

The Indian Interpreter

No. 3]

OCTOBER, 1918

[VOL. XIII

EDITORIAL NOTES

**Who are the
Protectors of
the Poor ?**

IN the present controversy as to the future government of India there is no question upon the answer to which so much depends as this, Who are the true protectors of the poor in this land? The glory of earlier Hindu rulers was that they protected cows and Brahmans, both being beloved of the gods. Will those who now reach forward so eagerly to grasp the instruments of government prove themselves as zealous guardians of 'God's poor'? It is disquieting to notice that, at the recent meetings of the Bombay Legislative Council, the proposals brought forward by the Government with a view to protecting poor tenants in Bombay from rapacious and 'profiteering' landlords were opposed by leading Indian members, of whom one expected better things. We remember, too, that a deputation that waited upon Mr. Montagu from the South Indian Chamber of Commerce, and that, we understand, represented the 'middle classes' in that province, made this statement, which has at least the virtue of frankness: 'All that we ask is that our plums shall be ours and we shall pick them for ourselves.' If that is the spirit, whether avowed or concealed, in which power is sought, then there is no case for taking it away from those who at present possess it and who have always believed themselves to be, and have often truly been, protectors of the voiceless poor against oppression. But, alas, we cannot place our claims even on their behalf so very high. Professor Limaye has recently pointed out in a contemporary that, at a time when food prices have risen to an unprecedented level and when the Poona Municipality, seeking on this occasion at any rate to do its duty by the poor, have been endeavouring with very imperfect success to obtain wagons in which grain may be conveyed from the Central Provinces, huge 'race specials' are being run between Bombay and Poona to gratify the desire for excitement of the rich. 'The love of freedom,' says Heine, 'is a prison flower;' but it is a pitiful commentary upon human

nature to note how often those whose prison bars are broken proceed to be gaolers of others in their turn. The Magyars, we remember, for whom Kossuth once won the sympathy of all free peoples, are now the oppressors of the Czecho-Slovaks. These reflections confirm the truth of Robert Browning's confession of faith :

I, to believe it (Christianity) true, for my part
See reasons and reasons ; this to begin—
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank a dart
At the heart of a lie, taught Original Sin,
The corruption of Man's heart.

Our imaginations, bruised and spent though they are by the 'bludgeonings of fate', cannot but be stirred by the tragedy of the end in blood and solitude and squalor of the House of Romanoff. Two months ago the Bolsheviki announced that the ex-Tsar had been shot at Ekaterinburg by order of the Ural Regional Council. His only son, the Tsarevitch Alexis, is reported to have died of exposure a few days later. And now the hideous tale is completed by the news that the ex-Tsaritza and her four daughters have followed them down the same road of blood. Who among us can judge this very ordinary man to whom was presented the tremendous, the overwhelming gift of a life and death autocracy over all the Russias? No one could be knelt to by millions as their 'little father' and accept the homage without mental or moral paralysis or such insanity as haunted the family of the Romanoffs. He certainly seems to have been visited at times by gleams of idealism, but when his great opportunity came, he failed. 'In January, 1905,' says an able observer of Russian events, 'he need only have stepped out upon the balcony and told the people he cared for them and they would have been at his feet.' But instead he was afraid and bade the Cossacks shoot them down. He was—what any one of us might have been in his place—'a little man who could not and would not perceive the signs of the times.' And so the tornado came and engulfed him. Russia, 'holy Russia', in which we had hoped to find the balm that would heal the gaping wounds of the world, has become truly 'the Possessed', as one of her sons described her even in far less hideous days. 'Let us shake old Chaos,' cries one of her poets. 'Let us tear down the firm-clamped heavens.' Surely the frenzy will pass and Russia, clothed and in her right mind again, will sit at the feet of her true Lord.

The end of the
Romanoffs.

THE AḤMADÍYA MOVEMENT

By the Rev. R. B. Douglas, B.D., Bombay

THE Aḥmadiya movement started nearly forty years ago in a village, called Qádián, in the Panjáb. From this circumstance its members are often called Qádiánis, but they object to this name as disrespectful. The leaders now claim a following of about 500,000 people, who are to be found not only in India, but in Africa, Australia, China and other lands. There are, however, no means available of testing the accuracy of this statement.

The founder of the movement was Mirza Ghulám Aḥmad, chief of the village of Qádián. He claims descent from a noble family, whose heads at one time governed an independent state. They were driven out by the Sikhs, but when British authority was established in the Panjáb a small part of their former state was restored to them. From his youth Ghulám Aḥmad was of a quiet and retiring disposition, so much so that his father had serious apprehensions as to his worldly future. On the day of his father's death, before any fatal symptoms had made their appearance, he had a revelation foretelling that the event would take place after sunset, and bringing him encouragement in these words, 'Is not God sufficient for His servant?' The revelations continued, and in 1880 some of them were collected and published in a book called *Barahin-i-Aḥmadiya*. In 1888 he announced that God had selected him to be a Khalifa or Mujaddid, and later on, in 1891, he declared that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdí, who had come to reform Islám, and establish its superiority to all other creeds. He died in 1908, and the community chose as his successor Maulawí Ḥákim Núruddín, who was its leader till his death in 1914. He was succeeded by the present Khalifa, Mirza Bashíruddín Maḥmúd Aḥmad, the fourth son of the founder of the movement, who was under thirty years of age at the time. He is described by a writer who is in thorough sympathy with the movement as a keen observer, an

accurate thinker, an earnest student, a man of simple life, retiring disposition and affable nature.

The essence of the Mirza Sáhib's message is that he is the Promised Messiah and Mahdí, i.e. that in his own person he fulfils the expectation of Muḥammadans as to the appearance of the Mahdí or Directed One, who is to rule according to the example of the Prophet in the last days, and as to the reappearance of Jesus upon earth. As he rejects the doctrine of transmigration he does not claim to be a reincarnation of Muḥammad or Jesus, but he claims to come in their spirit and power, as John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. 'It is a law of God that he always raises a reformer at the time of spiritual and moral decay. Agreeably to this law He revealed Himself to me that through me He might infuse new life into men dead in spirit. He exalted me to the dignity of Mahdí and Messiah, and opened up to me all the treasures of sacred wisdom. He has made me His instrument in bringing falsehood to naught.' The Messiah, he says, is called the Judge (Ḥakam) because he shall put a stop to discord by giving a final judgement in all religious questions. He is called the Mahdí (the Guided) because the Almighty Himself shall be his instructor and guiding star as He was of the Holy Prophet. He is entitled the Messiah because for the propagation of Islám he shall wield no weapon except that of heartfelt prayer. The spiritual personality of the Messiah and Mahdí is said to be a combination of the spiritual personalities of Muḥammad and of Jesus, some of its phases being derived from one and some from the other. Both these great personalities have appeared again through him, and both constitute the key to the secret of his being.¹ The second Messiah, though spiritually one with the first Messiah, is not physically the same person who lived and died before. Jesus likens his advent to that of a thief. Hence the general Christian expectation that he will descend from heaven and be met by an army of the elect in mid-air is wrong; as a matter of fact he has come in the person of Aḥmad.

As Mahdí, Aḥmad does not claim to supersede Muḥammad. His whole teaching is based on unqualified acceptance of the Qur'án as the final revelation, and of Muḥammad as the Prophet of God. 'I enjoin on you,' he says, 'not to forsake the Qur'án, for it is your life. . . . There is no book for the guidance of the

¹ *Claims and Teaching of Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdí*, pp. 80, 81.

world but the Qur'án, and no prophet for the intercession of mankind but the Holy Prophet Muḥammad . . . He who, losing himself in his Master, receives the title of prophet from God, does not break the seal of prophecy. It is like one's own image in a looking-glass. Such an image of the Holy Prophet is the Promised Messiah.' On the other hand, as Messiah of the Muslim line, he claims to be greater than the Messiah of the Mosaic line. 'Still,' he remarks with sublime complacence, 'I honour the Son of Mary, for spiritually I am one with him.'

This difference in attitude is an important mark of the essentially Islámic character of his teaching. In accordance with the orthodox Muḥammadan view, the authority of custom is recognized as next to that of the Qur'án, and then the authority of the traditions, especially the collection of Al-Bukhárí. The Qur'án is looked upon as superseding and completing the revelation contained in the Old and New Testaments, both of which are declared to be imperfect. The doctrine of the Unity of God taught by the Israelite law falls far short, says Aḥmad, of the sublime Unity revealed by the Qur'án, for while the Jewish law forbade the worship of images, it did not teach that any object of that worship and reverence which are due to God alone is an idol. Some of the examples which he adduces of the alleged imperfection of the New Testament may be quoted. While the Mosaic law laid stress upon strict vengeance in all cases, Jesus taught unconditional forbearance and non-resistance. The Qur'án teaches the middle path, in which punishment of the offender and forbearance ought to be resorted to as the occasion requires. So, it has been said in the Gospel that you should not look upon a strange woman to lust after her, but the Qur'án says that you should not look at strange women at all, for on such occasions a man is apt to stumble. The Gospels forbid drinking to excess, but the Qur'án forbids wine altogether, otherwise it is impossible to find the way to God. The whole of the Bible, declares Aḥmad, 'cannot stand against the Fátīḥah, or opening Súrah of the Qur'án, a chapter of only seven verses, which discloses such vast treasures of spiritual wisdom as could not be met with in the books of Moses and Jesus, though one were to waste his whole life in turning over their pages.' The instances given above sufficiently indicate how far Aḥmad has succeeded in grasping the meaning of Christ's teaching, and show how his own discourses furnish the most complete refutation of his claim to come in the spirit and power of Jesus. But in spite of this

attitude towards Jesus and the Gospel, it is a curious fact that the Messianic aspect of his supposed mission looms much more largely in the Mirza Sáhib's mind than his function as Mahdí. In fact, the main burden for all his writings is to prove his claim to Messiahship, and his mission as Mahdí is allowed to fall into the background till it practically disappears.

