

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

VOL. XLI (No. 6)

JUNE, 1927

(No. 853)

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The Open Court Publishing Company

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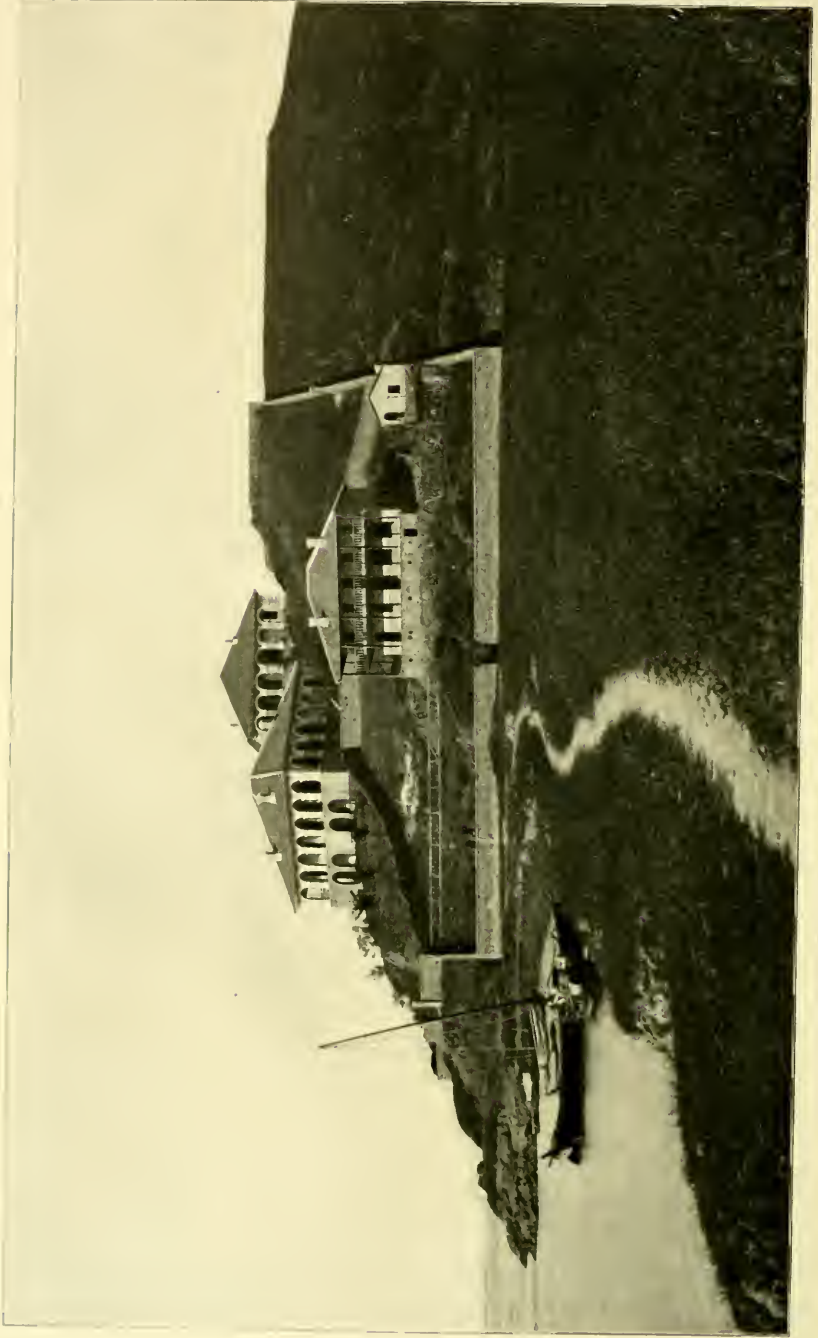
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CHRISTIAN MISSIONS ON YANGTSE RIVER

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SHRINE AND LABORATORY: A SYNTHESIS

BY ARTHUR E. CHRISTY

Here was I nourished on the truths of old,
Here taught against new times to make me bold.

G. E. Woodbeery.

I

READING the journals of opinion, one is impressed by the fact that those who are suggesting panaceas for the ills of our world are stressing the importance of securing a happy synthesis, between the spirit that surrounds an Eastern shrine and the scientific facts discovered in a Western laboratory. One culture, they say, has devoted itself entirely to the infinite in man which is not satisfied by the fashion of the finite world that passes away. The result is that wretched millions live in poverty, without money or knowledge to prevent awful famines and plagues, without effective power to keep the invader from consuming resources and life. The civilization, on the other hand, which boasts of being "practical", is said to be without wisdom, without spiritual inspiration, and the chaotic condition of its peoples is the result of permitting a very vital need or function to go unsatisfied and eventually atrophy.

