

BOOK REVIEWS

Joseph Thekkedath, S.D.B., Ph.D.

History of Christianity in India, Vol. II: From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century (1542-1700).

Theological Publications in India (published for Church History Association of India), Bangalore, 1982, xxii + 529 pp.

The awakening of the national consciousness of the Indian Christians has been expressed in various ways. It is easily recognizable in the recent Indian Church historiography. From the 1960's onward Church history writing has become not increasingly professional but evidenced a concern to present the Church history of India as the history of the Indian Christians. Histories written in the 19th century and early 20th century tended to be histories of the missionaries for the missionaries. It was rather the history of the expansion of the western missionary enterprise in which ecclesiastical authorities and missionaries, rather than Indian Christians, dominated.

Inspired by the new spirit the Church History Association of India felt that the time has come for a new, fuller and more up-to-date history of Christianity in India. In 1973 this Association resolved to sponsor the writing of a multivolume History of Christianity in India, from a single perspective. An editorial board was constituted with an ecumenical representation of writers. The editorial board clarified its perspective that the history of Christianity in India has to be viewed as an integral part of the socio-cultural history of the Indian people rather than separate from it. The history should, therefore, focus attention on the Christian people in India concerning their identity and their self-consciousness, their social, religious, cultural and political encounters, the changes these encounters made in them as well as in the Christian proclamation and in the Indian culture and society of which they themselves formed a part.

The volume under review, second of the projected six volume history of Christianity in India, is a test volume. It is up to the readers to judge how far the author and the editorial board have

kept in their view the perspective they have set for the writing of this series of history. This volume covers an important period in the history of Indian Christians, one and a half century, the beginning of which, A. D. 1592, is marked by the arrival of the great missionary, St Francis Xavier. The period ends in 1700. Then started the diversification of missionary efforts from traditions other than Roman Catholic; India witnessed significant changes in her socio-political history.

The book is divided into six major sections with a general introduction and conclusion. The introduction, after making a general survey of the socio-cultural context of India in the 16th and 17th centuries, analyses the main factors that helped or hindered the efforts of the missionaries hailing from different religious orders such as the Franciscans, the Jesuits, the Dominicans and the Augustinians. A large portion of the introduction is devoted to the discussion of the sources both published and unpublished.

The main sections deal with the different geographical areas: 1) Kerala, 2) Tamil Nadu, 3) Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, 4) Western Coast, 5) North India, and 6) Bengal and Orissa. Each section has an introductory chapter which briefly describes the political, socio-cultural and religious situation of the particular region. Most sections have a chapter each on the general impact of Christianity on the life of people in general and the influence of the environment on Christianity in particular. The general and particular contextualization is important for the perspective in which this new history is being written.

The section on Kerala—quite appropriately the major portion—is dealing with the ancient Christians of India, the St Thomas Christians. Special attention is given to the important changes that resulted from their encounter with western Catholic Christianity. Though in the beginning of the 16th century, they had enthusiastically welcomed the Christians from the West, the latinizing and westernizing policy of the Portuguese led to many confrontations and conflicts. The rest of the Kerala section describe the progress of evangelization of non-Christians that had been started by the Portuguese in the early years of the 16th century. In 1558 Cochin became a Padroado bishopric comprising all the new Christians of Kerala.

The next major geographical area is Tamil Nadu, where new Christian communities sprang up in the districts of Kanyakumari,

Pearl Fishery Coast, Tanjavur, South Arcot and in San Thomé or Mylapore. The last mentioned town, where remained what tradition held the tomb of St Thomas the Apostle, was raised to a bishopric in 1606. In interior Tamil Nadu Fr Robert de Nobili started in the 17th century a new experiment at evangelization. With Madurai as centre he lived and preached Christianity adapted to the cultural and social customs of the Hindus. It attracted many high caste Hindus to Christianity. Despite great opposition the experiment flourished all through the 17th century.

The origin of Christianity in Karnataka especially in the coastal regions is traced to Goa. Later it became a mission under the Propaganda Fider giving rise to conflicts with the Padroado jurisdiction. The first Christians of interior Karnataka also perhaps came from Goa; but soon the Bijapur vicariate was established by the Propaganda. Its first vicar apostolic, Mateo de Castro had to face serious troubles from the claims of the Padroado authorities of Goa. Southern parts of interior Karnataka was penetrated by Jesuits like Fr Cinnami who adopted the de Nobili method. Only a beginning was made in Andhra Pradesh during the 17th century.

Enormous was the mission activity on the west coast, above all in Goa, a territory wrested by the Portuguese by force of arms in 1510 from the Sultan of Bijapur and later expanded to north, south and east. Systematic Christianization of the territory started from the middle of the 16th century. In 1534 Goa became a bishopric, the first Padroado diocese in the East, and was raised to the status of archdiocese in 1558 with Cochin and later Mylapore as suffragan dioceses.

