. I must be permitted to handle things after my own fashion. And, it is not the R. T. C. that is going to give me what I want for the subjects of the States. I have to take it from the Princes. Similar is the question of Hindu-Muslim unity. I would bend my knee before

Mussalmans and ask from them what I want, but I could not do it across the round table. You must know that I am a skilled advocate, and, after all, if I fail, you can take away the brief from me.

Indirect method of Election

Q. Why did you commit yourself to the indirect method of election? Don't you know that the Nehru Report disapproves of it?

A. Your question is good, but it betrays, what we call in logic, an ambiguous middle. Leave alone the indirect method of election in the Nehru Report. It is a different thing altogether. As for the method I propounded, I may tell you that it is daily growing upon me. All that you need to understand is, that it is intimately connected with adult suffrage which cannot be effectively worked except by it. After all, you will have seven hundred thousand electors, themselves elected by the whole adult population of India. Without my method, it will be an unwieldy and expensive electorate. Every village republic, to use the words of Maine, would choose an attorney and instruct him to elect a representative for the highest legislature in the land.

After all, what may suit England and the Western world need not necessarily suit us. Why should we be blotting sheets of Western civilization? Ours is a country governed by entirely different conditions. Why should we not have our own special method of election?

"The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal. And inasmuch as I know only of the poetry of love, you should not be surprised that I trust the English people."

At essentially a students' meeting in Oxford, all variety of questions were put to Gandhiji, some of which were characteristic of the Indian student in England. Here are some:

Faith in England

Q. Do you still believe in the good faith of England?

A. I believe in the good faith of England to the extent that I believe in the good faith of human nature. I believe that the sum-total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love. The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal. And inasmuch as I know only of the poetry of love, you should not be surprised that I trust the English people. I have often been bitter, and I have often said to myself: 'When will this camouflage end? When will these people cease to exploit these poor people?' But instinctively I get the reply: 'That is the heritage that they have had from Rome.' I must conduct myself in accordance with the dictates of the law of love, hoping and expecting in the long run to affect the English nature.

Industrialism

Q. What is your view about the industrialization of India?

A. Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must, if it becomes industrialized—will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, *viz*., that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its 3 millions, and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England. The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources —natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages. And in the course of a few years, the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?

'I.C.S.'

Q. What do you think of the I.C.S.?

A. The I.C.S. is not really the Indian Civil Service, it is the E.C.S. the English Civil Service. I say this knowing that there are Indians in the Service. Whilst

India is a subject nation, they cannot but serve the interests of England. But supposing India secures freedom, and supposing able Englishmen are prepared to serve India, then, they would be truly national servants. At the present time, under the name of I.C.S., they serve the exploiting Government. In a free India, Englishmen will come out to India either in a spirit of adventure, or from penance, and willingly serve on a small salary and put up with the rigours of Indian climate instead of being a burden on poor India, whilst they draw inordinately large salaries and try to live there in extra English extravagance, and reproduce even the English climate. We would have them as honoured comrades, but if there is even a lurking desire to lord it over us and behave as a superior race, they are not wanted.

Dominion Status and Independence

Q. Do you say that you are completely fit for independence?

A. If we are not, we will try to be. But the question of fitness does not arise for the simple reason that those who have robbed us of independence have to render it back. Supposing you repented of your conduct, you can express your repentance only by leaving us alone.

Q. But why not Dominion Status? The fact is that the English understand what Dominion Status means. They don't know what is partnership, whereas Dominion Status means very nearly what you want. Why not accept it, if it is offered, as the Irish accepted the Free State Status of their own accord. Does your partnership mean anything more than that?

A. Present the case to me, let me examine the contents, and if I find that Dominion Status that you present is the same thing as independence, I shall accept it at once. But I must throw the burden of proving it on those who say that Dominion Status is the same as independence.

THE UNTOUCHABLES' CASE

"I can tolerate the proposal for special representation of the Mussalmans and the Sikhs only as a necessary evil. It would be a positive danger for the untouchables. I am certain that the question of separate electorates for the untouchables is a modern manufacture of a Satanic Government."

Gandhiji's stout refusal to concede separate electorates to the untouchables was one of the pet puzzles at almost all the gatherings he addressed in England, on the occasion of his visit there in connection with the R. T. C. *Following is the gist of what he said at the Indian Students' Majlis in Oxford, as given by Shri Mahadev Desai:*

Muslims and Sikhs are all well-organized. The untouchables are not. There is very little political consciousness among them, and they are so horribly treated that I want to save them against themselves. If they had separate electorates, their lives would be miserable in villages which are the strongholds of Hindu orthodoxy. It is the superior class of Hindus who have to do penance for having neglected the untouchables for ages. That penance can be done by active social reform, and by making the lot of untouchables more bearable by acts of service, but not by asking for separate electorates for them. By giving them separate electorates, you will throw the apple of discord between the untouchables and the orthodox. You must understand, I can tolerate the proposal for special representation of the Mussalmans and the Sikhs only as a necessary evil. It would be a positive danger for the untouchables. I am certain that the question of separate electorates for the untouchables is a modern manufacture of a Satanic Government. The only thing needed is to put them on the voters' list, and

provide for fundamental rights for them in the constitution. In case they are unjustly treated and their representative is deliberately excluded, they would have the right to special Election Tribunal which would give them complete protection. It should be open to these Tribunals to order the unseating of an elected candidate and election of the excluded man.

