Buddhists must learn from Christians, while on the other hand Christians can likewise learn from Buddhists.

"I am now very much pleased to see that our Hongwanji authorities are positively tending to the thought of spreading its religion, the true gospel of Buddha, widely abroad, by sending out not only emissaries, but also some active and able missionaries, to all important parts of the world.

"I have a very strong conviction that Buddhism is naturally destined to become the universal religion in the future, for the reason that there is perhaps no other religion equal to Buddhism, that would satisfy the refined minds of highly educated people of the twentieth century. And, at the same time, I cherish also another conviction not less strong than the above, that Buddhism, though supreme and grand and most beautiful in its doctrines as it is, may never be taken widely among mankind as their established faith as long as its followers themselves remain incompetent to prove its goodness before the public.

"I am now very fortunately called to the position in which I should like to devote myself to realize these two convictions. I feel very happy to become a martyr for the sake of mankind, but I find myself so poorly armed and so lamentably hindered by an imperfect knowledge of English that I should be overcome, no doubt, by bitter disappointments, if I had not an indestructible faith in my heart.

"I am most happy to say, however, I have a very pious belief in the boundless mercy of the Amitabhu Buddha who will assuredly support and protect me when I walk through the good and righteous path ordained by him.

"I came to America with such a belief, notwithstanding my apparent deficiency in all attainments required.

"My only goal is to attain myself and help others to attain the Maha-Nirvana, where the highest freedom and true happiness may be enjoyed, which our Lord Buddha has revealed for the first time to mankind, suffering constantly from their own passions and ignorance, inherited from previous existences." P. C.

A PHILOSOPHICAL CLASSIC.

Descartes's *Discourse on Method*, which constitutes the latest number of the Religion of Science Library,[1] a cheap series of books issued bi-monthly by the Open Court Pub. Co., was first published in Leyden, in 1637, and was followed by three brief tracts as appendices: the *Geometry*, the *Meteorics*, the *Dioptrics*.

The *Discourse on Method* was Descartes' intellectual confession of faith, his statement of his own peculiar method of reaching the Truth; the appendices were his documents of justification, specimens of the *actual* Truth that he had reached by his method. And splendid specimens they were: the invention of analytical geometry, which literally unshackeled mathematical research; the researches in the theory of equations and algebraical symbolism; the enunciation of the law of the refraction of light, which is the foundation of the development of modern optics; the partial explanation of the rainbow; and so forth. All these achievements, far as they may seem from the common life, are shot through the warp and woof of our technical civilisation, and our entire spiritual and material existence bears their hidden impress.

Whether our calling, therefore, be that of a philosopher or not, and whatever be our attitude to the problems involved, the contemplation of the methods by

[1] *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* By René Descartes. Authorised reprint of Veitch's translation. With Portrait. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd. Price, 25 cents.

which such unique results have been reached is of the highest concern. No one can fail to draw a most bountiful stimulus from these pages. Their freshness and independence of view, their wholesome common sense, their self-reliance, their apotheosis of Reason, are, when we consider the state of mind of the period in which they were written, almost unequalled in history. Here was an absolute break with the authority of tradition, an utter rejection of the past, an utter contempt of books, of the graces of literature and of erudition; while in their place were substituted the ideals of radical doubt, implacable critique, unerring certainty. Truth was no longer a "plurality of suffrages," the utterance of an Aristotle or a Pope; it was the outcome of right thinking and right seeing, the privilege of every man. The appeal throughout was made to "the great book of the world," to experiment, to observation. "Here is my library," said Descartes to an inquirer, as he pointed to a quartered calf he was busy dissecting.

Such an attitude would be impossible now; the present age has a real past of science behind it. But it was necessary then; the past which lay directly behind Descartes, with a few bright exceptions like Bruno and Campanella, was a past of slavish submission to authority, both in action and in thought; and the utter demolition of this past was the self-chosen task of the great recluse-philosopher who believed he had stript himself of every clog that the heritage of antiquity had placed upon man's intellect.