The proofs of his claims which Mirza Ghulám Aḥmad advances are interesting, but more from a psychological than a theological point of view. In the book entitled *Claims and Teachings of Aḥmad* one looks in vain for such a systematic statement of the grounds on which the claims rest as might be expected. But it is possible to make a rough classification.

1. We may take first the argument from predictions in the Qur'án. In the 73rd chapter Muḥammad is described as an apostle like Moses.¹ In the 24th Súrah, entitled 'An-Núr', it is promised that successors will be raised to Muḥammad like the successors to Moses. This is interpreted to mean that a Messiah will terminate the chain of successors to Muḥammad. From Moses to Jesus there were fourteen centuries, therefore the Messiah should appear again in the fourteenth century after Muḥammad, that is now, counting by the lunar year. Again, in the 66th Súrah, entitled 'At-Taḥrím', after the faithful have been compared to Mary, the breathing of a soul into her is mentioned. This, says Aḥmad, means that the faithful who have been made like Mary will be rewarded by being made Christlike. In fulfilment of this prophecy he says that he was addressed twice by God in special revelations as Mary, and once as Jesus. According to Súrah 61, Jesus declared that he had come to announce an Apostle who should come after himself, whose name would be Aḥmad. This is, of course, the well-known passage based on Christ's promise of the *Parakletos*, which is read by Muḥammadans as predicting the coming of the *Periklutos*, i.e. 'the praised one', or Aḥmad. It is usual to refer this to Muḥammad, but the Mirza Sáhib refers it to himself, on the ground that he also bears the name of Aḥmad, or at least of Ghulám Aḥmad.

2. Next to the argument from the Qur'án comes that from the traditions. One well-known tradition bears that the prophet predicted the return of Jesus, who would rule as a just king, and break the cross and kill the swine. One sign accompanying his

¹ Cf. Deut. xviii. 12-18.

coming would be that camels would not be ridden in his time, on account of the immensity of wealth. Ghulám Aḥmad says that he has come to break the cross, i.e. to overthrow the faith of Christians in the cross of Christ, and that the sign of regarding camels is fulfilled by the modern substitution of railways as a means of transit. Other signs are eclipses of the moon and sun in the month of Ramazán, which are said to have taken place in 1894, and the appearance of plague, which has been raging in India since 1896.

3. While Ghulám Aḥmad constantly repeats the usual Muslim assertion that the Christian Scriptures have been corrupted, he does not hesitate to use the Bible freely in support of his claims. The argument he draws from it, however, is negative rather than positive. As many of the Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah were not literally fulfilled in the coming of Jesus (e.g. that regarding the appearance of Elijah), so, he says, we are not to expect the literal fulfilment of the New Testament predictions regarding the signs which are to accompany the second advent of Christ. This argument does not prevent the Mirza Sáhib using the *ipsissima verba* of the Bible when he can, and it is curious to find him supporting his claim to Messiahship by quotations from some of those erratic expositors who attempt to calculate from Scripture the exact date of our Lord's second coming.

4. The fourth line of argument is that from miraculous signs. These consist partly in the special revelations which Aḥmad claims to have received, and which attest their divine origin by the impression of majesty and power that they convey; and partly in manifestations of special divine favour, such as answers to prayer, protection from plague and so on. But most frequently the signs have taken the form of predictions. A favourite method of argument on the part of Ghulam Aḥmad was to issue a prediction regarding the death or disgrace of some opponent, whom he challenged to issue a similar prediction against himself. In this way he claims to have foretold the downfall of the redoubtable Dr. Dowie of Chicago. In an exhaustive examination of the supposed Messiah's claims published in 1902, the Rev. Dr. Griswold of Lahore quotes a statement to the effect that he had made such predictions in the case of no less than 121 persons. The circumstances attending the fulfilment of some of these were such that in 1899 the Government of the Panjáb exacted a promise from Mirza Ghulám Aḥmad to refrain from the further publication of

predictions and challenges involving the disgrace of any person, or representing him as an object of the Divine wrath. Among the publications of the movement since his death is a pamphlet, dated 1917, in which is quoted one of his poems, dated 1905, that is alleged to foretell the present world-war, and especially the downfall of the Tsar. 'Streams of blood will flow like the water of a rivulet. . . . With the blood of the dead the streams of the mountains shall become like red wine. All men, both high and low, shall lose their presence of mind for fear; even the Tsar of Russia shall be in a miserable condition.' The terms of the prophecy are sufficiently general to be capable of various applications. The pamphlet points out that 'the words of the prophecy showed that it would be fulfilled not by means of murder but by other means, for one who is killed cannot be said to be in a pitiable plight.' No doubt this interpretation will be modified now that news of the assassination of the ex-Tsar has been received.

5. Ahmad realizes that if the New Testament account of the death and resurrection of Christ is true, and if the Christian view of his person based on it is sound, his claim to be the Promised Messiah and at the same time to be greater than Jesus cannot stand. Therefore he alleges corruption of the Gospels, and rejects the New Testament story. He apparently departs from the ordinary Muslim theory that it was only the 'likeness' of Jesus that was crucified¹ and declares that when he was taken down from the cross he was only unconscious. After three days he recovered from the swoon, and the disciples applied to his wounds the Marham-i-Ísá, or ointment of Jesus, a wonderful remedy known to Jews, Muhammadans, Parsis and Christians, with such success that in forty days he was able to travel. He visited India, Thibet and Kashmir, where he died at the age of 120. His tomb is in the Khán Yár Street, Srinagar. Dr. Griswold points out that this story is partly based on the *Unknown Life of Christ* written by the Russian, Nicolas Nolovitch, and that even this slender authority contradicts the Mirza Sáhib's theory in two important respects. (a) It makes Christ visit India not after his crucifixion, but between the ages of twelve and thirty; and (b) it clearly asserts the actual death of Jesus on the cross. As to Jesus' burial in Srinagar, the tomb of a certain Yus Asaf exists in Khán Yár Street. Yus, according to the theory, is clearly a corruption of Yasa or Jesus, and Asaf is from the Hebrew

¹ Súrah 4.

asaf, to gather. Yus Asaf thus means Jesus the Gatherer of the lost sheep, i.e. the lost ten tribes of the house of Israel.

So much for the proofs, which may safely be left to the impression they will make on any intelligent person. While the messianic claim itself forms the main burden of Aḥmad's voluminous writings, there are several other points in his teaching which call for notice.

1. One of these is his attitude towards Jihád. He denies that Islám ever allowed the propagation of the faith by the sword, and asserts that it forbids compulsion in matters of religion. The religious wars of its early history were undertaken in self-defence, or to punish those who were guilty of oppression or outrage on Muslims. Clemency was extended to those who accepted Islám or paid the *jizyah*.

2. The propagatio of Islám is therefore to be carried on by means of preaching and writing, and in both these respects the adherents of the movement display considerable activity. The writer of this article happened lately to be present at a fair held on the festival of Nágpanchmi in the street where are the headquarters of the Ahmadiya movement in Bombay. In front of their hall was displayed a large green banner with the inscription: 'The Second Advent of Jesus Christ. The Promised Messiah appeared in this world in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulám Aḥmad of Qádián, Panjáb, like the appearance of Elijah in the person of John the Baptist'. There followed announcements of weekly lectures, and an invitation to write for particulars to the head-quarters at Qádián. Tracts in favour of the movement were being distributed to the crowd. Ahmadiya missionaries are active in lecturing, disputing and distributing the literature which is plentifully issued from the press at Qádián and other centres. An office has been established in London in charge of two missionaries.

