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SIDELIGHTS ON THE
NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA

I
GANDHI AND GANDHISM

BY

NAGENDRANATH GUPTA

with a Foreword by K. Natarajan of the
Indian Social Reformer and an Appendix,
giving the life-sketch and an estimate of
the author by the late Ramananda Chatterjee



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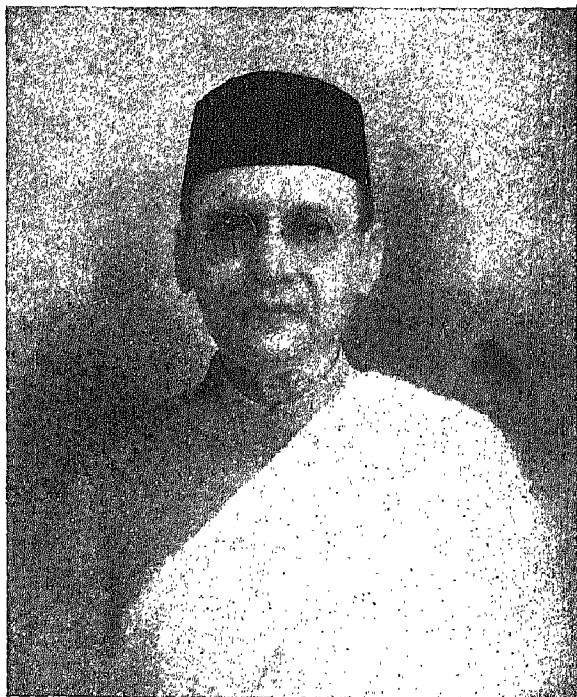
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THE AUTHOR

FOREWORD

My feeling in writing this short Foreword is one of melancholy pleasure. It will always be a matter of deep regret to me that though the late Mr Nagendranath and I were near neighbours and only a small piece of open land separated our houses, I did not cultivate his company much more than I did during his lifetime. This was partly due to both of us being persons of a shy, retiring disposition, I more perhaps than Mr Gupta. Only the other day a Parsi lady who is also a near neighbour was telling me how Mr Gupta once saved her life by recommending to her and giving her from his own stock a famous Ayurvedic preparation. He was keenly interested in his neighbourhood and from his rich store of varied experience could give advice and counsel which solved perplexities and removed depression. I often think that no help which one human being can give to another is more precious than the wise word spoken in season. Mr Gupta wrote with equal felicity in English and in his mother tongue, Bengali. His Bengali writings won high praise from such a competent critic as the late Ramananda Chatterjee in whose Bengali monthly, the *Prabasi*, several of Mr Gupta's works were originally published. His English style of which the papers included in this book are a good sample, was easy, clear and pleasantly attractive. These papers nearly all of them are written, so to speak, round Gandhiji. In writing of Gandhiji, Mr Gupta had an advantage denied to me. He was more or less a detached observer of Gandhiji's activities. I, on the other hand had to assess and comment on

them from week to week. It is, therefore, to some extent inevitable that my appreciation of Gandhiji's work and views should not coincide completely with Mr Gupta's. Nevertheless it is a pleasure to me to find that our differences are far less in number and significance than they might have been. That Gandhiji is one of the most notable men of our time, and indeed, of any time, is common ground between us.

Mr Gupta was not merely a journalist. He was a thinker and a scholar. Though not a scholar myself of either Maithili or Bengali, I followed with interest the somewhat hectic controversy aroused by Mr Gupta's thesis on Vidyapati. It is said that Hindus and Muslims claimed Kabir as their own. Vidyapati seems to have had a similar experience. Bengalis and Maithilis each claim Vidyapati as belonging to them, and to them alone.

Mr Gupta's sons and Messrs Hind Kitabs are rendering a valuable public service in making available to the English reading public in India and abroad these writings of a highly gifted Indian, which are the fruit of his wide experience and broad outlook on most of the problems which face India now and will be so for many years to come.

Bandra.

K. Natarajan

August 6, 1945

INTRODUCTION

This is not so much the history of a Movement as the account of an Experiment, necessarily incomplete since the Experiment itself has not yet been fully tried out. As a rule, the efforts of a nation to regain its lost liberty concern itself; to the rest of the world they afford only a detached interest. For the first time in the history of the world in complete variance with all precedents a movement has been initiated which is of vital importance to all the nations of the world: primarily and incidentally it affects India, but ultimately and essentially it may involve the future of every country and every nation.

Every radical change in the political history of a nation is associated with violence. A dynastic change, the overthrow of one form of Government and the substitution of another in its place are never accomplished without bloodshed. The throes of a revolution, the uprising of a people against a long regime of oppression and despotism are marked by streams of blood. No struggle is possible without violence and no nation can win back what it has lost without a struggle. History records no instance of an exception to this sanguinary rule. Nations wade through blood to conquest and the acquirement of empires; through blood they reach the goal of freedom. In either case the shedding of blood is considered inevitable and justifiable.

While the human race, or certain component units of the race, may be recognized as having advanced from a primitive savage state to high and efficient civilization, there has been no aversion to the shedding of blood at any stage of human progress. Savage tribes prey upon their neighbours; so do the most civilized nations, with the difference that the primitive warfare of savages is replaced by the

scientific and wholesale ruthlessness of civilized races. There are the same methods of attack and defence. By violence nations are subdued and enslaved, by violence they set themselves free. History is nothing but a record of ever-recurrent wars, wars of conquest and wars of freedom. Poets have sung of freedom's battle as lustily as they have chanted paeans of the triumphs of conquest. No one ever dreamed that national liberty could be regained without resort to violence.

In the early scriptures of various nations the sacrifice of life was enjoined as part of a solemn ritual. The slaying of animals at the altar was considered an acceptable offering to the gods. Even monotheists like the Jews had an elaborate code for the sacrifice of animal life in the form of various offerings to God. In his song of triumph after the passage of the Red Sea, Moses exalted God as a man of war. 'The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name....Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces thy enemy.' The commandment, Thou shalt not kill, is smothered by the doctrine of retaliation and vengeance which bristles right through the Mosaic law. In fact, the commandments were as little respected by the Jews as they are by the great majority of Christians. The sanctity and inviolability of all life was first insisted upon by the Buddha, the first and full avatar of Compassion. He also taught non-resistance to evil and violence. Christ preached a law higher than that of Moses. He declared that humility and non-resistance to evil were necessary for salvation.

These two great teachers had in mind the well-being of the individual, the course of conduct that makes a man fit for the higher life. They did not think of organized non-violence as a means of national emancipation, physical freedom instead of the salvation of the soul. Both

were mainly concerned with ministering to the spirit. Buddha did not find a people fretting against an alien rule; Christ did not undertake to help the Jews to shake off the yoke of the Roman rule. It is only now for the first time that an attempt is being made to use mass non-violence as a means of attaining national freedom under the guidance of a man who is a prophet rather than a political leader and whose faith in the efficacy and potency of abstention from violence is firm as a rock.

A man may by a prolonged course of self-discipline and self-restraint have a complete control over his temper and submit to violence and ill-treatment without complaint or any attempt at retaliation. There may be small bands of men who practise such self-restraint as part of their religion, but no one has ever believed that such restraint is possible in the case of ordinary men accustomed to give way to their feelings and passions. Passions are more easily aroused than subdued. The instinct of the mob invariably tends towards defiance and violence. When faced by a superior force unruly crowds disperse and run away. To provoke violence and then to face it calmly without any retaliatory violence requires an extraordinary amount of courage very different from the excitement and recklessness which characterize a soldier in a battle. The martyr is always a braver man than the warrior.

Mahatma Gandhi, the prophet and apostle of non-violence as a creed and an instrument for neutralizing and overcoming violence, has declared that the Satyagrahi, the man who uses Truth-force (or Soul-force) must have much greater courage than the armed soldier. A soldier is an indistinguishable part of a mechanism, he is identified with a machine which works without his volition. He has no consciousness of personal and individual responsibility; no need for self-restraint. A Satyagrahi, on the other hand,

has to exercise the utmost self-restraint. He can neither attack nor defend himself, nor can he save himself by escaping from danger. He has to follow unhesitatingly the course of non-violence and non-resistance. He cannot ward off a blow, he cannot strike back when struck, nor can he seek safety in flight. He must have the supreme courage of suffering without complaint, of making no attempt at self-defence. In short, he must be of the stuff of which martyrs are made.

During the course of the Civil Disobedience movements in India in 1930 and subsequent years this spirit of patient heroism, an infinite capacity for suffering, was displayed by thousands of men and women, and even children. They were sustained by a marvellous spirit of exaltation; they were filled with the indomitable courage of martyrdom. They have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the cause of freedom is nobly served by sacrifice and suffering, and freedom's battle may be won without striking a single blow, or a single deed of violence. It is this example of a new trend of thought, a new spring of action, now witnessed for the first time since the beginning of history, that holds a lofty appeal to all the nations of the world. It is no wonder that it has attracted world-wide attention.

It is not difficult to understand that faith in force, as old as the human race, cannot be easily shaken. Nations have measured their greatness by their strength, that is, the successful employment of force against other nations, and their greatness departed from them with the loss of strength. Force has sat enthroned as the great god of the nations, which have prostrated themselves before it and worshipped it. How can it be dethroned by any other divinity? Consequently, there should be no surprise if the experiment in India is watched with a good deal of curiosity

and perhaps wonder, but not conviction. A faith hardened through the ages cannot be easily abandoned, and conviction is at all times of slow growth. Yet within the very brief period of time that non-violence has been used as an instrument of national deliverance there has been a noteworthy tendency for other people to follow this example, while approval of the method itself is universal.

A price has certainly to be paid for the attainment of liberty. Up till now that price has been blood, the blood of those who sought liberty as well as the blood of those from whom it was to be wrested. For the first time, the price of liberty is being paid in sacrifice and suffering, in the giving of blood, if necessary, but in shedding none. It is an experiment that calls for the highest and noblest qualities of man, the suppression of all that is evil and the manifestation of all that is good. Of the ultimate success of this experiment there is not the faintest doubt. Indeed, in the brief period during which it was put to the test it nearly paralysed all the strength of a mighty Empire. The time may come when it will provide the solution for the problem which is perplexing the nations of Europe, and force will be finally hurled from its undisputed throne.

There has been no necessity for drawing up an indictment against even the present system of Government in India. It is perfectly natural that it should value itself highly and deem itself flawless. The one thing that it cannot deny is that it is an alien Government, neither can it deny the right of India to be a nation like other nations. The legitimacy and the naturalness of the claim of India to be perfectly free to administer her own affairs are not open to question. The determination of India to win her freedom through suffering and without resort to violence excludes all bitterness. There is no need to admit or deny the virtues claimed for a Government which is

not native to the soil. India is resolved to be a mistress in her own house and that resolution cannot be baffled. If in seeking her own freedom India succeeds in showing the way to real freedom to the other nations of the world she will be true to her past as a guide and a leader, and so earn the gratitude and blessings of the human race.

1. WHAT INDIA OWES TO MAHATMA GANDHI

While the world is dimly realizing that in Mahatma Gandhi it is beholding one of the great teachers who appear at long intervals, it will necessarily be a long time before his proper place is assigned among the guides of humanity. He has already been compared to the greatest prophets that the world has known and he has a larger following than any other prophet in his lifetime. He has introduced a new force for the emancipation not only of his own people but of the human race. He has inspired men and women of almost every nation with profound respect and reverence, and he has found himself in conflict with the rulers of an empire. If he had been only a moral and religious teacher he might have been let alone, but along with moral and social reform he has striven for the political salvation of the nation to which he belongs and this has inevitably led to punishment and the prison. It is equally inevitable that he should be bitterly assailed by those whose power is menaced with termination and also by such of his countrymen as are content with their present lot or will undertake no risk in the attempt to improve it. Every great liberator of humanity, every great teacher and prophet has to suffer humiliation and ill-treatment, for the world dislikes greatness and can only admire it at a distance—the distance created by the lapse of time.

It would, therefore, be a vain attempt to anticipate the ultimate position of Mahatma Gandhi among the masters who have laboured for the uplift and improvement of the human race, but even now we can bear witness to the marvellous changes already brought about among that

section—and it is a very large section—of the people of India who have understood and accepted Mahatma Gandhi's mission and message. He has lifted patriotism to the height of complete self-abnegation and a deep religious fervour. To him politics is inseparable from religion and morality. In recent times his own countrymen and the people of other countries had come to believe that patriotism was quite consistent with self-interest and one could pass for a patriot without self-denial of any kind. This smug and self-complacent theory has been shattered by the stern example and teaching of Mahatma Gandhi. Situated as we are in India we cannot hope to serve our country while serving ourselves all the time. If it had not been for the prophetic insight and the absolute sincerity of Mahatma Gandhi many years might have passed without the national emancipation of India becoming a live issue. Many centuries of suppression and loss of independence had helped to create a peculiar habit of mind in which men forgot to dare greatly even in thought. The one overpowering obsession was safety—safety first and safety last. It was not safe to speak of an independent India and so it was avoided. It was not safe to expose freely the evils of the administration, for that would be sedition. All that was feasible with safety was a little mild criticism that led nowhere.

There was also the fascination of false phrases and empty shibboleths. People spoke glibly of constitutional agitation and this was encouraged by the men in power, for in the present state of India constitutional agitation is meaningless. Constitutional agitation implies the pre-existence of a constitution. There is no constitution in India except what has been imposed from outside and in the making of which India has had no voice and no part. In England constitutional agitation may defeat the Government and place another party in power. In India any agitation

that may aim at changing the form of Government is regarded unlawful and revolutionary. No plebiscite and no popular vote can effect any change in the system of Government in India. Any change that is suggested or carried out is made at the instance of the Government itself and it cannot be expected that the Government will voluntarily divest itself of real power. Any genuine agitation in India can only be directed to the establishment of a constitution acceptable to the people and initiated by themselves.

The first quality of patriotism anywhere is fearlessness. In countries that have a national Government and where freedom of speech is unfettered, this fearlessness need not proceed beyond fearless speech. Patriotism is served by outspokenness and free and fearless speech. But India is not a free country, and what would pass unchallenged as criticism in England would be snapped up as sedition in India; and no prosecution for sedition has ever been known to fail. In order that Indian patriotism should become a reality and a living force it was necessary that it should learn to shed fear completely and this great object has been completely achieved under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. And the fearlessness that he has inculcated by example and precept is of a higher type than that usually understood by bravery. The bully and the swaggerer also claim to be brave but this is a fearlessness rather of the spirit than of the body. It is a courage completely detached from violence. The fearlessness that has been displayed by thousands of the followers of Mahatma Gandhi is that of the martyr and the patient sufferer. It excludes not only the right of attack but even that of self-defence. Violence is not to be met with violence but by suffering. If there is danger of physical assault it is to be faced and borne without complaint but without any attempt to escape it. There is to be no rushing to attack, but neither is there

to be any running away from an attack. The only buckler and shield must be patience and unresisting submission to violence. Than this there can be no truer or higher form of fearlessness; and it is the direct outcome of Mahatma Gandhi's teaching. Neither violence nor the prison has any terrors for the followers of Mahatma Gandhi. A nation that becomes fearless is bound to be free.

Fearlessness and truthfulness are closely allied. All religious, all moral and ethical teaching proclaim the high place of truth in the formation of character, but nowhere has truth been more highly exalted than in the ancient scriptures and literature of India. All the Vedas with the Upanishads are looked upon as equal to the truth. No sacrifice is to be considered too great for the upholding of the truth, no suffering is to be avoided for the sake of the truth. Mahatma Gandhi has declared that God is truth and a Satyagrahi can on no account depart from the truth. Even magistrates who convict Satyagrahis and send them to prison have been compelled to admit that a Satyagrahi speaks the truth and nothing but the truth. The habit of truthfulness has acquired a new importance owing to the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi and not a single man or woman among his numerous followers has ever been accused of speaking an untruth. To be a Satyagrahi is to be absolutely fearless, absolutely truthful, and to resist all provocation to violence and retaliation.

The third great quality that has been cultivated as the result of Mahatma Gandhi's teaching is simplicity. In the Ashrams that have grown up round Gandhiji exemplary and rigorous discipline has been introduced at his instance. Indulgence in every form is completely restrained and subdued. The craving of the palate for toothsome food is suppressed; spices and nicely seasoned dishes are unknown; food is not looked upon as a luxury but merely as necessary

to sustain the body. Indeed, the discipline in these institutions is more than monastic in its rigour. There are no servants, no cooks, no sweepers. No work is looked upon as humiliating or degrading. There are no caste distinctions, no untouchables or outcasts.