And here lies both the virtue and defect of his system. Descartes was primarily a mathematician. He found in mathematics, as did Kant and Comte, the type of all faultless thought—not in the traditional mathematics as such, but in mathematics as regenerated and inspirited by his own epoch-making discoveries. The geometrical analysis of Plato and the ancients was, at best, a haphazard procedure, depending almost entirely on the insight and skill of the manipulator, concerned for the logic rather than for the power of the method, and yielding in almost all cases isolated results, not general and comprehensive truths. But the method of Descartes was an engine of research; it reduced geometry largely to algebra; of the science of the eye it made a science of the mind; from a part it deduced a whole; for the rich exuberance of natural forms it substituted the economy and precision of a purely logical mechanism. Was he not justified, therefore, in pointing with pride to the maxims and rules by which his mediocre talents, as he termed them, had been enabled to advance the truth so powerfully? He was on the verge of a universal Mathematical Science, why was it not possible to construct a Universal Formal Science, manipulable with the same mechanical precision, and applicable to physics, chemistry, cosmology, biology, psychology, and theology? Why was it not possible to deduce God, man, and society from a few simple fundamental truths, as the properties of a curve were developable from an algebraical equation?

Hence resulted the Cartesian physics and metaphysics, half child of the science that he vaunted, half child of the dead tradition that he detested; for he had not stript himself entirely of the past. That is possible for no man.

Descartes stopped at Faith. His metaphysics was a rationalised theology, in which everything was merged in God,—a theistic monism. His psychology, his theory of the soul, were dualistic. Yet, despite their crudeness from the modern view, they were an advance, and despite their author's seeming submissiveness to the teachings of the Church, they were placed with his other doctrines on the Index. The very search for a "criterion of truth" was sufficient to condemn his system.

But there was in this action of the Church a presage of the disintegrating character of the new doctrines. Descartes's physics practically nullified his theology, yet he was careful not to give offence. With the fate of Bruno, Campanella, and Galileo before his eyes, he naturally felt, as a recent writer expresses it, "no vocation for martyrdom." Nonetheless he pushed his mechanicalism to the extreme and carried it to the very throne of his God, engulfing all nature and all life. With motion and extension alone, supported by the laws of geometry, he constructed the Universe. The construction was largely *a priori* and was in defiance of the experimental principles that he so highly lauded, and in contradiction to the real mechanics that Galileo had just discovered and which Descartes mistook, but it contained most of the theoretical elements of the modern mechanical explanation of nature, and its main hypotheses, as the theory of vortices, the uniform constitution of matter, etc., have persisted to this day. His ideas were, thus, more powerful than even his own application of them, and in the hands of his successors led to the undermining of the very Faith which, from prudence or conviction, he himself had desired to leave untouched.

His system, even now, as shattered by modern research, and in its ruins, with the towers of its real achievements projecting aloft, presents a magnificent spectacle, daring in its scope and execution. The defects of its construction are to be measured by the standard of its time, not by the standard which through its assistance succeeding centuries have been enabled to establish. If it appears repellent in its aspect, harsh in its rigor, it must be remembered that it came from a man to whom "there was no beauty but the beauty of truth," and to whom the natural severity of science was the proudest adornment of civilisation, and redounded most surely to the enhancement of real, practical life.

Descartes, it has been said, is the cross-roads from which the modern paths of thought diverge. He was the forerunner of Newton and Leibnitz on the one hand, and of Hume and Kant on the other. The picture presented in this book, of his mental autobiography, is one of the most pleasing chapters of the history of philosophy. It belongs to the world, from the great heart of which it sprung, untrammelled by the mustiness of the study; and its candor and manliness of view cannot, even now when most of it has become commonplace, and some of it antiquated, fail to arouse from their apathy a people who are hungering for enlightenment.

T. J. McC.

A NEW AND IMPORTANT WORK IN SOCIOLOGY.

The publication of a new work entitled *Science and Faith*,[1] by Dr. Paul Topinard, the distinguished French anthropologist, is certain to arouse much interest in the thinking world, and also to evoke not a little criticism and opposition. For the main problems of life are here boldly attacked from an independent point of view, and the tentative solution of them promulgated in the distinctest terms.

Dr. Topinard's book is essentially a contribution to sociology; but it possesses the additional merit that it has been made by an original inquirer of high rank in a department of science which constitutes the groundwork of sociology, and that consequently its conclusions have sprung from a direct and creative contact with the facts, and not from derivative and secondary theories about those facts. Whatever

[1] Science and Faith: or Man as an Animal, and Man as a Member of Society. With a Discussion of Animal Societies. By Dr. Paul Topinard, Late General Secretary of the Anthropological Society of Paris, and sometime Professor in the School of Anthropology. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co. Pages, vi, 374. Price, $1.50.