The remedy which is suggested is a blending of the mystic joy, the insight, of Upanishadic seers or St. Augustines and the output of those institutions where Bunsen burners and Bessemer crucibles are in use. The philosophers of the East are to lead Occidentals into the shrine room and show all that has been found there; the sociologists and scientific men of the West are to lead the Oriental into the laboratory and point short cuts to their systems. Then will follow, not the one sided culture of different hemispheres, but the better culture of tolerant, sympathetic men. If this is not done, the alter-

native held out is a bitter fight to extinction. No hope is expected from the religion of the nominally Christian West, critical as to the forms of theological expression and tinged with the spirit of the go-getter trying to "sell" his church. It is pointed out that even the atmosphere of many missionary compounds is one of bustle, social uplift and campaign headquarters.

As I read such articles, it has occurred to me that the most obvious persons in whom this desired synthesis is to be found would be the missionary's sons. It may not be perfect but it should be there. They have been reared in the East of hoary, mellow Thought and educated in the West of virile, sprawling Action. What has been blended of these two worlds into their minds? The question has persisted, and I have tried to put into words a few experiences which are typical, I am sure, of scores of missionaries' sons who have shared my fortunes.

II

Some of us who were born "East of Suez" face life with an "inheritance" that is unique. We are scattered throughout the world. In many colleges may be found one or two; in some of the larger universities perhaps as many as a score; in every profession we are numbered. In our fledgling days, when we were first immersed in American life we were a queer group. But there was reason enough. It takes a little while for the "young Chink" to forget himself; to lose the British accent learned perhaps at Chefoo, the pidgin English that sometimes crept out all unawares; to forget the ways of life as it was lived in the inland mission, where we were the only white boys within a radius of fifty miles and played foot-shuttlecock with the son of the native preacher instead of the games of American boyhood. One does feel in strange waters, when after a relatively short trip over the Pacific the atmosphere of non-hurry, the real root of contentment in China, is left far behind and the world is one of football, Fords and co-eds; when the sounds of the evening are not the gurgles of water-pipes that come from the group of coolies, cooks and colporteurs squatting in the courtyard, or the whine of the two-stringed Chinese fiddle but the jazz from the piano in the fraternity house. Some of our number become acclimated sooner than others. Those who do generally "make good" in a spectacular way. The old bamboo flute gives way to the saxophone. The Sunday sport sheets sometimes carry pictures of a football gladiator in

action, and what a contrast to the boy who a short time before spent hours by the side of the lotus pond with the scholar-butler of the family eating dried melon seeds, one by one, memorizing the maxims of the sages. Instead of the awkward youth in the long blue padded smock and native cloth shoes that he chose to wear because he did not wish to be dressed differently from his Asian playmates, there is not infrequently the lithe, well groomed, tuxedoed idol of the "prom". And when college is over, it may be back to the Orient in the oil or tobacco business; it may be medicine, the law or the stage; the diplomatic service or the father's calling to the gospel—it may be anything, just as with all youth.

There are those of us who just get along, who plod, who fall in love with Keats, who find with Chesterton that

"The happy men who lose their heads

They find their heads in heaven,"

who carry around an aspect of dreamy acquaintance with more Elysian territories than we can find in this land of our restless exile.

The missionary's son, after a few years in America, is very little different to all outward appearance, from any other undergraduate who may be seen striding across a college campus, or the men in the harness of this work-a-day world. Some of them have imaginations that never have been and never will be liberated by their births and childhood in some ancient city of Cathay or the Himalayan foothills. They never yearn to go "home" either in spirit or in person. They see the world with the Occidental eye. They are like the lad born near Niagara who found the shredded wheat factory the greatest wonder of his world. Never having received the "feel" for the Orient or enjoyed the flavor of life there, they cannot, now that they are away.