During this period in North India the Jesuit missions to the Mughal Court did not produce the desired result in terms of conversion of Muslims to Christianity. But it helped the establishment of a few mission stations which first catered to European Christians in the service of the Mughals and some Eastern Christians, mostly Armenians, engaged in trade. The number of converts to Christianity did not increase beyond two or three thousands, of which a few were Muslims and the majority came from different Hindu castes. Much greater was the number of converts—between thirty and forty thousand—in Bengal and Orissa where the Portuguese succeeded in establishing several settlements, the most important being in Hooghly.

In the beginning of the 18th century the total number of Christians in India was somewhere between 700,000 and 750,000 of which about 1,50,000 were St Thomas Christians. Most of the new Christians belonged to the territories which were either under the direct government of the Portuguese or at least where their influence was considerable. In the territories directly under the Portuguese undoubtedly moral pressure was exerted in order to make people accept Christianity. The policy of 'rigour of mercy' which led to the savage destruction of Hindu temples in Goa is a telling case. Little progress was made in the interior where the Portuguese had no control over the rulers. The reason for this failure was the over-dependence of the missionaries on Portuguese patronage and their faulty and unsympathetic approach.

The Tamil-speaking South and perhaps east Bengal were exceptions. In Tamil Nadu Fr. Robert de Nobili, adapting his life to that of the people, by accepting a number of Hindu customs and ceremonies for Christian use, and by a thorough study of the local language and the classical Sanskrit language, succeeded in breaking through the barrier of prejudices that kept Hindus away from Christianity. In eastern Bengal an enthusiastic missionary of the soil, Don Antonio de Rozario of Bhushna, a Bengali convert, was responsible for the conversion of several thousands of his co-religionists.

Perhaps the book under review may appear weak when it discusses the interrelation of Christians with the non-Christians. One reason for that is the general Portuguese policy of segregating converts from the non-Christians. Another is the dark ideas the missionaries entertained about non-Christian religions and their culture. Add to this the paucity of contemporary sources on this aspect.

The book has been hailed as a "monumental work", "a very valuable reference book" on 16-17th century Indian Christian history, "an excellent work of scholarship", "a well balanced, unbiased and authenticated account" of the period. A number of maps, an elaborate bibliography and a good index add to its value. Its special merit consists in the fact that the author has tried as best as possible to accommodate his material to the new perspective set for the series, without relaxing in any way the scientific rigour demanded of a scholarly work on history.

Dr A.M. Mundadan CMI

Thomas Pallipurathkunnel*A Double Regime in the Malabar Church (1663-1716)*

Alwaye: Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy, 1982, xi + 183 pp.

St Thomas Christians, the ancient Christians of India, had developed an autonomous identity of their own during the course of the first fifteen centuries of their existence. The arrival of the Portuguese in India should, in fact, have provided many possibilities for their growth and development. But the authoritarian intervention of the foreigners in the affairs of the community and the reaction this provoked did more harm than good. The latinizing and westernizing policy followed by the newcomers very adversely affected the autonomy, identity and unity of the ancient Christians of India.

The synod of Diamper (A.D. 1599) was the culmination of the latinizing policy. The age-old ties of the Indian Church with the East-Syrian Church of Persia were forcibly severed and Latin Rite Padroado prelates were appointed to govern the Oriental Rite Church of St Thomas Christians. As the grip of the Latin prelates tightened, the community's resentment and resistance increased. They revolted against the authority of Francis Garcia, the third Padroado archbishop. This revolt in 1653, known in Kerala as '*Coonon Kurisu*' (Bent Cross) Oath, marked the beginning of a confused period of history for St Thomas Christians; it not only split the community vertically but paved the way for the intervention of other foreign agencies.

The book under review covers the period from 1663 to 1716. The 'double regime' in the title indicates the two regimes or jurisdictions - Padroado and Propaganda - to which the Indian Christians of St Thomas were simultaneously subjected. The revolt of 1653 was directed against the Portuguese Padroado, particularly the Jesuit archbishop and missionaries who represented the Padroado at that time. So Rome sent to Kerala missionaries belonging to the Carmelite order who were made responsible to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide (S. Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) to tide over the crisis. One of these missionaries, Joseph Sebastiani, was consecrated bishop and appointed vicar apostolic of Malabar. Thus those St Thomas Christians who gave their allegiance to Rome came under the Propaganda.

In 1663 the Dutch captured the Portuguese fort of Cochin and foreign missionaries, including Sebastiani, were asked to quit Kerala. *Kathenar* Chandy (Alexander) Parampil (a prominent St Thomas Christian Priest) was consecrated bishop and appointed vicar apostolic in the place of Sebastiani. This is the beginning of the period Pallipurathkunnel has chosen to study. He calls it a 'period of confusion', for obvious reasons. As far as the Catholics were concerned, the conflicting claims of the Padroado and Propaganda was a source of confusion. The confusion became confounded when a coadjutor was appointed to Bishop Alexander in the person of a Latin Rite Portuguese—Indian priest Raphael Figueredo Salgado. Not only did Bishop Alexander consider this appointment highly objectionable, but Salgado himself soon proved to be unworthy of the office. Rome was even forced to issue an order suspending him, but the order was not executed before his death. Things got much worse when Bishop Alexander died in 1687.