Separate electorates to the untouchables will assure them bondage in perpetuity. The Mussalmans will never cease to be Mussalmans by having separate electorates. Do you want the untouchables to remain 'untouchables' for ever? Well, the separate electorates would perpetuate the stigma. What is needed is destruction of untouchability, and when you have done it, the bar sinister which has been imposed by an insolent 'superior' class upon an 'inferior' class will be destroyed. When you have destroyed the bar sinister, to whom will you give the separate electorates? Look at the history of Europe. Have you got separate electorates for the working classes or women? With adult franchise, you give the untouchables complete security. Even the orthodox Hindus would have to approach them for votes.

How, then, you ask, does Dr. Ambedkar, their representative, insist on separate electorates for them? I have the highest regard for Dr. Ambedkar. He has every right to be bitter. That he does not break our heads is an act of self-restraint on his part. He is to-day so very much saturated with suspicion that he cannot see anything else. He sees in every Hindu a determined opponent of the untouchables, and it is quite natural. The same thing happened to me in my early days in South Africa, where I was hounded out by the Europeans wherever I went. It is quite natural for him to vent his wrath. But the separate electorates that he seeks will not give him social reform. He may himself mount to power and position, but nothing good will accrue to the untouchables. I can say all this with authority, having lived with the untouchables and having shared their joys and sorrows all these years.

STUDENTS AND VACATION

"A student has no business to multiply delicacies and luxuries. The student life is meant for the cultivation of self-restraint in everything."

The following is a condensed rendering of a Hindi letter, received from a student in Dehra Dun:

"In the hostel belonging to our college, hitherto the *bhangis* have taken the leavings of our dishes. But since the awakening, we have stopped this practice and we have been giving them clean *chappatis* and *dal*.

"Harijans are dissatisfied with this. In the leavings, they get some ghee and delicacies. The students cannot afford to set apart all these things for Harijans. Then, there is this difficulty. We may adhere to the new practice we have adopted, but the Harijans will continue to receive leavings of caste-dinners etc. What is now to be done? And at the same time you answer this question, I would like you also to say how best we can use our vacation which will presently be upon us."

The difficulty that the correspondent has raised is real. The Harijans have got so used to the leavings that they not only do not mind them, but look forward to them. Not to receive them, they will regard as a positive deprivation. But this tragic fact just shows the degradation both of Harijans and of caste-Hindus. The students need not worry about what happens in other places. The first thing is for them to be in the right, and I suggest to them that they should resolutely set apart for their sweepers a liberal amount of the food that is ordinarily cooked for them. The Dehra Dun student has raised the question of cost. I know something of the hostel life all over India. It is my conviction that the general body of students spend far more on delicacies and luxuries than they should. I know,

too, that many students consider it undignified not to leave their plates with ample remains of the helpings they had. I suggest to them that to have any leavings whatsoever on their plates is undignified and a sign of disregard of the poor people. No one, least of all a student, has a right to take on his plate more than he could comfortably eat. A student has no business to multiply the delicacies and luxuries. The student life is meant for the cultivation of self-restraint in everything, and if they will follow the method of self-restraint and adopt the clean habit of not having any leavings on their plates, they would find that they would effect a saving in their expenses, in spite of setting apart a generous portion for their sweepers from the ordinary food that may be cooked for themselves.

And, then, after having done that, I should expect them to treat the Harijans as if they were their own blood-relations, speak to them kindly and tell them why it is necessary for them to give up the unclean habit of eating the leavings of other people's plates, and of making other reforms in their lives. As to the use of the vacation by students, if they will approach the work with zeal, they can undoubtedly do many things. I enumerate a few of them.

1. Conduct night and day schools with just a short course, well conceived, to last for the period of the vacation.
2. Visit Harijan quarters and clean them, taking the assistance of Harijans if they would give it.
3. Taking Harijan children for excursions, showing them sights near their villages, and teaching them how to study Nature, and generally interesting them in their surroundings, giving them, by the way, a working knowledge of Geography and History.
4. Reading to them simple stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.
5. Teaching them simple *Bhajans*.
6. Cleaning the Harijan boys of all the dirt that they would find about their persons, and giving both the grown-ups and the children simple lessons in hygiene.

7. Taking a detailed census, in selected areas, of the condition of Harijans.

8. Taking medical aid to the ailing Harijans.

This is but a sample of what is possible to do among the Harijans. It is a list hurriedly made, but a thoughtful student will, I have no doubt, add many other items.

I have so far confined my attention to the service of Harijans, but there is a service no less necessary to be rendered to caste-Hindus. The students can often, in the gentlest manner possible, carry the message of anti-untouchability to them in spite of themselves. There is so much ignorance which can be easily dispelled by a judicious distribution of clean authentic literature. The students can make a survey of those who are for abolishing untouchability and who are against, and whilst they are making this survey, they may take note of wells, schools, ponds and temples open to Harijans, and of those closed to them.

If they will do all these things in a methodical and persistent manner, they will find the results to be startling. Every student should keep a log-book in which he should enter the details of his work, and at the end of the vacation a comprehensive but brief report of the results of their labours could be prepared and sent by them to the Harijan Sevak Sangh of their province. Whether other students accept all or any of the suggestions made here, I shall expect my correspondent to give me a report of what *he* and his associates have done.

STUDENTS AND HARIJAN SERVICE

"If untouchability is really removed from the Hindu heart, we shall soon discover that we are all one, and not different peoples —Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, whatever we may call ourselves."

