

prehensive and intellectually highly exciting. It has already become a work of enormous importance which a student of Indian Logic can ill-afford to ignore.

V. K. Bharadwaja

3 *George Menacherry (Ed.)*

The St. Thomas Christians Encyclopaedia of India, Vol. II,
 Publisher, The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia of India,
 Trichur, Kerala, India,
 xi + 218 pp. (68 pp. of illustrations); \$ 35.00; Rs. 175.00.

The volume under review, the second of the 2 volume Encyclopaedia of Christianity in India, is practically on Christians and Christianity in Kerala. Volume II which is expected shortly will deal with Christians and Christianity in the rest of India.

The Encyclopaedia has succeeded not only in enlightening us about the Christian community of Kerala, but using the perspective of the Christian community also about the other communities, nay even about the various facets of life in Kerala. The articles in this work put before us a vision which tries to integrate Christian worship, temple festivals, entertainments, folklore and even occupations like bamboo-work, coir-making, mat-weaving etc.

“The Christian community which through many centuries grew up in the South-western corner of India, had from the beginning recognized to a large extent the value of being Indian and of being Keralite. This attitude enabled them to foster the architecture and other art forms of Kerala, and later on also its literature, and to become prominent representatives of Kerala culture. This was particularly the case before the arrival of the Portuguese.

“The changes brought about in this situation by the coming of the Portuguese led to division in the community and to a sort of grotesque imitation of the West. Though the changes produced material prosperity, the identity of the community was put on the road to distortion. Christian thinkers have again started to recognize the fact that the true spirit of Religion demands involvement in the human problems of one's neighbours, integration of the culture around, and service to humanity. If in the olden days Christians in the West discovered a new vision by assimilating the values of Greek culture, today the Chris-

tions of India can achieve a new stage of development by intergrating the values of the great Hindu thought and Hindu culture. At the same time they will be able to contribute a great deal towards the creation of a new Indian identity by rejecting some of the antiquated elements of Hinduism and infusing it with a new spirit. The ancient Christians of Kerala possess a tradition which could successfully promote this noble effort. The Encyclopaedia brought out by G. Menacherry does describe this tradition with skill and authenticity."

This is how Dr. N.G.S. Narayanan, a Hindu scholar of Kerala history has depicted the impact of the book under review. It must be said that no word is an exaggeration. The guideline article of Cardinal Parecattil, "Adaptation and the Future of Christianity in India", is evidence of what Dr. Narayanan has referred to the present thinking of many an elite in India. The Cardinal quotes a significant passage from theologian Danielou: "Up to now Christianity has been refracted only through Greek and Roman worlds, it still remains to be refracted through the Chinese and Hindu facets in order to find fulfilment at the end of time, when not only every individual but every civilization will have been Christianized."

In 1972 India celebrated the 19th centenary of the martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle who, according to tradition, died near Mylapore in the year 72 A.D. The centenary celebrations were the occasion for various praiseworthy enterprises on the part of the Christians especially in Kerala. One of the noblest of these efforts was the publication of a number of books and articles both on Christianity in India as a whole and in Kerala in particular. No one will doubt that the most phenomenal of these publications is the Encyclopaedia of G. Menacherry. "This sumptuous volume... is worthy of the centenary of St. Thomas", commented *The Hindu*.

The book has 72 major articles which cover 191 pages and follow more or less a chronological order. Minor articles numbering over 400 following an alphabetical order—mostly names of persons and places, certain historical events, documents, cultural and other customs—fill the rest of the book covering about 25 pages. The quality of the major articles depends upon the contributors who are in most cases well chosen. A few of the articles are reproductions from old books and are of unequal value.

The various articles together present a very good picture of the Christians and their life. The historical, sociological, liturgical, archeological and cultural aspects are dealt with fairly well. The customs, manners and social usages, arts and crafts of Kerala Christians are highlighted through the 300 and odd pages of this sumptuous volume, richly illustrated with splendid black and white, and colour plates. The illustrations bear ample testimony to an organized effort to bring

together a large number of pieces of sculpture and painting, depicting some aspect or other of the antiquities of Christianity in Kerala. Old monuments, ancient murals and frescoes, precious copper plates of royal grants and records of patronage extended to Christians from time to time, decorate several pages of this book.