If this habit of simplicity were confined only to these institutions there would not be much to be said, but it has steadily spread outside and every true Indian nationalist lives a simple life. In the matter of clothing all expensive or bright-coloured foreign fabrics have been discarded and all over the country are to be seen men and women clothed in coarse homespun white khaddar, the badge of the Satyagrahi and the Indian nationalist. Many are vegetarians and live upon the plainest fare. The extravagant expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies has been curtailed and strict self-denial is practised in many directions. Men and women have a nobler and simpler conception of life, and are no longer attracted by its frivolities. To them life has a serious and definite purpose, and is to be consecrated to the service of the Motherland. All around us are to be seen men and women fearless, truthful, simple, heroic; and their number is steadily increasing.

Another remarkable sign of simplicity is the directness of speech and writing. Eloquence comes easy to the people of India and during India's early struggles for freedom there have been many writers whose eloquent writings have been widely admired. But the high art of simplicity was being forgotten. Rhetoric was sedulously cultivated as the most effective form of eloquence. Rounded periods, complicated elaborations of style, high sounding phrases, polysyllabic words were thundered forth from public platforms and lavishly used in writing. The writer and the speaker strove to tickle the ear, to dazzle the reader and the hearer. Sonorousness was the main object aimed at; the heart was

seldom touched or stirred. To a man so greatly in earnest as Mahatma Gandhi rhetoric and flowery speech made no appeal. An apostolic simplicity and sincerity came to him almost naturally. His speeches and writings are bald and destitute of all ornament. He never goes beyond a direct appeal to reason. There is no emotionalism, no glamour of fine words, no sentimentalism, no appeal to the imagination. As he rigidly excludes extravagance in any shape or form, in clothes and food, so is he sparing in the prodigality of words. Yet as the world knows, his words have had a more far-reaching effect than those of any orator, writer, or poet. The influence in India itself has been almost miraculous. In his Ashrams and even outside, men and women and even boys and girls have acquired what seems almost like a new language, whether it is English, Gujarathi, or Hindustani. And the change is not confined to the educated classes. This new language is being imbibed by all classes of people, the peasant and the itinerant preacher, the ignorant workman, and students at school and college. Its first characteristic is the absence of all fear. People speak as they feel and write as they think without fear of consequences. There is no hedging about, no careful negotiation of angles and corners, no avoidance of risks. Everywhere are to be found men, young and old, women and girls, who move their audiences to the greatest enthusiasm by their impassioned eloquence, their burning sentiments of patriotism, and the clarity and force of their diction. The old roundabout ways, the resonant phrases, the carefully calculated cautiousness have entirely disappeared. The heart speaks direct to the heart, the words throb with life and speed on wings. Listening to these speakers one can understand what true eloquence means and what happens when the mouth speaks out of the fullness of the heart.

We are witnessing the beginning of a new era, the

gradual realization of the mythical Golden Age which may become a visible reality. This era dates with Mahatma Gandhi. The conditions that have made such a change possible may not be found out of India. In spite of the prolonged subjection and humiliation that have been the lot of India she has retained certain qualities that are not to be found among other peoples. To most other peoples fearlessness without violence would be incomprehensible. It is not difficult to raise the standard of revolution but no one ever dreamed of a revolution in which the clash of angry passions and the shedding of blood could be avoided. India is in the throes of a new birth, the birth of a new nation which will be different from the other nations of the world just as ancient India was different from contemporary nations of those times. While the other nations of those days have become extinct India has retained her fecundity and has not perished. Mahatma Gandhi is the founder and guide of this new nation. While retaining all the noble traditions of the past a new nation stands forth before the admiring eyes of the world, a nation fearless and truthful, a nation with no evil designs upon its neighbours, a nation simple and strong, a nation which will once again be an exemplar to the world.

2. FROM MISTER TO MAHATMA

Great conquerors at the head of large and invincible armies are fired with the ambition of conquering continents and holding many nations in thrall. Alexander of Macedon did not rest till he had carried his victorious arms across Asia to the north-western districts of India. Napoleon invaded Africa and dreamed of conquering Asia. The empire of the Tsars stretched over the whole of European Russia and a large portion of northern Asia. But the greater conquerors, the great teachers of humanity, who established their conquest over the minds and hearts of men never stirred out of their homeland, did not travel across continents. Buddha preached in a comparatively small area in northern India; his disciples and missionaries carried his doctrines east and west all over Asia. Christ preached from Galilee to Jerusalem; later on, the missionaries of his Church have spread his doctrines to the remotest parts of the world. Muhammad preached chiefly at Medina and Mecca in Arabia, and it was only after his death that the doctrines of Islam were carried far and wide and many countries were converted to the new faith.

By the merest accident Mahatma Gandhi's work has been divided over two continents. Similarly, his life falls easily into two divisions, those of the ordinary householder and the extraordinary leader and teacher; in other words, two periods of life, in the first of which he was earning his livelihood like any other man; and the second in which his renunciation of the world has been complete. In South Africa he was at first a practising lawyer but abandoned his profession for the long-drawn struggle against the iniquitous laws of that Colony. On his return to India his countrymen followed his activities with growing wonder and admiration.

He was not a political leader in the European sense of the word, or like others in his own country. Politics divorced from religion had no meaning for him. If he wanted full political rights for his countrymen, he wanted equal social and other rights for his countrymen condemned to live beyond the pale of society and whose touch and even shadow is pollution to the caste-bound classes. It is an oppression worse than the galling yoke of an alien rule, it is a heartless tyranny over our own kith and kin, the children of the same Motherland that we adore. He would suffer no disqualifications for women, holding them the equals of men in all respects. He insisted on total prohibition and complete abstinence from all intoxicating liquors and drugs as the basis of self-respect and the purity of national character. It did not take his countrymen long to recognize in him one of the ancient sages of Aryan India. The manner of his life, the rigidity of the discipline he practised over himself, his utter unworldliness, the purity that went out of him like the fragrance of a flower, proclaimed him a man different from the men around him. Here was a great-souled man who must not be confused with the gentleman and the polite habitue of the drawing room. Thus Mister Gandhi became Mahatma Gandhi: it was the transition from the citizen to the saint. The period of canonization in India does not take a hundred years after death. A living saint is venerated as highly as a dead one. Mahatma Gandhi himself regards the title of Mahatma as an affliction. He says: "The woes of Mahatmas are known to Mahatmas alone." This is not a denial, but confession of a great depth of meaning. A man who is rightfully called a Mahatma does not feel exalted but humbled, for it comes to him through suffering and the suffering of others is to him a personal suffering. It is not a title like a knight-hood or any of the titles given away so cheaply and which

make the recipients strut about like peacocks dancing with full-blown plumage, but a spontaneous tribute to the greatness of a man's soul, and it cannot minister to his vanity.

This is a great advantage in appreciating the life and life-work of Mahatma Gandhi. We find him in South Africa as the champion of the first rights of citizenship, the removal of degrading distinctions between the Indian immigrants and traders and the English colonists. When some misguided and misinformed Pathans savagely attacked him they might have killed him outright, in which case he would have died as Mr Gandhi with record of a certain amount of good work done but no great achievement. His countrymen in India might have remembered or forgotten him according to the importance they attached to his brief career in a far off continent. He would certainly not have become the world figure that he is today, with the eyes of the world fixed upon him in incredulous wonder as the challenger of the massed might of an Empire. (But no man is called away before his time, or before accomplishing his appointed task. The work that Mr Gandhi undertook in South Africa grew into the bigger undertaking in India that changed his designation into Mahatma Gandhi. But both in Africa and in India it has been an unbroken record of sacrifice and suffering, a heroic self-abnegation almost without a parallel, a continuous struggle against overwhelming odds, the spirit and the soul ranged against the physical strength of the autocratic power and always emerging triumphant.)

In South Africa the very beginning of the conflict found Mr Gandhi in prison, for it was essential that he should violate the laws that branded his countrymen in that Colony with an inferiority that was revolting to his sense of self-respect. If Mr Gandhi had not been there it is more than probable that his countrymen would have submitted

uncomplainingly to being treated as a criminal tribe and to register themselves on payment of a fee and to give their thumb impressions for identification. Prisons are degrading in all countries, but in the prisons of Cape Colony Mr Gandhi looked into the mouth of hell. The criminals belonged to the lowest type of humanity and consisted mainly of the natives of South Africa and the most degraded among the Chinese immigrants. They were addicted to unnamable vices and the most revolting profanity. In the prisons no distinction whatsoever was made between the Indian passive resisters, men who lived a clean life and were guilty of no moral turpitude, and the hardened criminals devoid of all morality and incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong. They were all given the same food and shared the same quarters. A man of high character who goes to prison for the sake of a principle is a convict according to the prison regulations and no distinction is made between him and the crime-addict who cannot be left at large without danger to society and law-abiding people. It is characteristic of Mahatma Gandhi that his experience of prison life have left no memory of bitterness behind and he never speaks or writes about them.

Although Mr Gandhi was repeatedly sentenced to imprisonment for defying and violating the laws of the British Colony of Natal his object was not misunderstood by all English colonists or other people outside South Africa. He had the sympathy of all right-thinking people who recognized the iniquity and the unrighteousness of the laws he had defied and disobeyed, and in consequence of which he had repeatedly suffered imprisonment. Both in England and in India public opinion held him guiltless of any offence, and admired the purity and justice of his motives. It was freely admitted that he had espoused the cause of the oppressed and the ill-treated, and he had vindicated the

self-respect of his people. It was in South Africa that some ministers of the Christian Church and men with a sense of justice first appreciated his Christ-like character, his humility, his fearlessness and his self-sacrifice. It was there that his countrymen first began to follow his lead with unquestioning faith and followed him to prison without hesitation and without question. As the Rev. Mr Doke, who wrote a brief account of his life, says, his countrymen in South Africa were prepared to lay down their lives at the bidding of their revered leader. Yet so long as he was there it did not occur to any one of his countrymen to designate him a Mahatma. They just realized that he was unlike other men, that he coveted no worldly possessions, that he accepted no gifts and lived a blameless life.

When he finally returned to India the saintliness of his life was a matter of common knowledge and he was accorded a warm reception wherever he went. For some time he took no active or leading part in the public life of his country. He travelled extensively, studying the conditions prevailing in different parts of the country and impressing all those who came in contact with him with his singleness and sincerity of purpose, the transparent purity of his character, the simplicity of his life and his unflinching devotion to truth. The time very soon came when he could no longer stand aloof from public movements in India. It would have been strange indeed if after what he had done and suffered in South Africa he could be content to be a mere spectator of any great struggle in any part of India. Any wrong was to him a clarion call of duty and his return to India was followed by a multiplicity of wrongs. He joined the Indian National Congress and in a few years became the supreme leader of that organization. The spirit that had led the passive resistance movement in South Africa filled and dominated the national movement in India.

It did not take his countrymen long to distinguish between Mr Gandhi and other political leaders in the country. (The other leaders were undoubtedly sincere patriots; some of them gave a good deal of their time and others all their time to the service of their country. But this patriotism was the patriotism of the West... — a kind of an isolated movement for the establishment of political rights. India, however, does not stand on the same level as the nations of Europe. They have not lost their liberty and are not engaged in making efforts to regain it. In Europe constitutional agitation means an attempt to bring about a change in the existing composition of Government. The changes that have taken place in various European countries after the last war are not constitutional changes. India has no constitution in the European sense. Her first requirement is a constitution. The only constitution that can be regarded as national is one in the making of which, Indians themselves have a share. Thus the efforts of Indian patriots have to be directed towards bringing about conditions conducive to a truly national representative constitution not imposed from outside but evolved from within. This was undoubtedly the aim of Indian nationalists and it was shared by Mr Gandhi and others working with him.

Unlike, however, other leaders, Mr Gandhi did not concentrate all his energy on political agitation alone. (Any social or other inequality was intolerable to him. In the next place, the motive power of all his activities was religion. He followed the religion of his fathers, but there was no exclusiveness in his creed and all religions were to him worthy of reverence. Mussalmans were to him as dear as Hindus, the despised and untouchable classes among his own people were his brothers. Christians found in him a man who resembled Christ more than any other man they knew, and some of his dearest friends were Christians

and Europeans. The institution that he established at Sabarmati near Ahmedabad was in reality a monastery. The inmates lived a celibate, monastic life and practised the most rigorous self-discipline. They had to devote their lives to the service of India. Mr Gandhi's countrymen soon realized that his character transcended all his activities and he was not only a champion of the rights of his people but a holy man. The more they knew him the more strongly were they impressed by the holiness of his life, the utter selflessness of his character, his self-denial and the austerity and simplicity of his ways of living. His gentleness and his abounding love were so obvious that to know him was to love and revere him. Nowhere in the world is saintliness of character and blamelessness of life so quickly and so largely appreciated as in India and Mr Gandhi was soon known as Mahatma Gandhi all over the country. He himself deprecated the distinction both by word of mouth and in writing, and insisted that he did not deserve to be called a saint. That, however, made no difference to the conviction of his countrymen and now he is known throughout the world as Mahatma Gandhi. If any man is worthy of being called a Mahatma it is undoubtedly Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The greatness of his soul is now manifest to the whole world.

Thus we have two easy divisions of a single personality, two continents as scenes of action, two spheres of activity, two stages of life — the citizen and the saint. There has been no conflict and no contradiction but only a process of evolution. He began life with a strict adherence to certain rules of conduct but with no idea of taking part in a great struggle or dedicating his life to a great cause. The legend runs that Siddhartha the Prince, who was to be known to the world as the Buddha, was kept in strict seclusion surrounded by all the joys and pleasures of life to prevent the

fulfilment of the prophecy of the soothsayers that the Prince would renounce his kingdom for the wandering life of a mendicant. Lulled by the luxury around him and ignorant that there was aught else in the world, the soul of the Prince slept. He did not know that there were such things as illness, the decrepitude of age, and death. The sight of these, one after the other, during the drives in the city awakened his soul and he tore himself away from wife and kingdom and went out in search of truth. All men see the sights that Siddhartha saw but they are not moved nor do they abandon their homes, but all men are not born Buddhas. Similarly, nothing uncommon happened before Mr Gandhi went to South Africa and his soul slumbered. It was when he went to that Colony and saw and personally experienced the treatment he and his countrymen received that his soul rose in rebellion. As he stated before a judge at Ahmedabad he discovered in South Africa that he had no right as a man because he was an Indian. Others of his countrymen had submitted to humiliation and degradation, but they were not like Gandhi. The sights that he saw and the treatment that he received were much worse than the things seen by the Buddha. The Prince saw the various phases of the laws of nature in the different ages of man. Mr Gandhi saw to what extent man may be brutalized and subject his fellow-men to ill-treatment. From the rights of a man to the rights of a nation it is only a step. As the Prince became a wandering ascetic and a teacher of men so the citizen became a Mahatma and the leader of a nation.

Both in South Africa and in India the call to Mahatma Gandhi came quite unexpectedly. While in South Africa he was not at all sure that there was great work awaiting him in his own country. In India he was more or less an unknown man; there were several leaders known to fame who were working according to their lights. When the

Rev. J. J. Doke, who was then Baptist Minister, Johannesburg, and has since died, wrote a short account of Mr Gandhi's life, he invited him to send a message through the book to the young men of his native land. Mr Gandhi then hesitated though he complied with the request.

That was Mr Gandhi, the Passive Resister of the Transvaal, who was uncertain whether he had any right to send a message to his countrymen in India, being an obscure individual in a distant corner of the world. Today he is Mahatma Gandhi in intimate touch with all classes of the vast population of India, the one man whose right to speak on behalf of the whole country is beyond cavil or question. Even those who do not share his views and opinions freely admit that there is no other man living in India who has got the same hold on the people that he has, or who has anything like his authority. Whoever could have dreamed that the Liberator of a race, and, may be, of the world would appear as a holy saint to whom the ambitions of the world are dust and ashes, whose gentleness wins over even those who have him in custody as a prisoner, whose unarmed and unresisting strength shakes an Empire to its foundations? A new page has opened in the history of the world and the writing is spread over two continents. The loss or restoration of freedom has ever been associated with men of war, but the world now sees the cause of freedom led by one of the greatest apostles of peace. Everywhere in India the air resounds with shouts of *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!* Victory to the great-souled Gandhi! His name will go down the ages not as a revolutionary and a rebel but as one of the saintliest of men ever known, an emancipator of the human race.

3. APPRECIATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI

For the man who succeeds in life, who prospers and succeeds in his undertakings, who grasps the prizes that life has to offer, there is immediate and abundant appreciation; but the man who despises all wordly things, who sets no store by anything that men desire and pursues ideals of no present value there is no early recognition or reward. This is why the world neglects or uses ill its greatest men, the teachers and prophets with their eyes withdrawn from the ephemeral prizes of the world and fixed upon the eternal truth. They are allowed to pass unhonoured and misunderstood. Understanding comes in the course of time and then men praise the memory of one who is beyond praise and blame, and accept and follow his teachings.

To only one great teacher, a man who had renounced a throne for the sake of truth, a large measure of praise and homage came while he was yet in the land of the living. This was Buddha. The measure of his sacrifice still remains unequalled and he alone of all men was able to say:

‘Oh, summoning stars ! I come ! Oh, mournful earth
For thee and thine I lay aside my youth,
My throne, my joys, my golden days, my nights,
My happy palace — and thine arms, sweet Queen !
Harder to put aside than all the rest !

Yet thee, too, I shall save, saving this earth.”¹

He founded the great Brotherhood of monks, the Bhikkhus of the Sangha, and converts and followers flocked around him. The fame of his holiness, his wisdom, his great compassion and love for everything having life, his humility, went forth throughout the land. A great welcome awaited

1. The Light of Asia

him wherever he went. He did not live inside a city, but usually in a garden outside the precincts of a town, which he entered every morning with a begging bowl in his hand and passed along the streets in silence, receiving alms in the shape of food. Wherever he stayed kings and wealthy men, men of learning and piety waited upon him and showed him the greatest respect and reverence. No actual figures are available but from all the accounts extant it can be inferred that Buddha was widely venerated and many were converted to his doctrines. No learned Brahmin ever defeated him in argument. The most notable fact is that although Buddha denied the revealed authority of the Vedas, set his face against the sacrifice of living animals, made no distinction between a Brahmin and a man despised and outside the pale of caste, yet after his death he was universally regarded as an avatar of Vishnu, one of the triad of Hindu divinities.

There is evidence that some appreciation came to Jesus Christ during the short term he was permitted to teach the people. Great multitudes followed him, attracted by his preaching, but chiefly by his fame as a healer. The most celebrated of his sermons, the Sermon on the Mount, was delivered to his disciples; Jesus avoided the multitudes by going up into a mountain. There were not many converts, for the people did not understand that Jesus was preaching a new religion. He did not deny the authority of the Hebrew scriptures or refuse obedience to the law as revealed to Moses. He said: 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.' When he spoke of himself as the Messiah or the Christ of God, that was also in accordance with the scriptures and the predictions of the prophets. Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist, who recognized in him the promised Messiah. If all the Jews had accepted the view of John probably there would have been no new religion and

Jesus would not have been crucified. The Romans of course took no notice of him: there is nothing to show that the more prosperous Jews paid any attention to his teachings, and it is abundantly clear that the priests were inimical to him from the first. The idea of a new religion did not arise till after the death of Jesus Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles it is stated that the apostles by their preachings and persuasions succeeded in converting three thousand people. The number must have been much less when Christ was living.

Certain Christian missionaries recently wrote that Christ 'refused to lead a revolution against the Roman Government'. Of this very confident assertion the only proof is that Christ refused to be drawn into seditious speech against Tiberius Caesar, the cruellest and most ferocious tyrant among all the Caesars, with the exception of Nero. Christ had no earthly ambitions and he never spoke of an earthly kingdom. Besides, how much time did he have to do his appointed work? When the most influential sections of his own people were against him how could he have placed himself at the head of a revolution? Indeed, his own people falsely accused him of fomenting disaffection against the Roman rule and had him put to death by the Romans. At the same time, there is good reason to think that the Jews dreamed of a Messiah who would break the Roman yoke and make Israel an independent kingdom. The wise men from the east who came to Jerusalem at the time of the birth of Jesus went about saying: 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.' When Herod the king heard this he was troubled and massacred the Innocents of Bethlehem. The feeling that must have prevailed among the Jews was that the Messiah or the Christ would be one like Moses and perhaps a greater man. Moses had led the Jews out of Egypt from bondage under the hands of the Pharaohs.

Would not the Messiah whose coming had been foretold by the prophets deliver Israel from the bondage of Rome and the tyranny of the Caesars? The apostles themselves cherished such a hope even after the death of Christ. When he rose from the dead and appeared before them they asked: 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom of Israel?' He who had performed so many miracles in life — could he not compass another after his death?

It is evident that the idea of a great religious teacher leading a movement for the freedom of his people is not inconsistent with the holiness of his character or the peacefulness of his mission. Moses himself was such a prophet and teacher. With the exception of Jesus Christ alone he was the greatest prophet of the Jews and since they refused to recognize Jesus either as a prophet or as the Messiah, in their eyes Moses was the earliest and greatest of the Hebrew prophets. The ten commandments which are binding upon Jews and Christians alike were communicated to Moses through the mouth of God. Moses liberated the Jews from slavery, not by strife and waging war, but by carrying his people out of Egypt and baffling the pursuit by the army of the Pharaoh. He laid down a complete code of laws for the Jewish nation. He organized elaborate rites of sacrifices and offerings, he had altars and tabernacles made, he made the robe of the ephod, he introduced the scapegoat, the first form of vicarious atonement. Lawful and unlawful marriages were clearly differentiated, sacred feasts were instituted, labour and land laws were laid down, a census was prepared for the first time, the nucleus of an army was created and a complete social organization was set up. It was a wonderful change from the most abject and miserable slavery to well-ordered and complete freedom, and the whole process was accomplished in the lifetime of one man who had been sent by God

to deliver Israel. It must be remembered, however, that Moses lived to a great age and was in full possession of his faculties at the time of death — 'And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.' If great length of life had not been granted to him he could not have accomplished all the work he did.

The spirit of resistance may manifest itself against various forms of evil: it may set itself against some accepted form of religion, it may come into conflict with objectionable social customs, or it may seek to overthrow an oppressive Government. In the two former instances if the State does not identify itself with either the religion or the social customs, it does not interfere; but no Government tolerates any opposition to itself. We hear of religious and social reformers, but a change of government is called revolution. The motive in every case may be the same but the methods are different. The first do not necessarily involve violence, but a Government does not abdicate without violent resistance and it is assailed with violence. A revolution is always associated with violence and bloodshed. It is a violent eruption of pent up passions, the wreaking of vengeance against men or a system that is held responsible for many evils. When a nation is deprived of its freedom and held in galling subjection for a considerable time freedom is only attained by violent struggling. The Israelites were not natives of Egypt and so they were able to free themselves by escaping from the country, but this cannot be thought of in the case of peoples who have lived for generations in the same country and for whom a wholesale exodus is impossible. Large numbers of people went over to America from Ireland but the entire Irish nation could not transport itself across the Atlantic and had to achieve independence after a protracted and bitter struggle.

The world is very different from what it was in the times of Moses and Buddha. In those days news and thought travelled slowly; every tribe, every nation, every country formed a world of its own. No nation knew of the extent of the world or the different continents. There were imaginary and fanciful divisions of the earth, fantastic conceptions of its shape and its area. There was no means of rapid travel, no inter-communication. Even the most advanced nations lived more or less in a state of isolation and detachment. But now it is all changed. Every centre in the world is a broadcasting station and the whole world is listening in for the messages that are going forth at every hour of the day. All over the world there are repercussions of thought and an ever-widening assertion of democracy. This accounts to a great extent for the world-wide recognition and appreciation that have come to Mahatma Gandhi in the course of a few years. The problem to which he has applied himself is a problem for the whole world. In a world of violence he has set up the sovereignty of non-violence. In a war-bound and war-worn world he has shown the way to the termination of war. He has identified the freedom of the spirit with the liberty of the person. He has directed the highest apostolic zeal to what would be ordinarily recognized as a political purpose but which to him is indistinguishable from religion. To him reform and revolution are synonymous since violence in any form is to be strictly eschewed. Mahatma Gandhi stands for more than passive resistance; his doctrine of non-violence not merely precludes violence to others, but includes suffering for oneself, a complete absence of all bitterness, and love for those who inflict pain and suffering on the non-violent resister.

It is a creed that calls for the full development of the best and highest qualities of man. All the primitive in-

instincts of retaliation and defensive or offensive violence are to be completely subdued. There is to be no resistance either by action or in thought. On the other hand, this attitude is on no account to be mistaken for submissiveness, or an acceptance of the evil that has called forth this particular form of resistance. To suffer is not to submit, for non-resistance of this kind always implies non-submission. In order to succeed by pursuing such a method one must pass through a course of the most rigorous self-discipline, self-restraint and self-denial. There must be an unlimited capacity for suffering, a steadfast refusal of submission. The world has known individual instances of this particular form of action, but this is the first time that an attempt is being made for presenting it in mass formation. What was a rule of personal conduct is being converted into a solvent of national problems. It is in fact a new message for the world, a spiritual force intended to displace physical force, a law higher than the laws which often seek to perpetuate evils. Mahatma Gandhi has been and is being treated as a transgressor against the law, but that is inevitable when he is frankly trying to establish freedom and to abolish the use of armed force. Those that uphold the existing order of things are bound to denounce and punish him, but he has succeeded in stirring all that is good and noble and generous in human nature throughout the world. More. He has brought into the world a new gospel of triumphant suffering, a new panacea for healing the ills of humanity.

What the world is witnessing today is the fulfilment of the cyclic manifestations spoken of in the Bhagavadgita. There is a decay of righteousness and an exaltation of unrighteousness everywhere in the world and there is no wonder that the powers of unrighteousness are endeavouring to smother the message of righteousness. Nevertheless, the

doctrine of Mahatma Gandhi has a universal appeal and is being recognized as opportune by right-minded and right-thinking people. There are unmistakable signs that the civilization of Europe is doomed to self-extinction. It is a civilization that has made wholesale slaughter its principal fetish. It is a menace to itself and to the world. The glamour of materialism and the pursuit of pleasure are merely a mirage. In reality, Europe is a jungle infested with tigers which, when there is no other prey in sight, stalk one another and leap upon one another with the roar of cannon and the snarl of bombing planes. If the annihilation of Europe is to be averted the new creed of non-violence must be accepted and followed. It is realized throughout the world that blind faith in force has imperilled the very existence of civilization and civilized nations, for every civilized country is engaged in arming itself to the teeth. General and real disarmament is only possible when mutual distrust among the nations disappears, but there are no signs of any radical change in the outlook of the nations of Europe or the deep-seated jealousies that find expression in constant resort to force. The prevailing sense of insecurity accounts for the intense interest and expectation with which the movement of non-violent resistance in India is being watched throughout the world.

No amount of misrepresentation or interested accounts can convince the world at large that Mahatma Gandhi is a violent reactionary or revolutionist. His whole life is a complete and effective answer to all accusations of this nature. The world has rarely known a life so entirely free from all bitterness, so pure, so saintly, and so noble. From the day that he took up the cause of his humiliated and outraged countrymen in South Africa up to the present it has been an unbroken and unblemished record of utter selflessness, unlimited sacrifice and the most rigorous self-discipline.

Men in all countries have compared him to the founders of the great religions of the world, to the greatest martyrs, to the highest exemplars. He may be treated as a rebel and a criminal, but that serves only to exalt him in the eyes of the world. His worst detractor cannot allege for a moment that he seeks anything for himself. He certainly seeks the freedom of his country, but the means employed by him may achieve the freedom of humanity. The world is astonished not only at his doctrine but the way he has harnessed spiritual force for the attainment of physical freedom. This is a consummation that would be devoutly hailed by the world with joy and gratitude. It means that the nations are not to be trained to the use of arms and to contemplate the prospects of slaughter, but they should use self-restraint as the most effective weapon against the use of force and thus ensure real and abiding peace. Foreign and by no means sympathetic onlookers have found no difficulty in visualizing the time when Mahatma Gandhi will be regarded as an incarnation of God by the teeming millions of India. Even today he has a larger following than Buddha or Christ in their lifetime. He could not have attained this eminence as a political leader. He is not at all a political leader in the usual sense of the expression. A struggle for political freedom is not watched with awe and reverence by the ministers of any church, nor is any political leader compared to Jesus Christ or the founders of other religions. Every struggle in which Mahatma Gandhi has been engaged is of the essence of religion, whatever may be its outward manifestation.

Mahatma Gandhi himself has said: 'My experiments in the political field are now known, not only to India, but to a certain extent to the "civilized" world. For me, they have not much value.' The value is in their religious aspect, in their elevation to the spiritual plane. Except the one

country interested in the prolonged subjection of India the whole world would welcome the freedom of India and her admission on terms of perfect equality with the other nations of the world. Turkey, Russia, China have all won liberty but they followed the usual methods of a revolution and did not attract unusual attention. The struggle in India is being followed with breathless interest by every civilized country in the world because of the impressive personality of the leader and the novel methods adopted.

This is the explanation of the universal reverence and homage rendered to Mahatma Gandhi. He is not merely the leader of a nation but the bearer of a divine mission. He is the prophet of universal freedom, universal self-respect, universal non-violence. Except death by violence he has known every kind of physical suffering; insult and humiliation have repeatedly fallen to his lot. He has imposed upon himself a discipline more than Spartan in its severity: he has undergone penances for the wrong-doing of others; he has submitted himself to prolonged fasts in order that others may give up violence and vindictiveness. In food and clothing he has practised self-denial to the extreme limit. Every week there is a day of silence on which he exchanges no spoken word with any man. His hours of prayer are observed with scrupulous regularity without the slightest regard for any public engagements. His writings and his teachings bear the stamp of truth on every word. He is not a revolutionary leader but the prophet of humanity. Wherever men long for peace and relief from the horrors of war, wherever there is a yearning for the truth, there is reverence and admiration for Mahatma Gandhi. It is not merely that millions in India look upon him as an incarnation of divinity and are ready to follow him unquestioningly to the death. In India such a belief is

common enough, but no man in his lifetime in the history of the world has exercised such supreme authority as the man who has been repeatedly dragged to prison in South Africa and India. He claims no pontifical infallibility, he presumes on no divine authority. His appeal, so irresistible to men and women alike, is in his own life, his nobility and humility, his years of suffering and anguish, his invincible courage, the faith that burns in him as a steady and an inextinguishable flame. If his authority is unequalled, what is to be said of the miracle of obedience that has acknowledged his power? His call has not been to success and distinction as the world understands them but to suffering and sacrifice, and except by the fearful and the craven-hearted the call has not passed unheeded. Once before in Japan the Samurai owners of wealth heaped up all their possessions in the national treasury; it was a splendid record of sacrifice but it entailed no suffering. Those who have responded to the call of Mahatma Gandhi have not only parted with their worldly possessions but have shared the felon and criminal's lot and gone to prison without regret or a word of complaint. Men in the enjoyment of every comfort and luxury that wealth can bestow, women delicately nurtured and unaccustomed to hardships of any kind have spurned all thoughts of personal convenience and followed the call of duty as defined by Mahatma Gandhi. It has been found difficult to stem the rush to seek suffering and punishment. By suffering is freedom to be achieved and suffering is being offered without stint, and men and women are wearing the martyr's crown of pain and humiliation illuminated by a halo of glory. All over the world there is a growing faith in the message of the new evangelist and hearts are being held up and hands stretched out to Mahatma Gandhi over the seas and across the continents.

4. JESUS CHRIST AND MAHATMA GANDHI

A comparison between Christ Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi, or rather, Mahatma Mohandas, to be accurate, would not ordinarily occur to an Indian, nor was such a comparison first made by an Indian. Hindus are brought up in a spirit of reverence to the prophets of all creeds, but for purposes of comparison it is not necessary for them to go out of India. The designation Mahatma (great soul) is not rare in this country; in former times it was applied to several great men and some are called Mahatma even at the present day. The designation Christ, which means the Anointed, the Messiah, has been applied to only one individual, Jesus of Nazareth. No other man can be called by that appellation.

Mahatma Gandhi has been compared to Christ Jesus by Christians, clergymen and laymen. He has tasted of the cup of bitterness in two continents, but it has left him wholly unembittered, firm and steadfast in faith. The first slight suggestion of a comparison between Jesus and Gandhi is to be found in a little book written by the Rev. Joseph J. Doke, Baptist Minister, Johannesburg. The book is incomplete and does not contain the full history of the South African struggle which brought the name of Gandhiji into prominence. Mr Doke was a personal friend of Gandhiji; much of the material of his book was obtained first-hand by questions put to Gandhiji. Mr Doke became a great admirer of the Indian leader. In a postscript dated October 16, 1908, Mr Doke writes that on the previous day Mr Gandhi was sentenced for the second time, during the year, to imprisonment for two months with hard labour. A few days later convict Gandhi (his number is not mentioned) was transferred from Volksrust gaol to the Fort at Johannesburg.