In the course of his speech at the Nagpur Students' meeting, Gandhiji said:

You have spoken of me in terms, which if I believed to be true of myself, I do not know where I would be. But I know my place. I am a humble servant of India, and in trying to serve India, I serve humanity at large. I discovered, in my early days, that the service of India is not inconsistent with the service of humanity. As I grew older in years, and I hope also in wisdom, I saw that the discovery was well made, and after nearly 50 years of public life, I am able to say to-day that my faith in the doctrine, that the service of one's nation is not inconsistent with the service of the world, has grown. It is a good doctrine. Its acceptance alone will ease the situation in the world, and stop the mutual jealousies between nations inhabiting this globe of ours. You have said truly that, in taking up this war against untouchability, I have not confined myself to Hinduism. I have said more than once that, if untouchability is removed in its fulness from the Hindu heart, it will have far-reaching consequences, inasmuch as it touches millions of human beings. As I said last night to the great meeting in Nagpur, if untouchability is really removed from the Hindu heart, that is, if the high-caste Hindus purge themselves of this terrible taint, we shall soon discover that we are all one and not different peoples—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, whatever we may call ourselves. We

shall feel the unity, once the barrier of untouchability is removed. As I have often said, untouchability is a hydra-headed monster, appearing in many shapes. Some of them are very subtle. If I have jealousy for any human being, that also is a species of untouchability. I do not know if my dream about the removal of untouchability will be fully realized while I am living. All those who are religiously inclined, those who believe not in formal religion but in the essence of religion, cannot but believe in the removal of a subtle type of untouchability that affects the lives of a vast mass of humanity. If Hindu hearts can be purged of this evil, our eyes of understanding will be more and more opened. It is not possible to estimate the gain to humanity when untouchability is really removed. You can now have no difficulty in understanding why I have staked my life for this one thing.

If you, the students who have assembled here, have followed me so far, and understood the implications of this mission of mine, you will soon extend the help I want from you. Many students have written to me asking what part they can take in helping this movement. It is a surprise to me that students are obliged to ask this question. The field is so vast and near you that you need not ask the question as to what you may do and what you may not. It is not a political question. It may become one, but for you and me, for the time being, it is not connected with politics. My life is governed by religion. I have said that even my politics are derived from my religion. I never lost sight of the principle that governs my life when I began dabbling in politics.

As this is a humanitarian campaign, students must devote a part of their spare time, if not the whole, to the service of thousands of Harijans. By giving me this magnificent purse you have certainly equalled the brightest records of students' meetings, which I have addressed in my many peregrinations throughout the length and breadth of India. But I want much more from you. I have found that, if I get many helpers who can give their spare time,

much work can be done. This work cannot be done by hired labour. With hired labour we cannot go to Harijan quarters and sweep their roads, enter their houses and wash their children.

I have described in the columns of the *Harijan* what students can do. A Harijan teacher has shown what a Herculean task it is for him to tackle. Even wild children are better than Harijan children. Wild children are not sunk in utter degradation as the Harijan children are, nor do they live in such filthy surroundings. This problem cannot be tackled by hired labour. No amount of money can enable me to do this. It must be your prerogative. It is an acid test of the education received by you in schools and colleges.

Your worth will not be measured by your ability to make faultless English speeches. Your worth will be measured by the service you render to the poor, and not by Government posts worth Rs. 60. or Rs. 600 that you may have got. I wish you would do this work in the spirit I suggest. I have not met a single student who has said that he cannot spare one hour per day. If you write your diary from day to day, you will find that you waste many a precious hour in the 365 days of the year. If you want to turn your education to good account, you will turn your attention to this work while this hurricane campaign lasts.

Erstwhile students are serving Harijans within a radius of 5 miles round about Wardha. They are doing good silent work; therefore, you do not know them. I invite you to see their work. It is hard but pleasurable. It will give you joy greater than your cricket or tennis. I have repeatedly said that money will come if I have real, intelligent, honest workers. As a boy of 18, I began my education in begging. I have seen that money can be found easily if we have the right kind of workers. Money alone will never satisfy me. I would ask you to pledge yourselves to devote a definite number of spare hours to Harijan service. As you, Mr. President, have said, I am a dreamer. I am, indeed, a practical dreamer. My

dreams are not airy nothings. I want to convert my dreams into realities, as far as possible. Therefore, I must hasten to auction the gifts I have received from you.

THE WIDER MESSAGE

"It is untouchability with all its subtle forms that separates us from one another, and makes life itself unlovely and difficult to live."

Addressing the students of the Union Christian College of Alwaye, Malabar, Gandhiji said :

My message is exceedingly simple. It is no new truth that has dawned upon me to-day. I have, to the best of my ability, striven to live up to it for the last fifty years. And the more I have succeeded in living up to it, the greater has been my inward joy. Nor is it for the first time that I am delivering this message to India. But because of some incidents in the recent past, it comes to the people as a new thing. My message is simply this: that *savarna* Hindus, who have been considering themselves superior to those whom they have called untouchables, unapproachables, invisibles, or *avarna* Hindus, should realize that this arrogation of superiority has no sanction whatsoever in the *Shastras*. If I discovered that those scriptures, which are known as *Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagvad Gita, Smritis*, etc., clearly showed that they claimed divine authority for untouchability as I have described it to you, then, nothing on this earth would hold me to Hinduism. I should throw it overboard, as I should throw overboard a rotten apple. My reason is offended and my heart is wounded at the very thought that God Himself, who has created both *savarna* Hindus and *avarna* Hindus, should impose this bar sinster between His children. The very thought that the *Rishis*, who gave the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, and who, in every *mantra* that they pronounced, taught the unity of God, could ever conceive of any such thing as untouchability,

as it is practised to-day in Hinduism, must be repugnant to every intelligent person. But prejudice and superstitions die hard. They cloud the reason, befog the intellect and harden the heart. And so, you find learned men defending this untouchability.