In describing the history of the Christians starting with St. Thomas the Apostle and his connections with Kerala and India, the editors have kept the pages open to different shades of opinion: St. Thomas' apostolate in India, the orthodoxy of certain sections, the relationship between the native clergy and foreign missionaries, rites in liturgy etc. A scholarly serenity is apparent in many of the contributions. Since Christians in Kerala are divided into five or more denominations, thoroughly ecumenical approach is adopted in the book. It has been acclaimed as an "Indian Ecumenical Feat". Both in selecting the editorial board members and assigning major articles, it is clear that the ecumenical perspective has been decisive. Ecumenical co-operation is printed into every page of the book.

Reviewers have not minced words in praising Encyclopaedia. In almost every review are found such glowing expressions as, "a work of rare excellence", "the single volume will serve the purpose of several volumes of many denominational publications", "a great achievement in Kerala historiographic literature", which goes to show that "where Governments and Universities have failed, the determination of a few individuals has triumphed." This lavishness in acclaiming the book does not mean that it is all perfect. It has its defects too. Some of the articles not only overleap subject matter but lack encyclopaedic precision and conciseness; since some topics are treated by more than one author, not only repetitions but even contradictions appear side by side. A few of the contributions remain at a very popular level, neither critical nor very authentic. Editing is not always of a high standard.

These defects—one may call them marginal considering the nature of the work—notwithstanding, the book is a marvellous achievement in Indian publication, Indian historiography, and Indian encyclopaedic literature. One will find in it a wealth of information, very difficult, if not impossible to find in any other publication. This is particularly so in the case of the illustrations. The printing and get up are excellent—a rare virtue in Indian book industry.

The General Editor G. Menacherry and his collaborators can take legitimate pride in this extraordinary achievement. The work is the combined result of imagination and scholarship; even more, it testifies to dedicated effort pursued with love. It is of singular gratification that so many facts, documents, and authoritative interpretations have been beautifully blended in one volume like this. It is a monument to the 19 century-old dialogue between Christianity and Indian

culture, and at the same time is certain to inaugurate a new era of encounter and assimilation. The book with its companion volume should find a special place on the shelves of every library both in India and abroad, as a valuable contribution to world literature and as a source book of Indian Christianity.

A.M. Mundadan

N.K. Devaraja,

Hinduism and the Modern Age,

New Delhi: Islam and Modern Age Society,
1975, 149 pp; Rs. 35.00.

The first chapter "An Interpretative Survey Of The Growth Of The Hindu Religious Tradition" is a veritable panorama of Hinduism painted masterfully in broad strokes. In the second chapter quotations from a cross-section of western critics sets the background for appraising the present trends of Hindu reform movements. Unfortunately, the western critics and admirers of Hinduism who have drawn the attention of Indian exponents of reform have mostly represented western secular views, which do not go to the roots of Hinduism as a religion and philosophy. The author senses clearly the task of religious reform to consist in "reappraising itself in relation to other religions of the world and in coping with the demand for adequate evidence in respect of beliefs and dogmas of every kind that the unprecedented successes of modern science and the prestige of scientific methods of investigation, have tended to foster." (p. 65).

The third chapter "Science, Secularism and Religion" outlines critically the attempts made by many thinkers to find a unity among all religions. The author arrives at the conclusion, that humanism is the core of all religions and that it will lead, in effect, to their being divested of their "religious" outgrowths. "It seems to me that a view of religion free from pre-suppositions, that would be acceptable to the modern man with his more developed and demanding sense of evidence, would lead towards Humanism". (p. 77)

The author remarks approvingly, "religion today is expected to find or furnish sanctions for an interference of the state in the interest of the welfare of the people" (p. 81). In this chapter he outlines also the part played by Christianity in the growth of humanism. Unfortunately, here also the author relies too heavily on statements of authors