Others can never forget the ashy smell of old incense that the evening breeze brought with it as it sighed through the pines and gently touched the bells on the temple eaves. By starlight, by candlelight, by dreamlight, come memories of that soft hour between sunset and lamptime when the amah fondly told the old, old Chinese fairy tales and legends because mother was in prayer meeting and had little time for Mother Goose. In "the bustle of the noontide" the memory might fly over leagues of sea and sand to a quiet little rural shrine surrounded by its majestic old trees and an ineffable spirit of religious peace and lovely legends.

They were not effeminate lads, these boys. Frequently fists

flew, noses bled and eyes were blackened in vindication of their honor at being called "foreign devils" by a group of hostile native urchins. The ubiquitous Chinese queue of the Pre-Revolutionary days also offered its temptations, especially in prayer meetings at which attendance was compulsory. Mischievous youngsters quickly learn the art of tying together two or three queues of the kneeling worshippers, or if the prostrate are not close enough, the simpler trick of knotting the queue to a bench leg. The discomfiture of the victims when they arose from prayer was a reward for the thrashing meted out by the irate missionary father to save "face" before the converts. Very human boys they all were.

Sometimes this childhood world seems infinitely remote, sometimes very near. Most of us love to linger over these memories. The excitement of it all—life in the East! Fire eaters, sword swallows and snake charmers! Not the serious spreading of missionary propaganda that filled the day of one's father and mother. The trip to the city wall to fly kites: the stealthy, secret expedition down to the river bank to view the corpses of the bandits beheaded in the morning; even the long weary hours of "school" spent over that greatest bugbear in life, the Calvert lessons, with the maiden missionary apprentices assuming the teacher role; and in the afternoon the rides on the little gray donkey. If opportunity offered, the jaunt to the sweet-meat vender on the corner, followed by the group of native children from the compound, dressed in their speckled yellow costumes, bright red coats, mirror caps and pussy shoes with eyes and whiskers. And such an assortment to choose from, covered with flies to be sure, which the vender flecked off with a feather duster! The trays loaded with delightful "fodder", cakes, water-chestnuts, lichees, and candied ginger; dried water melon seeds, and candied crab apples and pickled leeks; sesame seeds, beetle nuts, peanuts and olives,—all precariously near the rubbish piles outside the doors, on which little black pigs lay fattening for the New Year feast. Chickens also scrambled from under one's feet in approaching the assortment. But sanitary scruples were not ours. Then back again to toys from Sears Roebuck. Unspeakable pride in exhibiting the ingenious jumping monkey. Smudgy white fingers showed dirty little yellow fingers how to wind the engine; and when the springs broke, tears filled the blue as well as the little, black slanting eyes, and yellow faces carried tear streaks as well as the white. Childish hearts of two races, offspring of two

"cultures", made one by the common bond of sorrow.

A more vivid memory yet! A seething mass of frenzied fanatics from a religious festival outside the compound wall. The same old superstition of early years. White men with blue eyes could see through the ground and had come to the Middle Kingdom to prospect for gold. Hospitals were butcheries. Witness the anatomical parts in bottles on the dispensary shelves! Cameras purloined the soul of the one whose picture was taken. Suspicion and distrust. Then the weary tale resulting from an indiscreet word in answer to a surly request of a ruffian group to enter the hospital and dispensary. An ignorant crowd forcing and pilfering its way gluttonously until it came to the store room. Five gallon jars of concentrated nitric, hydrochloric and sulphuric acid smashed on cement floors. Bare feet starting to wade through the mixture. And the awful aftermath—blood, rape and no quarter. One station of twenty missionaries completely wiped out. Then the spread of the fire, until it was at last without our own compound. Frantic, hurried disguise. And the whole family by devious routes, the children in the sole care of the kind old Christian amah and water carrier, safer with them than anywhere else, escape over the back wall to a house boat and a happy reunion far down the river, long after darkness had covered the world. Saved by the help of kindly natives.

Yet men will ask a missionary's son today how he feels about the race problem and seem incredulous when they are told.

III

A yearly occurrence in the inland station where I spent my growing years was the long awaited Dragon Boat Festival. No Poughkeepsie regattas were ever more thrilling than those races in which long barges with fish scales painted on their sides and grotesquely carved dragon heads on prows were paddled and raced by fifty men or more to the beat of the coxswain's drum. Dragons were very real things in life then. Dragons, mammoth, writhing, terrifying dragons lead the religious procession that passed down the street by the compound gate. It was from the old scholar, the language teacher of the new missionaries that the significance was learned, and a whole course in pagan philosophy, though dimly comprehended because the "years that bring the philosophic mind" had not come.