We may here notice the educational and literary activity which is connected with this propaganda. At Qádián there is an English High School with a hostel, a Madrassah for the study of Arabic, a class for the training of preachers and two industrial classes. There is also a girls' school, and women are encouraged to attend public prayers in the mosque. Two journals are issued, an English monthly called *The Review of Religions*, and one in Urdu, entitled *Al-Hakam*. In Ceylon a weekly paper is published in English and Tamil, and in Mauritius there is a fortnightly in English and French. The latest enterprise is an edition of the Qur'án in Arabic, with transliteration in Roman

characters, a new English translation and copious notes. This is to be completed in thirty parts at Rs2 each, but as yet only one part, comprising the first two Súrah, has appeared. Unfortunately the character of the commentary does not inspire great confidence in either the scholarship or the critical impartiality of the writers. The notes on the opening Súrah, for example, expound it as a prophecy referring, especially in the last verse, to the coming of the Messiah in the person of Ghulám Aḥmad. Canon Sell of Madras has drawn attention to the way in which the note attempts to connect the Súrah with a verse in Revelation. Being the opening Súrah, it is called Súratul-Fátiḥah. Now Rev. x. 2 speaks of an angel coming down from heaven having a little book *open*. The commentator, who does not seem to know that Revelation was written in Greek, says: 'The original Hebrew word is Fatoah¹ and the translators, being ignorant of the real significance of the prophecy, translated the word as *open*. The seven thunders in the prophecy represent the seven verses of this chapter. . . . The little book Fatoah or Fátihah was constantly in the hands of the Promised Messiah, who wrote many commentaries on this chapter. . . . One might say with truth that the chapter had remained up to his days a sealed book.' This extract is characteristic not only of the commentary, but of Aḥmadíya writings as a whole.

3. The aim of the propaganda is the universal diffusion of Islám as interpreted by Ghulám Aḥmad. But the most remarkable development is his declaration that he represents in himself not only Muḥammad and Christ, but Krishna. In 1904 he proclaimed that his advent in this age was meant for the regeneration not only of Muḥammadans, but of Christians and Hindus. 'I come in the character of Rájá Krishna, the greatest *avatár* of the Hindu religion, and spiritually I am the same man.' In the early days of his mission Aḥmad was strongly opposed by and vigorously attacked the Árya Samáj, but towards the end of his career he sought to draw them into his fold. 'One of my revelations on this point', he says, 'is, "O Krishna, destroyer of the wicked, and upholder of the meek, thy praise is written in the *Gítá*."' 'The two attributes of Krishna', he goes on to say, 'are exactly the same as those of the Promised Messiah. Thus spiritually Krishna and the Promised Messiah are one and the

¹ The correct transliteration would be Páthuah but that would not bring out the identity of the Hebrew and Arabic roots so clearly.

same person.' In a lecture written in 1908 and delivered after his death he declared his belief that the Veda was the Word of God, in spite of errors in its teaching. In the same paper he turned to the Sikhs and spoke of their Guru Nának as an embodiment of Divine mercy for the Hindus, born among them to bear witness to the Divine origin of Islám. His followers carry this tendency farther, and describe him as the Messiah, the Mahdí, the Krishna, the Messiodarbahmí and the Buddha. Apparently they wish to take a leaf out of the book of the Theosophists, and to show Mrs. Besant that her announcement of the advent of a world-teacher has been forestalled.

Dr. Griswold has pointed out how close in several respects is the resemblance between the Ahmadiya movement and that of the Bábís and the Biháis. The most striking point of contact is the claim of Bihá Ullah, or of his followers for him, to be Christ, returned again, as he had promised. Other parallels are the denunciation of Jihád, insistence on loyalty to one's protecting rulers, and friendly intercourse with all sects and peoples. But there are also decided points of contrast. The movement of the Bábís and the Biháis is intimately connected with the cult of Alí, a tendency which has existed in Islám since the death of the Prophet himself, and their teachings are coloured by the mystical doctrines of the Súfís. There is nothing of the mystic in Ghulám Ahmad, nor is there any trace in his teaching of the Bábí idea that God reveals Himself through a Primal Will distinct from Himself, who becomes incarnate in the Imám's Will.¹ Still in its real significance, the movement, like that of the Bihais, is an attempt to overcome the isolation of Islám and modify its antagonism to other faiths. It is plain that, in spite of Ghulám Ahmad's attacks on Christians and Christian teaching, what lay at the root of his original claim to Messiahship was a sense of the power of Christ's name, and a desire to enlist that in the propagation of Islám. The denunciation of Jihád, the advances to Hindus and Sikhs and the tendency to substitute an ironical for a polemical style of argument all point in the same direction. How far the movement may spread it is difficult to estimate. The Messianic claim is an empty assertion, which has behind it no Gospel for men, and no power to help or deliver from sin. There are always people both in the East and the West who are

¹ *Essays on Islam.*

ready to be impressed by the kind of argument on which Ghulám Aḥmad's claim rests, but a religion cannot live on argument. Such vigour and momentum as the Aḥmadiya movement possesses come not from the Messianic claim but from Islám, and from the desire to establish it as the universal religion. If the present tendency continues to grow of seeking to accomplish this not by a process of conquest, whether physical or intellectual, but by one of absorption, one thing is certain, and that is that the religion which will evolve from the Aḥmadiya movement will not be Islám, but something very different.

THE PERILS OF SPIRITUALISM

By the Rev. R. B. Douglas, M.A. East
London, South Africa

THE war is responsible for a portentous revival of superstition. It has sent multitudes of people to consult psalmists and crystal-gazers. It has awakened a new interest in the claim of spiritualism to reveal the unseen world and put us into communication with those who have passed beyond the veil. The notion is current that by these methods fuller and more certain knowledge is given of life after death, and the faith in immortality is made more secure. It is only natural that, in times of anxiety and sorrow like these, many should be tempted to make experiment of a way that promises to lead to so desirable a goal.

I am not going to attempt to discuss abstract questions as to the possibility of intercourse between ourselves and spirits in the unseen world, nor even to weigh the evidence for and against such intercourse. No one who has studied F. W. H. Myers' monumental work on *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* will be disposed to deny that there is a considerable body of evidence for such communication. Amid a vast deal that is doubtful, and a still greater mass of mere fraud and trickery, there remains much that does point to the possibility of messages reaching us from some other sphere than this. But into all this aspect of the subject I am not to enter. I am willing to believe, in the common phrase, that there is 'something in it'. I am only going to ask, granted that all the claims made by its votaries are true, what we are to think of this way of acquiring knowledge, and of what use it is fitted to be.

1. Now, in the first place, it is significant that both the Old and the New Testaments definitely bar the door against any such intercourse. Modern spiritualism only goes back to 1850, but the thing itself is as old as the human race, and it is rigorously

banned in every period of the Biblical literature. The doom of King Saul is ascribed to the fact that 'he trespassed against the Lord and asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit.' The good King Josiah, who 'turned to the Lord with all his heart,' put away 'them that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, and all the abominations' from Judah and Jerusalem. The Deuteronomic legislation declared it to be an abomination to the Lord that there should be a sorcerer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard or a necromancer in the land. In Leviticus the command is urgent and pointed: 'Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God.' The prophets speak in the same way. In Isaiah viii. 19 especially, with all the prophet's weapons of scorn, moral indignation, and lofty faith in God, the contrast is unflinchingly drawn between spiritualism and religion as two conflicting, antagonistic, and mutually exclusive means of fellowship with the unseen—'When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that chirp and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?' We cannot ignore this consistent testimony. We cannot waive it aside as mere prejudice. It is at least the reasoned and weighty conclusion of experts. Here, they felt, was a grave moral danger, a power hostile to the spiritual life, a thing to be sternly avoided in the interests of duty and faith.

With this verdict the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was in fullest agreement. He lived and moved with perfect confidence in the unseen. He spoke with authority. To Him the spiritual world was as real as this. He spoke often of its inhabitants. He knew of those who lived with God. He felt Himself surrounded by spiritual agencies. Angels ministered to him. Unclean spirits cried out at His approach. But He gave no encouragement to the idea that fuller manifestations of the unseen world would lead men to a better life or a surer faith. 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets,' He said once, 'neither will they believe though one rose from the dead.' Moses and the prophets had little to say of the future life, but much about duty and piety here, and on these alone our Lord laid stress. Anything that made its appeal to mere curiosity, or took the place of faith in the living God was to him, as to prophet and apostle, a dangerous device of the great enemy of human souls.

2. But while we cannot ignore the warnings of Scripture, we may still ask what reason and justice there are in such grave warnings. Is there really a peril in spiritualism so serious as the Biblical writers supposed? Can we understand this unvarying condemnation of the cult of spirits? We can see, at least, how offensive to reverent and wholesome feeling is the morbid and prurient sensationalism that is fostered by the methods and practices of the spiritualistic seance. One can deeply sympathize with mourners who are tempted to use any means to appease the sorrows of their hearts. One can understand the passionate longing for 'the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still.' But one has nothing but reprobation for those who are driven by curiosity to pry into those sacred things, and who turn this whole subject into matter of cheap entertainment and excited gossip. As commonly practised, spiritualism degrades the sanctities of love and death. It exploits the most sacred feelings of the soul—the pangs of bereavement, the longing for reunion with our beloved dead, the craving for assurance of the reality of things unseen, the hunger for immortality. Its silly performances, where persons have their nerves thrilled by manifestations of the uncanny, are at best mere vulgarities, and at the worst profane degradations of the sanctities of life.