'When he reached Johannesburg, dressed in convict clothes, marked all over with the broad arrow, he was marched under guard through the streets, before sundown, carrying his bundle as any convict would.'

Mr Doke's reflections on this march are worth reproducing. 'His face was "steadfastly" set to go to Jerusalem, and he saw nothing but that. I wonder what he saw in that long march. Not the immediate Jerusalem, I imagine — the place of crucifixion. I know of no vision more terrible than that. The Fort, with its cells and its hateful associations. Those long files of prisoners. The white-clad, brutal native warders, swaggering along with their naked assagais. The lash for the obdurate, and the criminal taint for all. A city whose secrets may not be told; from whose dens children emerge criminals, and criminals infinitely worse than they entered.'

In the prison the criminal savage and the conscientious Indian were herded together without distinction. Mr Doke writes that the experiences of Mr Gandhi during the first night in Johannesburg Fort were 'extremely shocking'. 'As a native prisoner of the criminal class, he was locked into a cell with native and Chinese convicts, men more degraded than it is easy to imagine, accustomed to vices which cannot be named. This refined Indian gentleman was obliged to keep himself awake all night to resist possible assaults upon himself such as he saw perpetrated around him. That night can never be forgotten.'

In the 19th chapter of the first Book of Genesis it is written how two angels came to Sodom and spent the night in Lot's house. As the two angels had taken the shapes of men, the men of Sodom, both old and young, compassed the house round and wanted to force their way in to assault the two guests of Lot. Whereupon the angels smote the assailants with blindness. On the night that Jesus was

taken he was mocked, and they spat in his face and buffeted him, but it is not mentioned where they kept him till the morning when he was dragged before Pilate for trial. But in death he was undoubtedly associated with malefactors, for at Golgotha he was crucified between two thieves, 'the one on his right hand, and the other on his left'. 'And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressor.' Law and order, whether Roman or Hunnic, of the Persians and Medes, or any other, have ever stood for righteousness, and the Christs and Gandhis are always among the transgressors. In the eyes of the Romans in Judea Jesus was merely a Jew, and to the British in South Africa Gandhi was only a coolie.

Mr Gandhi was a Barrister of the Inner Temple, 'a cultured gentleman in every sense of the term', according to Mr Doke. In England he had met with kindness everywhere. He went first to South Africa on a professional engagement, but found Natal somewhat different from London and even unlike Bombay. On the day after his arrival he was rudely ordered to take off his turban in court. In the railway train he was travelling first class with a first class ticket; he was forcibly ejected and his luggage was thrown out. In the Transvaal then under President Kruger (Oom Paul of beloved memory), the Dutch guard of a coach ordered Mr Gandhi to sit down at his feet. On Mr Gandhi's refusal to do so, he was struck a brutal blow in the face and a second knocked him down. The Dutchman threatened to do for him, 'but the passengers intervened and asked the Boer to let the poor beggar alone.' There was no room for him at any hotel. The sentry kicked him off the footpath in front of President Kruger's house. It was in this pleasant land of the Boer and the Uitlander that the first cross was laid upon the Mahatma's shoulders and he cheerfully resolved to bear it, though the Mount of Calvary

was not in sight.

In the wilderness Jesus was tempted of the devil, who first asked him to change stones into bread and next invited him to cast himself down from the pinnacle of a temple. Finally the devil offered all the kingdoms of the world, but Jesus refused to be tempted. As a young boy and a young man Gandhi passed through a religious crisis and for some time he was practically an atheist. But he never lost the habit of truthfulness. Mr Doke writes: 'It was then, as it is now, a part of himself. He could not lie. Other anchors were lost; this held.' Later, Gandhiji found his lost faith and now to him God is the Truth. As a lawyer he prospered, but the time came when he renounced all property and gradually he stripped his body even of clothing until the loin-cloth alone was left, and it was thus that Mr Slocombe, a newspaper correspondent, found him in the Yeravada Central Jail near Poona in the Bombay Presidency. 'He was as the world knows him—bare except for a loin-cloth, brown and emaciated like an anchorite of the desert.' Mr Slocombe further declared that 'the imprisoned Mahatma now incarnates the very soul of India.' Between the Gandhi who led the movement of passive resistance in South Africa and the Gandhi who leads Civil Disobedience in India from behind the prison bars, there is no difference except that in the intervening years he has added several cubits to his moral and spiritual stature.

When a Pharisee invited Jesus to eat with him a woman came in weeping. She washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, wiped them with her hair and anointed them with ointment that she had brought in a box of alabaster. She was a sinner, but Jesus said unto her: 'Thy sins are forgiven.' At Durban Gandhiji was assailed by a fusillade of stones, fish and rotten eggs; a burly European kicked him till he became nearly unconscious. 'Then', writes Mr

Doke, 'a beautiful and brave thing happened. Mrs Alexander, the wife of the Superintendent of Police, recognized him, and opening her sunshade to keep off the flying missiles, courageously went to his assistance, and when he attempted to go forward she walked at his side.' Mrs Alexander acted like a noble Christian woman.

Jesus Christ taught: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.' The law in Cape Colony was that Indians should be registered for a fee of £ 3 per head and they should give their thumb impressions. M. Bertillon's method was undoubtedly intended for criminals of Mr Gandhi's type who repeatedly had to be sent to prison because they broke the law. But when the Second Boer War broke out in 1899 Mr Gandhi organized the Indian Ambulance Corps. They were only stretcher bearers and were more than once under fire. General Buller described Mr Gandhi as 'Assistant Superintendent'. When the mistake was pointed out to him General Buller replied that he had meant it as a title of courtesy. In the plague epidemic of 1904 Mr Gandhi and his devoted workers worked incessantly without any thought of personal danger. The prompt measures taken by them saved Johannesburg. The Zulu rebellion of 1906 saw Mr Gandhi at the head of another Stretcher Bearer Corps and this time he was offered the rank of Sergeant-Major. One of the features of this rebellion was that many Zulu prisoners were severely lashed. Mr Doke writes: 'Mr Gandhi speaks with great reserve of this experience. What he saw he will never divulge. I imagine it was not always creditable to British humanity.....This Ambulance Corps, tenderly ministering to the wounded or cruelly-lashed Zulu—with the son of an Indian Prime Minister at their head—is worthy of an artist's brush.'

Jesus was a child-lover, not of the variety that writes pretty verses about children but has very little to do with them, but one who declared that children were the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and no one could enter the kingdom of God unless he was like a child. 'And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them : and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them : "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."' Again: 'At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them. And said, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."' Mahatma Gandhi, even in the midst of his bitter struggles, has been a constant and consistent lover of children. Mrs Polak writes that in South Africa she repeatedly saw Mahatmaji 'walking up and down a room with a young child in his arms, soothing it in the almost unconscious way a woman does', and all the time discussing intricate questions with the utmost clearness. At the Sabarmati Ashram no amount of work prevented his playing with the children for some time every day, and one of the first letters he was permitted to write after his incarceration in 1930 in the Yeravada prison without any charge having been formulated against him, was addressed to some children at Sabarmati. It was a beautiful letter couched in the fairy language of children and addressed from 'Yeravada Palace'. Similarly, when he and his people were filling the Transvaal gaols he wrote that they had been sent 'to partake of the hospitality of King Edward's Hotel'. Whether in prison or out of it his cheerfulness never flags or falters.

Jesus Christ has rightly been called the Prince of Peace; yet he said, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.' This is of course metaphorical language, because Jesus set his face against violence, and taught: 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' Mahatma Gandhi has never advocated the use of violence either in metaphor or parable. His cardinal creed is non-violence.

The first time that Mahatma Gandhi was likened unto Jesus Christ was in the course of a sermon delivered by the Rev. Dr John Haynes Holmes to the congregation in the Community Church at Park Avenue, New York. The entire sermon was devoted to an exposition of Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence and it concluded with the following striking words: 'When I think of Gandhi, I think of Jesus Christ. He lives His life; he speaks His word; he suffers, strives, and will some day nobly die, for His kingdom upon earth.' In another sermon delivered quite recently Dr Holmes spoke with clearer conviction and greater emphasis. The theme of the sermon was 'Gandhi before Pilate'. The opening words are of impressive solemnity: 'Why talk ye about God and the Son of God and His resurrection on this earth when He is here?' In symbolic answer to his own question the preacher placed upon his head a Gandhi cap made of Indian Khaddar cloth in pledge or recognition and devotion to the Indian leader, who, Dr Holmes believes, is now taking Christ's place in this world. As he put on the cap he continued: 'This cap is a symbol of human devotion as sacred as the cross. As the early Christians lifted the cross in token of Christ's triumph over shame and death, so the Indians are wearing this cap in token of Gandhi's triumph over tyranny and force. Why should not this cap go around the world, as the cross has gone around the world? For there are millions of men in

all countries today who see in the Mahatma the true redeemer of our modern world. More than any other man since Jesus, Gandhi manifests that spirit of universal peace and brotherhood which alone can save us.' Dr Holmes likened the Mahatma's march through India to the sea to break the salt laws, to the march from Galilee to the sea two thousand years ago. In the measures taken to suppress Civil Disobedience in India, Dr Holmes finds 'the throne of Pilate set up again before the nations'. Then come the supreme question and the confident answer: 'Is there to be another crucifixion? Gandhi is doomed to failure, defeat and possibly death, tomorrow perhaps. But in the later tomorrow his victory will be supreme. Only once before has the world seen such a leader. Then it was Jesus.' In his final determination to ignore all violence and go right ahead Gandhi is 'relentless and terrible as only a meek man can be terrible'. This is the sword of which *Jesus Christ* spoke.

Even earlier than this, in 1913, Bishop Whitehead of Madras declared: 'I frankly confess, though it deeply grieves me to say it, that I see in Mr Gandhi, the patient sufferer for the cause of righteousness and mercy, a truer representative of the Crucified Saviour than the men who have thrown him into prison and yet call themselves by the name of Christ.' Is it not evident that Christ stands outside the chancelleries and the cabinets, and there is no place for him in law and order? Governments understand the doctrine of force; to them the power of faith is meaningless.

The *Christian Century* of Chicago compares Gandhiji's utterances to the echoes of a Galilean hillside. A leading editorial article of the magazine calls attention to the fact that Mahatma Gandhi is now engaged in a battle for human freedom, and that 'this battle is being fought on

the basis of the New Testament'. Towards the conclusion it is stated that 'the issue which Gandhi has raised transcends the fate of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Stripped of all ephemeral aspects the issue here joined is the choice of the means whereby, for the next hundred years or longer, men will seek to control the affairs of nations.'

Mr Brailsford is a publicist and not a padre. Writing about the Mahatma in *The New Leader* he says: 'Since Tolstoy died, there is no human being living today who commands as he does the veneration of mankind. Others are liked, respected and admired, but he stands on a Mount of Transfiguration.' The reference here is to the transfiguration of Jesus: 'And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' Further on Mr Brailsford writes: 'One glances in vain at the world's premiers and presidents for a personality worthy to stand beside him (Gandhi).' Speaking about himself Jesus said: 'Behold a greater than Solomon is here.'

After Mahatma Gandhi's arrest at Karadi in Gujerath in 1930 he was taken to Borivli near Bombay by train and thence by motor car to Yeravada prison. By special favour of the authorities two newspaper correspondents, Mr Ashmead-Bartlett, representing a London paper, and Mr Negley Farson, the correspondent of an American paper, were present when Mahatmaji was taken down from the train. Describing the scene Mr Ashmead-Bartlett, who is not a friend of India and does not favour Indian aspirations, writes: 'There was something intensely dramatic in the atmosphere while we were waiting for the train, for we all felt we were sole eye-witnesses of a scene which may become historical—this arrest of a prophet, false

or true. For, false or true, Gandhi is now regarded as a holy man and saint by millions of Indians. Who knows whether, one hundred years from now, he may be worshipped as a supreme being by 300,000,000 people. We could not shake off these thoughts and it seemed incongruous to be at a level crossing at dawn to take the prophet into custody.' Mr Ashmead-Bartlett cannot be ignorant of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi is looked upon as a prophet in Europe and America, and has been spoken of as the living Christ from the pulpits of churches, but he was apparently thinking of India alone.

The Rev. A. D. Belden, in his sermon at a church in London referred to Mahatma Gandhi's movement of Civil Disobedience as 'a phenomenon which should make the Christian churches in Great Britain stand and gaze, and command their awe and reverence.....Gandhi is the greatest Christian at present on the earth.'

It is doubtful whether Mr Ashmead-Bartlett was conscious of the parallels he was suggesting in his account of the arrest of the Mahatma. Writing of the gaily decorated car waiting to convey Mahatma Gandhi to prison this correspondent says: 'It looked as if it was prepared for a happy bridal party, for the body was entirely covered with bright pink and red curtains, looking as if made to conceal the nervous young people from gaping crowds on their honeymoon.' Recall the words of Jesus Christ: 'And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.' Again, Mr Ashmead-Bartlett says he was present when Mahatma Gandhi broke the salt laws at Dandi. Then he was surrounded by his faithful disciples and followed by a large multitude of enthusiastic Satyagrahis. 'This morning he looked indescribably deserted and lonely without a

single friend or follower, a melancholy picture as he stepped forward to descend to earth.' Still the writer has to admit that 'the old man departed himself with remarkable dignity.' What else did this correspondent with a double-barrelled name expect? He ought to be aware that Mahatma Gandhi is the bravest man that ever lived. And as to the loneliness of the Mahatma in custody and now in prison, was the loneliness of Jesus Christ less tragic when he stood before the throne of Pontius Pilate? As regards the word 'deserted' it is wrongly used, for thousands would have followed Mahatma Gandhi to prison as they are doing now if permitted to do so.

The arrest itself is best described in the beautiful words, quickened by the deepest feeling, of Mira Bai (Miss Slade). She wrote in *Young India*: 'At dead of night, like thieves they came to steal him away. For, when they sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet.' In a footnote the following words of Jesus are quoted: 'Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not.' The District Magistrate came to arrest the Mahatma accompanied by policemen armed with rifles and police officers carrying revolvers. The Mahatma's disciples had no arms and they had been taught to bow their heads to the cudgel and bare their breasts to the bullet without resistance. When a torchlight was flashed into the Mahatma's face he woke up and the Magistrate asked: 'Are you Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi?' The Magistrate was not expected to know by sight so insignificant a person, and there was no thumb impression to identify the criminal. The parallel between the arrests of Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi may be pushed a little further. When Jesus was about to be arrested, 'Simon Peter having a sword drew it and smote the high priest's

servant and cut off his right ear. Then said Jesus unto him. Put up again thy sword into place: for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.' Mahatma Gandhi's disciples had no sword, but not one of them uttered even a word of protest when he was arrested. They had learned thoroughly the doctrine of non-resistance whereas Simon Peter, who was one of the apostles, did not abide by the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The disciples of Jesus Christ were generally humble people, fisherfolk and the like. Matthew alone was a publican and a man of some means. He was sitting at the receipt of custom when Jesus called him, and Matthew rose and followed the Master. But when Jesus asked a wealthy young man to sell all he had, give it to the poor and to follow him, 'the young man went away sorrowful: for he had great possession. Then said Jesus unto his disciples: Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Among the disciples and followers of Mahatma Gandhi are the rich and the poor; men and women of high position and fame have laid aside all their possessions and readily gone to prison at his bidding. Lawyers at the head of their profession and with large incomes have abandoned their work and courted and suffered imprisonment. Millionaires have been sent to prison like common criminals. Gifted women in easy circumstances have gone smiling to prison. The disciples of Jesus had to undergo no suffering until some time after his crucifixion when the persecution of the early Christians commenced.

Not all the disciples of Jesus Christ or even the apostles were faithful. To the twelve apostles Jesus had said: 'Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Among them were Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his master, and Peter, who, in order to save himself from arrest, three times denied Jesus, and cursed

and swore vehemently, saying he knew not the man. Not one disciple or follower of the Mahatma has ever disowned him; of the few that have left him the chief person earnestly pleaded that Mahatma Gandhi should not be arrested.