The universe was composed of two principles, Yang and Yin. The dragon was the symbol of Yang, the tiger of Yin. Water, mist

and clouds were the nature of the former, the terrestrial elements of the latter. The former was the male, the latter the female; and not only material things, the stars and the heavens, the earth and all the animal creation of the earth, but all ethical and moral good as well came from Yang and Yin. They were the fountain head of all admirable conduct, all qualities of pity and honor, intelligence and justice.

A primitive philosophy indeed, and of course shown to be absurd by father when he was asked. But to boys with a bit of the mystic in their embryonic souls there was a fascination in the thought. In other talks the old scholar said there was no opposition between man and the universe, between man's nature and the nature of trees and majestic mountains and flowers, that the mind, purified and disciplined by meditation would perceive unity and identity between man's life and the cosmic forces and realize it as a spiritual experience. The old man was the legatee of a fine spiritual tradition. His temper had much the same quality as Wordsworth's, quiet and untrumpeted, deep and awful as nature herself. He talked of all "thoughts that lead us out from ourselves into the universal life, hints from the infinite, whispers from secret sources, mountains, waters, mists, flowering trees, whatever told of powers and presences mightier than ourselves: these were the themes dwelt upon, cherished and preserved."

It would be a sacrilege to the memory of that blessed old man to attempt a philosophical evaluation of what he had to say. It was a culture of the spirit that he gave us, not a creed. Later in their expansion, many missionaries' sons have learned, as I have learned, that the Kingdom of Heaven is a temper and not a place. To some of us, the things he had to say have been of infinitely more value than the clerico-sociological exhortations we have received in the Occident of pathetic faith in quantity and numbers.

Perhaps the psychologists would say that many of us are pathologically out of gear somewhere, but in

"The weary and the heavy weight

Of all this unintelligible world,"

we live our lives on something like a Platonic philosophy, finding in the plethora of matter recurrent flashes of the Gleam, the Idea, like glints of gold in a lump of ore. The first tufts of violets in the spring, the happy laugh of a child, majestic music, graceful fancies of poets, kind deeds and warm hand clasps, in these that quality

of universality, which is the reason for their durability, which is the chief element in the beautiful, and a momentary inlet into the universal which is God.

It was an old pagan scholar, who probably bowed down to wood and stone, who burnt his incense in the shrine room, who first lead us to this source of pleasure.

IV

College at last. Imagine a very cosmopolitan group—a Chinese friend of my boyhood, Chang by name, who had come to America through the generosity of friends; a Hindoo named Parulekar, we called him "Parlorcar" in those days; and a quick witted little Japanese known to us all as Ishii. Add to this group three other American boys beside myself. All our home ties were broken; our parents were all in foreign worlds. The aliens of the group, need it be said, were solitary strangers here. It was indeed a group drawn together by "the fellowship of kindred minds". Added to this bond was a touch of sheer loneliness, and most of us were in the midst of that pathetic struggle which meets youths who are sent into the world, ignorant of modern ideas and destined to do battle with them alone. Several of our number had come from the quiet, strict, orthodox atmosphere of an isolated mission compound where piety was not always flavored by the salt of humor or the leaven of imagination. An interesting group of college lads, earnest, introspective, serious beyond their years because of their "inheritance". And such talk as flowed between them, often into the small hours of the night.

The Hindoo was wider read than any of us, a thing which we were tacitly reluctant to admit. Besides, he had a knack of finding passages in his literary browsings that mysteriously blended with our thought. At one of our sessions he brought out a volume of Francis Bacon and read from the preface to the "Instauratio Magna": "I have not sought, nor do I seek, either to force or to ensnare men's judgments, but I lead them to the things themselves, and the concordances of things, that they may see for themselves what they have, what they can dispute, what they can add to the common stock." He paused and closed his book.

Long we discussed the matter. We tried to imagine the result in the world if all men could ever be persuaded to go to the "things themselves and the concordances of things". How much of the present missionary program would of necessity be revised. An

ideal text, I thought, for those who strove for a synthesis of the shrine and laboratory, for the creation of the philosopher's stone.

"Finally", asked Parulekar, "isn't it paraphrased by the Bible in the verse 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good?'"