3. It is also easy to see that spiritualism demands the deliberate abnegation of intelligence and will. The idea is that knowledge of spiritual things is to be gained by passively yielding oneself to the control of persons who are peculiarly sensitive to the influence of spiritual forces. By means of trance utterances, through mysterious movements or rappings, or other mechanical means, it is supposed that beings in the unseen world can convey information to us. It is obvious that there can be no possible proof of the authenticity of these alleged messages, and that the possibilities of trickery are endless. We may note in passing that, where a real test has been applied, abject failure has resulted. In 1901, Mr. F. W. H. Myers left a sealed letter, the contents of which were to be made known through a medium after his death. Mrs. Verrall received messages from the poet some years after his passing; but when these communications were compared by Sir Oliver Lodge and other selected investigators, there was not the slightest resemblance with the contents of the unsealed letter. The same kind of test occurred in America, when a sealed document was entrusted to Professor James by a lady named Hannah Wild. Mrs. Piper,

the famous medium, received communications after Hannah Wild's death, but not one of them was anything like the written letter.

But even where the 'medium' cannot be accused of sheer conjuring tricks and deliberate deception, there is no pretence that he or she is a person of high intelligence or lofty character. The type of persons who makes a medium has once for all been analysed by Browning in his great poem, 'Mr. Sludge, the Medium,' and it will be generally admitted that to put oneself, without question or restraint, into the hands of these neurotic degenerates is to insult our highest faculties and degrade our personality. It is, of course, possible to retort that persons would be wise to pocket the insult in exchange for the precious truth of which these mediums are the vehicle. But the simple fact is that no new knowledge has ever yet been given by their means. The alleged messages are either utterly trivial or silly, or are a pale reflection of what has been clearly proclaimed and taught by the saints and sages on earth. The latest and best of all these utterances—those which Sir Oliver Lodge believes to have come from his son Raymond, a young man of noble character and fine attainments, show no advance on the simple pieties of his earthly life, and fall at times to so low a level—as when he says that he had a new tooth, and that cigars and even whisky and soda can be had in the other world—as to suggest that some mocking spirit is jesting with his father's broken heart and credulous mind.

4. And that leads to another serious consideration. To put the magical in the place of the intellectual and moral is to expose oneself to the gravest danger. Let it be granted that some spiritual beings control and inspire the utterances or mechanics of the spiritualist performance, what kind of beings are most likely to come at the medium's call? It is an insult to our blessed and holy dead to believe that they would make use of such a method of communication. It is a particularly crass materialism that would suppose that they need to stoop so low as to use the kind of personality that prostitutes itself to the medium's trade in order to hold communion with us. But it is easy to believe, as the Bible teaches, that restless and rebellious spirits of deceit take advantage of the open door, the blank mind, the unbraced will, to enter in and confuse the soul. If our warfare is against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places, then it must be a serious matter to lay down one's arms, and give invitation and welcome

to any cunning and malignant force that is in the universe. There are unclean spirits, spirits of falsehood, spiritual hosts of wickedness eager to enter into the empty heart and unfurnished brain. It is unquestionable that one takes grave risks who deliberately opens his soul to the tag-rag and bob-tail of the spiritual world, and allows himself to be made the sport and plaything of the vagrant and lawless powers of darkness.

5. This leads us to the final and gravest peril of spiritualism. It turns us away from the true source of knowledge and the true way of certainty. There is a lower way and a higher way of approach to every realm of human life, and these two ways are most clearly distinguished when we come to talk of spiritual things. The high way is by faith in Jesus Christ, the low way is through the senses, by touch and hearing and sight. You can follow one way or the other, but you cannot go by both. You can follow Christ or you can ignore Christ, but you cannot do both together. The distinction is profound and far-reaching. To climb the high way is to walk by faith. There is nothing degrading to the personality, nothing insulting to the intelligence here. The mind is stirred to fullest activity in response to a revelation that is both historical and ethical. The will is called out to its highest exercise in a deliberate choice of obedience and a resolute assertion of the supremacy of spiritual values. Along that high way you come to knowledge and assurance far richer and stronger than all the mediums in the world can give. For you have the teaching of Christ on the Father's Home; His assertion that the believing soul is at once admitted to Paradise; His own victory over death; His gift of the Holy Spirit; His guiding of the Apostles into the confident faith that to depart is to be with Christ, which is far better, that there is a spiritual body in which the personality can express itself without the limitations and the earthly desires of the body of this death, and that the life of the world beyond is perfection of vision, perfection of union, perfection of service. We are not to ask for more knowledge. Probably no more can be revealed in our human language and to our human capacity. Probably it would not be good for us to know more. It would unfit us for duty here. It would take our minds away from our present life with its demands. It would minister to idle curiosity rather than to loving service. What we need to know is fully revealed to faith by Jesus Christ. By that same high way of faith you have not only knowledge of the other world, but communion with it. For this you do not need to go to the riff-raff

of the Invisible. You go to the Lord of the Unseen World Himself, and know Him to be no vision, but a Present Helper. You enter, too, into real communion with those who have gone from sight. Your fellowship with them is unbroken by death. You can do more than rejoice in that communion; you can be uplifted by it, you can be solemnized and strengthened by it for all holy living and service. You can have all that on one condition, on condition of faith in Christ, of a sincere acceptance of Christ, a real surrender to Christ as Lord and God. And this is the final condemnation of spiritualism, that it ignores Christ, or belittles Christ. It elects to crawl along the lower way—the way of mist and shadows; the crooked path that leads through shaking bogs; that is beset on every hand with pitfalls for the unwary; whose only light is the will-o'-the-wisp that lures most who follow it into mere morasses where mind and nerve and conscience are choked in mud or suffocated with poison-gas.

The two ways are open to us. We can make our choice. But we cannot doubt which is the high way and which the low. We cannot doubt that Christ has the keys of death and of the grave. We cannot doubt that to turn from Him is to turn from the only authentic light that falls on earth from the unseen world. We may be certain that to put all our trust in Him, and to take Him as Guide, is to secure that we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

RECONSTRUCTION

By Professor J. C. Kidd, M.A., Calcutta

RECENTLY the writer was due to lecture in a Y.M.C.A. hut in a large camp. On the evening of this event he met an officer—a padre, too—who regarding himself as in some way responsible for what he allowed to be served out to the men in the way of mental pabulum—even by others—and apparently as the special guardian of paragraph 451 of the King's Regulations, asked curtly the subject of the proposed lecture. 'What is Reconstruction?' was the veracious reply. 'Humph!' and these cryptic letters do not serve to indicate the contempt he expressed. 'What we have got to think about is beating the Huns.' That is one way of dealing with Reconstruction and if we shared such a view, or want of view, we should neither write nor read this article—nor trouble to think more about the matter. But the difficulty is that we are up against it all the time. The war is making us aware of immense problems which have to be tackled and tackled because the successful solution of them is but part of that for which we are striving in this great war. And one cannot but feel that much gain will result if we can but get a common viewpoint from which to look at all our problems. That the consideration of Reconstruction as a whole serves to give.

Much of the recent literature on Reconstruction leaves the impression on one's mind that this must mainly be an economic process, attention being chiefly directed to some aspect or aspects of future economic policy. From one point of view much is made of increase of output and industrial efficiency. From another consideration is given to the paramount claims of labour in industry and the need for a betterment of wages. From a point between these two perhaps we get the discussion of measures to be taken for securing industrial harmony. Other questions which come prominently before us are those relating to the furthering of industrial research, to scientific management, to technical education, to our commercial supremacy—as a nation, as an empire,

or as a group of allied nations, to the settlement of tariffs—even to the economic boycott of enemy countries after the war. Now such economic questions—or most of them—have importance and require to be actively discussed, but the value of such discussion necessarily depends upon our idea of the goal at which we aim. A short time ago the Kaiser with his usual facility for perverting motives spoke of the Anglo-Saxon world view as an idolatry of Mammon. By this time the Kaiser should know better and so should we all. In concentrating on the question of trade and industry after the war by isolating them from their proper relations to wider questions, we may be in danger of perpetuating an evil against which we are really striving. It has been said of the United Kingdom: 'The domestic history of this country during the last century is largely the history of a series of attempts on the part of society to assert its authority over the economic system.' To-day we go along the same road but we need a wider view and so a fuller, nobler policy. Above all we need to have in all our schemes, with whatever small details they may be concerned, a new sense of direction and a clearer perception of purpose.

What is the wider view? Briefly it is that Reconstruction shall mean both the conceiving and further development of that for which the sacrifices of the past four years have been made, viz. freedom. That is because we believe we stand for freedom—that the moral basis of our country and of our Empire is freedom. Reconstruction is thus the attempt to give fuller expression to the principle upon which we consider our national and imperial life to be built. This ideal of Reconstruction is variously put. From the national standpoint it has been spoken of as the consecration of the material, mental and spiritual resources of the nation to the fulfilment of a great purpose, viz. the realization of the ideal Britain for which men have laboured and suffered, fought and died. This means, nationally, the striving after the embodiment of a new ideal of wider and fuller freedom in all our institutions and in all the activities of our national life. It was such an ideal that Mr. Asquith spoke of when he said 'that the peace when it comes must be such as will build upon a sure and stable foundation the security of the weak, the liberties of Europe, and a free future for the world'; it was such an ideal that inspired President Wilson when he said that the world must be made safe for democracy. And to the making of advances to such an ideal no time gives opportunities like the present. It is remarkable how

easily, during the time of war, customs and traditions which being outworn have blocked the path of progress, have been swept aside. Equally remarkable has been the liberalizing of the common thought, the willingness to give fair trial to all manner of expedients which in pre-war days would have received little support. And such widening of the horizon of common life is of the utmost significance for the days that lie ahead. And as we cannot go back it is the more essential that we know just how we are going forward and whether Reconstruction covers an immense series of problems which are related in different ways but the solution of all of which is to be determined by the true democratic view for which the allies stand.