Of the insults heaped upon Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi only a particular kind need be specified. When Jesus was placed before Pilate he was asked whether he was the King of the Jews. Jesus inquired whether Pilate said so of his own knowledge or had heard it from others. Pilate contemptuously retorted: 'Am I a Jew?' That was the supreme insult, the contempt of a Roman for a Jew. An orator in Natal denouncing Mr Gandhi said: 'Mr Gandhi had returned to India and dragged us in the gutter, and painted us as black and filthy as his own skin.' When Mr Gandhi applied for admission to the Supreme Court of Natal, the application was strenuously opposed by the Natal Law Society on the specific ground of colour. 'It was never contemplated', so they argued, 'that coloured barristers should be placed on the roll.' Once, a member of Parliament took exception to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India using the form 'Yours truly' in a curt reply to Mahatma Gandhi's 'historical letter to the Viceroy. This is the sovereign contempt of the White for the Brown. Romain Rolland, who reminds the Rev. Dr Holmes of Tolstoy, has written a remarkable book on Mahatma Gandhi. There is no likelihood of any Prime Minister or Viceroy being similarly honoured. Romain Rolland writes: 'This is the lesson of Gandhi. Only the Cross is wanting to him...The soul of the Eastern peoples has been stirred to its very depths and vibrations are heard all over the earth...One of two things will surely happen: either the faith of Gandhi will be crowned with success, or it will repeat itself, just as centuries ago when Christ and Buddha were born, in the complete incarnation of a mortal

demigod, of a principle of life that will lead future humanity to a safer and more peaceful resting-place ! ' .

The kings and the captains depart, the governors and patriarchs are forgotten, empires rise and fall, but the Christ and the Mahatma live for ever, enshrined in the hearts of men, revered generation after generation through all time !

5. THE TRIAL OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was tried only once and he was condemned to death by crucifixion. For centuries afterwards the Jews were persecuted by Christians in utter disregard of the teachings of Christ in almost every country in Europe for having compassed the death of Jesus. The entire race for generations was cruelly ill-treated, hunted from place to place and placed under all manner of civil disabilities. It was forgotten that the earliest disciples and followers of Jesus Christ were Jews and the apostles themselves were Jews. In the time of Jesus the Jews had the Sanhedrim, their supreme ecclesiastical and judicial tribunal. It condemned Jesus to death but the sentence could not be executed without ratification by the Roman Governor and so Jesus was dragged before Pilate. The Jews accused Jesus and clamoured for his death. They shouted, 'His blood be upon us, and on our children.' But the power of life and death lay in the hands of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, and he need not have yielded to the clamour of the populace at all. At a word from him the Roman legionaries and centurions could have scattered the Jews like chaff and assured the safety of Jesus Christ. But to the Roman rulers, Jesus was a man of no consequence and it was all the same to Pilate whether he released Jesus or crucified him. A Jew more or less did not matter at all.

It must be remembered that the Gospels were written while Rome still ruled Israel and it was a rule of iron. It would have been as much as their lives were worth if the writers of the Gospels had ventured to accuse the Roman Governor of injustice and putting Jesus unjustly to death. The result has been that the actual responsibility for the

death of Jesus has been considerably minimized and all the blood-guiltiness has been placed upon the Jews.

In order to understand clearly the accusation and trial of Jesus Christ certain preliminary facts require to be elucidated. Jesus was born in the days of King Herod, called the Great; and wise men from East had prophesied that in Bethlehem an infant was born King of the Jews. Herod was alarmed, and taking no chances, slew all the children in Bethlehem. But Joseph, the father of Jesus, had been forewarned in a dream and taking the young child and his mother fled into Egypt. Shortly afterwards Herod died and his son Archelaus reigned in Judaea, and Joseph with his wife and child returned to Israel. Thus the birth of Jesus portended evil to the Roman ruler, as he understood it, just as the birth of Sri Krishna presaged danger to Kansa the king. The Jews could not have had anything to do with the massacre of their own children, but Herod certainly feared that when Jesus grew up he would overthrow the Roman rule.

All the four Gospels are silent about the whereabouts of Jesus, his movements and his doings between his twelfth and twenty-sixth years. When Jesus was thirty years of age and was tempted by Satan, Tiberius Caesar, a ferocious tyrant, was Emperor of Rome, Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judaea, and Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. Jesus was an unknown and humble Jew, Herod the king of Judaea was long dead, and the Roman rulers had no reason to suspect Jesus of any revolutionary designs.

The ministry of Jesus Christ was very brief, for he was crucified at the age of thirty-three. When Jesus began to preach he must have offended the priests at once, for he was not one of them and had no authority that they recognized. He gave greater offence by preaching directly against the Old Testament. The God of Moses and of the Old Testa-

ment was a God of wrath and vengeance ; Jesus preached a God of compassion and love, with only a faint echo of the old terrible doctrines. He openly denounced the Pharisees and the Publicans and exalted renunciation and poverty. Above all, he infuriated the priests, the Sanhedrim and their followers by claiming to be the promised Messiah, Christ the Anointed, whose coming had been prophesied by the ancient Hebrew prophets. Perhaps the priests and the Jews thought the Messiah would be one like Isaiah or Jeremiah, but greater, with words that flowed and scorched like molten lava. When John the Baptist, whose food was locusts and wild honey, came out of the wilderness and said to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him: ' O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? ' the people heard the thunder of the old prophets and mused in their hearts whether this was the Christ, the Messiah that was to come. John, reading their hearts like an open book, said unto them all : ' I indeed baptize you with water ; but one mightier than I cometh the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' This prediction referred to Jesus but the majority of the Jews rejected it. In his humility Jesus usually spoke of himself as the Son of man, but he also affirmed that he was the Son of God, the Christ. He said he was greater than Solomon. Now Solomon was not only one of the wisest of Jews but the greatest King of Israel, and a greater personality than any Emperor of Rome. The words of Jesus might readily lend themselves to the interpretation that he was thinking of a kingdom on earth. It would have been an utterly wrong inference but the priests and the Pharisees were quite capable of making it. When Jesus was seized at night and taken before Caiaphas, the high priest, the latter adjured Jesus to declare by the living God whether

he was the Christ, the Son of God. 'Jesus saith unto him : Thou hast said ; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Whereupon the high priest rent his clothes and said, He hath spoken blasphemy ! what further need have we of witnesses ?' The next morning before being placed before Pilate Jesus was brought before the council of the priests and scribes and was asked : 'Art thou the Christ ? tell us. And he said unto them : If I tell you, ye will not believe ; And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all : Art thou then the Son of God ? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness ? For we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.'

Before this the Pharisees and the Herodians had attempted to tempt Jesus into seditious speech against Caesar and had failed. They were subtle of speech and praised Jesus saying he was true and taught the way of God in truth, and cared for no man. Then they tried to inveigle him into a compromising admission. 'Tell us, what thinkest thou ? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not ? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said : Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites ? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he said unto them : Whose is this image and superscription ? They said unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's ; and unto God the things that are God's.' The tempters were silenced and went away. Jesus had barely three years in which to preach his doctrine and he never thought of calling upon the Jews to throw off the Roman yoke.

What charge was preferred against Jesus when he was

brought before Pilate? So far as the priests and their followers were concerned Jesus had offended in that he had claimed to be the Messiah, the Christ of God, and had taught against the old scriptures, but of this no word was spoken before the Roman Governor. Nothing whatever was said about the questions put to Jesus by the priests and his answers. Why? Because the proud patrician would have laughed the whole thing to scorn and sent them all about their business with a flea in their ears. What cared he for the religion of the Jews, their God and their Messiah? In the eyes of the Roman the Jews were merely barbarians, their ancient civilization was of no account and their religion a fantastic superstition. It is doubtful whether any Roman ever read the Old Testament. The Romans and the Greeks had their own gods and goddesses who swarmed on the heights of Olympus and indulged in unrestricted pleasure. Bacchus was their favourite god and revelry was his worship. The religion of the Jews had no appeal for the Romans, neither did they listen to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

If therefore, the Jews had accused Jesus of blasphemy, and had complained that he claimed to be the Messiah and the Son of God they would have obtained no hearing from Pilate, who would have simply driven them out of his presence. He knew nothing about the Kingdom of Heaven and a charge of blasphemy against the Jewish religion would have constituted no offence in Roman law. But Pilate understood treason and sedition, and this was the offence with which the priests and the rabble charged Jesus. All the four Gospels agree in the account that when Jesus was brought before Pilate the first question that the governor asked him was: 'Art thou the king of the Jews?' That is to say, Hast thou proclaimed thyself a king and set at defiance the authority of Caesar? Art thou guilty of

treason? The accusation against Jesus is clearly set forth in the Gospel according to St. Luke: 'The whole multitude began to accuse him (Jesus) saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king.....He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.' These charges were manifestly false, for Jesus had explicitly declared that the tribute to Caesar should not be withheld, and his lofty teaching had nothing whatsoever to do with rebellion or revolution. But the multitude was there to bear false testimony against him and to have him condemned to death like a common criminal upon a charge of high treason.

The attitude of Jesus Christ at this trial, the most memorable in the annals of humanity, was remarkable. He made no attempt to defend himself, he took no part in the trial. For the most part he maintained silence and a wondrous calm. 'When he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word.' He stood serene and silent, grave and calm-eyed. He knew the end was near, but after the agony in the garden his tribulation had passed from him. That night he had told three of his disciples: 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.' Alone, he had fallen on his face and prayed, saying, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' At the time of the trial the spirit of Jesus had withdrawn within itself and was holding communion with God the Father. The lips that preached the Sermon on the Mount were mute. He might have called his faithful apostles, excluding Judas and Peter, as witnesses to testify to the purity and spiritual nature of his teaching; he might

have called the men and women he had healed and Lazarus, whom he had called back to life from the grave. He did nothing: he was being tried for his life but he stood aloof and unconcerned, a figure of silence and supreme dignity. For him the bitterness of death was already past.

Yet was not Jesus wholly silent before Pilate. Exasperated by the refusal of Jesus to answer questions Pilate thought the accused was insulting him by refusing to speak to him and he angrily said: 'Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?' 'Jesus answered: Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.' St. John writes that though Christ did not defend himself he made a statement and this must be quoted at length to correct the impression that Jesus spoke no word during the trial. Apparently, the Jews had power to deal with offenders against their law, but they could not inflict the penalty of death. This could be imposed by the Roman Governor alone. When Jesus was first led into the hall of judgement Pilate asked the Jews to take the culprit away and judge him according to their law, but the accusers replied that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death. They desired his death but were powerless to pass the death sentence. They went so far as to use a tone of menace towards Pilate. 'The Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.'

It is not difficult to understand the thoughts that were passing in Pilate's mind. He attached no importance to the accusation that Jesus was stirring up the Jews to rise in rebellion against Caesar. The Roman grip upon Israel was far too strong to be lightly shaken off. There were no signs

of unrest among the Jews. Jesus was an unknown and insignificant person, poorly clad. He had neither the air nor the assurance of a pretender. When, however, the Jews refused to deal with Jesus themselves Pilate had Jesus brought before him. 'Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?' Thereupon Jesus made the famous statement to which reference has been made. 'Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.'

Pilate was not inclined to condemn Jesus to death. He told the accusers of Jesus: 'Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. And they (the Jews) were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.' Just before this Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, who happened to be in Jerusalem at the time. To the many questions put by Herod Jesus gave no answer. 'And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.' This Herod was Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, by whose order the head of John the Baptist was presented to Salome in a charger.

It has to be borne in mind that from the time Jesus was delivered to Pilate to the final crucifixion the Jews had no opportunity of laying hands on Jesus. All that was done was done by the centurions and Roman soldiers. While Pilate was trying Christ his wife sent for him and told him: 'Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.' Pilate followed this advice by washing his hands before the multitude, saying: 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.' But he passed sentence of death all the same.

Not only so, but there is clear evidence that Pilate took an active part in the punishment and crucifixion of Christ. 'Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and they put it on his head and put on him a purple robe and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him saying: Hail, king of the Jews! and they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him upon the head.....Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!' Were not these words uttered in mockery? Pointing to the thorn-crowned and purple-robed Jesus, Pilate told the Jews: 'Behold your king!' When they shouted that Jesus should be crucified Pilate asked: 'Shall I crucify your king?' Further on it is written: 'And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate: Write not, the king of the Jews; but that he said, I am king of the Jews.' The priests were afraid that they might be charged with treason and

complicity in a conspiracy, and to guard against it they had already declared: 'We have no king but Caesar.' Pilate refused to change the writing, saying: 'What I have written I have written.'

From the evidence in the Gospels it is impossible to acquit Pilate of responsibility for the death of Jesus. True, he did not of his own initiative charge Jesus with treason and condemn him to death by crucifixion. He was not bloodthirsty like the two Herods, one the slayer of children and the other, of John the Baptist. The Jews desired the death of Jesus and they delivered him to Pilate for that purpose, but there was no need for the Governor to yield to their clamour. It was his clear duty to refuse to be coerced by the insistence of the mob. The Jews could not have forced his hands, for his authority was backed by the formidable soldiery of Rome. Jesus was in the hollow of his hand, to save or slay at his sovereign will. Because Jesus was unjustly accused was he to be also unjustly put to death? Pilate was weak, indolent and fond of pleasure like the patricians of Rome. He made a few feeble efforts to save Jesus from the penalty of death. He knew Jesus was innocent, but was only an obscure, wandering Jew, and it was hardly worth while saving a Jew if his own people vociferously demanded his life. If the Jews sought the life of Jesus it was Pilate who sent him to his death.

The Roman archives of the time contain no mention of the trial of Jesus Christ. He was condemned like a common criminal and executed along with other criminals. Subsequently his followers were persecuted and hunted with full Roman rigour and brutality. They were quite inoffensive, humble and meek, but they were treated like the worst criminals, harried and killed without compunction, and thrown to the lions. The time came when the Romans

began accepting the new faith and the Vicar of Christ and successor of St. Peter sat in the Vatican in Rome. The cross became the symbol of suffering and devotion. As the centuries rolled by, the mockery of Pilate and the Roman soldiers, and the ridicule of the Jewish mob hailing him in derision as the king of the Jews were exalted to the living faith of Christendom and the crucified Christ is now acclaimed as the King of Kings. Not in real sooth, for Jesus lives only in the hearts of the meek and the faithful while Rome still holds the crown and the sceptre. In Europe today the rulers are the Caesars, the Herods and the Pilates of old, and if another Christ were to come into the world he would be hauled up before the men in power and receive the same justice that was meted out to Jesus of Nazareth by Pontius Pilate. Christ lived and died in vain as far as the rulers in Europe are concerned.

But, for the whole humanity a beacon light was kindled in that dark, turbulent, tragic night—the prayer of Jesus Christ on the Cross on behalf of his persecutors: ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’

6. THE TRIALS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

One of the commonest sayings of the admirers of Mahatma Gandhi, specially in India, is that he is the greatest man in the world at the present time. In what sense is he great? His greatness has not saved him from being kicked about by Boers and Britishers in the Transvaal, or being sent repeatedly to prison and herded with criminals of the lowest and worst type. Is a man great who may be arrested by any policeman and sent to prison by any magistrate? When a man is imprisoned without trial can he be called great?

The world has almost lost count of the number of times Mahatma Gandhi has been tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Judged by the number of convictions he may be called a jail bird, though, curiously enough, instead of suffering in public estimation on account of his numerous convictions he has ever risen higher in the esteem and admiration of the world, so that today there is no name more universally revered than that of the saint of Sevagram. The stage in his case has been set in two continents and in Africa and Asia taken together he has appeared as often before the criminal courts as any habitual criminal, and every time he has come out of prison with added lustre to his fame and a meed of wider recognition. But in the eyes of the law he has been an offender.

When certain beliefs have found acceptance for a long time any departure from them is considered intolerable. If the founder of a new religion challenges these beliefs, no matter how great he may be, he is liable to persecution and even to be put to death. A heresy is not necessarily

confined to a religious belief. Galileo was considered guilty of heresy and thrown into prison for asserting that the earth was moving and not standing still. He was only released when he recanted, though his real conviction was unchanged. In all ages and almost among all nations the greatest men have been denounced and persecuted. Time alone has finally and firmly established their greatness.

All human institutions have a tendency to move along a fixed groove and any innovation is looked upon with suspicion and alarm. A new doctrine or a new truth is always regarded with suspicion as a menace to the existing order of things. The very greatest of men do not keep step with other men of their generation; they do not accept without question beliefs or customs that have been unhesitatingly followed for many generations. They find a society comfortably ensconced behind old beliefs and old institutions hardened with time and they shake it by their new-fangled doctrines or the new truths they claim to have found. Every form of authority, whether it is a hierarchy, an oligarchy, or the rule of one man, insists on submissiveness for the smooth working of its regime. It will not tolerate any challenge or hesitation in obedience. The world is accustomed to mediocrities and men who do not deviate from the beaten path. Men who want to strike out a path of their own are not wanted.