Towards the close of the 17th century Roman diplomacy succeeded in making an agreement with the Dutch which permitted Carmelite missionaries of three nations - Belgian, German and Italian - to work in Kerala. By virtue of the same agreement Rome appointed in 1700 Angelo Francis, an Italian Carmelite missionary, vicar apostolic of Malabar under the Propaganda. This action on the part of Rome provoked the Portuguese to reassert their claims to the Cranganore archdiocese and nominate John Ribeiro as its archbishop. These developments gave rise to a new series of conflicts between the Jesuits under the Padroado and the Carmelites under Propaganda, and these worsened matters. In 1709 Pope Clement XI issued a brief the result of which, in practice, was the division of St Thomas Christians into two jurisdictions: the majority under the Propaganda (vicariate of Malabar), and the minority under the Padroa (archdiocese of Cranganore).

This is the story of 'confusion' which is told by Pallipurathkunnel in the five chapters (2-5) of his book. Chapter 1 is the introduction and 7 the conclusion. Chapter 6 is devoted to the study of those St Thomas Christians who, even after the arrival of Carmelite missionaries in the late 1650s, continued under Archdeacon Thomas who led the revolt of 1653. Within a year after the revolt, Thomas was made a 'bishop' through the imposition of hands by 12 priests, and he assumed the name Thomas I. This community finally received

a bishop sent to Kerala by the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch to whom they finally gave their allegiance.

Much of what the book tells us is already well-known. However, the author has unearthed a number of unpublished documents from the various archives of Rome (particularly in the Propaganda archives) and Lisbon. It is for the first time these documents have been studied, and they help to throw much light on certain areas which had so far remained obscure, and also fill up gaps which we find in other studies. A little more attention to the writing, perhaps, would have greatly improved the quality of the book. I have a feeling that the full significance of the fresh documents has not been exploited in the presentation. There is no doubt that the book is a very valuable contribution to the documented and scientific historiography on St Thomas Christians and an objective evaluation of a very critical period in their history. It should serve as an incentive to inquire further into the root causes of the division into several groups of the original one autonomous community of Christians of India, the 'Church of All India'.

Dr A. M. Mundadan

A. M. Allchin

The Dynamics of Tradition

London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981, viii + 151 pp. Price : £ 4.50.

With the publication of the present book A. M. Allchin completes a trilogy of which the two titles published earlier were : *The World is a Wedding* and *The Kingdom of Love and Knowledge*: The problem the author tries to tackle in the present book is the importance remembering the past has for the present, the active encounter between the spiritual life of today and that of earlier times.

While preparing the book under review A. M. Allchin was confronted with a dilemma. He was constantly asking himself, "Am I advocating a mere antiquarianism, an escape into an earlier and supposedly golden age?" His predicament was similar to the dilemma which Raymundo Panikkar faced when the latter chose to publish his *The Vedic Experience*: "What would you save from a blazing house? A precious, irreplaceable manuscript containing a

message of salvation for mankind, or a little group of people menaced by the same fire? . . . How can you be just an 'intellectual' concerned with truth, or just a 'spiritual' busy with goodness, when men desperately cry for food and justice? How can you follow a contemplative, philosophical and religious path when the world shouts for action?"

Panikkar resolved the dilemma by convincing himself that 'saving the manuscript from the fire', taking intellectual vocation seriously, was fully related to helping people in more concrete and proximate ways. The central concern of Allchin's book, namely, how history makes itself known to us in the present and how it makes possible for man to live creatively towards the future, is brought home to the reader by reflections on poetic literature, particularly of T. S. Eliot, certain significant moments of British history, Eastern Christian experience, and the experience of non-Christian religions, especially Hinduism. Thus, through all this, a conviction grown that: "Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future" (T. S. Eliot). We are not liberated from the past by forgetting it; the opposite is true. As we reflect a sense grows in us that unless the moments of time are more than a mere linear succession of atoms, unless there is some overarching reality which links one to the other, the world cannot simply subsist. In theological terms, it is the interaction of the timeless with time, the continuity of Presence which is creative and life-giving every moment, a contemporaneity of the Spirit. The past, the present and the future are linked by the Presence of the one who is unspeakably transcendent and unspeakably immanent.

It is in prayer, in contemplative prayer (liturgical as well as meditative), particularly as it is practised in the monastic tradition, that this holy awareness is created of the presence of the past creatively turned to the future. This special dimension of Europe's past is not seriously attended considered by the youth of Europe and America who are disillusioned with the cultural, political and religious institutions which they have inherited. Religiously the youngmen have turned instinctively, not to Christianity, but to the teachings of other religions. They are led to think that the contemplative knowledge and experience which they feel that their world requires cannot be found in Christianity, which in their minds is closely associated with

the horrors of our time and has itself become a victim of the spirit of activism which rules our world.