These are world problems. We look for a new era of international co-operation in the common work of this world. Perhaps there will be established a league of democratic nations but if so, to fulfil the purpose of Reconstruction, its function must be wider than the negative one of preventing future war. It must lead to, as it must work for, the creation of a positive international interest. The world policy must be a constructive policy. True democracy is always positive. 'The main duty of the future is not so much to suppress evil as to set free the forces making for positive, constructive effort in the world, to multiply the agencies whereby the peoples of the world can work side by side in the performance of common duties, and the attainment of common ends, to piece together the broken strands of international life and to weave into it the strands of new interests.'

The British Empire, too, is faced with its own particular problems. The alternatives seem clear. Either it must achieve—so far as the Home Country and the Colonies are concerned—a new organization whereby all matters affecting the life and status of the Empire are controlled by all, or it must split up into a number of separate States, the sequel to the Seven Years' War being repeated after this war. It is, of course, to the former alternative that our best ideas of Reconstruction point. In somewhat a different light must the question of India's place in the Empire be viewed, but the statesmanlike proposals of the Montagu-Chelmsford report show that here, too, the British Empire is seeking to work out its ideals of freedom in Reconstruction.

In another sphere we are faced with immense problems of national Reconstruction. In the political sphere these have already in part been tackled. How far spread will be the changes

resulting from the recent Representation of the People Act it is impossible at present to say. The anomaly of the House of Lords in our democratic constitution seems likely to receive adequate attention before long. We are faced with social, educational, ecclesiastical, economic problems and these, too, must be approached in the spirit of Reconstruction as inspired by the democratic ideal. Most acute, perhaps, of all our national problems is that of industrial reorganization. Industry has to be made democratic. It is a constitutional question, for industry and labour has to win its true place in the economy of the country.

We could go a stage further and show that we shall have, in face of all these other problems, questions of local and civic reconstruction but such are necessarily subsidiary. But not in so far as they bring us once more to the individual for all schemes of Reconstruction conceived in the light of a great ideal can only achieve success in so far as they express the will of the individual. For world problems and imperial problems we need the development of a world consciousness and a new imperial consciousness. Both of these the war has done much to develop. But the obligation of the individual is certainly pressingly clear. As Lord Milner wrote in introducing *The Elements of Reconstruction*, a small book which republished a series of articles contributed to the *Times* :—‘ As the war itself is the greatest in history, so will its aftermath be the most prodigious. And upon all those, who are not of necessity wholly absorbed with conduct of the war itself, there rests no higher obligation than to think constantly, strenuously, connectedly, with soberness but also, if they are fortunate enough to possess it, with imagination, of the new measures and methods by which the difficulties may haply be overcome.’

THE TREASURE OF THE MAGI II¹

By **Maneckji B. Pithawala, B.A., B.Sc.**

THE second section of Dr. Moulton's book deals with the Parsee community, its ceremonial life, both inside and outside the Fire temple and its caste tendencies which seem to cleave the race into two sharp divisions, those of the orthodox and the reformers. Of many aspects of the community he seems to give quite an impartial picture, but there are other things that are more doubtful. He presents a psychological study of the Parsees as intermediaries between the dreaming, spiritual Indians and the forceful, materialistic Westerners. They are 'thoroughly Oriental' in spite of their Western culture and they have in consequence unique advantages as intermediaries between East and West. But unfortunately the cultured Parsees have so far given themselves up entirely to the sphere of practical life and especially to commerce and have neglected the spiritual. The Parsee is less imaginative and speculative than the Hindu; he is also less critical than the Briton. 'A very small community, which has put its brains into commerce, law and to a less extent medicine, is by the ordinary working of probabilities not very likely to produce the genius we desiderate. But should he come in an age not too prolific of religious genius in either East or West, he would assuredly be the instrument of a wonderful work of good for all the world alike.'

The Parsees easily go in for reforms, but there are reforms and reforms. The masses are orthodox; the rich and the upper middle class style themselves reformers. To both of these Dr. Moulton has a word to say. The danger of the reformers' attitude is 'the emphasis on the negative.' Not this, not that, denying one thing, denouncing another, they have very little left—'a real, albeit cold Theism' or rationalism. But, he says, reason alone in the domain of religion has never succeeded. 'If the Reformation in England had been even mainly a protest

¹ By **JAMES H. MOULTON**. Oxford University Press, 1917.

against the errors of Rome it would not have survived its first impulse.' There must be now and for ever a craving for spirituality if the Parsees are to remain Parsees. There must be constructive reforms if success is to be guaranteed.

In this spirit he himself suggests some healthy reforms. (1) The Gāthas charge the Prophet's followers with a call to preach and to cultivate the missionary spirit among the Parsees. (2) Prayers must be in an intelligible language and we should not cling tenaciously to the familiar 'abracadabra.' (3) There must be less ritualism practiced, such as is due to the belief that *urvan* and *fravashi* are not different and that souls and exalted spirits care for rites like the *barashnum*. (4) The use of *gomez* must be condemned.

But Dr. Moulton's most virulent attack is not on any exclusively Parsee custom or belief but on the 'system of fantastic sophistry' with 'all the absurdity of Mrs. Besant's clever nonsense' that used to be called Gnosticism but is now styled Theosophy and which has been affecting the spiritual Parsee in these days. 'It is the Parsee departure from the Gathas that has given Theosophy its chance.' 'A scheme which can veil absurdities behind scientific jargon and justify things hard to take seriously by suggestions of profound underlying doctrine has very clear attractiveness'. Against these Dr. Moulton wants the Parsees to be safeguarded.

We offer no criticism upon this severe attack on Theosophy, but proceed instead to take up the challenge which Dr. Moulton has openly thrown at the community in the last part of his thesis. Although we are grateful to him for helping us to see how full Zoroastrianism is of grandeur and beauty, that the Gathas glow as powerfully as the fire of the Atesh Behram, that the essence of the Founder's system is Good Thought and that man must be reformed from within,—although we appreciate his efforts so far, we cannot but say that Dr. Moulton is very dogmatic. Religions are after all man's most earnest expositions of the lore of the infinite. Man is a finite being and to say anything dogmatically is the most disastrous policy one can propose in this age of reason. Dr. Moulton himself has shown the beauty of Zoroastrianism clearly and impartially and then he cannot get out of it. He might at the best say Christ is the second best Prophet. But like a good engine-driver he would ask the people of all the varied religions to embark on an uphill journey in a railway train, putting the Christians in the first-

class compartment, the Zoroastrians in the second class, the Muhammadans in the Intermediate and the Hindus of all denominations in the third class. Arriving at a certain stage he would make a brief halt, and, reaching the reversing station on the Ghauts of heaven, he would detach all the compartments except the first, leaving the rest of the passengers struggling behind, or asking them to renounce their class distinctions and, paying a higher price, to step into the first class. Can a motor car or even an aeroplane not take them to the desirable Realm faster and more comfortably? Or is walking not a healthier though a slower exercise?

But Dr. Moulton would emphatically say, where Zoroastrianism ends Christianity begins; he would begin and end his book by asserting that in Jesus Christ the Parsees must find the promised *Saoshyant* and the 'future Saviour', and 'when they shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away.' In fact he would disbelieve the later Avesta and yet believe in it in the promise it gives of the son of Zarathustra to be born at the close of the sixth millennium after him. He would at one time warn us against the Buddha's asceticism and at another have us believe that 'the way of renunciation is the way of highest good.' Therefore Zoroastrianism has, according to Dr. Moulton, failed in its struggle for existence; it stands for self-assertion in that Zarathustra utterly repudiated asceticism. He himself has told us that the grandest thing which Zarathustra taught us was his doctrine as to how to live this life completely, that he was a theoretical philosopher and at the same time a practical Prophet, that instead of preaching the word of God on a platform in a large amphitheatre he himself would go to the fields and farms and preach to the farmers there that agriculture was a synonym for virtue. This idea the third chapter of the *Vendidad* brings out so beautifully and yet he would call the *Vendidad* a book 'full of silly rubbish.' Dr. Moulton would judge and criticise a two thousand year old book by his Cambridge standard and apply his twentieth century logic to every line, nay, every word of the book. The *Vendidad* with its emphatic teaching that 'Work is worship', its sound and strict laws enacted against all earthly impurities, its cheering advocacy of agriculture, its moral teaching of the observance of all contracts, and above all the little light it throws upon the geography and history of Iran and also the commercial and industrial pursuits of the old Iranian nation can hardly be wholly disposed of even by

a 'pontifical note' by the reverend doctor. In one place he says that Zarathustra is tremendously in earnest and in the Gathas 'he sees truth with an intense clearness', but in another he declares the Gathas cold and Zarathustra not standing as one among 'the goodly fellowship of the prophets for warmth and tenderness and passion.'