But you, students, should know that behind this message there lurks also a much greater message. This monster of untouchability has invaded every form of society in India; and the idea behind this message is that there should be, not only no untouchability as between Hindus and Hindus, but that there should be no untouchability whatsoever between Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans, Parsis and the rest. I am convinced that if this great change of heart can be brought about among millions of *savarna* Hindus, and if their hearts can be purified—as certainly they will be purified—we should live in India as one people, trusting each other, and without any mutual distrust or suspicion. It is untouchability with all its subtle forms that separates us from one another, and makes life itself unlovely and difficult to live.

You can now, therefore, understand why I am drawing upon the sympathy of all Indians, to whatever faith they may belong. Indeed, I have not hesitated to ask the support of the whole world, not by way of pecuniary offering, but by their sympathy, their prayers and their study of the question with all its implications. I want their heart sympathy, which is infinitely greater than any pecuniary offering. I do not stretch out my hand before them for money, because they are not debtors to Harijans. It is for *savarna* Hindus to discharge this debt.

To conclude. This prayerful support and sympathy can only be given by non-Hindus, if they have no distrust of this movement and if they are satisfied that this is a movement of inward purification and is deeply religious. Remember, that I have not idly given this message which has come straight from the heart. I have gladly taken your purse which is a spontaneous offering from you.

But I have accepted it as a bond between you and myself, and as a token of your determination to give me the fullest support you are capable of giving. And since I am a good accountant, I shall ask for an account from you and shall want to know from time to time what part you have played in this movement.

PROVE YOUR CREDENTIALS

"Character alone will have effect on the masses. Masses will not argue. They will simply want to know who are the men who go to them. If those men have credentials, the masses will listen to them; if they have no credentials, the masses will not listen."

Advising the students of Madras to take the broom and the bucket, and clean out all the dirty Harijan quarters, and to serve the Hariians in a variety of ways, Gandhiji said:

If you want to convince Hindu society that untouchability cannot be part of religion, and that it is a hideous error, you have to develop character and to show in your lives that to believe in some people being touchables and some untouchables is not religion but the reverse. If you have no character to lose, people will have no faith in you. You will have to move among the masses; you will have to bring about a change in their hearts. The so-called orthodox do not represent the masses, nor do they represent the correct interpretation of scriptures. They can react on the masses. But character alone will have effect on the masses. Masses will not argue. They will simply want to know who are the men who go to them. If those men have credentials, the masses will listen to them; if they have no credentials, the masses will not listen. It is in the midst of these people that you have to go and bring a ray of light and hope. You will have to bend your backs and work in their midst, and assure them that you have gone to them not with any mental reservations, nor with any base motives, but with pure motive of serving them and taking the message of love and peace in their midst. If you will do that, you will find a ready response from them.

CASTE AND COMMUNAL QUESTION

"I do not believe in caste in the modern sense. It is an excrescence and a handicap on progress. Nor, do I believe in inequalities between human beings. We are all absolutely equal. But equality is of souls and not bodies."

A student who sends his name writes:

"I know you are thinking furiously, day and night, about the communal problem in India, and as you have declared, the solution of this problem is one of the two conditions of your participation in the next plenary session of the Round Table Conference. At present, the solution of the problem of minorities depends, chiefly, upon the leaders of the various communities, but to eradicate the root of all inter-communal tension, any provisional settlement, if at all reached by them, would not be sufficient.

"To strike at the root of all communal differences, a much closer social intercourse is absolutely necessary. At present, the social life of each community is almost completely segregated from that of other castes and creeds. Take the Hindus and the Muslims. On the occasion of the important festivals of the Hindus, the Muslim brethren do not greet the Hindus, and *vice versa*. This results in a feeling of communal exclusiveness, which is so very detrimental to the interests of the nation.

"The next step, as has been suggested by some people, would be inter-communal marriages. But so far as my knowledge of your convictions goes, I think you are a firm believer in the caste system. This means, then, that according to you inter-communal marriages will be baneful to the Indians in the long run. So long as there remain some distinctions between the two communities, it is very difficult to wipe out the communal differences altogether.

"What kind of relation do you envisage, in the light of your convictions, among the various communities in the 'New India' of *Dharma Raj*? Shall the different communities continue to remain separate in social intercourse? I think, upon the solution of this problem depends the future well-being of the Indian nation.

"One point more. If we believe in the caste-system, the position

of the so-called untouchables becomes very delicate. If we want to elevate the 'untouchables', we cannot possibly retain the caste restrictions. Difference in caste or religion creates an atmosphere of separateness, which is a curse so far as the promotion of universal brotherhood is concerned. The caste-system gives rise to a false sense of superiority, which causes unfortunate consequences. How, then, can one justify one's faith in the ancient caste restrictions?

"These problems have been agitating my mind for several months, and I have not been able to understand your point of view. It is with a view to solve these questions that I venture to ask you to remove my difficulties.