Many other things that were said have slipped into the limbo where Time stores the matter it has robbed of our memories. Still fresh however, and blending superbly well, corroborating what we had been thinking, were the hours that followed, when Chang and I withdrew to attend a lecture on the "Three Religions of China" which was given by a returned veteran of "missionary wars". He took up Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism each in turn, describing their degeneracies, telling story after story to illustrate the debauched state of religion and public morals in China. Then after each catalog of the degradation of knavish priesthood and debauched practice, he concluded with the sentence: "And when Christ comes into the Chinese heart, Buddha goes out". Confucius and Lao Tze were evicted in their turn.

On our way home Chang was sullen and seething. Finally the fire broke out. He railed at the point of view of missionaries who tried to paint the picture of a civilization by darkening its shadows and obliterating the lights with an ignoring brush. The witches of Puritan New England, the Inquisition, the modern types of persecution—the intolerance, hypocritical moral codes that crushed the soul, the spiritual estrangements so prevalent on Main Street, all our faults of the past and present he cataloged in retaliation.

"All of us want a remedy for the sorrows of the world. We Chinese hunger for something besides life's meat and drink. So do you". His words came pouring out pell mell. "Buddha believed that it could be found in the destruction of desire, by renouncing the world and following the path of peace until death. What is the difference between that and Christ's words, 'If any one would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me?' Never mind what philosophers have said regarding Nirvana and abnegation and unhealthy mental states. Is there any difference?"

I admitted that I saw little.

"Then why does Buddha have to be cast into outer darkness if Christ is to come in? Take Confucius. He said that the remedy was to be found within the world by fulfilling all its duties and leaving to a greater justice the future and its rewards. Where is the

hitch there with Christ's message? You might say that Confucius presented high ideals without the breath of spirit, a system for the head and not the heart. Yet he taught that from the highest in the land to the lowest worker in the field, personal virtue, cleanness of heart and hands, is to be held the thing of greatest value. He told us to cherish all that was good, to avoid evil living, to cultivate right feeling, to be true and faithful to our tasks. Do these things of Confucius have to go if Christ is to come in? These things have made China mellow. They have softened the harshness of our early barbarian conquerors, just as Christianity in the West. Where are his teachings incompatible with the gospel of Jesus?"

In his heated remonstrance he rushed on to Taoism. It was a religion shot through with superstition and rank practice, finding its devotees in the lowest classes, a reproach to his land. But Lao Tze had noble thoughts and lofty sentiments that had helped generations of his kinsmen in their struggles. Then Chang compared the missionary speaker's point of view with Christ's, who had tolerantly told Jews that he had never found such faith as in a certain Roman captain. He had set up a Samaritan as a model of human decency and chivalry which shamed a Hebrew priest and Levite. Surely he meant to say that in the higher realms of the spirit there were no boundaries. The difference was not in the teachings of the world's Holy Men, but in the narrowness of the structures their followers have built on their words. The prejudices of white men reminded him of the story of a Chinese miser who had valued his pearls and jade, but considered their value lessened if pearls and jade were found in other parts of the world. Was a Christian doctrine of less value if the same thing in the rough was found in China?

Why could not Christianity be presented as something beside a static set of doctrines by men who ignored the wisdom of Chinese sages? Who could blame the scholar class of his country for being "almost unreachable"? What a repugnant thought, the apostles of the gospel of love entering under the aegis of extra-territoriality! And once in, to set at naught the civilization and defy the laws of those they would help. I felt that I was getting the benefit of years of smouldering resentment and misunderstanding, the reaction of a cultured Oriental thinker to the whole system of missionary endeavor. I walked silently by his side, hoping he would continue. He did.

"You Americans have proven to me that it is easier for you to

give assent to the Apostles' creed than to love your enemies. It does not take as much Christlikeness to believe in the inerrancy of the scriptures as it does to live a brother with men of other colors. I've been asked to leave more than one barber shop and boarding house". He added the last with a note in his voice that told me the storm had spent itself.

"Well, Chang." I said, "now that you've told me what's wrong with Christianity as it's lived and preached, what is your verdict on the relative merits of the world's religions, as you see them. Try and forget what a rotten mess men have made of everything. Is any one superior?"

He walked on, long in silent thought. Finally he answered me.