Therefore, it is no use expecting that any consideration will be shown to any man because he happens to be great. Everything depends upon the form of greatness. If it is such as is not likely to cause any anxiety to the authorities he is let alone; if society is not disturbed he may be safe from social persecution. But really great men who have a new message or proclaim a new truth, or who lead the human race along a new road, invariably come into conflict with men in power or established interests and they have

to pay the penalty. The greatness of such men is not generally recognized in their lifetime; even if it is it affords them no protection from suffering or punishment. In expecting or demanding considerate treatment for Mahatma Gandhi because he is undoubtedly the greatest man in the world we confuse real greatness with accidental and artificial greatness. The greatness that confers safety is the greatness of office or the glamour of position. It is only the man in power who can do no wrong. Greatness in itself, the greatness which owes nothing to accident or environment, has no privilege and is no safe-guard against oppression or ill-treatment. History is full of instances of the persecution of great men innocent of any real offence, but supposed to have offended against some prevailing belief or some law in existence at the time.

Laws vary according to times and the notions of the law-makers, but infallibility is claimed for every law in force at any particular time. Laws that would be now repudiated as monstrous and inhuman were regarded as perfect and just when they were being enforced and any one who questioned the wisdom or righteousness of such laws could obtain no hearing. There is scarcely any crime that has not been perpetrated at some time or other in the name of the law, and wicked laws are passed even by civilized nations to this day. Men who are really great, to whom the world owed more than to any crowned king or victorious conqueror, have stood up for the right and the truth without fear of consequence and have suffered for their temerity. Subsequently, with the passing of time, their greatness has been recognized and millions have paid homage to their memory and followed their teachings.

It is idle to speculate what would have happened if Mahatma Gandhi had never gone to South Africa. It would be as idle as to ask what would have happened if Buddha

or Christ or Muhammed had not been born. Men can merely rough-hew the purpose of life; it is a divinity that shapes our ends. It is not for us to attempt to pry into the inscrutable ways of Providence. Time and again, once in a thousand or two thousand years, a man arises who is different from his fellow-men, who bears the burden of his people, who suffers in order that others may not suffer, whose words are words of healing and faith, who is a messenger of God, charged to deliver His message for the well-being of mankind. The why and wherefore of it is beyond our ken; but it is open to us all to profit and raise ourselves above our sordid surroundings with the help of the examples and teachings of these great teachers.

Whether we call such prophets incarnations, sons or messengers of God they are all rebels, for all of them break the law in some form or other. A religious or social law has higher sanction than a civic law, but any law is unhesitatingly broken by the great teachers of humanity. Buddha violated the law of caste; he accepted food from the untouchable *chandala* as readily as from the twice-born. The Brotherhood of the Sangha was open to all without distinction of caste. He openly challenged the authority of the Vedas as revealed religion, and denounced the sacrifice of living life in Vedic *yajnas* (sacrifices). The political conditions of his time called for no protest. He was not molested, however, or arraigned before any tribunal because India has always been a land of large tolerance and men are free to hold any faith they choose without interference or punishment. No man was persecuted for his opinions or religious convictions and that was the reason why no one thought of ill-treating or punishing Buddha for his anti-Vedic doctrines. Jesus Christ preached against the law of Moses and thus incurred the mortal hatred of the Jews, whose religion does not inculcate tole-

rance of any kind. Jesus made himself still more hated by declaring himself to be the Messiah announced by the Hebrew prophets. How could the Messiah of the Jews dare to speak against the law of Moses? And so the Jews trumped up a false charge against Jesus and had him crucified like a common robber. Muhammed broke the law of idol-worship and was compelled to flee to Medina. At the end of *hejira* he returned to Mecca and destroyed all the idols.

It may seem impious to compare any living man with the great prophets that lived in the past, but in their own generation the greatest of them were much like other men and recognition and following came to them in course of time. Men spoke well and ill of the Buddha in his lifetime. Some blamed him for renouncing the royal inheritance, others censured him for his apostacy and nonconformance to the accepted faith. His followers began to grow in number in his lifetime, but it was not till some time after his death that Buddhism became a largely accepted and widely followed creed. In his short life Jesus Christ had more enemies than followers, and it was several centuries after his death that his followers multiplied and spread over a continent. The prophet Muhammed was bitterly and fiercely opposed and it was only after his death that the number of the Faithful began increasing rapidly.

It is impossible to say what would have happened if Mahatma Gandhi had never gone to Cape Colony in South Africa. There were two foreign settlements at that time in that part of the world. There was the Dutch Republic of the Transvaal, comprised of Dutch colonists who had settled in the country. They had a Government of their own, independent of the Dutch Government, and they elected a President from among themselves. The Cape Colony of Natal was a British Crown Colony. There was no love lost

between the Boers as the Dutch settlers were called, and the British colonists who were called Uitlanders in opprobrium by the Boers. These Dutch colonists, unlike the Dutch in Holland, were big towering men with enormous muscular strength and treated the British colonists with scant courtesy. The strained relations between them culminated in the first Boer War, in which the British were defeated by the Boer farmers, the battle at Majuba Hill proving a veritable rout. Peace was concluded but the bitterness remained.

Although the Boers and the British colonists were divided by sharp differences they were of one mind in their treatment of the natives of the country. These consisted of the warlike Zulus and the timid Bushmen. The Zulus retained their independence for some time but were soon subdued, their assegais and desperate courage being of no avail against the arms of precision of the Europeans. Prospects of trade and work had attracted a number of Indians, chiefly from the Bombay Presidency, and also numerous immigrants from China. The Indians were British subjects, the Chinese were the subjects of a great independent Asiatic Power. Both Indians and Chinese are the inheritors of an ancient civilization, far more ancient than the civilization of either England or Holland. Of these some were traders, the rest were labourers. There was indentured Indian labour in the sugar fields, and it was 'a system of servitude little better than slavery'. The Chinese, the Indians, the Zulus and the Bushmen were all treated alike. The first two were coolies, the others were niggers. The English and the Dutch colonists did not either know or care that there have been great men in China, and in India the Emperor Asoka was greater than any British sovereign.

Mr Gandhi was a practising barrister at Rajkot in the

Bombay Presidency when he was summoned to Pretoria in South Africa on a professional engagement in an important law suit. The engagement was for a period of twelve months. He was disillusioned as soon as he arrived at Natal. In England he had met with nothing but kindness, in India he had no particular cause of complaint. Cape Colony was as much under British rule as India, but the conditions were wholly different. Without the slightest provocation and without giving any offence Mr Gandhi was insulted and brutally assaulted wherever he went. Personally he felt no resentment and he refused to complain, but the systematic ill-treatment of his countrymen moved him to the depth of his being and the clear call came to him to espouse the cause of his unfortunate countrymen and the other Asiatics in South Africa.

This was in 1893. His application for enrolment as a practising lawyer under the Supreme Court of Natal was resisted on the specific ground of colour, but the objection was overruled. In England an Indian barrister may practise anywhere, but in South Africa he is sought to be disqualified on the ground of his skin. This is an indication of the attitude of the British colonists in South Africa towards the Asiatic settlers.

The issue in South Africa was not at all what it is in India. The people of India want to be masters in their own house and to have the rights of a self-governing people. In South Africa neither the Europeans nor the Asiatics are in their own house. The Dutch and the British settlers have dispossessed the children of the soil of their land and usurped it. They as well as the Asiatics are foreigners. The Asiatic problem in South Africa was at no time a struggle for political freedom but merely an insistence on the elementary rights of citizenship. The Asiatics were disenfranchised by law. They were required to register them-

selves on payment of a fee and give their thumb impressions as if they were members of a criminal tribe. Mr Gandhi burned his certificate and refused to give his thumb impression. By his advice his followers, Hindus and Mussalmans, did the same and the Chinese followed their example. These certificates or permits were originally issued by the Dutch Government and the British Government insisted on renewing them after the second Boer War.

Neither bitterness nor vindictiveness has ever had any place in Mahatma Gandhi's nature. Although persistently humiliated and repeatedly assaulted he had organized and led an Asiatic Ambulance Corps during the second Boer War when the fortunes of the British seemed desperate until Lord Roberts appeared at the head of a very large army. For reward, he was excluded from the reception given to Mr Joseph Chamberlain and was severely taken to task for having returned to the Colony to misguide the Asiatics.

Lord Milner, the High Commissioner, who would have made a distinguished proconsul under the Romans but made rather a sorry figure in Egypt when he went to take evidence and not a single witness appeared before him, had given an assurance that no fresh certificates would be required from those who had registration certificates from the Dutch Government. This promise was deliberately broken and thus began the prolonged and bitter Passive Resistance Movement which nearly ruined the Asiatics but left them undaunted and victorious in the end so far as that particular struggle was concerned. No law is ever bad in the eyes of those who make and enforce it. A law that imposes servitude is quite as good as another that confers freedom.

Mr Gandhi was a trained and accomplished lawyer. He knew the laws of England, India and South Africa. Still he repeatedly violated the laws of ~~South Africa~~ and

found himself in prison, sentenced to hard labour and herded with criminals of the worst description. Besides the degrading and demoralizing surroundings, the prison food was not fit to be touched by Indian prisoners. It consisted of crushed mealies cooked with animal fat. Mr Gandhi and most of the Hindu prisoners were strict vegetarians. Mussalmans cannot partake of animal food unless the animal is ritually killed and certain meats are forbidden to them. Thus the food supplied in prison was an abomination to both Hindus and Mussalmans, and they either starved or lived upon a single meal of rice. Representations were made that ghee should be substituted for fat. The fat was discontinued but no ghee was ever supplied.

The Asiatic Registration Act was consistently defied and broken by Mr Gandhi and his followers time after time and hundreds of them were repeatedly sent to prison. The Rev. Mr Doke recalls the appearance of Mr Gandhi before 'a cynical Magistrate with his face flushed'. Responding to the call 'Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi', the accused took the prisoner's place with alacrity and received a sentence of two months' imprisonment with hard labour. Just before the trial Mr Gandhi had addressed a crowded meeting of Indians and had made the position clear. 'No matter what may be said, I will always repeat that it is a struggle for religious liberty. By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker....To repeat again the words of the Jew of Nazareth, those who would follow God have to leave the world, and I call upon my countrymen, in this particular instance, to leave the world and cling to God as a child clings to its mother's breast.' This is the originality of Mahatma Gandhi's attitude — that he makes no distinction between politics and religion.

One South African Magistrate in passing sentence upon Mr Gandhi spoke a few words of sympathy: 'I very much regret to see Mr Gandhi, an officer of this Court and of the Supreme Court, in his present position. Mr Gandhi may feel otherwise, looking at the situation in the light that he is suffering for his country. But I can only view it from another point of view.' Mr Gandhi made a short statement saying that he had advised his countrymen not to submit to the primary obligation imposed by the Act and he was before the Court to suffer the penalties that might be awarded to him.

Considerable sympathy and indignation had been evoked in India, even among the officials, by the struggle in South Africa, and large sums of money were sent from India to carry on the fight. In England also some sympathizers were found. The Government of India made strong representations to the British Government against the law enforced against Indians in South Africa. But when the scene shifted from Africa to India and Mr Gandhi found himself in collision with laws and authorities here it became another story. It must not be supposed that his opposition to the Government began immediately on his final return to India in 1915. During the Great War he helped materially in recruitment for the army, he organized famine relief, he arbitrated successfully in disputes between millowners and millhands, he defended vigorously the rights of the despised pariahs and panchamas, he identified himself with his Mussalman countrymen in the Khilafat agitation. He has been a consistent and implacable opponent of every form of evil, wherever found. He condemned his countrymen as severely as he criticized the Government.

The agrarian trouble in Champaran in Bihar in 1917 between the Indian peasantry and the European indigo planters saw him immediately in the thick of the struggle.

The District Magistrate ordered him to leave the district by the next available train, but that officer evidently knew nothing of the South African campaign of passive resistance. Mr Gandhi refused to obey the order and offered himself for imprisonment. However, the higher authorities intervened, a Committee of Inquiry was appointed and Mr Gandhi was nominated a member. In the result, the peasants got the relief for which they had asked. We need not take into account two other minor incidents, in the first of which Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on his way to Delhi and sent back under police escort to Bombay where he was released and the second when he was fined a rupee by a Calcutta Magistrate on a charge of burning foreign cloth in a public garden. The fine was paid by some unknown person much to the annoyance of Mahatma Gandhi. His theory is that since he owns no property he can be only sent to prison and not mulcted in a fine.

Thereafter events moved with extraordinary rapidity. The iniquitous Rowlatt Laws were passed; the horrors of Martial Law in the Punjab, and the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh filled the country with shuddering indignation. Mr Gandhi launched the Non-Co-operation Campaign, the Congress boycotted the Legislative Councils inaugurated by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Next followed the Bombay riots on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales and the terrible tragedy of Chauri Chaura. Shortly afterwards, Mr Gandhi was arrested on a charge of sedition in connexion with certain articles he had written in his paper *Young India*.

This historical trial in 1921 has been compared to the trial of Jesus Christ. The reason is that many Christians have compared Mahatma Gandhi to Jesus Christ, and the trials of both these prophets have exercised a profound influence upon the thoughts of mankind. But there can be

no comparison between the settings and backgrounds of these two trials. When Jesus Christ was brought before Pilate the number of persons who recognized him as the Messiah was few and even these did not come forward at his trial. The accusation against him was that he had called himself the King of the Jews. To this no importance was attached by the Roman Governor, but still Jesus was robed in purple and a crown of thorns was placed upon his head in mockery, and he was hailed in derision as the King of the Jews. The only persons present were his accusers, who clamoured that he should be put to death. His followers and disciples deserted him and left him to his fate. Not one voice was raised in his defence or to proclaim his innocence. Pilate himself believed him innocent of the charge that he had set up a rebellion against Caesar and the Roman rulers, and pretended that he was the King of the Jews. But the belief was not strong enough to effect the restoration of Jesus to liberty. Pilate had no evidence that Jesus was a prophet and was held in high regard by a number of his people.

Not so in the case of Mahatma Gandhi. Jesus Christ has said : 'A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.' This cannot be said of Mahatma Gandhi, who is a prophet and is held in the highest honour in his own country and in his own house, though he has no house to call his own. In court except the few official witnesses there were no accusers. The court room was full of distinguished persons who honoured and admired the accused. No one appeared for the defence and no witnesses were called for the defence because Mahatma Gandhi did not wish to defend himself. Mrs Sarojini Naidu, the gifted poet, the silver-tongued orator, the devoted patriot, was present in court and she has put on record an eloquent and moving account of the trial. As 'the entire court rose

in an act of spontaneous homage' when Mahatma Gandhi entered he smilingly looked around and said: 'This is like a family gathering and not a law court.'

The judge was fully aware that he was presiding over no ordinary trial. Whether a vision of the future rose before him or not is not known, but the present was sufficient to impress him greatly. Addressing Mahatma Gandhi in passing sentence he said: 'It will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen, you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only.' The last sentence will recall what the South African Magistrate had said, though at that time Mahatma Gandhi did not fill so large a space in the public mind. Pilate is remembered simply because he tried Jesus Christ and condemned him to death. The greatest kindness that can be shown to the Magistrates and Judges who have tried Mahatma Gandhi at different times is to forget them altogether so that history may not summon them at the bar for trial and judgement.

The statement read out by Mahatma Gandhi at this trial will find a permanent place in history. As Jesus Christ is believed to have suffered vicarious punishment for the sins of humanity, so Mahatma Gandhi accepted responsibility for the Bombay riots and the Chauri Chaura tragedy. He explained in clear and forcible language how his faith in British justice had been shattered by successive happenings. *Part of his masterly analysis of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code under which he was charged and convicted may be quoted:* 'Section 124A under which I am happily

charged is perhaps the prince among the political sections designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or system one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection, so long as he does not contemplate, promote, or incite to violence.....I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person.....I am here therefore to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen.' The Judge sentenced him to simple imprisonment for six years for what was a first offence, adding a pious wish that no one would be better pleased than himself if the Government should think fit to reduce the sentence and release the prisoner. In actual fact, Mahatma Gandhi was in prison for two years, for he had to be operated on for appendicitis and thereafter was set at liberty.

