

## BOOK REVIEWS

S. Arulswamy, *Saivism: A Perspective of Grace*, Sterling Publications, 1987, p. 234, Rs. 175/-

This work is a close study of eight works (*Sidhanta Astakam*) attributed to Umapati Sivacarya, who lived in the 14th century A. D. He has presented the *Saiva Siddhanta* system following the lead of Meykaṇḍar, under two methods which are known as *Podu* and *Unmai*. The former employs reflective reason for the study of reality and the latter, which resembles the *Upanishadic* method, adopts an introspective analysis of various states of consciousness. It cannot be called an intellectual investigation nor an enlightenment by the light of Divine grace (p. 22). The study has discovered that Umapati uses also a third approach to arrive at ultimate reality, viz, the method of *Tiruvaruḷ*. The significant feature of this method is that what had been earlier established through the testimony of the written works and reasoning (*podu*) and experienced through the final state of consciousness in the descending order (*unmai*) can now be seen and confirmed with the 'eye of divine grace' (*Tiruvaruḷkaṇṇal*). The concept of *Tiruvaruḷkaṇ* is specific to mystical experience. The mystics of *Saiva Siddhanta* such as Tiruñāśambandar and Tirunavukkarasar, have claimed to have had such grace-experience and seen the realities through *Tiruvaruḷkaṇ*. That is, the divine love with which a mystic is filled, wells up within him and affects both his soul and body; then the *Paramporul* which was within him as *aruḷ* becomes intensified and consequently his soul attains *arulmayam* (the nature of grace) (p. VIII).

The book is a powerful plea that the seekers of truth cannot find fulfilment and consummation in their search, if it is not complemented and confirmed with the 'eye of divine grace'. This work was originally submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy. It is a very valuable contribution in the field of research in theistic trends in Indian religious philosophy.

Gregory D'Souza, O.C.D., *Transforming Flame*, Mysore Divya Jyothi Publications, 1988, p. 214.

The spiritual transformation or renewal of man envisaged by St John of the Cross is the central theme of this work. Renewal and rejuvenation interest us all because it means happiness, which is seldom realized due to the universal and inescapable presence of suffering. For John solution for suffering consists in the practice of theological

virtues of faith, hope and love centred around Christ which transform the man of sin into a 'new man'. He explains the life of new man in terms of the love of God in his *Spiritual Canticle* and in the *Living Flame of Love*. He terms the higher state of the new life 'the state of the spiritual betrothal' and the highest state 'the spiritual marriage'. The author has aptly called the experience of love in this union of human person with God as transforming flame.

After a careful study of the mystical experience of St John of the Cross, the author states that John does not contradict the genuine mystical experience in other religions. Another conclusion of the author makes the work more appealing to the general public: "... his teaching holds good not only for mystics but also for those who tread the path of perfection without any form of mystical experience. For the most pivotal point of his teaching is the growth of love, so that we can be united with God in perfect love. But this call to the life of perfect love is open to all and not merely to mystics" (p. 195). The author has commendably presented in his work the central concern of St John of the Cross, namely, "to lead those who cared to be led, into the highest sublimities of transforming union".

Luis M. Bermejo, *The Spirit of Life*, 1987, P. 400, \$ 10.5; Michael Paul Gallagher, *Help My Unbelief*, 1987, P. 125, \$ 5; Ramon Nubiola, *Union with God through the Eucharist*, 1987, P. 132; Vandana Mataji, *Jesus the Christ*, 1987, P. 60; Ignatius Jesudasan, *Gandhian Theology of Liberation*, 1987, P. 318, \$ 11; S. Arokiaswamy SJ and G. Gispert Sauch SJ (eds) *Liberation in Asia Theological Perspectives*, 1987, P. 269, \$ 9.50; Carlos G. Valles SJ, *Unencumbered by Baggage: Father Anthony De Mello, A Prophet for our times*, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, 1987, P. 192, \$ 6.50.

Tony de Mello was a phenomenal success among the religious living a committed life in the Catholic circle in India. His sudden death in June 1987 was a real shock for his admirers here and abroad. The reviewer himself was fortunate enough to acquaint himself with the early and later spiritual teachings of this *Sadhana* - master. Carlos G. Valles, a close associate with Tony in his spiritual evolution, gives a reliable and faithful account of his teacher's latest spiritual vision of life in the book under review. A perusal of this book would be certainly a very rich spiritual experience. It is a marvellous specimen of cultures, religious traditions and philosophic reflections, meeting, mixing and merging into a 'new spirituality' or religion. Tony has through and through Christened the life - ideal of J. Krishnamurthi, the philosopher of contemporary India.

The philosopher said: "I enter fully into each experience and I come out clean from each of them too. I put the whole of me into all I do, and . . . out of all I do. Nothing sticks to the mind . . ." (p. 182) Tony who lived this idea on his own, insisted on it repeatedly. "Live every experience to the full, so that it leaves no residue in the mind. No leftover, no remainder, no scraps. Account without any carry over. Journey without luggage. No living on credit, but cash down each time" (p. 182).

The book would be a spiritual aid to any pilgrim for a journey without luggages.

### **Liberation in Asia: Theological Perspectives**

This book is the collection of articles most of them reprinted from *Vidyajyoti*, a Journal of Theological reflection, which celebrates its fiftieth year in 1987. They have been written in the context of the two documents on the Theology of Liberation issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in 1984, and 1986. Today liberation theology is a world wide phenomenon cutting across continents, churches and races. The twelve essays presented here divide themselves into two main parts. The first contains thematic studies on various aspects of the theology of liberation in Asia. The second part gathers together commentaries on the two documents mentioned above, written with the context of Asia in view.

No serious theologian in Asia will want to miss this articulation of the faith. Theologians elsewhere in the oikumene will find in these pages what to them may be an unexpected expression of the new Asian soul.

### **Gandhian Theology of Liberation**

In this handy blend of biography, history and homespun theology, the author adds a helpful dimension to the desperately needed dialogue with all religions.

This book is an exposition of Gandhi's theology of liberation. It is exposed both as a concept and as a historical experience which was the context of the concept. Thus context and content stand at once both distinct and united. Gandhi's concept of liberation has its theological roots in his faith as a self-understanding which related him to all reality - material, animate, human and divine - in its conflictual and reconciling aspects. *Satyagraha* turns out to be the Gandhian synthesis or dialectical unity which reconciles opposite poles without perpetuating the need for continued conflict and dialectics. The book remarkably demonstrates that it is in this context of non-violent living that we attain true liberation.

**T. Kadankavil**