This universality which characterises the view of the young, and refuses to be hedged in within a single historical experience, or a single historical era, is laudable. But these young men do need to be reawakened to the fact that the Christian tradition of the West contains within itself a contemplative dimension. It is this dynamic of Western tradition that canon Allchin's deep spirituality, broadbased culture and pioneering imagination bring into focus in the present book.

Dr A. M. Mundadan

Dominic J. O'Meara (ed.)

Neoplatonism and Christian Thought

Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982, XVIII + 297 pp.

This is the third volume in the series, *Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern*. Another volume in the series, *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought* must be of special interest to the readers of the *Journal of Dharma*. The volume under review is of special significance for the Church today, as the Church is called upon to enter into dialogue with not just with one Particular culture or philosophy as was the case generally in the Middle Ages, but with various cultures and many philosophies, philosophies which had developed in ancient cultures as well as philosophies which have emerged or one in the process of emerging in modern cultures. The way in which one branch of Greek philosophy, Neoplatonism, was made use of by the Fathers of the Church, the school men of the Middle ages, the Renaissance leaders of the 15th and 16th centuries and a number of modern Christians thinkers, provides us a lesson for a serious encounter of the Christian Gospel with these philosophies of mankind with which Christianity has not as yet established any meaningful contact.

The book starts with the Neoplatonic and early Christian interpretations of the Greek myth of Ulysses. Here the myth received a Christian meaning both theological and ethical. Then follow studies by various scholars on Origen's Trinitarian doctrine and its relation

to certain late Neoplatonic theories; the influences of Neoplatonism are the thinking of Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Marius Victorinus, Ambrose and Augustine; the "objective link" between Pseudo-Dionysius and a Neoplatonic source. St. Augustine's use of Neoplatonism is somewhat complex. Plotinus' *conversion* or turning of the soul to God appealed to him; equally influential on Augustine was Porphyry's search for a universal path to the liberation of the soul.

During the middle Ages Aristotle replaced Plato; but the Aristotle St. Thomas and other scholastics made use of for developing a Christian theology, was an Aristotle enriched indirectly by the Neoplatonic insights of Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius and others. 15th century Renaissance writers were directly influenced by Neoplatonism. Nicholas of Cusa and Mario Ficino show immense enthusiasm for harmonizing the Christian Gospel with Greek philosophy, particularly Neoplatonism. In modern times Robert Browning's poems, the theological thinking of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien and Charles Williams show marked Neoplatonist tendencies. The book offers good insights about these channels of Platonic continuity in the Religio-philosophical literature.

Dr A. M. Mundadan

Doris M. Srinivasan

Concept of Cow in the Rigveda

Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979, xii + 161 pp. Rs. 35.

The last two decades had seen a renewed interest in the study of customs and practices particularly in respect of cow, which even made some noise in the political scene in India. Doris M. Srinivasan in her scholarly work *Concept of Cow in the Rigveda*, presents the image of cow as defined by the concepts associated with it in the Rigveda. The work is important as it offers a progressively better understanding of both the Rigveda and its cultural milieu.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is a long introduction which gives a comprehensive analysis of the subject. The next four chapters are arranged according to four contexts in which the term "cow" appears in Rigveda. They are the economic

life, the ritual system, the mythology and the epithets found in Rigveda.

The chapter "Cow in Vedic Economic Life" aims at bringing into focus not only the cow's uses but also people's attitudes and modes of thinking about such uses. The importance of cow in vedic rites can be seen from the various vedic verses analysed in the chapter on 'Cow in the Vedic Ritual'. "Cow" in vedic mythology shows how the symbol of cow is used in the various myth-narratives of the time.

The book is very informative since it offers a complete picture of the vedic life and culture of great antiquity. About 700 terms on cow occurring in Rigveda are analysed. The author does not confuse her own ideas with the fact. Though she has made her own conclusion the reader is left with ample freedom to interpret in his own way. The present work adds a new chapter to the studies on Indian culture especially, its origin and development.

Justin Akkara

Antony Mookenthottam M.S.F.S.

Towards a Theology in the Indian Context

Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1980, 350 pp.

Here is a scholarly and timely book in the field of Indian Christian Theology. Dr Antony Mookenthottam, takes a refreshingly novel stand with regard to the understanding of truth. In his own words his attempt is "... to propose an approach which has a common basis in the Indian scriptures and the Christian scriptures and consequently acceptable to all Indians." In order to achieve this purpose he undertook a research on the concept of Truth and Reality in the Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist and Christian Scriptures. He tried to arrive at points of agreement rather than disagreement in the matter of Truth and Reality. He discovered both in Hindu and Christian scriptures that Truth is one but it has more than one dimension.

The first chapter of the book presents a short review of the development of Indian Theology. After mentioning the contributions of the theologians, both Catholic and Protestant towards the growth of

the Indian Christian theology, the author deals with some of the problems of Indian Theology and focuses on the problem related to Truth. In chapter two the author begins to explore the dimensions of Truth in the Vedas. In order to know the Vedic notion of Truth he analyses three concepts namely, *ṛta*, *satya* and *dharman*. He says that the means adopted by the Vedic Rshis for attaining the Ultimate Truth are introspective meditation and intuition. On the basis of this analysis he draws some important conclusions concerning the nature of the Indian approach to the experience of Truth.