"I am a student of the B. A. Class in the University of Allahabad. My earnest desire is to create a brotherly feeling among the Hindus and the Muslims, by all means possible. But the difficulties that confront me, really, are very many. One of them is regarding the caste system, as I have already put before you. The second is about flesh-eating. How can I participate in a Muslim dinner where meat is served? There can be no one better than yourself who can guide me. It is, therefore, that I beg to approach you through this letter."

It is not quite correct to say that Hindus and Mussalmans do not greet one another on their respective sacred days. But one would certainly like much more frequent and extensive interchanges of such greetings.

As for caste, I have frequently said that I do not believe in caste in the modern sense. It is an excrescence and a handicap on progress. Nor, do I believe in inequalities between human beings. We are all absolutely equal. But equality is of souls and not bodies. Hence, it is a mental state. We need to think of, and to assert, equality because we see great inequalities in the physical world. We have to realize equality in the midst of this apparent external inequality. Assumption of superiority by any person over any other is a sin against God and man. Thus caste, in so far as it connotes distinctions in status, is an evil.

I do, however, believe in *varna* which is based on hereditary occupations. *Varnas* are four to mark four universal occupations,—imparting knowledge, defending

the defenceless, carrying on agriculture and commerce, and performing service through physical labour. These occupations are common to all mankind, but Hinduism, having recognized them as the law of our being, has made use of it in regulating social relations and conduct. Gravitation affects us all, whether one knows its existence or not. But scientists who knew the law have made it yield results that startled the world. Even so, has Hinduism startled the world by its discovery and application of the law of *varna*. When Hindus were seized with inertia, abuse of *varna* resulted in innumerable castes, with unnecessary and harmful restrictions as to inter-marriage and inter-dining. The law of *varna* has nothing to do with these restrictions. People of different *varnas* may inter-marry and inter-dine. These restrictions may be necessary in the interest of chastity and hygiene. But a Brahman who marries a Shudra girl, or *vice versa*, commits no offence against the law of *varna*.

Marriage outside one's religion stands on a different footing. Even here, so long each is free to observe his or her religion, I can see no moral objection to such unions. But, I do not believe that these unions can bring peace. They may follow peace. I can see nothing but disaster following any attempt to advocate Hindu-Muslim unions, so long as the relations between the two remain strained. That such unions may be happy in exceptional circumstances can be no reason for their general advocacy. Inter-dining between Hindus and Mussalmans does take place even now on a large scale. But that again has not resulted in promoting peace. It is my settled conviction that inter-marriage and inter-dining have no bearing on communal unity. The causes of discord are economic and political—and it is these that have to be removed. There is inter-marriage and inter-dining in Europe, but the Europeans have fought amongst themselves as we Hindus and Mussalmans have never fought in all history. Our masses have stood aside.

The untouchables are a class apart—a standing re-

proach to Hinduism. The castes are a handicap, they are no sin. Untouchability is a sin, a grievous crime, and will eat up Hinduism, if the latter does not kill the snake in time. 'Untouchables' should no longer be the outcasts of Hinduism. They should be regarded as honoured members of Hindu society, and should belong to the *varna* for which their occupation fits them.

According to my definition of *varna*, there is no *varna* in operation at present in Hinduism. The so-called Brahmans have ceased to impart knowledge. They take to various other occupations. This is more or less true of the other *varnas*. In reality, being under foreign domination, we are all slaves, and hence, less than Shudras—untouchables of the West.

The correspondent being a vegetarian finds it difficult to reconcile himself to dining with meat-eating Mussalmans. But he should remember that there are many more meat-eating Hindus than Mussalmans. A vegetarian may with impunity dine with meat-eaters, Hindu and others, so long as he has eatable food cleanly prepared and placed before him. He will always have fruit and milk wherever he goes.

SCIENCE AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

"I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary, the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration, and if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation."

A student who is carrying on post-graduate studies in America writes:

> "I am one of those who are extremely interested in the utilization of Indian resources as one of the means for remedying the poverty of India. This is my sixth year in this country. My special field is wood-chemistry. I would have entered executive service, or taken up medical studies, if I were not so profoundly convinced of the importance of the industrial development of India....Would you approve of my going into industrial enterprise, say, pulp and paper manufacture? What is your attitude in general on the question of adopting a sane, humanitarian industrial policy for India? Do you stand for the progress of science? I mean such progress which brings blessings to mankind, *e. g.*, the work of Pasteur of France, and that of Dr. Benting of Toronto?"

I answer this question publicly, as so many inquiries are received by me from students all over, and as so much misconception exists regarding my views on science. I should have no objection, whatsoever, to industrial enterprise such as the student has in view. Only, I would not call it necessarily humanitarian. A humanitarian industrial policy for India means to me a glorified revival of hand-spinning, for through it alone can pauperism, which is blighting the lives of millions of human beings in their own cottages in this land, be immediately removed. Everything else may thereafter be added, so as to increase the productive capacity of this country. I would, therefore, have all young men with scientific training to utilize their skill in making the spinning-wheel, if it is possible,

a more efficient instrument of production in India's cottages. I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary, the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration, and if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation. I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and humanity so-called, and all the scientific discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence. If the circulation of blood theory could not have been discovered without vivisection, the human kind could well have done without it. And, I see the day clearly dawning when the honest scientist of the West will put limitations upon the present methods of pursuing knowledge. Future measurements will take note not merely of the human family but of all that lives, and even as we are slowly but surely discovering that it is an error to suppose that Hindus can thrive upon the degradation of a fifth of themselves, or that peoples of the West can rise or live upon the exploitation and degradation of the Eastern and African nations, so shall we realize, in the fulness of time, that our dominion over the lower order of creation is not for their slaughter, but for their benefit equally with ours. For, I am as certain that they are endowed with a soul as that I am.