"I'll be honest. I think Christianity is. Where it shows its peculiar genius is in its emphasis on the individual. I am not contradicting what I have said about the Nirvana which rightly understood means a going out, an extinction, not of life itself but earth born desire. Beautiful concept. But the Christian is greater. Complete self realization is not obtained by a formal and categorical repudiation of finite things but a self-eclipsing devotion to others, a living for others. In the East it's all impersonal—God, Nature, everything. Fine ethics and philosophy but rigidly impersonal in the last analysis. You know that to love and to be loved by a person more than anything else gives meaning and value to life. When Christ tells us that we are loved and valued by God Himself, it is all-transforming news. Christ pointed it out again and again in the lost sheep, the prodigal son. Ours is a system of betterment by tugging at our own boot straps. Christ has promised the grace of God to abet the believer, to be the Comforter. Can't you see what hope there is in that message for a man or woman fettered with caste or iron-clad tradition?"

I pushed my last question with eagerness.

"Chang, if we have something the world does not have, tell us, since you are a friend, how we should spread the news."

"In the first place," he answered, "not by trying to evangelize other systems. They have served their purpose; leave them alone. Not by going to war, singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers", as a power among powers, but by furnishing a meeting place of ideas, areas of mutual give and take, mutual comprehension, encouraging intellectual reciprocity, letting sympathy and kindness pass into action, just as Christ did on earth; example, not the propaganda of

a campaign. You can't go to war against the religion that has come down through the generations of millemiums to a man and not have him fight back."

I said goodnight to Chang that evening, simply, just as old friends do. And as I recall, I tossed on a sleepless bed, pondering about it and about.

A few days later I was in my room, again talking over old times with Chang, and following up the different digressions into which the long talk of that eventful evening which I have recorded had lead us. A gentle tap on the door and "Parlorcar" walked in. I could tell from the expression on his face that he had found something he wished to share with me. In his hand was a copy of Gilbert Murray's "Four Stages of Greek Religion".

"Here's something I want you to read. A pagan talking—Maximus of Tyre. Tell me what you think of it when you are through."

For Chang's benefit I read out loud.

"God Himself, the father and fashioner of all that is, older than the sun or sky, greater than time and eternity, and all the flow of being, is un-nameable by any law giver, unutterable by any voice, not to be seen by any eye. But we, being unable to apprehend his presence use the help of sounds, and names, and pictures, of beaten gold and ivory and silver, of plants and rivers, mountain peaks and torrents, yearning for the knowledge of Him, and in our weakness naming all that is beautiful in this world after His nature—just as happens to earthly lovers. To them the most beautiful sight will be the actual lineaments of the beloved, but for remembrance sake, they will be happy in the sight of a lyre, a little spear, a chair perhaps, or anything in the world that wakens the memory of the beloved. Why should I further examine and pass judgment about Images? Let me know what is divine: let them know: that is all. If a Greek is stirred to the remembrance of God by the art of Pheidias, an Egyptian by paying worship to animals, another man by a river, another by fire—I have no anger for their divergences: only let them know, let them love, let them remember."

Somehow these words jarred on my ear, accustomed from childhood to dull dogmatics. Instantly there arose before me the well remembered idols in temples, monstrous, Chinese beings towering high above me, some with frightful grimaces, some with benign mein. And a Taoist hell: life sized images of those who had found

fault with the weather or had cornered the grain market being licked by flames, or the gruesome spectacle of the makers of bad books and givers of poison being ground to pulp, like grain crushed between mill stones, by a bevy of devils. I was reluctant to commit myself entirely to the view of Maximus. One is so blinded by the degeneracies of what were once the expression of beautiful thoughts, deep religious yearnings. My Hindoo friend read my mind. Then he said something I have never forgotten.

"The Second Commandment, has a broader spirit than any Christian missionaries have ever given it. Some of them say that it forbids the worship of idols, some add false ideals. No doubt it does this but there is a good deal more. Our idols back home are the embodiment of what we feel are the attributes of God. What this commandment forbids is the crystallization of the Idea of God. If you are going to give full scope to its inner meaning the first clause must be modified. Instead of 'Thou shalt not make thyself any graven image', we must think of God as saying, 'Thou shalt not let thy mind rest in any mental image of me'."

I quoted a passage I was familiar with from childhood, the passage which speaks of a "form of Godliness denying the power thereof". I asked him if the Bible revelation of God was not the finest that had ever been given to mankind.

"Do you know", he countered, "what the puranas have to say about idol worship? You imply that the pantheons of gods you have seen in Chinese temples form the highest concepts Oriental sages have of God. A verse in the Siva Purana reads: 'The highest state is the natural realization of God's presence, the second in rank is meditation and contemplation, the third is the worship of symbols which are reminders of the supreme, and the fourth is the performance of ritual and pilgrimages to sacred places'. All missionaries have ever seen then, is third and fourth rate religion in the East."