Chapter three deals with the Upanishadic approaches to Truth and Ultimate Reality. The Atman-Brahman unity of the Ultimate Reality is the central theme of the earlier Upanishads. In the later Upanishads the notions of *purusha*, *prakṛti* and *māyā*, are the main concepts related to the world-process.

Chapter four and five are devoted to a study of Truth according to Jainism and Buddhism respectively. Jainism contends that Absolute Truth is a plurality of conscious and non-conscious substances which are eternal. But the fullness of Truth, in the words of the author "... is reached by the exclusion and annihilation of *karman*, resulting in the full unfolding of consciousness and intuitive vision of all realities." In Buddhism, however, Truth is to know what Reality is. It is the knowledge of the impermanence of existence, which is suffering. Moreover, Truth is something practical and pragmatic in Buddhism.

In chapter six a discussion on the concept of the Ultimate Reality according to *Bhagavadgita* is presented. The Ultimate Reality assumes personal as well as cosmic forms, and Truth is an experience the unity between God and the individual self which is a particle of God. In order to achieve this unity, that is, to attain liberation, several means are suggested and explained in the Gita, namely, *karma mārga*, *jñāna mārga* and *bhakti mārga*. The Gita subordinates the various mystical experiences to the ultimate experience of the love of a personal God.

The seventh chapter presents the author's research findings on the biblical concepts of Truth and Reality. Here not the whole Bible, but only the Old Testament and the gospel and the letters of John are studied and analysed. Analysing *emunah*, *emet* and *dabār* of the O.T. and *aletheia* of John, Dr Antony suggests that Truth and Reality have

various aspects or dimensions also in the Biblical revelation. "The knowledge of God, both in the O.T. and in John begins with divine intervention." The means to arrive at the knowledge of God according to John are witnessing faith, obedience and love.

Chapter eight is central to the whole work. Here, at first, he attempts to formulate the agreements and disagreements between the Indian scriptures and the Bible on Truth and Reality. He finds that the concepts of Truth and Reality of these scriptures are based on different world-views and to arrive at a basic agreement he makes an attempt to reinterpret the sacred texts. Consequently, we recognize that all these scriptures agree on two things, namely, that the Ultimate Reality is one which has a manifested aspect that is Truth, and that Truth has many dimensions. Since the principle that governs each dimension is one of identity and differentiation, he proposes a pluri-dimensional approach to the understanding of Truth. In his opinion, the fundamental problem in Indian theology can be examined in the light of this principle. Hence, on the basis of this new approach he draws further conclusions and makes suggestions on various topics in the final chapter. The topics discussed include the Trinitarian, the Christological, ecclesiastical and missiological aspects of the Indian Christian theology in its making.

On the whole it seems that the author had succeeded in proposing an approach for theologizing in the Indian context. Elaborate references and foot-notes, and good printing add to the value of this book. Perhaps the study on the Old Testament concept of Truth could have been a little more elaborate and an analysis of Truth in the synoptic gospels, the Pauline Epistles and the book of Revelation would have certainly made this book more informative. Nevertheless, this book of Dr Antony Mookenthottam is a valuable contribution to the emerging Indian Christian theology.

Jacob Naluparayil

Richard Fox Young

Resistant Hinduism: Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India

Vienna: De Nobili Research Library, 1981, 200 pp. Gld. 50.

Resistant Hinduism is a valuable work for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, this detailed study of the anti-Christian apologetics of the Hindu pandits of early nineteenth-century India debunks the romantic Western hyperbole of Hinduism being perceived as the perfect model of religious tolerance. Yet, on the other hand, the author, Richard Fox Young, also expresses the hope that his research may become helpful for stimulating interreligious dialogue in the future. Certainly, this well-documented study of the history and development of the *Mataparīkṣā* Controversy ought to prove a helpful tool for ecumenical theologians looking for models of past conversations. Young's work details the foundational effort at crafting "neologisms" (new theological words or phrases) which must precede any genuine dialogue or real communication between traditions as different as Hinduism and Christianity. Clearly, a great deal can be gained by reflecting on such experience.

In Calcutta in 1839, John Muir, a scholarly lay Glasgow missionary with an Evangelical background and an ability to write in Sanskrit, published *Mataparīkṣā: A Sketch of the Argument for Christianity and against Hinduism*. This work attempted to present Christianity and Hinduism as, more or less, compatible although Christianity was clearly depicted as superior. Unlike the vitriolics of the vast majority of the missionary tracts, the *Mataparīkṣā* was far more irenic and even empathetic in tone and spirit. The best of contemporary Indological scholarship was adapted; evolving Church Sanskrit forged new Sanskrit terms for traditional Christian theological concepts. When necessary, even new Sanskrit words were created: one such neologism is *svargīyamukti*. Yet throughout Muir's work, an argument is advanced for the superiority of Christianity according to the norms of nineteenth-century European apologetics; thus, miracles moral excellence, and universality are advanced as the three major arguments in favour of Christianity. All these arguments were crafted in language which attempted to be sensitive to the Hindu genius while yet simultaneously bearing witness to the claims of Christianity.