WHAT MAY YOUTH DO

"Professors would do well not to burden either their boys or girls with literary studies during the vacation, but prescribe to them educative outings in the villages. Vacation must be utilized for recreation, never for memorizing books."

I got now sometime ago a letter on behalf of the Agra Youth League, asking the following question:

> "We are in the dark with regard to our main activities in future. We wish to co-operate with the peasants and neighbours of the locality, but no practical method seems to be at hand. We hope that you will kindly suggest some practical way out of the difficulty. We think ours is not the only institution facing this difficulty. Accordingly, it is highly desirable that you should suggest a definite solution of this problem through the columns of *Navajivan* or *Young India*."

The address of the Youth League at Gorakhpore contained a similar sentiment, and also asked how to face the bread problem that stared the youth in the face. In my opinion, the two questions are intertwined, and both can be solved if the youth can be persuaded to make village life their goal rather than city life. We are inheritors of a rural civilization. The vastness of our country, the vastness of the population, the situation and the climate of the country have, in my opinion, destined it for a rural civilization. Its defects are well-known, but not one of them is irremediable. To uproot it and substitute for it an urban civilization seems to me an impossibility, unless we are prepared by some drastic means to reduce the population from three hundred million to three, or say even thirty. I can, therefore, suggest remedies on the assumption that we must perpetuate the present rural civilization, and endeavour to rid it of its acknowledged defects. This can only be done if the youth of the country will

settle down to village life. And if they will do this, they must reconstruct their life and pass every day of their vacation in the villages surrounding their colleges or high schools, and those who have finished their education, or are not receiving any, should think of settling down in villages. The All-India Spinners' Association, with all its multifarious branches and institutions that have sprung up under its protection, affords an easy opportunity to the students to qualify themselves for service and to maintain themselves honourably, if they will be satisfied with the simple life which obtains in the villages. It maintains nearly 1500 young men of the country, drawing anything between Rs. 15 to Rs. 150, and it can take in almost an unlimited number of earnest, honest and industrious young men who will not be ashamed of manual work. Then, there are national educational institutions affording a similar though limited scope, limited only because national education is not in fashion. I, therefore, commend to the attention of all earnest youngmen, who are dissatisfied with their existing surroundings and outlook, to study these two great national institutions which are doing silent but most effective constructive work, and which present the youth of the country with an opportunity both for service and for honourable maintenance. Whether, however, they avail themselves of these two great nation-building agencies or do not, let them penetrate the villages and find an unlimited scope for service, research and true knowledge. Professors would do well not to burden either their boys or girls with literary studies during the vacation, but prescribe to them educative outings in the villages. Vacations must be utilized for recreation, never for memorizing books.

DEFINITE SUGGESTIONS

"Service of self is strictly limited by that of the country, and hence excludes a living beyond the means of this absolutely poor country. To serve our villages is to establish *Swaraj*. Everything else is but an idle dream."

During the U. P. tour, I received the following letter from Allahabad students:

> "With reference to your article in a recent issue of *Young India* on rural civilization, we beg to say that we appreciate your suggestion of going back to villages after finishing our education. But this statement is not a sufficient guide for us. We want some definite outline clearly chalked out for us, and what we are expected to do. We are tired of hearing indefinite and vague suggestions. We have a burning desire to do everything for our countrymen, but we do not know where to begin definitely, and what hopes we may entertain as to the probable results and benefits from our labours. What will be the sources of obtaining our income from Rs. 15 to Rs. 150, as suggested by you? We hope, you will very kindly throw light on these points in your address to the student-gathering, or in some issue of your esteemed paper."

Though I dealt with the matter in one of my addresses to students, and though a definite programme has been placed before students in these pages, it is worthwhile reiterating and, perhaps, more pointedly, the scheme adumbrated before.

The writers of the letter want to know what they may do after finishing their studies. I want to tell them that the grown-up students and, therefore, all college students should begin village work, even whilst they are studying. Here is a scheme for such part-time workers.

The students should devote the whole of their vacation to village service. To this end, instead of taking their walks along beaten paths, they should walk to the villages

within easy reach of their institutions, and study the condition of the village-folk and befriend them. This habit will bring them in contact with the villagers who, when the students actually go to stay in their midst, will, by reason of the previous occasional contact, receive them as friends rather than as strangers to be looked upon with suspicion. During the long vacation, the students will stay in the villages, and offer to conduct classes for adults, and to teach the rules of sanitation to the villagers, and attend to the ordinary cases of illness. They will also introduce the spinning-wheel amongst them, and teach them the use of every spare minute. In order that this may be done, students and teachers will have to revise their ideas of the uses of vacation. Often do thoughtless teachers prescribe lessons to be done during the vacation. This, in my opinion, is in any case a vicious habit. Vacation is just the period when students' minds should be free from the routine work, and be left free for self-help and original development. The village work, I have mentioned, is easily the best form of recreation and light instruction. It is obviously the best preparation for dedication to exclusive village service after finishing the studies.