'Zoroastrianism has failed' is the ringing note of the last part of the book under review. It has failed because it has not the power of producing saints, because it stands for self-assertion and not self-renunciation, because Zarathustra inspired no successor or disciple, because Zoroastrianism depended upon dead prophets and needed a living voice, having no dynamic to bring forth a revival, and above all because Zarathustra did not love Ahura Mazda. 'The Christians say 'God is love'. The Zoroastrians would still say, 'God is fire and light'. Which is the wider term, love or light, is a serious question. Whereas Zarathustra has taught us that evil should be crushed and liars hanged on the gibbet, that defensive wars should be waged in the world against the Druj or Satan, Jesus Christ would love all mankind, would have the persuasive and tactful policy to win over the good as well as the evil, and, acting as an intermediary, would grant salvation to anyone and everyone who cared to see God through him. But even the latest news in the *Times* shows us that 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' is rather too good a doctrine for this workaday, businesslike and selfish world. Two thousand years of Christianity in this world has resulted in the greatest and most epoch-making world war. Has Christ failed therefore?

Dr. Moulton says that the very smallness of the community shows that Zarathustra has failed. This seems to be poor arithmetic. What about its morale, its worthiness even in a strange land like India? The community is small because proselytism is not allowed, because Parsees now cannot claim to possess even a small town in the world. Once it exercised a paramount power for centuries and then Zarathustra's followers could be counted by millions. The very fact that the community under unfavourable conditions still lives is a proof that Zarathustra has not failed. The history of the world shows that the religion of a ruling nation always flourishes. But for the Roman Empire to back up Christianity Mithraism, we are told, would have been the religion of the world. But for the undesirable Arab conquest of Persia Parseeism would never have reached the pitiful condition

of to-day. 'If Persia would have won', says Elizabeth Reed, 'the battles of Marathon and Salamis the worship of Ormuzd might have become the religion of the whole civilized world'.

Again Dr. Moulton in the first place would admire the Gathas for their unique teaching, taught for the first time in the world, that God is just, righteous and benevolent, and for their optimistic teaching through and through. The very Founder of the faith is made to laugh while taking his birth in this world. And yet the author would require an intermediary to grant salvation and so to bring the Frastokereti (Renovation) as early as possible. At a bitter cost we have to learn that time is no factor in the laboratory of Nature.

We have said before, and say again, with pleasure that this posthumous volume of Zoroastrian lore left to us by the late lamented Dr. J. H. Moulton is a welcome addition to the scanty Zoroastrian literature the world possesses to-day and that the Parsees are grateful to him for the 'word of good tidings' preached by him here and also in his two previous works. In Dr. Moulton's own words, 'May the wise Lord prosper it.'

THE MARATHA PSALMISTS II

By the Rev. N. Macnicol, M.A., D.Litt.

THE tradition affirms that Jñāneśvar, like most of the Marāṭhī school of *bhakti*, was a devotee of Viṭhobā of Paṇḍharpūr. It is strange, therefore, to find no mention of this god in either the *Jñāneśvarī*, or his other philosophical poem, the *Amṛit Anubhāv*. Perhaps it may have been another and later poet of the same name who is the author of these shorter songs or psalms and who is linked in the legend with the next notable saint of this succession. This is Nāmdev, the author of many simple and passionate lyrics, that give expression to varying phases of an ardent devotion to the god of Paṇḍharpūr. The language of Nāmdev's verses is much more modern than that of the *Jñāneśvarī*, so that, though the tradition gives his date as from 1270 to 1350, the probabilities are that Sir R. G. Bhandarkar is right in placing him a century later. He was born in a village near Karhād in the Sātāra District. The tradition that he was born from an oyster shell (*śimpī*) which his father saw floating on the water of the sacred river, Bhīma, manifestly has its source in the fact that he was a tailor or *śimpī* by caste. How it came about that Nāmdev's heart turned with such passionate adoration to Viṭhobā is somewhat obscure. According to one account he bore, like many other saints, from his infancy the marks of sainthood. The first word he spoke was 'Śrī Viṭṭhal'; he learned nothing at school for he cared for nothing but *kirtans* (services of song). That is one way in which saints are made, but another is the way of conversion and there seems to be more authority for the story that Nāmdev was converted from an evil life to service of Viṭhobā.¹ Several *abhaṅgs*—among others one said to be by his wife—refer to an early career of lawlessness brought to a sudden end by his contrition at the tears shed by a woman whom he had

¹ There is curious confirmation of this in the recently discovered and very early book, *Lila Caritra*, a scripture of the interesting sect of Mānbhāus.

made a widow. In his remorse he would have taken his own life in the temple of Nāgnāth, but he found comfort and forgiveness when he sought instead the presence of the more gracious Viṭhobā, and from that day onward he gave himself with complete devotion to the worship of this god.

What Viṭhobā has been to the saints of Mahārāṣṭra it is not necessary to record in detail here. It is sufficient to say that from a date that recedes far into the dim past of the history of this part of India this god, for whatever reason, has gathered about him a great company of peculiarly devoted worshippers. Among these there seldom have been lacking some whom love to Viṭhobā has inspired to sing his praise. To-day Paṇḍharpūr is still the great high place of *bhakti* worship in the Marāṭhā country, the central shrine to which year by year the saints go up. Those who in their lives centuries ago had been devoted to the god are still borne with songs in *pālkīs*, in which are placed models of their holy footprints, to the presence of Viṭhobā, in his temple in this village on the river Bhīma.

On the Bhīma's banks all gladness is
In Paṇḍharī, abode of bliss.

This is the refrain of many a song of Nāmdev and Tukārām that is re-echoed by the choruses of singers that journey with eager expectation year by year to this Deccan village to look upon the face of the god. Paṇḍharī is their *kām-dhenu*, the satisfaction of their heart's desires. Nāmdev's ancestors were among those who made this pilgrimage at regular intervals, *vārkarīs* as they are called, and some of them—as he himself was to do when his time came—'took *samādhi*' or obtained release from earthly bonds in this place of their affection. Nāmdev was so possessed by the *bhakti* of Viṭhobā that neither his wife nor his mother could induce him to consider the needs of his household of fourteen members. He spent day and night in dancing and in singing the name of the god. Apparently most of his family became infected with his passion for writing *abhangs*, of which he is credited with having composed millions. Even the remonstrances of his wife and mother are expressed in this verse form. There is a wail by his wife, Rājāī, 'O whatever am I to do? My lord and master has "got religion".' Even more than in the case of the mystics of the West these Indian saints prove a sore trial and disappointment to their more worldly friends and dependents. The exasperation that Bernardone felt when his son St. Francis cast the world behind his back is echoed in the expostulations of

Nāmdev's parents, Dāmset and Gonāi. Nāmdev was no practical mystic and the cloth he should have taken to the bazaar remained unsold while his children starved.

The chief religious interest in Nāmdev's life lies in tracing a change or development in his thought which his *abhangs* reveal. At first he is the purely emotional *bhakta*, all tears and cries and raptures. Later in his life, however, he seems to have passed through an experience which greatly altered his outlook on the world. In the first stage of his experience Viṭhobā of Paṇḍharī is the sole object of his devotion; he can scarcely tear himself away from the precincts of his temple. At a later period Viṭhobā has become for him no more than a symbol of the supreme Soul that pervades the universe. He is still a *bhakta* but he is no longer visited by the gusts of passion that had once shaken his soul. An attitude of spiritual indifference is now his supreme attainment. His faith rests upon a philosophical interpretation of the universe which blunts the sensations which formerly harassed him and brings him, if not peace, at least passivity. This change, or growth, is reflected in his *abhangs* which have not, of course, come down to us in their historical setting or in the order of their composition. The record of his life, however, gives us the traditional account of the circumstances which brought about this enlargement of his outlook.

To the earlier period of his religious history belong the *abhangs* which are most simply cries of the heart. The god was a dear and somewhat elusive friend who sometimes came at his cry and even ate with him, Śudra as he was. There is a quaint and characteristic sequel to this particular incident to the effect that Rukminī, Kṛiṣṇa's wife, made her husband do *prāyāścīt* or atonement for having thus polluted his divine caste.

Another legend relates how Kṛiṣṇa, taking the form of a carpenter, rebuilt the unpractical saint's house for him when a storm had overthrown it. A line occurs in the poem which tells of this, curiously, but quite accidentally, suggestive of an acquaintance on the poet's part with Christian scripture. 'When a man breaketh with his family and his friends,' it says, 'the Carpenter of his own accord cometh to him'. This personal fellowship with Viṭhobā is alleged especially to have been the experience of one of the members of Nāmdev's household who has a place among the Marāṭhā poet saints. This is a Śudra woman named Janabāi, who according to the story became a domestic slave of the poet because of her admiration of his devotion. She spent her whole life in his service and Viṭhobā's.

