

BOOK REVIEWS

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh,

Divine Melody,

Poona : Rajneesh Foundation, 1978, iv + 263 pp.

“The ten chapters of this book are transcriptions taken from original recordings of the discourse on the songs of Kabir given by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh at the Rajneesh Ashram in Poona, India, from January 1st, 1977 to February 10th, 1977.”

As the message of the book, the author of the book himself is a new spiritual phenomenon of our times. His teaching is that any attempt to repress human emotions and desires is doomed to failure, and prevents transcendence to higher levels of consciousness. In *The Divine Melody* he states : “everybody has been told that happiness exists in the future. This is nonsense. Happiness exists here-now. You need not achieve it, you bring it with yourself—it is part of your innermost core” (p. 243). But men “have been hypnotised to remain in misery.” “Ideologies are just mind-products; consciousness is far beyond, for above” (p. 245). Hence one has to free one’s consciousness from these ideologies and religions which condition man’s mind and thus make him a miserable man. “A happy man is a rebellious man. Happiness is tremendous rebellion. Once humanity is awake, temples, churches, religions will disappear from the earth” (p. 242). “Let freedom be your religion and be rebellious ! A revolutionary is a reactionary he reacts against the society. But a rebellious person is one who has understood the whole nonsense of the society, and simply slips out of it. He does not fight with it. On the surface he even continues to pretend that he belongs to it” (p. 251).

Thus to attain real happiness what Rajneesh proposes is a rebellion against the hypnotising ideologies that condition our thinking. One of the spheres in which a man has to attain freedom is that of the sex. “Once the sex energy rises in the spine, you start becoming very very happy. When the sex energy reaches to the seventh—*sahasrar*—you flower into a lotus bloom. Your life then is a deep

ecstasy. This repressed sexual energy is your repressed happiness. By repressing sexual energy, happiness has been repressed. By repressing sexual energy, you have been cut from your roots" (p. 250).

Concerning his role as a teacher Rajanesh says : " I teach a new man, a new humanity, a new concept of being in the world. My message to humanity is a new man. Less than that won't do. Not something modified, not something continuous with the past, but utterly discontinuous." Declaring himself as a *guru* (master), Rajanesh follows the teaching of Kabir who sang : " *Guru* (master) and God are both standing, whose feet shall I touch first ? I shall touch yours O Guru, for you revealed God to me."

Commenting on Kabir's poem Rajanesh states that real religion can never be found in the scriptures. " And a real religious seeker does not go in search of scriptures, he goes in search of a Master—a living Master. If you can come in contact with a living master then dead Scriptures will become alive again" (p. 10). Rituals are formalities. With a living master, a new ritual is born. It is celebration of life rather than ceremonies. A master speaks on his own authority, he is his sole authority. " You have to be very open and vulnerable, only then will you be able to feel a Master. Don't go to a Master with a negative attitude" (p. 13). The real Masters are very paradoxical, very contradictory. A true master never promises anything. He is not here to fulfill your greed. A master simply teaches you how to be alert with full consciousness" (pp. 13-16). Rajanesh himself is such a master.

In the above account some of the salient features of the book have been outlined. A question naturally comes to my mind is whether the author himself is hypnotising the reader with his idea of a "new man." The teaching that "God is happy only when you are happy, God is happy in your happiness" (p. 21) could be certainly accepted without much reservation. The suggestion, however, that it can be achieved by being rebellious to the society and by releasing the repressed sexual energy is certainly controversial. It is just another ideology which also condition and captivate our minds. Is that not another form of slavery created by a very powerful suggestion of a master ?

The book is written in conversational style. It is full of beautiful anecdotes, and it offers very interesting material for reading in spite of its internal contradictions.

R. H. Lesser,

The Holy Spirit and the Charismatic Renewal,

Bangalore : Theological Publication in India, 1978, VI + 274 pp.