Reaction from the Hindu pandits came quickly. Somanātha (Subāji Bāpu) responded with *Mataparīkṣāśikṣā* in 1839; this work was set in the form of a dialogue between a "śiṣya" puzzled by Christianity and a *guru*. After discussions of the problems of *avatārās*, *varnas* and science, this gentle apologetic argued with finesse for the

superiority of Hinduism while challenging and expanding the norms proposed by John Muir's work. Haracandra's *Mataparikṣottara*, however, was far different in tone; it was antagonistic and often lacking in tact and understanding. The Christian complaint against Hindu sectarianism was countered by lampooning Christian denominationism and lax moral practices. Moreover, it is argued that the *Vedas* are obviously superior to the Christian Bible for they are eternally pre-existent (*nitya, sanātana*). Nilakanṭha Goreh (1825-1885), a third apologist, proved to be the most systematic and the most critical of these Hindu pandits. His *Śāstratattvavinirṇaya* raised central doubts concerning such basic Christian beliefs as interpreting Jesus Christ as the unique *avatāra* whose death wrought salvation for all. He also undercut Muir's three chief arguments of miracles, moral excellence, and universality by applying each of them to Hinduism. These principles, he claimed, argued as well for Hinduism as they do for Christianity.

As the *Mataparikṣā* Controversy developed, many challenging questions deepened and expanded the argument. For example, is reason, especially a reason formulated in concepts of Western logic, really an apt norm for understanding and describing the religious experience of all humankind? Do the traditional Christian dogmas of creation, redemption and sanctification adequately describe the human dilemma? Why are the Genesis stories considered more suitable than the Puranic myths? Is not the Christian tendency to intellectualize religion, its discipline of theology, a very incomplete way of describing religious experience? Moreover, is not Hindu "*mokṣa*" as profound a religious deal as the Christian goal of "*svarga*"? Indeed, is not the human dilemma better understood as epistemological ignorance rather than moral turpitude? These and many other questions well-illustrate the resistance and the deep disagreement with which the Hindu apologists responded to the challenge of John Muir's *Mataparikṣā*; resistance rather than accommodationalism was far more characteristic of the Hindu response in early nineteenth-century India.

Richard Fox Young's work then is an excellent study of this entire *Mataparikṣā* Controversy. His study is especially strong in tracing the history and development of this early effort at a Christian-Hindu religious conversation. It points to the need for the development of a cross-cultural hermeneutic as sympathetic to religious experience as it is to logic and reason. As the Hindu apologists had pointed

out, even though John Muir had written the *Matāparīkṣā* in Sanskrit, its understanding of religious experience and its theological formulae were all crafted in the Occident and consequently ultimately at odds with Indian spiritual experience. If real dialogue and genuine inter-religious communication is ever to take place, much more than the neologisms of Church Sanskrit must be created; a more expansive cross-cultural hermeneutic must evolve. The *Matāparīkṣā* Controversy and Richard Fox Young's excellent study of it help us to understand this.

Dr. Frank R. Podgorski

Mariasusai Dhavamony, S. J.

Classical Hinduism Documenta Missionalia 15.

Roma: Gregoriano, 1982. vii + 525 pp. \$31.00

Two series originating from the Gregorian University deserve to be far better known in theological libraries. *Classical Hinduism*, Documenta Missionalia 15, is a good example of why both the Documenta Missionalia and the Studia Missionalia series ought to be appreciated more widely. Put candidly, these works address inter-religious questions with a thoroughness and theological acumen many other works simply lack.

Classical Hinduism by Mariasusai Dhavamony is a vast and yet very sophisticated portrait of the Hindu religious tradition articulated in language and categories capable of dialogue with theology. Indeed, *Classical Hinduism* is a pioneering work insofar as it frames its study of Hinduism within such familiar categories as revelation, incarnation, salvation, worship, meditation, monasticism and morality. Such classic theological categories invite one to dialogue and fuller understanding.

A strength of *Classical Hinduism* is precisely this depiction of Hinduism in language which both preserves the special character of the Hindu tradition and yet simultaneously presents itself to theology in anticipation of further and deepened conversation. Thus Chapter Three, "Incarnation", presents a thorough study of ten different forms of Hindu "incarnation" (*avatāra*); it emphasizes the critical

initiative of divine grace (*prasāda*) to explain why Krishna chooses to begin the divine-human conversation of love (*bhakti*). When Professor Dhavamony describes such divine-human "surrender" in terms of theism accompanied by strong leanings to practical monotheism, an apt starting point for conversation with theology has been located. Similarly, when dealing with the Absolute of the *Upanishads*, Dhavamony consistently points to this *Brahman-paramātman* experience as a religious and not simply a brilliant philosophical insight. Such emphasis on religious experience promises to open theological doors. Moreover, when dealing with worship rites, and "sacraments", Dhavamony invariably goes to the heart of the matter by emphasizing the critical transformative importance of religious faith (*śraddha*). Ritual without such faith is simply empty and vacuous, still another point for deeper mutual understanding.