The scheme for full village service does not now need to be elaborately described. Whatever was done during the vacation, has now to be put on a permanent footing. The villagers will also be prepared for a fuller response. The village life has to be touched at all points, the economic, the hygienic, the social and the political. The immediate solution of the economic distress is, undoubtedly, the wheel in the vast majority of cases. It at once adds to the income of the villagers, and keeps them from mischief. The hygienic includes insanitation and disease. Here, the student is expected to work with his own body and labour to dig trenches for burying excreta and other refuse and turning them into manure, for cleaning wells and tanks, for building easy embankments, removing rubbish, and, generally, to make the villages more habitable.

The village worker has also to touch the social side, and gently persuade the people to give up bad customs and bad habits, such as untouchability, infant marriages, unequal matches, drink and drug evil, and many local superstitions. Lastly, comes the political part. Here, the worker will study the political grievances of the villagers and teach them the dignity of freedom, self-reliance and self-help in everything. This makes, in my opinion, complete adult education. But this does not complete the task of the village worker. He must take care and charge of the little ones, and begin their instruction, and carry on a night school for adults. This literary training is but part of a whole education course, and only a means to the larger end described above.

I claim that the equipment for this service is a large heart and a character above suspicion. Given these two conditions, every other needed qualification *is* bound to follow.

The last question is that of bread and butter. A labourer is worthy of his hire. The incoming President is organizing a National Provincial Service. The All-India Spinners' Association is a growing and stable organization. It furnishes young men with character an illimitable field for service. A living wage is assured. Beyond that there is no money in it. You cannot serve both self and country. Service of self is strictly limited by that of the country, and hence excludes a living beyond the means of this absolutely poor country. To serve our villages is to establish *Swaraj*. Everything else is but an idle dream.

HOW STUDENTS MAY HELP

"You can serve the country by spinning daily. . . by daily selling some *Khadi* . . . . by saving at least one pice per day and holding the collection at my disposal. . . . by visiting Harijan quarters."

In a letter to a university student, who expressed his keenness to serve during his spare time without prejudice to his studies, Gandhiji gave him these elaborate suggestions:

You can serve the country:

1. By spinning daily even and strong yarn for the sake of *Daridranarayana*, by keeping a diary of the time for which you have spun; of the quantity spun, with its weight and count; and reporting the work to me every month. Yarn should be carefully collected and held at my disposal.

2. By daily selling some *Khadi* on behalf of the local certified *Bhandar*, and by keeping a record of your daily sales.

3. By saving at least one pice per day.

4. By holding the collection at my disposal. The implication of the adjective 'least' should be understood, namely, that if you are able to save more, you should pour more in the *Daridranarayana's* chest.

5. By visiting Harijan quarters in company with other students; and with your companions cleaning the quarters, befriending the children and giving them useful lessons in sanitation, hygiene etc.

Then, if you can save some more time, you should learn some village industries for future service of villagers after finishing your studies. When you have been able to do these things, and have still time and ambition for doing more, consistently with your studies, you can ask me and I shall send you more suggestions.

QUESTION BOX

How to use Vacation

Q. What can students do during vacation? They do not want to study and would get tired of constant spinning.

A. If they get tired of spinning, it shows that they have not understood its life-giving property and its intrinsic fascination. What is the difficulty in understanding that every yard spun adds to the national wealth? A yard of yarn is not much, but as it is the easiest form of labour it can be easily multiplied. Thus, the potential value of spinning is very great. Students are expected to understand the mechanism of the *Charkha* and keep it in good order. Those who do so, will find a peculiar fascination in spinning. I refuse, therefore, to suggest any other occupation. But, of course, spinning may give place to more pressing work—I mean more pressing in point of time. Their help may be required in putting the neighbouring villages in a good sanitary condition, and in attending to the sick or in educating Harijan children etc.

Students and the Coming Fight

Q. Although a college student, I am a four-anna member of the Congress. You say I may not take any active part in the coming struggle whilst I am studying. What part do you expect the student world to take in the freedom movement?

A. There is a confusion of thought in the question. The fight is going on now, and it will continue till the nation has come to her birthright. Civil Disobedience is one of the many methods of fighting. So far as I can judge to-day, I have no intention of calling out students. Millions will not take part in Civil Disobedience. But

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millions will help in a variety of ways.

1. Students can, by learning the art of voluntary discipline, fit themselves for leadership in the various branches of the nation's work.

2. They can aim not at finding lucrative careers but at becoming national servants after completing their studies.

3. They can set apart for the national coffers a certain sum from their allowances.

4. They can promote inter-communal, inter-provincial and inter-caste harmony among themselves, and fraternize with Harijans by abolishing the least trace of untouchability from their lives.

5. They can spin regularly and use certified *Khadi* to the exclusion of all other cloth, as well as hawk *Khadi*.

6. They can set apart a certain time every week, if not every day, for service in a village or villages nearest to their institutions, and during the vacation devote a certain time daily for national service.

The time may, of course, come when it may be necessary to call out the students, as I did before. Though the contingency is remote, it will never come if I have any say in the matter, unless the students have qualified themselves previously in the manner above described.

A Ticklish Question

Q. I am a Hindu student. I have been great friends with a Muslim, but we have fallen out over the question of idol worship. I find solace in idol worship, but I cannot give an answer to my Muslim friend in terms of what may be called convincing. Will you say something on idol worship in *Harijan*?