The Charismatic movement has been spreading among the Catholics of India during the recent years arousing the interest and criticism of not a few. Though there are many publications about the movement an objective and sober study of the movement in its relation to the Holy Spirit has been a felt need. R. H. Lesser, the author of many books, has made a significant contribution in this line in his book *The Holy Spirit and the Charismatic Renewal*. This book will be of attraction both to those interested in the movement and to the critics since it comes from a writer who, though involved in the movement, has a balanced view and is not carried away by enthusiasm and emotion like many of the charismatics. More than this, it is also a manual for the members of the movement who want to be directed by sound theological principles and practices. The author writes in plain language clear to ordinary man even when he treats strictly theological topics.

As the title indicates more importance is given to the "Holy Spirit" than the "Charismatic renewal." Of the 24 chapters, chapters 1-11 and 16-24 mainly treat about the Holy Spirit and his activities and only chapters 12-15 are devoted to the "Charismatic renewal." In chapters 1-4 we have a biblical study of the Holy Spirit and chapter 5 explains how the H. Spirit vivifies and acts in the Church as its soul. Though chapters 6-9 do not explicitly speak about the Charismatic movement, they implicitly describe who a true charismatic is, the one who is always open to the Spirit. This openness to the H. Spirit cannot be restricted to those in the Charismatic movement though the movement is a sign of a new outpouring of the Spirit. The chapter on "Emotions and the Holy Spirit" is remarkable. "We Catholics have tended to be too exclusively cerebral in our official liturgical worship. We have stressed intellectual prayer, whether mental or vocal, to the almost complete exclusion of physical or emotional worship" (p. 105). "With the Charismatic renewal there enters a new element—one not really catered to in the emotional popular devotions—namely physical expressions of worship : raising of hands, ecstatic cries, prostrations, etc." (p. 107). However the author is not favourable to emotional extravagance in public worship although he admits that spontaneous outburst of emotions in private gatherings could be from the Spirit.

After treating in detail the workings of the Spirit in the Church and in the life of the individual, Lesser gives a brief historical sketch of the Charismatic movements which unfortunately were movements that ended in heresy or that developed among the Protestants. In his assessments of the Catholic Charismatic movement he says that it is "a de-institutionalising of the Holy Spirit" (p. 131). In chapters 14 and 15 he gives important pastoral guidelines and suggestions for running a prayer group. The three chapters on "Gift of the H. Spirit" would be very useful for the charismatic to judge what value he should give for the extraordinary minor gifts, while the chapter on "Discernment of Spirits" lays down the essential norms to detect his spirit. Some of the charismatics have a negative attitude towards Our Lady and the chapter on "Mary and the H. Spirit" is an eye-opener for such people. In "Development and the Holy Spirit" the author tries to correct the too much other-worldly-attitude of some charismatics who neglect the social concerns of man. In spite of some drawbacks such as—negative attitude towards 'praying in tongues', omitting the genuine charismatic manifestations in the history of the Church and the legalistic approach to the liturgy, the book will be very useful both to the charismatics and non-charismatics who are really interested to know the activities of the Spirit of God.

G. Aranjanyil

M. Amaladas, S.J.

Do Sacraments Change,

Bangalore : Theological Publications in India, 1979, pp. 151.

Vatican Council II initiated the much awaited programme of liturgical renewal and adaptation, because, "... the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. The latter may not only change but it ought to be changed with the passage of time...." (S. C. art. 21).

But how do we distinguish between variable and invariable elements in the rite concerned? Is there a reliable criterion, an effective method for that? Such were (and are still to a certain extent) the problems

encountered by this renewal programme. Of course Post-Vatican theological thinking has already proposed some criteria, e.g., that of Bible and biblical symbolism, of the Tradition, Institution by Christ etc.

It is the author's contention that "these principles, though excellent in themselves, are not precise enough to be effective criteria. They orient the research : they are not instruments of discernment" (p. 12).