An eye-witness of the trial, referring to the statement made by the prisoner, wrote : 'The ennobling confessions, the convincing logic, the masterly diction, the elevated thoughts and the inspiring tone — all produced instantaneous effect on the audience, including the Judge and the prosecutor. For a minute everybody wondered who was on trial — whether Mahatma Gandhi before a British Judge or whether the British Government before God and Humanity.' Mrs Sarojini Naidu in her brief but beautiful account describes the scene after sentence had been passed: 'The pent-up emotion of the people burst in a storm of sorrow as a long slow procession moved towards him in a mournful pilgrimage of farewell, clinging to the hands that had toiled so incessantly, bowing over the feet that had journeyed so continuously, in the service of his country. In the midst of

all this poignant scene of many-voiced and myriad-hearted grief he stood, untroubled, in all his transcendent simplicity, the embodied symbol of the Indian Nation—its sacrifice and sacrament in one.'

Mrs Sarojini Naidu also recalled the trial of Jesus of Nazareth as a true parallel to the trial of Mahatma Gandhi: 'As I listened to the immortal words that flowed with prophetic fervour from the lips of my beloved master, my thoughts sped across the centuries to a different land and different age when a similar drama was enacted and another divine and gentle teacher was crucified, for spreading a kindred gospel with a kindred courage.' True, no other two trials will fill such a large space in history, but as has been pointed out, there is a difference in the setting. It has taken a background of two thousand years to invest the trial of Jesus with its full significance. For the trial of Mahatma Gandhi the whole world served as a background. The trial of Jesus created no commotion at the time. Pilate had no conception that he had before him a man who would be worshipped as Lord and Saviour by millions when the Roman Empire had gone the way of all empires and remained only a memory. The Governor had loud and vociferous evidence that the lowly Jew standing calm and silent before him was fiercely hated by large numbers of his own people who were insistent upon his death. There was not one Jew present prepared to speak a word in favour of the prisoner. The terror of Rome had scared away the apostles and the small following of Jesus from the hall of Justice. After conviction he was crucified like a common criminal between two other criminals. Crucifixion is a horrible form of death, preceded by hours of fearful agony and torture and the victim retains consciousness to the end. Jesus was tortured in the body and the spirit for all the time he remained suspended on the

cross; he was reviled and mocked by the passers by, the priests, the crowd that waited, and even the thieves who were crucified with him. Did these men know that the carpenter's son crucified between two criminals was the greatest among men, nay, that millions would worship him as God incarnate? How could Pilate or any one else ever realize that the time would come when the cross on which Jesus suffered would shine brighter than the Southern Cross in the sky and would be the symbol of devotion and humility for millions of men and women? If any one had told Pilate that this unknown individual, a man of humble origin and destitute of means, Jesus of Nazareth, was the greatest man in the world, the Roman Governor would have laughed him to scorn. A Jew greater than a Roman? As for the greatest man, was not Caesar on his throne for all the world to see? In Mahatma Gandhi's case there was no room for ignorance of this kind. The Judge spoke of the millions in India who admire and revere him. He might with equal truth have added that millions outside of India venerate him. It will not be necessary for centuries to pass before a correct perspective is created. The future is reflected in the present and the Mahatma stands revealed as one of the teachers and guides vouchsafed unto humanity from age to age in the revolving cycles of time. As the years pass and the centuries roll by, the world will not look upon him as a transgressor but as a Deliverer and Redeemer who has shown mankind the way to suffering and to overcome violence by patient non-resistance. Two continents bear witness to his achievement and triumph, and the pedestal on which he stands alone, a meek and invincible figure, has ever risen higher with every trial and every humiliation through which he has passed. Kingdoms and empires, laws and punishments are but fleeting incidents, a man like Mahatma Gandhi stands for all time on the rock of ages, a shining

embodiment of the living and eternal Truth!

Referring to one of the numerous occasions of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi the Rev. Dr Holmes instituted a comparison: 'In the New Testament we read of the arrest of Jesus of Nazareth in ancient Palestine by the troops of the Roman Empire which occupied the country as a conquered province. They "led him unto Pilate"—runs the text. "And they began to accuse him saying: We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give taxes to Caesar." In another place the story reads: "And they were the more fierce, saying: He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." All this has a curiously modern sound as we read of what has been happening in India. On Sunday, 4th May 1930—historic date—Mahatma Gandhi was arrested by the soldiers of the British Empire which occupies his country today, as Rome occupied Jesus' country yesterday as a conquered province. Against Gandhi is brought the same charge that was levelled against Jesus—that he is "perverting the nation", which means, of course, turning it against the rule of the alien oppressor. "Stirring up the people", "forbidding to give taxes"—how familiar these phrases sound, and how perfectly they fit as carried over from the Christ yesterday to the Mahatma today. To be sure, the parallel is not perfect. Jesus was at least given the semblance of a trial, while Gandhi is held in prison without so much as a hearing.....It is the crucifixion episode all over again, and, if Gandhi dies, he will, like Jesus, rise again to vex the world forever.'

Socrates was put to death by the Greeks in Athens. Jesus Christ was crucified in Jerusalem by the Jews and Romans, and Latimer was burnt at the stake in England by Christians. No question then arose as regards the injustice of the law, and why should the laws that sent Mahatma Gandhi

to prison in the Transvaal and in India be deemed fallible ? Instead of being a shield and buckler greatness is frequently a challenge to the law, which is sometimes another name for physical force. It is only after the lapse of some time that a man condemned by the law is called a martyr, when posterity finds out his greatness, and men who are called martyrs in life are spared no suffering when they come within the clutches of the law.

7. THE PLACE OF MAHATMA GANDHI

‘ There is only now and then a man under Heaven who loves what is right without expectation of reward, or hates what is wrong without fear of consequences.’ So said Confucius, one of the wisest of men. These words seem to be the enunciation of a very simple truth and yet they take the measure of the greatest of men, the greatest of the prophets and teachers. A man who loves and hates like this lacks nothing of greatness and every visitor to Mahatma Gandhi has noted these qualities in him.

He has appeared in an age in which the whole world is plastered with photographs, cinematographs, cartoons and illustrated newspapers. The whole world is familiar with his figure and features either in portrait or in caricature. Visitors from every part of the world have turned their steps to the hermitages at Sabarmati and Sevagram, and given their impressions to the world. All the known likenesses of Mahatma Gandhi represent him as he is to be seen today, with his bare body lean with many fasts and the rigours of an ascetic life, a coarse hand-woven cloth round his loins, his head close-cropped with a single tuft of long hair on the top to indicate that he is a Hindu, and the spinning wheel by his side which he plies industriously even while conversing with visitors. He is neither tall nor an imposing figure, though his eyes and his toothless smile afford a glimpse of the wonderful spirit within him. Earlier photographs taken when he was a handsome young man dressed in European clothes and a law student in England or a practising barrister are not easily available and are no longer published. Lord Lloyd, at one time Governor of Bombay, who had Mahatma Gandhi tried and convicted on

a charge of sedition, spoke of him contemptuously as a shrimp of a man ; others have described him as a gnome, but no man or woman who has seen him face to face and has listened to his conversation has been able to resist the magnetism of his personality or failed to respond to the charm that he radiates around him. People who have come to see him from the far West have gone back profoundly impressed by his greatness and have given glowing descriptions to the world. Not that every one who comes within the sphere of his influence can appreciate him, for at all times there have been men impervious to all ennobling influences and who are incapable of reacting to the higher instincts of human nature. Buddha had enemies and so had Jesus Christ. Yet the fact remains that no man during his lifetime had so large and devoted a following as Mahatma Gandhi.

To an American visitor who has written a highly appreciative account of what he saw at Sabarmati occurred the words of an ardent admirer of the Mahatma: 'In this trivial lantern of the flesh there burns a light that never was on land or sea.' Another quotation is: 'When Nature is making geniuses she has a habit of paying more attention to the contents than to the container.' As a matter of fact Mahatma Gandhi is very much higher than a man of genius. It is not his intellect but his spirit that has won for him the homage of millions. It is not by what he has acquired but by what he has given away, not by what he has enjoyed but what he has suffered that he will be recognized as one of the greatest men of all time. The fleshly tenement in which he dwells for a brief while is not the man, nor is his identity found in his limbs and lineaments. The light shines from within and the lantern must not be mistaken for the light itself. Moreover, physical descriptions are not even reliable. Not long ago, there was a man who is now

worshipped by his followers as an avatar—Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. His photographs are to be seen everywhere. He was neither fair nor handsome, nor even striking looking, but in the accounts of his life he is seriously and quite sincerely described as a fair man, with a majestic presence. People will always believe what they wish to believe and imagination always clothes the beauty of the spirit with the beauty of the body. It is forgotten that the mortal habitation for the immortal soul must always be a matter of indifference.

What place will the world ultimately assign to Mahatma Gandhi? Ordinarily, it is unprofitable to attempt to pry into the future, for that is the privilege of the prophet, but it does not require much intelligent anticipation to predict that the centuries as they are unrolled will hold an imperishable record of Mahatma Gandhi as one of the greatest guides and teachers of humanity. Empires are effaced by time like the doll-houses of sand built by children on a beach, but truth cannot be obliterated and Mahatma Gandhi has brought a new truth to the world. A man who makes a resolute stand for the freedom of a subject nation is not looked upon as a prophet, though history may assign to him a place of distinction. It is somewhat of a novelty that one man should combine in himself the roles of a patriot and a prophet and that the world should come to regard him as a greater prophet than a patriot. It is only incidentally that Mahatma Gandhi has identified himself with the freedom of India; essentially, he has proclaimed the freedom of the world—freedom from war and violence, freedom from cupidity and aggressiveness, freedom from passions and ambitions that have destroyed nations. There is nothing to prevent every nation in the world accepting his creed and becoming free in the highest sense of the word. No nation is really free that lives in the deadly shadow of

war, no nation is entitled to be free if it robs another nation of its freedom. Self-conquest is the real conquest, abstinence from violence is real strength.

Mahatma Gandhi himself claims to be nothing more than an ordinary human being, but it is obvious that an ordinary man cannot achieve what he has accomplished, nor can inspire such extraordinary enthusiasm and devotion. Casually and superficially considered he appears to be possessed of a complex personality: a lawyer by profession with a knowledge of the laws of three countries, he glories in being a law-breaker; a man accustomed to earn money, he has found happiness in poverty and the renunciation of all property; a true Hindu, he will take his food with any one belonging to any religion and with despised people outside the pale of caste; hated by many, he loves them all; gentle of speech and full of courtesy, he is unsparing in his denunciation of evil and injustice. He has been called the terrible meek—a significant contradiction in terms—because his meekness is not synonymous with submissiveness and his invincibility is even more remarkable than his gentleness. Even those who assail him bitterly never venture to assert that there is any power on earth that can coerce or overawe him. Every term of imprisonment has fixed him more firmly in his purpose. He has the truth in him and truth recognizes no higher authority and does not bend to Caesar or might of empire. In the midst of all complexities and contradictions the singleness of Mahatma Gandhi's aim in life stands out clear and he has stripped off all superfluity just as he has reduced himself to a loin-cloth and the plainest food.

His writings are ethical and moral rather than political and they have been collected and published as books, and are regarded as of permanent interest by many readers outside India. His famous book, *My Experiments with*

Truth, written originally in Gujarathi, is a remarkable autobiographical work, narrating the growth of the spirit within the writer.

His whole life has been an unbroken record of a search for Truth and the quest has ended in the knowledge that God is Truth. For the rest, he has passed from disillusion to disillusion, from renunciation to renunciation. He has never quite recovered from the first shock he received in South Africa. There and later on in India his faith in blatant professions of justice was shattered. Self-interest and not justice is the prevailing motive when a powerful nation has to deal with a weak one and the pride of race is a permanent bar to equality of treatment. Freedom is the only means of attaining self-respect, but the soul of Mahatma Gandhi rebelled against the use of violence in any form. There must be a better and higher way and it was revealed to him. To refuse submission and to refuse violence was the way to win the freedom of the body and the spirit. Therein lay the secret not only of the freedom of the Indian nation but the redemption of the whole human race.

The movement led by Mahatma Gandhi has brought into prominence some of the greatest men that India has known in recent times, men who would be considered great in any country at any time. If Mahatma Gandhi is the prophet they are undoubtedly the apostles. The national movement in India may be easily divided into two phases, one before Mahatma Gandhi had joined the Indian National Congress and the other after he became the most conspicuous figure in it. In the earlier stage Congressmen confined themselves to agitation and oratory, to ever-repeated assertion of their birth-right to Home Rule, and severe criticism of Governmental action, to constitutionalism and reformism. Only the very greatest of them

risked and sacrificed everything for achieving their goal. The rank and file were passive onlookers and on-hearers so to say. This might have gone on for any number of years without any prospect of freedom for India. Then came Mahatma Gandhi with his experience of the Transvaal, his spiritual outlook, his gentle nature and his inflexible will. There were willing hearts in India waiting for his call and they at once realized the nature of the struggle that lay ahead of them. Since then the struggle for national freedom in India has grown ever wider and today it comprehends the entire nation; it has been a glorious record, which is being added to day after day, of sacrifice and suffering, and women have vied with men in offering themselves as sacrifices at the altar of liberty. The old caution and timidity have disappeared for ever; the prison has lost its hardships and degradation, and there are no signs of hesitation or reluctance to suffer. Men and women are filled with the spirit of martyrdom and the determination to win by suffering what was hitherto accomplished by violence.

The evidence of history and the trend of human nature would be belied if there were no discordant notes in the chorus of admiration elicited by Mahatma Gandhi's work and character. It may be stated as a well-known fact that the greater the man the larger the number of his detractors. The time comes when the voices lifted in blame are stilled and the worth of a man is placed beyond criticism. Pilate and the priests and the Pharisees have passed away; who now speaks evil of Jesus of Nazareth? Buddha was maliciously maligned by Devadatta and others spoke ill of him, but the centuries have silenced those voices. There are two kinds of critics and calumniators: first, those whose interests are likely to suffer by the new doctrines of a new teacher or the movement of a liberator; second, those who are moved

by ignorance or malignity. The motives of the former are easily understood, the latter are deserving of pity. The important thing to remember is that the stories of great lives are told by those who believe in them and appreciate them and not by others who think or speak ill of them. The immense literature about the Buddha—there are still many volumes that have not been translated—is the work of learned and gifted Buddhists. The Brahmins and the opponents of Buddha wrote nothing, or anything that has survived. The whole of the New Testament is written by Christian saints and divines, the Gospels are written by four apostles of Christ. The Jewish priests or the Roman historians have left nothing on record about the Founder of Christianity. Among the bitterest critics of Mahatma Gandhi may be mentioned Sir Sankaran Nair, who distinguished himself by heading the committee that served as a foil to the Simon Commission. He wrote a book which he named *Gandhi and Anarchy* and in which he held Mahatma Gandhi responsible for nearly a hundred riots and disturbances. Neither the Mahatma nor his admirers took the slightest notice of the ravings in this book, but trouble came for the author from an unexpected quarter. It seems that besides stripping Mahatma Gandhi of every vestige of saintliness and holding him up as the high priest of anarchy, the writer had also paid some attention to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab who had introduced Martial Law in that province. Sir Michael O'Dwyer brought a suit for libel in England against Sir Sankaran Nair and an *English jury mulcted the defendant in heavy damages*. The book itself is practically forgotten and very few people know its contents. Let us think of another book on Mahatma Gandhi—the one written by M. Romain Rolland, one of the most famous names in contemporary literature. He was awarded the Nobel prize for literature and his personality is considered

as lofty and as remarkable as that of Tolstoy. His book on Mahatma Gandhi has been translated into several languages and has become a classic. No one ever imagines that the venomous diatribe of Sir Sankaran Nair, who has no literary reputation, will ever have a place in literature. Even now it is forgotten.