The god is declared in the legend to have been constantly in her company, grinding corn for her, drawing water, helping her to wash the clothes. It is not always clear, however, whether the *abhaṅgs* do not really describe, not a personal relationship or communion, but a recognition of the divine immanence in all things. When she says that, 'in the inner shrine of contemplation Pāṇḍuraṅg comes to meet us and clasps us to his breast', it is difficult to believe that she is not describing an experience of spiritual fellowship. But when she says, referring to the household occupations,

Grinding, pounding—this our game,
Burn we up all sin and shame,

there is here more than a suspicion of *advaita* doctrine. She is reaching beyond the *māya*, the 'sport', of life and its duties to an identity with *brahman* beyond the distinction of good and evil. This is fully unveiled in another *abhaṅg* which, after expressing a feeling that has all the appearance of being parallel to that daily comradeship with Christ which Christian saints have ever sought, betrays itself in its conclusion as no more than a metaphysical affirmation of identity with the All.

These ambiguities, whether in Nāmdev's writings or in those of his servant woman, make it difficult to trace with any confidence the stages of his progress from the simple-minded '*Hari-bhakta*' to the philosopher-saint. The story is that, as we have seen, Nāmdev received in Paṇḍharpūr a visit from Jñāneśvar, who invited the saint to accompany him on pilgrimage and he reluctantly agreed. It appears that a 'wander year' was almost a necessity in the case of every Indian saint. Presently the pilgrims reached Jñāneśvar's village of Ālandi near Poona, and there, the story goes, a potter, 'an old, old man', Gora Kumbhār, tested them as he would his pots, 'with experience for his potter's tool', and pronounced Nāmdev to be *korā* or *kacchā*, that is, of insufficiently burned clay. Apparently Nāmdev had become proud because of his reputation for sainthood and in the opinion of his fellow-saints the one cure for him was to put himself in the hands of a *guru*. Viṭhobā himself is alleged to have given his servant this advice.

Nāmdev accordingly sought out Visobā Khecar who is said to have been a disciple of Jñāneśvar. 'The value to the seeker of 'the *guru's* grace' is taught with much emphasis in the earlier poet's works and is an important element in the fully-developed

Vaiṣṇavite doctrine. Perhaps it was only at this time that this tenet of *ācaryābhīmāna* or reverence for the spiritual teacher which had established itself powerfully in the south, began to impose its discipline upon the unrestrained fervour of Marāṭhā *bhakti*. It involves a reassertion of the authority of the Brāhman philosophic teacher and priest, and so it proved in the case of Nāmdev. The lesson that his *guru* taught him is embodied in a tale which is related also, with suitable variations, of Nānak. Nāmdev was shocked to find Khecar lying with his feet upon the *liṅga* of Śiva. When he expostulated with him for his impiety the *guru* asked him. 'Where is the place where God is not?' And to Nāmdev's amazement he saw that wherever the holy man turned his feet there was always a *liṅga*. Nāmdev learned the new lesson and resolved 'to light the lamp of knowledge in the world'.

The new knowledge that he had attained and the changed outlook that it brought to him are expressed in his prayer to Viṭhobā—'Let me see thy face with my eyes everywhere and let all creatures be my friends.' He has not ceased to follow *bhakti* but it is no longer with the simplicity of his early love. Far more difficult than to empty the sea or to measure the sky is 'the *bhakti* of Keśav', for it requires that all sense of 'I' and 'thou' shall utterly disappear. 'Ah God, a single atom of distinction is huge as Mount Meru.' So also the *bhakta* must realize that God is in all creatures; there must be no love of the flesh, no attachment to the things of sense. He must pass beyond good and evil, beyond love and hate, beyond all storms and tempests into the quiet of passivity. Viṭhobā is now the one real God to him, but not in the sense, as formerly he had thought, that all other gods are false and that he dare not look upon them but only on the idol of Viṭhobā. He is the sole-existent Brahman with 'thousands of worlds in every hair.' Nāmdev's denunciations of idolatry in his *abhangs* may be as much inspired by the contempt of the philosopher as by the theistic temper that Muḥammadanism was beginning at this time to introduce to India. Not only, however, does he denounce idolatry and, like Jñāneśvar, the gross, popular worships. He brushes aside in a fashion that would hardly be possible had he come under the influence of the author of the *Jñāneśvari*, the authority of the sacred scriptures. 'Do not study the Vedas,' he says 'needless is scriptural instruction. Repeat the verses of Nāmdev.'

Nāmdev obtained *samādhi* at the age of eighty and is buried at the great door of the temple of Viṭhobā at Paṇḍharpūr. Whoever enters to look upon the face of the god to whom he rendered such intense devotion must step across the place where the saint lies buried. Thus he remains still, as it were, a stepping stone to the presence of Viṭhobā.

But of all the Marāṭhā *bhaktas* the grèatest in the popular estimation, certainly the widest in the extent of the influence, is Tukārām. He was a contemporary of the Marāṭhā national hero, Śivājī, and it can scarcely be questioned that, by the work that he accomplished in drawing together by means of a common religious enthusiasm all classes of the community, he contributed to the formation under that leader of a Marāṭhā kingdom sufficiently strong and united to resist with success the power of the Mogul Empire. The popularity of his verses has continued undiminished until to-day, and they are so widely known among all classes of Marāṭhās that many of them have almost come to have the vogue and authority of proverbs. They are more familiar throughout Mahārāṣṭra than are (or were) in Scotland 'the psalms of David or the songs of Burns.' Not only are they prized by the most illiterate worshipper of Viṭhobā as the 'Veda' of the sect, but they furnish a large portion of the psalmody of the reforming Prārthanā Samāj, while some of the grèatest of modern Indians, such as M. G. Ranade and Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, have found in them, perhaps more than in the ancient scriptures, nourishment for their own religious life.

Tukārām was a Śudra grain-seller and was born in 1608 at Dehū, a village about eighteen miles north-west of Poona. He had an inherited interest in the god, Viṭhobā, for his family for at least seven generations had been devout worshippers of the god and had regularly visited his shrine at Paṇḍharpūr. One of his *abhangs* gives an account of the process by which he was drawn from occupation with the world to 'lay hold in his heart of the feet of Viṭhobā.' It gives us a glimpse of one of those periods of famine that must have been frequent and terrible in these days. It brought him, he says, to poverty and shame and sorrow. One of his two wives perished, and he lets us hear her dying cry, 'Food, food'. This experience appears to have been what made him give himself with complete devotion to the service of the god. In another *abhang* he tells us how a 'king of *gurus*' came to him in a dream and, giving him the *mantra* or sacred

formula, 'Rām, Kṛiṣṇa, Hari,' pointed him to 'the ship of Pāṇḍuraṅg.' This mysterious teacher is called Bābājī, and he was of the spiritual line of Rāghav Caitanya and Kesav Caitanya. This may indicate that Tukārām came at some time under the influence of teachers belonging to the Vaiṣṇavite sect founded by Caitanya in Bengal at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The story of Tukārām shows us a man possessing much unworldly charm of character. His occupation with religion is, indeed, as in the case of Nāmdev, a cause of bitter complaint by his wife. His children can get nothing to eat for their father lives at the temple. There are many tales of his unworldliness, such as how the compassion of the saint—in this respect one of the kin of St. Francis of Assisi—for 'his little sisters, the birds' made him allow them to have their will of the grain in the corn fields that he was placed in charge of by the farmer who owned them. Another story tells how the birds, recognizing him as 'a friend of all the world,' perched fearlessly upon him in the temple court. He does not appear to have gone on pilgrimage, reckoning such religious practices as of no value for the making of men better. Jñāneśvar also had condemned them, but he is said, nevertheless, as we have seen, to have conformed in this matter to the established custom. According to a familiar story Tukārām refused to travel to Benares but gave those, who were going there and would have him join them, an unripe gourd, bidding them dip it in the sacred waters of the Ganges and see if thereby it would become sweet to taste.

Tukārām is said to have suffered much persecution from Brāhmins who saw in this Śūdra's popularity as a religious teacher an infringement of their prerogative. Their opposition is said to have culminated in a command to him to cast his poems into the river Indrāyani on the bank of which Dehū stands. He obeyed, but his god himself intervened and saved them from destruction. Another story, which appears to be of doubtful authenticity and may have been invented to exalt the poet, represents Śivajī as in vain inviting the humble saint to visit his court and even, under the spell of Tukārām, as proposing himself to quit his kingdom and give himself up to a life of contemplation. Tukārām is believed to have been miraculously translated to Vaikuṇṭhā—the heaven of Viṣṇu—in the year 1649. Several early manuscripts of his poems, however, have simply the statement noted on them that in that year on a certain day he 'disappeared', or, according to one of them 'he set out for a holy place'.