It is in this perspective that he proposes a new approach to the whole problem, that of Semiology, or "the science which studies the life of signs in the heart of social life" (p. 38). The author's choice of this method is because, "to speak of adaptation of sacramental rites is to think of them as signs. These signs communicate a message. This message may be expressed, hopefully through other signs except in the case of those signs which have been determined by Christ himself" (p. 48). The concepts of 'structure', 'signification', 'communication', etc., which belong to the category of sign systems, help the author in clarifying the issues involved, like the tension between stability and mobility, change and continuity, etc.

The book as a whole is certainly an important contribution to the theology of sacraments. The semiological approach adopted in order to clarify a theological problem is in itself commendable, in this period of interdisciplinary studies to explore new dimensions of truth.

Louis Malieckal

David C. Scott (ed.)

Keshub Chunder Sen,

Bangalore : The Christian Literature Society, 1979, xv + 361 pp.
Rs. 20.

This is the first book published by the 'Library of Indian Christian Theology' under the special title 'Companion Volume Series.' Its aim is to make available to Indian Theological Students the writings on Christian Theology by Indians of other faiths with implications for indigenous Christian Theology in India,

The book under review is an anthology of the writings of Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-1884) with twelve lectures and forty excerpts from his work *The New Dispensation*. Keshub's life was influenced by his family's traditional Bengali Vaiṣṇavism and 19th Century liberal Protestant Christianity. He spent his life trying to synthesize both the Hindu and Christian components in his heritage. It was his conviction that the British Raj was the divine agent in promoting religious harmony. This called in question Keshub's credibility with his countrymen, who stood for the independence of India.

Though Keshub's main concern was to synthesize his Hindu and Christian heritage into a united vision, he was certainly not a mere eclectic. "On a deeper level his spiritual life was nourished by the twin stream of Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* with its yogic mysticism and incarnational theology, and devotion to Jesus Christ, disassociating from the Western trappings of organized Christianity" (xii). Keshub had a vision of Christ which crossed the pale of historical Christianity, and this vision became the determinative force in his own life as well as the source of the 'New Dispensation', a universal religion of the spirit.

In the lecture 'We Apostles of the New Dispensation' Keshub gives an account of his vision of a world religion (Calcutta 1886). It is modelled chiefly on the Christian Church and explicitly centred on Christ. According to him this Church of New Dispensation contains the best of all the great religions as is shown by its emblem, which included the cross, the symbol of *OM* and the star and crescent. "The New Dispensation is the harmony of all Scriptures and all saints and all sects. It is the harmony of reason and faith, of inspiration and science, of devotion and duty. It is the harmony of the Veda and the Purāna, of the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is the harmony of *Yoga* and *bhakti*. It is an explanation of the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation" (p. 344).

Due to his interest and faith in the Christian dogmas of Trinity and the Incarnation of Christ, he is a key figure in the Hindu dialogue with Christianity and a real pioneer in the development of Indian Christian Theology. A close perusal of the anthology will doubtlessly convince us that "Keshub was the origin of a number of seminal ideas, such as his exposition of the Trinity in terms of the well-known definition of Brahman as *Saccidānanda*, or the idea of 'divine humanity' as that which best describes the nature of Christ, or his vision of a truly Indian Church which is sought to embody in the Church of the New Dispensation" (xii).

Keshub writes : " Divinity coming down to humanity is the Son; Divinity carrying up humanity to heaven is the Holy Ghost.... In this plain figure of three lines, you have the solution of a vast problem. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost; the Creator; the Exemplar, and the Sanctifier; I am, I love, I save; the still God, the Journeying God, the Returning God; Force, Wisdom, Holiness; The True, the Good, the Beautiful; *Sat, Cit, Ananda*; Truth, Intelligence and Joy; Has not the Holy Ghost been described as the ' Comforter ' ? Truly He is the heart's joy. Thus the Trinity of Christian theology corresponds strikingly with the *Saccidānanda* of Hinduism. You have three conditions, three manifestations of Divinity " (p. 228).

