

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM

A Study of Jesus Christ, and a Disciple's Recollections of the Swami Viveka- nanda.

IN AN AGE which has not yet fully emerged from the pessimism and doubt into which the destructive analytical criticism of the last century had cast its thought, it is a pleasure to be able to welcome two books* which, both dealing with matters of spiritual insight on somewhat different planes of experience, yet agree in making a personal religion the basis of their hope and aspiration. And although one of these books deals with a purely Eastern phase of religious thought, none but the most bigoted, probably, would see in that fact matter for objection.

In Christianity and in Hinduism (only a broader title for that system of religious thinking which Buddha found and on which he impressed the image of his commanding personality), the principle of a divine love exhibiting itself through the agency of a perfected self-humiliation has reached at once its highest historic examples and greatest historical results; and the service which modern radical criticism has done (often in spite of itself) has been in clearing, from the one the débris of superstition which had grown up around its heart, and from the other the prejudice which was as yet unprepared to acknowledge the relationship of God to man in a universal rather than in a local setting. In neither case, however, has the task which criticism set forth to accomplish been completed although neither can it be said that the truth has not been already definitely enlarged upon in both cases. The proof of this is in the reinvigorating impulses which are seen flowing into and out of the veins of each to-day.

Dr. Forsyth, in his study of Christ, has undertaken an analysis of his own constructive faith in "a far larger Saviour than the humane Jesus of mere religious liberalism." Frankly admitting that "we have no call to-day to prove the real manhood of Jesus," he seems to derive therefrom only greater justice for his finely wrought argument, that the godhead in Christ, in choosing to enter finite conditions, involved no negation of his nature, but the opposite, the "last assertion of his nature as love," and was no negation of his freedom, but, on the contrary, the mightiest and freest energy of his whole will toward its subjection as self-will. "It was not limitation so much as concentration." And then, with profoundest judgment, Dr. Forsyth concludes at the point where he began—namely, that "we have come to a time in the growth of Christian moral culture, when personal relations and personal endowments" must count for much more than any other; and in frankly envisaging those old errors which are the chief danger in the Church itself, he reminds us that the true reformation of humanity will have to be sought not "by amelioration, by reorganization, by programmes and politics," but by the "soul's new creation." As to how that state is to be brought about, however, we are told nothing, and, although its answer exists, of course, inferentially, in a fine practice of the Christian faith, yet that does not bring us immediately nearer to the question of how to get there. It is here that we may derive some help from the Buddhistic conception of man in his relation to God.

In that neo-Buddhism or revivalism (if it may be so termed), which has already found at least one definite practical expression in the founding of the Indian religious order of Ramakrishna, and has already sent (not unnoticed by Western scholars) its first missionaries from the East to the West, the claim is made in behalf of an evangelicism which, without either wholly renouncing the Buddhistic rigor of ascetic piety or losing itself in the Hinduistic universalism, has borrowed from Western missionary zeal, secular and religious, something of its attitude toward foreign races and religions—with this distinction, however, that having its roots in that region of saintliness, India, it places practice even before faith, and realization or experience even before redemption. Here, then, we have a means of a more distinct and, perhaps, at the same time more devotional, character than any of which Christianity presents a type—one which, if only as a training, or as an example in training, for personal leadership might be well calculated in

time to offer an appeal to the utilitarian Western mind, even stronger than it offers to the Oriental, with its ingrained preoccupation with the ideal, as ideal, apart from any "setting in time and space."

It is at first sight only, in all such differentiae as are qualified under terms such as worship, revelation, error or guilt, grace, salvation, and so forth, that Christianity and Buddhism would seem to be in direct opposition to one another—transcendism being set over against immanence, absolutism against relativism, and a divine pity showing itself as compassion against one which is felt as strength. But while these differences are much more explicit than implicit in any higher significance of their terms, with modern evolutionary science ranging itself rather on the side of the older than of the newer interpretation, the transition in thought from one to the other may only find itself a little accelerated.

THE SQUAW MAN'S SON

EDWIN MILTON ROYLE has made the psychological side of his novel, "The Silent Call" (Charles Scribner's Sons, \$1.50), as interesting as its dramatic action. Its central figure is the son of the English lord who as the Squaw Man has been for some years a familiar figure in Mr. Royle's play of that name. With his double inheritance of race, there has come to him an endowment of warring impulses, desires, inherent modes of thought and feeling. It was no easy task the author set himself to penetrate, conceive within himself and then make understandable to his readers the tangled motives, the contradictory impulses, the opposing wishes and inhibitions of a man into whose blood has come the best of two races so widely different. In the main, he has acquitted himself fairly well with this task, and his Calthorpe seems a real human being; even if he is, at times, a bit melodramatic, and talks as if he had read a good deal of western fiction, and so knew just what was expected of him. The story opens in the West, in the same region as that of "The Squaw Man." Hither the half-breed has returned, after having been brought up and educated in England and having had some years of service in the army and other years of dissipation in London. Most of the action—which is rapid, exciting, dramatic—takes place at the Indian agency, with an interlude in London. There is trouble over the discovery of valuable asphalt deposits on land belonging to the Indians, and a struggle for its possession; and there is just as much trouble over an Indian girl with whom the half-breed falls in love. He already has a wife in London, between whom and himself there is no love lost. But the young man's Anglo-Saxon sense of duty is strong, and the situation grows more complicated as the story proceeds. The interest centres constantly in the questions whether the "silent call" of his mother's people and his mother's land will triumph over his heritage from his father's race.

"FAIR AMERICA"

IN TENDED primarily for very young readers, Katharine R. Crowell's "Fair America" (George H. Doran & Co.) is written in so romantic a spirit that it can hardly fail to touch the imagination and arouse the interest of young people of varied ages, and ought to be an especially useful book to put into the hands of such as think they do not like history. Beginning with the voyage of Columbus, it gives brief glimpses of important endeavors and achievements which went to the making and the development of our Nation. Considered with reference to the readers for whom it is intended, the method is admirable. For the book pays the least possible attention to battles and wars—of which there is far too much in nearly all histories—and takes up instead the lines of social and industrial development along which the country grew. These are made vivid and dramatic by setting forward prominently some one person or group identified with a movement or an epoch, and telling picturesquely what he or they did. It would seem as if the author might have introduced more of these phases of National growth and so made her history a little more nearly complete. But possibly these scanty, bold outline sketches will be more impressive for childish minds than would a picture of more detail. She has surely erred, however, in taking in her text so little account of the flight of time. A very few more dates, and an occasional reference to the slipping by of a hundred years or so would have enabled her young readers to see the story in truer perspective. And in the style a shade less of the sentimental now and then would have been more wholesome. A series of rather unique picture charts, with a full descriptive key, gives the history of advance from 1513 to 1910 in a way that will be full of delight for young minds.

*THE PERSON AND PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST. By P. F. Forsyth, Principal of Hackney College, Hampstead. Boston: The Pilgrim Press. \$1.50.

THE MASTER AS I SAW HIM. Being Pages from the Life of the Swami Vivekananda. By his disciple, Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Longmans, Green & Co. \$1—.