Yet another unique and extremely valuable contribution of this book is to be found in the last two chapters which deal with "Salvation" and "Redemption". Following an excellent etymological study of various Hindu understandings of "sin" (already an extraordinary source for the moral theologian), Professor Dhavamony explains how the human Ego (*ahamkāra*) and imperfect human ways of knowing (*avidya ajñāna*) can be formidable obstacles to salvation for the Hindu. Then, with scholarly precision, salvation as depicted in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* is presented with appropriate distinctions. It is just such precise scholarship as this reinforced by a variety of Sanskrit texts that makes *Classical Hinduism* such a valuable sourcebook for both Hinduism and theology.

Moreover, from still another perspective, *Classical Hinduism* promises to become just this needed sourcebook for Hinduism. Professor Dhavamony draws on German, French, English and American scholarship to supplement his already vast command of the basic Indological sources. Thus citations from Otto and Eliade and Dumezil are accompanied by extensive quotations from the Hindu *bhāṣyas* of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva as well as the more contemporary insights of Ramakrishna, Aurobindo, Gandhi, and Radhakrishnan. Moreover, Sanskritists will be delighted to find extensive pertinent quotations from Gaudapāda, Vyāsa Vijñānabhikṣu, and Vācaspati-miśra.

In summary then, *Classical Hinduism* is a thorough theological sourcebook for discovering and exploring the "immense and yet vast ocean" of the Hindu religious tradition; it is unique insofar as it invites contemporary theology to take up this book and ponder more deeply. Such reflection promises mutual stimulation and enhancing enrichment.

Dr. Frank Podgorski

John Dudley

Gott und Theoria bei Aristoteles, Die metaphysische Grundlage der Nikomachischen Ethik.

Frankfurt a. M./Bern, Peter Lang, Series XX, Vol. 89, 1982, 241pp.

In this work Dr Dudley takes a fresh look at one of moral philosophy's perennial questions, namely, the influence of God on the perfect life of man. Probably the thinker with the greatest influence on the evolution of moral philosophy was Aristotle, and the author studies the role of God in the *Ethics* in the belief that a correct insight into the function of the Unmoved Mover provides the key to understanding the corpus of the Stagirite's ethical writings.

The author begins by outlining the attributes of the Prime Mover and is struck by how closely they correspond with the qualities of the perfect human life. God (i) has an immaterial nature, (ii) contemplates, (iii) is happy, (iv) enjoys pleasure, (v) is good and (vi) is immobile: the perfect human life is a life (i) according to the intellect which is by nature immaterial, (ii) of contemplation, (iii) of happiness, (iv) of pleasure, (v) which is good and (vi) which is very stable. Aristotle also was aware of this intimate relationship between the nature of God and the perfect life for man and indeed he posited imitation of God as the way to human perfection. Thus, it is evident that God plays a central role in his *Ethics*.

The author explores the connection between God and the perfect life in considerable depth. God is by nature an immaterial active intellect, while man's most perfect activity is that of his immaterial intellect. There is therefore a strict correspondence between the

nature of God and the highest part of man, namely, his intellect, which Aristotle qualifies as divine precisely on account of its immateriality.

The author makes an even closer examination of God's activity *vis-à-vis* that of man. Aristotle's God contemplates himself in all his attributes. He knows himself above all as good, even if he does not know the diffusive effects of his goodness on the world. Man's supreme activity is also contemplation, *theoria*, and God is its ultimate and purest object. In the ideal life all human knowledge leads in the end to God, all human activity to contemplation. Thus in Aristotle's scheme the good life for man represents a conscious effort to imitate the life of God and it follows that God is the final cause of the ideal life of man.

Dudley's theory is bound to raise controversy as it runs counter to most of the accepted interpretations of Aristotle's *Ethics*. Yet it is a case which is substantiated by a very strong philological base and which is argued with truly admirable clarity and intellectual rigour. The thesis put forward here, with its many merits, must surely call forth a rethinking of the currently prevailing interpretation of Aristotle's *Ethics*.

Dr Patrick H. Daly

R. J. Venkateswaran

Bhagavad Gita for Peace of Mind

Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1982, vii + 111 pp. Rs. 21.

Bhagavad Gita for Peace of Mind offers a realistic solution to the vexing problem of humanity regarding achieving peace of mind. The book presents a new approach to the study of Gita and it shows how the teachings of Gita can be effectively used for avoiding 'all' that disturb mental peace and for developing the positive powerful attitudes which promote real joy and happiness. In this book, the author focussed his attention on those teachings of Sri Krishna which have a direct and intimate bearing on our peace of mind.