He continued, speaking of Christ's terms, the "mustard seed", the "leaven", the "blade, then the full ear". Surely they implied an actual growth, a spiritual expansion. The Narcissus-like love of our own terms was not for him. He pointed out the inevitable Nemesis of endless disputation on the things of the spirit: a waning flame of faith and a chilling of all mutual charity. Devotees of the dead letter of tradition could never master the alphabet of spiritual progress. In this atmosphere rancour would never grow

chastened, hostility could never be overcome by love. Life and the spirit were perennial springs of novelties that could never be eternally or fully expressed by dogma. The sages of his land had spent centuries in their shrines, on Himalayan mountain tops, "sounding depth on depth, only to find still deeper depths, unfathomed and profound".

"Here you have intellectual curiosity, science and the laboratory," he said. "That is the genius of your West. But what's ours? Be still. Be still and know. How the world needs the two!"

We sat in silent thought, each deeply intent on all that had been said. Then Chang spoke.

"Did you ever hear that parable of Confucius' about the young pigs and their dead mother?"

Neither of us had.

"Well, it's something like this. Confucius is sent on a mission to a distant state. On his return he tells of having seen a litter of young pigs nestling close to their dead mother. After a while they looked at her, then all left the dead body and went off. For their mother did not look at them any more, nor did she seem any more to be of their kind. What they loved was their mother; not the body which contained her, but that which made the body what it was."

"And what's the moral, Chang?" I asked. "Dogma with the spirit and life squeezed out?"

"Exactly. You have seen enough of the world to know that men do not quibble over theological distinctions in the God that brings relief from pain and ignorance. We Chinese may not believe in some of the doctrines your missionaries teach in the hospital waiting rooms, but we do believe in the healing power of their medicines, and the religious zeal that has brought them there."

The story of many other things said and done in this group must remain in the oblivion of the unrecorded "things that were". The reactions of these Oriental minds to our social customs, to the discoveries of our laboratories, to the myriads of things in our press, and the good and pestilential winds of doctrine in the air, these form some of the most interesting things I have ever observed in this world.

Ishii, the Japanese in our group had come to America a Shintoist. His was a nimble wit and penetrating mind. Almost immediately upon his arrival at college he had taken a profound interest

in the history of religions and the new psychology. He read everything of Freud and about Freud. He devoured every volume on the new psychology that came within his reach. He read voraciously and with a marvellously retentive mind. Gradually he threw up all his belief in a supernatural universe. Some of us still had within a bit of the missionary zeal of our fathers and attempted to bring him back to what we called a "saner view". But we found him granite. His arguments generally went like this: "You have taught me to see that there can be no spiritual power in trees, rivers and fetishes. The same method of study you westerners have given me makes me ask where there is spirit at all. If you examine and analyze the universe, isn't everything in it material? And if, by your method of reasoning my religion is proven false, isn't the same method valid to prove your religion false?"

We found no answer that could convince him, though we talked to him of a better and finer revelation of the unseen world and God. Ishii remained adamant. Gradually it was tacitly decided to leave the matter to our Hindoo mystic. How well he succeeded I do not know, but some of the things he said in our group, while we were discussing Ishii's point of view and that of science were memorable. Scornfully Parulekar lashed us. We of the west were so preoccupied with "getting by", with having a "good time", with our materialistic thinking, that we had failed entirely in grasping the truth that our personal existence could never express itself adequately in terms of our outward relations with the men and women of our environment. We strove, he said, for chiefly a series of mechanical successes over persons and things; and he defied us to prove that any of our scientific inventions had made us any better in the deep essential things of life, that men in an unscientific age were any worse off than in a scientific, in these matters. He judged moral progress not by man's power over the forces of nature but by his control over the passions of his heart. To much of the new psychology that had upset Ishii he seemed impervious.

"You fellows seem perfectly satisfied", he said, "if the psychologists give a diagnosis of what is wrong with the world or a man. How about a prescription? Mighty few of them have been offering any. Now they are beginning to talk about 'untapped wells of health' or 'unexplored levels of sublimation'. Indian sages have been tapping those wells and climbing those levels for ages, and so have some of the Christian mystics. In St. Augustine's "Confes-

sions"—the thing there that he calls 'the eternal life of the saints', the mystic moment of joy and comprehension, it is the same as the 'God-realization' of our Hindoos.