The reality of Keshub's experience of Christ and the genuineness of his effort to express this experience in terms of his own Indian tradition cannot be denied. " Christ has been my study for a quarter of a century. That God-man—they say half God and half man—walks daily all over this vast peninsula, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, enlightening and sanctifying its teeming millions. He is a mighty reality in Indian history. He is to us a living and moving spirit " (pp. 220–221). " How beautiful, how soul-satisfying ! The Father continuously manifests his wisdom and mercy in creation, till they take the form of pure sonship in Christ, and then out of one little seed—Christ is evolved a whole harvest of endless and ever multiplying Christs " (p. 228).

Keshub's writings are a classical example how an officially non-Christian, *i.e.*, a Hindu by birth, could genuinely experience Christ and live the Christian dogma of Trinity. In that respect the anthology of the writings of Keshub, prepared by David C. Scott, is a very valuable publication in the field of dialogue between religions.

K. T. K.

Bruce D. Reed,

The Dynamics of Religion: Process and Movement in Christian Churches,

London : Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978, pp. xiii + 235, £ 3.90.

What would be the nature of religious behaviour if it is interpreted, not from the believer's standpoint, but from that of the human

sciences, namely, primarily psychology, anthropology and sociology? Bruce D. Reed's *The Dynamics of Religion* is an attempt to answer this question. The author makes an extensive study of social psychology and Church life over ten years with colleagues at the Grubb Institute of Behavioural studies and arrives at a general theory of religion called 'the oscillation theory of religion.' Though the study is based on the rites and practices of the Churches of England, primarily the Church of England, the author hopes to be able, not only to provide an analysis which will be of use to believers in England, but also to offer a model for the interpretation of religious behaviour in any country and environment (cf. p. 2).

The oscillation theory of religion means that religious behaviour is comprised of two elements, *i.e.*, a human process of alternation between states of dependence and autonomous living and a *movement* which provides a rationale for the symbolic acts which manifests the process itself.

This oscillation is natural and universal in the life of the individual as well as in social units such as institutions, groups and societies. In discussing this theory the author has begun from the experience of the individual. The study concentrates mostly on an extrapolation of religion from the point of view of individual experience. Though the work recognizes the corporateness of religious behaviour as fundamental, it does not investigate this aspect in depth. The chapters 2-6 consider the various manifestations of the process and movement of the worship outlined in the first chapter. In the second part of the book (Chapters 7-9) an examination of the implications of this analysis for the leadership and organisation of churches is offered. It concludes, "with a personal postscript setting out writer's own 'action paragraph', based on this study" (p. 10). The author wants the work "to be taken as a contribution to sociological and psychological thinking about society and the function of religion in that setting" (p. x).

The research is made within and between two interpretative frames, namely, a behavioural or psychological frame and a theological frame. Corresponding to these two frames of reference two key terms are employed: "Process and movement" (p. 3). An attempt is made in the first chapter to fix the meaning of these two terms to establish the validity of the general religious theory of oscillation.

Why do people go to church? When we examine this phenomenon we can distinguish two elements, namely, a pattern of behaviour with a dynamics which is still obscure and a rationale of the event, defining

the meaning of the event for the participant. These two elements in the act of worship may also be regarded as related to each other as 'container' and 'contained' (p. 9). The inarticulate human *process* is given form and consciousness through the theological rationale. The first element is referred to as process and the second as movement. The core of a movement is an emotive idea; in the case of a religious movement a myth or system of myths or religious stories. Even in religious practices the emotive element is very important. Man always stands in need to renew contact with a source of meaning and confidence. Let us analyze a particular event. When a member from international Everest expedition (1971) died, his companions carried his body below the snowline and cremated. From the utilitarian point of view this act was unnecessary and dangerous. But from an emotive point of view it was necessary. "In face of the death of a companion, everyone's meaningful world is threatened with collapse. Only by giving value to the body of the dead companion can the climbers restore their own sense of meaningful endeavour. They reawaken inside themselves the image of a group which cares for them and will mourn for them if they also are killed" (pp. 12-13). This oscillation of mind between meaning and action or movement and process is also found in the religious behaviour of man. *The Dynamics of Religion* is a veritable contribution in this field of study.

K. T. K.