This book consists of 17 small chapters that mainly deal with practical ways to achieve the peace of mind. The author explains the message of the Gita in a language easily understood by those who are not familiar with the religious and philosophical background. To support and strengthen his interpretation of the Gita he has quoted from the outstanding scholars and philosophers.

According to this author Sri Krishna does not expect people to kill all desires except those which come in conflict with the good of the society. Against the interpretation of Mr. Morarji Desai about giving up all desires, he asks how a man can aspire for peace of mind unless he has an irresistible desire for the same and is prepared to pay the price for it? This price is to be paid in the form of control of senses, disciplined life, and a firm faith in ourselves and in God. He makes a distinction between lust and desire, and concludes that desire can contribute powerfully to the attainment of mental peace. His views on 'Death' is fascinating and he substantiates his views on 'Death' by quoting Rabindranath Tagore: "Death is not extinguishing the light, it is only putting out the lamp because the Dawn has come."

The secret of achieving peace of mind consists in the practice of positive thinking. Gita has laid eloquent emphasis on this aspect. In almost every chapter, there are suggestions to avoid such emotions as resentment, fear, lust and greed. The verses quoted in chapter XVII from the Gita, which if correctly understood and assimilated, may help one to ward off defeatist thoughts and other emotions which affect our physical and mental health. The book ends with the affirmation that whoever follows the teaching of Gita with confidence and conviction will be able to achieve 'Peace of mind' which is an essential prerequisite for successful living.

Sr. Maria Pushpam f.c.c.

M. V. Cyriac

Meeting of the Religions: A Reappraisal of the Christian Vision

Madras-Madurai: Dialogue Series, 1982, xix+214 pp. Price Rs. 30.00, \$6.00.

This is another book in the Dialogue Series (No. 3) which tries to promote dialogue with other religions. It visualizes a basic unity

of mankind as envisaged by God's plan. The diagram on the cover page proclaims that different religions are recognized as "exteriorisations of the Spirit of God under different historically and culturally conditioned forms" (p. xi). It underlines the many positive contributions of the Second Vatican Conciliar deliberations, especially its open attitude to non-Christian religions.

Building upon the biblical, patristic and conciliar foundations, the author characterises the whole of mankind as the 'People of God' with the aid of the Second Vatican documents. The thrust of the book is this: the sacramental nature of the church equips it to initiate dialogue with other religions instead of supplanting and converting people from one faith to another. The ultimate aim is the spiritual growth of all the People of God. A positive evaluation of other religions and thereby, a shift from a dialectical theology of mission to a dialogical one is greatly emphasized. It is pointed out that non-Christian religions have a positive role to play in God's salvific plan.

The author underlines the explosive ideas that have already been highlighted by the Second Vatican Council, especially one's approach to other faiths. The book drives home the need for a theology of religions in order to develop a proper theology of missions. The author does not highlight the Indian situation where the church is placed among different religious faiths. He limits the redefinition of the mission of the church, conversion, dialogue etc., to just a few sentences. Probably, it is the intention of the author to give only a few guidelines to help initiate dialogue with other faiths through this modified version of his doctoral dissertation.

Rev. R. C. Thomas

Sebastian Adayanthrath

Human Liberation in the Indian Context

Pune: The Students' Council, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 1983, 256 pp.

This book is the outcome of a seminar on 'Human Liberation in the Indian Context', conducted at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth from 8 to 10 July, 1982. The purpose of this book is not just academic; it is

meant to "help people to achieve freedom from oppression and to join hands with other organisations which are already working for this end" (p. 20).

The book has three parts. It comprises various articles which are actually presented at the seminar by different scholars. The first part is sub-titled, 'Indian Situation'. It identifies the age-old as well as new shackles of oppression such as caste system and neo-colonialism. This part contains a penetrating analysis of the Indian situation from economic, social, and cultural perspectives. The second part is 'Perspectives on Human Liberation.' An attempt is made here to elucidate the meaning of liberation from Hindu, Islamic, Marxist and Gandhian points of view. The third part is devoted to the Christian response. The mission of the church and evangelization are redefined in the light of the theology of liberation. The shortcomings on the way of the Indian Church are identified, and a new vision of life is emphasized.

In addition to the papers, the discussion is presented in the form of questions and answers. This is presented in 'Response-Praxis.' Consolidated reports of the group discussions, and a gist of the views expressed in the general sessions are also appended.

The book succeeds in bringing home to the reader the gravity of the problem of liberation in India. One is challenged and motivated to commit oneself to the task of liberation. The Church is asked to re-examine her value-systems and *modus operandi*. This book invites our attention not merely to an academic understanding of the problem but it urges us towards a metanoia. This is evident from the way the staff and students of Jnana-Deepa think aloud and ask themselves how they can be true to the spirit of liberation in their campus and also in the wider field of their mission. Together with signs of despair, the new insights of this Seminar give us rays of hope, to help us move forward until we reach the goal to be achieved in India.

Rev. R. C. Thomas