"Some of the ideas of vedantins are posers for European thinkers, I know. For instance, they hold that by means of meditation and practice, they can reach successively wider intuitions. The Yogin even holds that by ascetism he can attain the power of seeing atoms. Western scientists would say that biasses and passions are an obstacle to the acquisition of truth. Possibly, in special cases, they might allow that civilization and science are built on renunciation in various stages, but how many would agree that systematic spiritual discipline would help a lot in facilitating the realization of the highest truths? They might credit something to auto-suggestion, but not one of them would claim to have tried the method or even be willing."

He failed to arouse in any of us the desire to be Yogins, but we turned with him, as I recall, from the complacent certitude that God could be a perfectly encompassed object for the work of psychological science, which could raise questions about the religious interpretation of life and the world but could not answer them. He was a logician and metaphysician in his bones. He was dauntless and fertile in speculation. The satirical attitude of modern intellects he held to be illuminating but containing little of the milk of human kindness. To him, they were dilettanti in the affairs of life and the world. Faultless in no way was he. Still many of us have counted it one of fortune's greatest gifts to have been able to read and think with him in those college years.

Now, to have been brought up among an Oriental people that actually believes its faith and shapes life by it, is to have lived in an atmosphere infinitely different from that of our western, half-hearted assent to creeds. Many of us would prefer the cycle of Cathay, with its food and drink that have come to us "without money and without price" to Tennyson's fifty years of Europe and its "practical" civilization. With the Cathayan sage we would rather say, "Better an earth-lined cave from which the stars are visible than a golden pagoda roofed over to shut out the sky."

It was the Hindoo who taught us to

"Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing
That's spirit."

V

It is the religious nerve that is the irritable nerve. The air of to-day is rendolent with unrest and discontent. The East is arming against our Western insistence on policing its mind. Suffering from the worst sort of spiritual inertia ourselves, and justly accused of being the "flattest minded people on the fact of the earth", we have been attempting to foist on the Orient a narrowly doctrinal and sectarian Christianity. The Stevensonian phrase, "Man lives not by bread alone but mostly by catchwords" is only too true. Unintrospective wits that we are, many of us have judged the depth of a man's Christianity by the rate at which he ejaculated hallelujahs and amens. And without even the faith that survives the decay of dogma, we would clothe alien races in the habiliments of our own mind which we wear so hardly.

Certain it is, the journey to the mental antipodes is longer than the journey to the physical. The West has forced its way into the latter; we have been more than willing to take what it offered, and when it was not offered we have grabbed while the grabbing was good. The spiritual we have completely ignored.

The East will not forever passively permit itself to be trampled upon either by our platoons or our many forms of propaganda. Within the last years we have seen ample evidence of this. Further more, those of us who have lived and talked with the elite of the East, the leaders in the making in American colleges and universities, those of us who have tried to share mutual dreams for our "native" land, have come to feel that above all, the most needful thing in the world today, if we are to be saved from another blood-letting, is the creation of a spirit that would assure men of no variance in our policies and religious profession, that would not ignore many points in their civilization in which they can show Christian nations an example to be followed.

The East is far from spiritually perfect, and no missionary's son is blind to the disease that yearly exacts its heavy toll of life, the superstitions and practices that have fettered millions, crushing them under a weight too heavy for mortals to bear. It is not a weak minded eclecticism that the world needs. In the face of wars and rumors of wars, of religious factions locking horns, of dire physical calamity and need, "sorrow and resignation to sorrow are signs of soul anaemia and disease". Something must be done. The pose of the wise-acre who claims infallibility has too long been the West's.

It has repelled those we would help. We must recognize what the world holds in common of the eternal verities. Where the gospel of Christ, nominally accepted by the West, has given aught else, these things we must so live and practice that our lives will make them irresistably attractive and men will choose of their own accord. The spirit of the East, from which Christianity itself sprang, the spirit of the shrine must be synthesized with our "progress". Superior men of all races must make common cause against the fools, weaklings and dunderheads of the world. Generosity and pity, a deep understanding of man's slow struggles and the unequal movements of life will forbid intolerance. It can only express itself in Emerson's words, "I am primarily engaged to myself to be a public servant to all the gods, to demonstrate to all men that there is intelligence and good will at the heart of things, and ever higher and higher leadings."