The most authoritative collection of Tukārām's *abhangs* contains over 4,600 of these poems. This is far short, however, of the number that he is credited with having composed. Nāmdev is said to have enjoined upon him in a dream to produce enough to realize the earlier poet's ambition that the world should possess a hundred *crores* or one billion *abhangs*. As a matter of fact many even of those that are attributed to him are in all probability forgeries for which popularity and authority have been sought by the help of a great name. This, no doubt, has helped to make still more bewildering the inconsistencies of thought that appear in Tukārām's work, as in all the work of these far from logical or systematic thinkers. Nor are the poems arranged in any chronological order. Any attempt to trace a process of development in the religious ideas they present must accordingly be largely conjectural. As a matter of fact, like so many other Hindu teachers from the days of the *rīsis* of the *Upaniṣads*, Tukārām is claimed by various religious schools—by theists and by pantheistic monists—as an adherent of their views. To explain his inconsistency, however, it is perhaps sufficient to say that he was a poet and that he was a Hindu.

When we turn to consider the character of the teaching of these poet-saints and of the influence that by work so widely popular they exerted and still exert, the first difficulty that presents itself is this inconsistency which is written upon every page of their work. No doubt the fact that they were Hindus and therefore inheritors in their blood and in the texture of their thought of that Hinduism which is as much a spirit, a temperament, as a system goes far to explain their mental adjustment to what appear to us irreconcilable explanations of life and destiny. *Advaita* (non-duality) and *bhakti* are not so much, we may say, contradictory theories of the universe as varying moods of the Hindu mind. Certainly *bhakti* in large measure was a mood. It was the other half of *advaita*, a reaction of the soul, a feast of that heart which *advaita* had starved. It is the deliberate choice after long loneliness of the companionship of God and the saints, after silence of song, after bareness and intellectual austerity of the rich colours of affection. And yet, because it is a reaction and not the result of a reasoned development, it is apt to lapse back to what it has rebelled against. It is not intellectually convinced. It represents a part only of the man and that the part most liable to fluctuations—his emotional life. *Advaita* is equally partial, and hence, perhaps, the

oscillations to and fro that marks their thinking. It would be foolish to labour to reduce their teaching to logical consistency. The *bhakta* has his seasons of warmth and exaltation when the supreme bliss is to have fellowship with the god of his devotion and to be conscious of his love, while at other times in colder mood he is content to follow the philosophic path that leads to Nirvāṇa and to nothingness. But the value and significance of this movement lie in its affirmation of the claims of the human heart and in the moral and religious consequences that follow from that affirmation. These are the elements in it that gave it its power and enabled it to make an appeal so far reaching and so profound. It was, if we may say so, a splendid effort of the Hindu soul to break the bondage under which it had lain so long. It at least stirred in its long sleep and turned its drowsy eyes towards the dawn.

If there was in it this rebel spirit, then there was no tyranny within Hinduism that would so challenge it as the long-established and powerful dominance of caste. A fervent spirit of devotion is inevitably democratic, just as a 'way of knowledge' is a way reserved for an intellectual minority while a ceremonial religion strengthens the power and the pride of a priestly order. The heart and its emotions are much the same in all men, high or low, and the road to God along which the affections lead the way is an open road. It is accordingly to be expected that the *bhakti* movement, in so far as it was earnest and sincere, would oppose Brāhman pretensions and caste contempt. We find this to have been in large measure the case. The sect of Caitanya admitted to its ranks even Śūdras and Muḥammadans and they are said to sing of the saint himself in Bengal. 'Come see the godman who does not believe in caste.' Kabīr is said to have been himself by birth a Muḥammadan who succeeded by strategy in obtaining admission to the number of Rāmānanda's disciples. The Marāṭhā saints were of all castes from Brāhmins to outcastes. The stories that are told of them, mingled with legend as they are, reveal a continual struggle against Brāhman pretensions. We see it in the story of Jñāneśvar's parents and of the saint's own experience and that of his brothers and sisters. It seems as if Jñāneśvar may have been the centre of a struggle between the old orthodoxy, entrenched within its caste privileges and buttressed by its claims to magic powers, and the new and more living and spiritual faith. We see indications of the same conflict in the

case of nearly every one of Jñāneśvar's successors in the *bhakti* line. There is evidence too, as we have seen, both in the traditions of Nāmdev's life and in his verses that as a Śūdra he had to face Brāhman contempt but was sustained by the sympathy of Viṭhobā. Eknāth, too, who lived at Paithan towards the close of the sixteenth century and was himself a Deśasth Brāhman continued the struggle and opposed caste both by precept and example. As a consequence he is said to have been outcasted and his poems publicly thrown into the river Godaverī. Tukārām, as we have seen, was punished in the same way, according to the story, and he certainly had to endure much petty persecution because of his denunciation of caste-exclusiveness. Again another of the saints of Paṇḍharpūr was a member of the outcast community of Mahārs. This man Cokā Melā, whose *samādhi* (memorial) is opposite to the entrance to the great temple of Viṭhobā, once, it is said, crossed the threshold of the temple and was cast out for his impiety. He pled in excuse that he had been borne in by a divinely created impulse that he could not resist and reproached his enemies in pathetic words for their harshness and contempt. On another occasion Viṭhobā himself is said to have helped him to carry off the carcass of a cow, that being one of the perquisites permitted to this outcast community. These are some indications of what was, we may conjecture, a continuous struggle throughout this whole period between the divisive forces of Brāhman pride and exclusiveness and the sense of kinship and unity that the new religion of faith and fellowship with God inspired. Without being aware of it these saints from Jñāneśvar to Tukārām were creating a nation. They were awakening self-respect and hope and some feeling of a common brotherhood in the distracted and despised masses of the common people. They were helping to make possible the union of the Marāṭhās under their leader Śivaji and their successful resistance to the attacks of the Muḥammadans.

Their message was democratic and liberating because it was, by comparison with the grosser worships around it and with the legalism and formalism of orthodoxy, theistic and ethical in its character. It was opposed to a gross idolatry; it frequently denounced immorality and superstition; it was generally sincere and earnest and spiritual. No doubt there are qualifications that have to be added to each of these statements if we are to avoid misunderstanding. Most of them were

worshippers of the idol, Viṭhobā, but they distinguished between their attitude to this god and that of the superstitious multitude.

A stone with red-lead painted o'er
Brats and women bow before.

When Tukārām says this he implies that he and those like him looked beyond the idol—Viṭhobā, ‘standing on the brick,’ as he so often describes him—to something greater than the idol symbolized and signified. So Nāmdev repeatedly denounces idolatry, though, perhaps, in his case it is his Vedantic pantheism that really stirs his condemnation of the worship of the ignorant. ‘No *guru* can show me god: wherever I go there are stone gods painted red. How can a stone god speak? When will he ever utter speech? My mind is weary of those who say “God, god”. Everywhere I go they say, “Worship a stone”. He is god whom Nāma beholds in his heart. Nāma will never forsake the feet of Kṛiṣṇa.’ They also will make no terms with the impure and degrading worships that they see around them. The evil cult of Khaṇḍobā, the greedy mendicant, the formal and hypocritical priest, the magic worker, all these they deal with in much the same fashion as did Luther and Erasmus with their counterparts in the Christian Church of Europe.

PSALMS OF MARATHA SAINTS

JÑĀ NEŚVAR

THE STOREHOUSE OF BLISS

When thy visage I descry,
O how glad, how glad am I.
Viṭṭhal 'tis, the good, the fair,
Mādhav, good beyond compare.
Many blessings gather here,—
How can Viṭṭhal but be dear?
Every joy is found in thee,
Father, Lord of Rukmiṇī.

NĀMDEV

'MY MOTHER THOU'

My Mother thou ; thy sucking babe am I :
Feed me with love, my Pāṇḍuraṅg, I cry.
I am the calf with thee, the mother cow ;
Thy milk, my Pāṇḍuraṅg, refuse not now.
Thou mother bird, and I among thy brood ;
O fly, my Pāṇḍuraṅg, and bring me food.
Ah, heart's beloved, hear thy Nāma say,
On every side thou hedgest up my way.

MUKTĀBĀĪ

A REMONSTRANCE

Graciously thy heart incline :
Open to me, brother mine.
He's a saint who knoweth how
To the world's abuse to bow.
Great of soul indeed is he,—
Wholly purged of vanity.
Surely he whose soul is great
Is to all compassionate.
Thou pervading Brahman art.
How should anger fill thy heart?
Such a poisèd soul be thine.
Open to me, brother mine.

Note. This *abhaṅg* is said to have been addressed by Muktābāī to her brother Jñāneśvar on one occasion when the door of his hut was closed against her and she supposed him to be angry.

JANĀBĀĪ

GRINDING

Dispassion's mill, with earnest mind,
 Lo, here grind I,—
 While for a handle faith I find
 To grind it by.
 A handful of past deeds I deem
 Grist for the mill,
 And grind in the one Soul supreme
 My good or ill.
 All outward form to dust is ground,
 All eyes can see,
 For 'tis the Lord himself, I've found,
 Who grinds for me.
 Strange that this god should come and sit
 His servant nigh ;
 For I've had naught to do with it,
 Says Janābāī.

EKANĀTH

' GOD DWELLS IN ALL '

God dwells in all, and yet we find,
 To him the faithless man is blind.
 Water or stones or what you will,—
 What is it that he does not fill ?
 Lo, God is present everywhere,
 Yet faithless eyes see nothing there.
 If Ekanāth unfaithful be,
 Then God he also shall not see.