A. My sympathies are both with you and your Muslim friend. I suggest your reading my writings on the question in *Young India* and, if you feel at all satisfied, let your Muslim friend read them, too. If your friend has real love for you, he will conquer his prejudice against idol worship. A friendship, which exacts oneness of opinion and conduct, is not worth much. Friends have to

tolerate one another's ways of life and thought, even though they may be different, except where the difference is fundamental. May be, your friend has come to think that it is sinful to associate with you as you are an idolator. Idolatry is bad, not so idol worship. An idolator makes a fetish of his idol. An idol worshipper sees God even in a stone and, therefore, takes the help of an idol to establish his union with God. Every Hindu child knows that the stone in the famous temple in Benares is not Kashi Vishwanath. But he believes that the Lord of the Universe does reside specially in that stone. This play of the imagination is permissible and healthy. Every edition of the Gita on a bookstall has not that sanctity which I ascribe to my own copy. Logic tells me there is no more sanctity in my copy than in any another. The sanctity is in my imagination. That imagination brings about marvellous concrete results. It changes men's lives. I am of opinion that, whether we admit it or not, we are all idol worshippers or idolators, if the distinction I have drawn is not allowed. A book, a building, a picture, a carving are, surely, all images in which God does reside, but they are not God. He, who says they are, errs.

Educated Unemployment

Q. The problem of unemployment among the educated is assuming alarming proportions. You, of course, condemn higher education, but those of us, who have been to the University, realize that we do develop mentally there. Why should you discourage anyone from learning? Would not a better solution be for unemployed graduates to go in for mass education, and let the villagers give them food in return? And, could not Provincial Governments come to their aid and help them with some money and clothing?

A. I am not against higher education. But I am against only a few lakhs of boys and girls receiving it at the expense of the poor tax-payers. Moreover, I am against the type of higher education that is given. It is much cry and little wool. The whole system of higher educa-

tion, and for that matter all education, needs radical overhauling. But your difficulty is about unemployment. In this, you have my sympathy and co-operation. On the principle that every labourer is worthy of his hire, every graduate who goes to a village to serve it is entitled to be housed, fed and clothed by the villagers. And they do it, too. But they will not, when the graduate lives like *saheblog* and costs them ten times as much as they can afford. His life must accord, as nearly as possible, with that of the villagers, and his mission must find appreciation among them.

Bolshevism

Q. What is your opinion about the social economics of Bolshevism, and how far do you think they are fit to be copied by our country?

A. I must confess that I have not yet been able fully to understand the meaning of Bolshevism. All that I know is, that it aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics, and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord, or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion, there would be nothing like it. But, from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force, but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective state ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime, in its present form, cannot last for long. For, it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence. But be that as it may, there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain: the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes.

UNDER SWARAJ

Q. What, in your opinion, ought to be the basis of India's future economic constitution? What place will such institutions as savings banks, insurance companies etc. have in it?

A. According to me, the economic constitution of India, and for the matter of that of the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And, this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of elementary necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are, or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness to-day, not only in this unhappy land, but other parts of the world, too. It is this evil that the *Khadi* movement is calculated to remedy. Savings banks and insurance companies will be there even when the economic reforms, suggested to me, have been effected, but their nature will have undergone a complete transformation. Savings banks to-day in India, though a useful institution, do not serve the very poorest. As for our insurance companies, they are of no use whatever to the poor. What part they can play in an ideal scheme of reconstruction, such as I have postulated, is more than I can say. The function of savings banks ought to be to enable the poorest to husband their hard earned savings, and to subserve the interest of the country generally. Though I have lost faith in most Government institutions, as I have said before, savings banks are good so far as they go, but unfortunately to-day their services are available only to urban section of the community, and so long as our gold reserves are located outside India, they can hardly be regarded as trust-worthy institutions.

In the event of a war, these banks may become not only utterly useless but even a curse to the people, inasmuch as the Government will not scruple to employ the funds held by these banks against the depositors themselves. No Government institution can be depended upon to remain loyal to the interests of the people in emergency, if they are not controlled by, and not run in the interests of, the people. So long, therefore, as this primary condition is absent, banks are in the last resort additional links to keep the people in chains. They may exist, but it is well to understand where we are in respect even of such harmless-looking institutions.

Foreign *v.* Swadeshi

Q. What is your opinion about the importation of foreign goods, other than cloth, into India? Are there any foreign commodities which you would like to see immediately laid under prohibition? What do you think should be the nature of India's foreign trade in the future?

A. I am more or less indifferent with regard to trade in foreign goods other than cloth. I have never been an advocate of prohibition of all things foreign because they are foreign. My economic creed is a complete taboo in respect of all foreign commodities, whose importation is likely to prove harmful to our indigenous interests. This means, that we may not, in any circumstances, import a commodity that can be adequately supplied from our own country. For instance, I would regard it a sin to import Australian wheat on the score of its better quality, but I would not have the slightest hesitation in importing oatmeal from Scotland, if an absolute necessity for it is made out, because we do not grow oats in India. In other words, I would not countenance the boycott of a single foreign article out of ill-will or a feeling of hatred. Or, to take up a reverse case, India produces a sufficient quantity of leather; it is my duty, therefore, to wear shoes made out of Indian leather only, even if it is comparatively dearer and of an inferior quality in preference to cheaper

and superior quality foreign leather shoes. Similarly, I would condemn the introduction of foreign molasses or sugar, if enough of it is produced in India for our needs. It will be thus clear from the above, that it is hardly possible for me to give an exhaustive catalogue of foreign articles whose importation in India ought to be prohibited. I have simply enunciated the general principle by which we can be guided in all such cases. And this principle will hold good in future, too, so long as the conditions of production in our country remain as they are to-day.

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