The world has not waited for the passing of Mahatma Gandhi to realize his mission and interpret his message. It were as if a world threatened with extinction by wars in which it was sought to wipe out whole nations by scientific slaughter and torn by fierce jealousies and insensate ambitions, were waiting for his coming and has greeted him as the Messiah of peace and freedom. Men accustomed to the thunder of cannon and familiar with the terror that follows in the wake of zeppelins were flabbergasted when they heard of soul-force. In the celebrated case of O'Dwyer versus Nair the Judge, Mr Justice, M'Cardie, counsel and jury were convulsed with laughter when the Judge inquired what was soul-force—the humour of a Judge in his Court, it should be remembered, is one of the wonders of the world. The world is however beginning to realize that soul-force is a very real force indeed and a definite challenge to physical force. When Jesus Christ stood before Pontius Pilate and refused to defend himself he displayed soul-force, but it has not been understood by even those who profess to be the followers of Christ. Even as it is a large mass of valuable literature has already grown up around the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. All men and women, who have had the privilege of seeing him in his humble hermitages, and holding converse with him, have recorded their impressions and paid him tributes of reverence and admiration. Many people have come from many lands and not one of them has returned disappointed; every one of them has found him to be greater than they had been led to believe

from what they had read or heard about him. If all these tributes could be put together in one or more volumes the reader would be astonished to find how wide and how universal is the homage that has been rendered to Mahatma Gandhi. Whether free or immured within the four walls of a prison, whether in health or confined to a bed of illness, he has never failed to inspire all who have come in contact with him with the deepest respect and a strong personal attachment akin to love. Neither race, colour, nor nationality has been a bar to this feeling. Jailors, physicians, nurses, even convict warders have been won over by his irresistible charm.

Is it not strange that although Mahatma Gandhi is the leader of a movement of political freedom he has never been compared to such great national leaders as Rienzi, Mirabeau, Washington, Hampden, Mazzini, Sun-Yat-Sen or Zaghlul Pasha? Yet he has been repeatedly and widely compared to great religious teachers like Zoraster, Buddha and Christ, or a saint like St. Francis of Assisi. What political leader has fasted for twentyone days to do penance for his country and the warring factions of his countrymen? At Delhi where this memorable fast was begun and ended the representatives of all parties and religious persuasions, including the Lord Bishop of Calcutta, the head of the Anglican Church in India, were present and a solemn resolution was passed to preserve peace. Not once but many times he has made atonement for the errors and wrong-doing of others by mortifying his own flesh and submitting to the pangs of hunger. It is a deliberate, vicarious penance, self-imposed with full faith in its efficacy. Who can think of him as merely a political leader? Speaking at a public meeting in Bombay Mrs Goshup Captain, a Parsi lady, said: 'What Mahatmaji was preaching today was essentially the teachings of Zoraster.' Erward Kutar, a

Parsi *Mobad* (priest), said : ' The Parsis were fortunate that their feelings of humanity were aroused by official excesses and had joined the national struggle under the banner of Gandhiji, which was based on truth, the essence of Zoroastrian religion. '

We need not take any account of what the Churchills or the Anglo-Indian papers and officials may say about Mahatma Gandhi. The world that is outside England and Anglo-India, the generations that will come into the world with the years yet unborn will not designate Mahatma Gandhi 'a malevolent fanatic'. These people are not critics nor are they in a position to form an unbiassed opinion of the Indian leader. They have been greatly alarmed and sorely perplexed by the movement of Mahatma Gandhi. They cannot think of an India lost to the Empire, they hold fast to the idea of an India held in tutelage in perpetuity and the mere suggestion of a free India is to them anathema. Since Mahatma Gandhi is seeking to set India free he cannot expect any consideration or courtesy from those who are directly interested in putting off the day of India's freedom indefinitely and anything they may write or say will not be the verdict of history.

As regards his own countrymen it has been admitted that no man had so large a following or was held in such reverence in his lifetime. There are dissentient notes, of course, as is to be expected, for every man does not possess the capacity to appreciate real greatness and men of little minds are naturally hostile to great men. Some people in India are puzzled by what they call Mahatma Gandhi's influence over the masses, forgetful of the patent fact that his influence is equally undisputed over the classes and among his staunchest adherents are men who have greatly distinguished themselves in their spheres of life and whose intellectual eminence is not open to question.

The greatness of a man does not consist in his isolation from his fellow-men. A man, no matter whether he is regarded as a prophet or an incarnation of divinity, lives as other men. The physical plane is the same for all and the only distinction is in the moral or spiritual plane. Christ, for instance, who is now identified with God by all who worship him, was a carpenter's son and lived an humble life and mixed with humble folk. Buddha, whose image is now seen in thousands of temples and pagodas, obtained his daily bread by begging and lived on terms of familiarity with his disciples. These teachers were only different from other men in their thoughts, in their manner of speech and in their moral and spiritual vision. There is a wise saying in the Mahabharata to the effect that friendship between two persons does not indicate their equality. Kings used to have fools for their friends and wise men have been known to be greatly attached to friends with simple minds. Arjuna knew Sri Krishna as a relative and a friend, and looked upon him as wise and gifted, but he never fully realized the divinity of his friend until he heard the matchless discourse of the Bhagavadgita and beheld the supreme form of Sri Krishna as the Lord. Then, overpowered with awe and full of contrition, Arjuna addressed the Lord Krishna with becoming humility and remorse :

If thinking Thee but friend, importunate,
O Krishna ! or O Yadava ! O Friend !
I cried, unknowing of thy majesty,
And careless in the fondness of my love ;
If jesting I irreverence showed to Thee,
At play, reposing, sitting or at meals,
Alone, O sinless One, or with my friends,
Forgive my error, O Thou boundless One.¹

1. Mrs Besant's Translation of the Bhagavadgita

Neither familiarity of association, nor companionship in work makes men equal, and therefore those who have lived or worked with Mahatma Gandhi do not regard themselves as his equals. As a lawyer there was not much time for him to win distinction, as he was drawn firmly and finally into the South African struggle; and it may be said rightly that many of his countrymen have been far more distinguished than he as lawyers. It is well known that in the Indian National Congress no leader has ever exercised so great an influence as Mahatma Gandhi. To what is this influence due? Not certainly to his oratory, for as an orator he cannot be compared to the many famous orators heard in the Congress, though he is listened to with the greatest attention and respect. He uses no rhetoric to embellish his speeches, no glowing periods to elicit applause. He uses the simplest and most direct language and appeals always to the reason and not to the emotions of his hearers. Living among others he yet lives in a world apart, with his unrelaxing and vigilant discipline, his steady introspection and self-searchings, his ceaseless quest after Truth, his unwavering and unfaltering faith in non-violence and non-resistance. Among many others from every part of the world Mrs Annie Besant has paid a striking tribute to Mahatma Gandhi: 'Among us is dwelling for a brief space, one whose presence is a benediction, and whose feet sanctify every house in which he enters—Gandhi, our Martyr and Saint.....I see in him that deathless spirit which redeems by suffering, and in which death wins life for others, one of those marked out for the high service of becoming Saviours and Helpers of Humanity.' If, in later years owing to differences of opinion Mrs Besant spoke in bitterness and in terms of disparagement about Mahatma Gandhi, that will be forgotten and her earlier appreciation

will be remembered. Of no man living or dead has it ever been said that he is the soul incarnate of a country or nation and this has been said of Mahatma Gandhi by visitors from the distant West.

There is greatness and greatness. Men are given the title of great on account of their conquests or large possessions or their high qualities as rulers. Thus Alexander and Napoleon were called the Great, Asoka and Akbar and Charlemagne were designated the Great. Even Catherine of Russia, a powerful monarch but a profligate woman, was called the Great and so was Peter, brutal in his passions and despotic as a ruler. This is the form of greatness with which the world is usually familiar, but this is not the greatness claimed for Mahatma Gandhi. He is not possessed of the sort of greatness that can secure him immunity from humiliation and ill-treatment.

When a meeting was being arranged between Mahatma Gandhi and a certain Viceroy of India the latter declared that his address was not unknown, that is, every one has heard of the Viceregal Lodge, Simla. That was also a sort of greatness, if pomposity can pass for greatness. But this personage is no longer Viceroy nor is he to be found at this address and consequently his greatness has passed from him. This is the case when greatness belongs to the office and not to the man. The glamour of wealth or a high position is often confused with greatness and most people are content to accept the shadow for the substance.

Real greatness belongs to different types, the manifestation of the heroic in man in different forms, and this is to be found in a small number of representative men who attain a distinction denied to average humanity. Greatness is found on a graduated scale and the higher the form of greatness the slower the recognition that comes to it. Men to whom the distinction of Great is given as a title are some-

times no benefactors of humanity. What does the world owe to Alexander the Great and Napoleon the Great? They sacrificed thousands of human lives to their insatiable ambition of conquest and brought sorrow and lamentation to thousands of peaceful homes. They have left no enduring monument of good work behind, nothing to promote the happiness of the peoples over whom they ruled.

Other men who are now recognized as among the greatest of men received no appreciation or reward in their lifetime. Homer was nothing more than a wandering singer who probably lived on the charity of other people. Shakespeare was an obscure play-actor who frequented the ante-rooms of titled patrons. These latter are now forgotten while the poet's birthplace has now become a place of pilgrimage. The very greatest men are the sages and the teachers of humanity and sometimes their reward was punishment and death. The two names standing foremost among the famous men of ancient Greece are Homer and Socrates. Homer walked the streets as an itinerant singer, while Socrates, one of the wisest of men of all times, was judicially condemned to death at an advanced age. Of all the thinkers of ancient and modern Europe his name stands the highest and his fame is growing with the passing centuries. He was a man of impeccable virtue, of blameless purity of life, yet he was tried on charges of impiety and immorality, and put to death by his own countrymen. He was accused of denying the gods and corrupting the youth of Athens by his doctrines and instructions, which are carefully studied with profit to this day. If in his defence it had been urged that he was the greatest man in the world it would have availed him nothing.

The greatest of Athenians was put to death by a potion of hemlock. The greatest of Jews was cruelly put to death on the cross. The greatest of Indians of ancient times was

never in danger of such a fate because India has always been a land of large tolerance; but in his lifetime he suffered enough contumely and opposition. Times have changed: the old laws of India no longer prevail, and the greatest Indian of modern times is again and again sent to jail without any charge. We do not care to deny that Mahatma Gandhi seeks to bring the British Empire in India, the last of the empires, to an end. Both the Romans and the Jews firmly believed that there was an end of Jesus Christ when he died on the cross, and it is not impossible that every time the British Government throws Gandhiji in jail they firmly believe that they have made an end of nationalism in India. Not so easily are the lights of the world put out, nor is the soul of a nation liable to death and destruction. To the flesh death comes in many ways, by crucifixion, *during or after imprisonment, or in the ordinary course of nature.* Mahatma Gandhi has vanquished death even in life and of the hereafter nothing is more certain than that he will rank among the saviours of the world. The world itself would grow dark if the lights of such redeemers could be quenched. The ashes of empires are scattered to the winds in the remorseless march of time, but the great guides and teachers shine as beacon lights through eternity. Yet are they comprehended in the simple and sublime words of the Chinese sage, for they love what is right without expectation of reward and hate what is wrong without fear of consequences.

8. THE DIVINITY OF VIOLENCE

Violence is the primary instinct of all living creatures, whether brute, bird, or human. All creatures are easily moved to anger and fight either in attack or defence. Some are animals and birds of prey that kill others and devour them. Others quarrel and fight for the mate, while yet others are roused to fury at the mere sight of others of their species. A dog will attack another dog at sight apparently without any provocation. As among the brute creation so among the human race men have fought and slain one another from the beginning. The lower creatures fight with the weapons with which nature has armed them—their teeth and claws and tails. Man with his greater ingenuity has devised other arms of attack and with growing intelligence and the advance of science has produced fearful instruments and engines of destruction.

The first act of violence recorded in the Old Testament is slaying of a brother. Cain was wrath with his brother Abel because 'the Lord had respect for Abel's offering but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.' It is not mentioned how Cain killed Abel; he may have done it with a stone or with some primitive agricultural implement. But this first taking of human life, the slaying of a brother by a brother, is symbolical of all the killing that has followed. If the first murder that was committed was a fratricide all the slaughter that has taken place since that time belongs to the same category, since it is not denied that all men and all races are descended from a common ancestry. White, black, brown, red and yellow men are brothers all the world over, however much one race may condemn or oppress another.

Men have been addicted to violence at all times and in all stages of progress. Deeds of violence are done not only by individuals in moments of wrath, but with calm premeditation on an organized scale. Fighting is not confined to savage tribes living in a state of nature but is equally common among the most civilized nations. Man glories in violence and the man of war is a hero. While the animal and the savage have retained their primitive weapons of warfare, one of the boasted triumphs of civilization is the invention of weapons and machines that kill at a distance without the opponents coming to handgrips. Hand in hand with the march of civilization has advanced the science of wholesale slaughter. Formerly, the actual work of fighting was confined to trained warriors, the braves among the savages, the soldiers among the civilized nations. The rest of the population—the civilians, women, and children, held aloof. Only in rare instances when a particularly savage and fierce marauder descended upon a helpless city were the weak and the unarmed put to the sword and other nameless horrors perpetrated. Now when civilization is at its height war threatens the extinction of whole nations and peaceful cities and townships far away from the battle zone are laid waste by aerial raids and giant shells projected to long distances. It is not mere ruthlessness or frightfulness but a blind and demoniac lust for blood, an insensate and insatiable frenzy for the destruction of human life without distinction of age or sex. Ships full of non-combatants or neutrals are sent to the bottom of the sea, school buildings full of young children are blown up with as little compunction as if they were the enemy on the battlefield. And there is no regret or remorse at any time, but only an unholy sense of exultation. What is in reality nothing else than a cowardly assassination and wanton massacre is lauded as a valiant deed and justified

as an act of war.

It is not to be wondered at that violence has scriptural sanction, since scriptures are ancient books of authority and many primitive instincts and customs are justified and even enforced in certain of these sacred books. In spite of such evidence all those books are 'revealed' and they cannot be criticized without hurting the susceptibilities of those who have implicit faith in them. In the Mosaic law deeds of violence are enjoined as divine laws and were carried out without hesitation. Among others are to be found the following: the penalty for stealing and selling a man was death. The same penalty was inflicted for striking or cursing a man's father or mother. Then there is the well-known doctrine: 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.' A woman taken in adultery was to be stoned to death and neither brother, son, daughter, wife, nor friend was to be spared. 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'—it was in conformity with this law that witches were burned in England. The sacrifice of animals was ordained as a divine law among many peoples. Even human sacrifices were made to beg divine favour or appease divine wrath.

Thus the use of violence was considered not only justified but sanctioned by divine authority. What was originally a mere animal instinct, the law of the forest and the primitive savage, was raised to the sanctity of a divine commandment. Not only have the strong preyed upon the weak at all times but the law of retaliation was clothed with holy sanction. The extension of this law resulted in conquests and the founding of empires. The dialogue between the robber and Alexander the Great is based upon undeniable truth. The founder of an empire and a robber who plunders with violence stand precisely

upon the same footing with the difference that the robber is said to be at war with society while the empire-maker wars with nations. The distinction is between success and failure. A successful robber lives in luxury in his mountain fastness or his forest lair upon his ill-gotten booty, a successful conqueror is crowned king or emperor and is greeted by the homage of the multitude. A robber when caught is hanged or shot, a Napoleon when defeated is exiled to St. Helena to pass the rest of his life as a prisoner.

No violence, no forcible seizure of another man's property can be justified or defended on moral grounds. In spite of scriptural sanction witches are no longer burned, and it has been realized that there are no such women as witches. A nation that dispossesses another people of their land is guilty of a much greater offence than the thief or robber who takes away a little property. All land belongs to the people born upon it, who derive their sustenance from it. The children of the soil are the inheritors of the soil and their right is indisputable and inalienable. There was a time when the children of men were not numerous and the earth was sparsely populated. There were nomadic tribes that wandered over the face of the land with their cattle and their scanty belongings. There were large tracts of uninhabited territory and there was nothing to prevent the nomads from seeking fields and pastures new. The right to a land belongs either by birth or by peaceful occupation if there are no other claimants. But this right has been habitually overpowered by force and fraud, and weaker or simpler peoples have been always deprived of their lands by more powerful or more scheming peoples. In some cases the usurpers possess themselves of other lands by cunning artifices and then claim to have conquered it.

Founded upon the violation of all primary principles and the elementary rights of all men, these kingdoms

and empires set up the apotheosis of cant and sicken gods and men with their sanctimonious professions of justice, sanctity of law, and their anxiety for the well-being of the people placed in their power. It is a case of adding insult to injury all the time. How can there be a superstructure of justice upon a foundation of rank injustice? How can law be established upon a basis of lawlessness? Every people, every nation, owes obedience to its own laws and not to the laws imposed upon it by another people who have usurped the right of ruling them. It is submission under compulsion, not cheerful obedience. The moral authority of such laws is a mockery. No nation can rule another unless its authority is backed by force and violence. It may not be always ostentatious violence; violence may be masked when there is no need for its application, but it is unmasked at the slightest indication of restlessness on the part of the subject race. In Europe, ancient and modern, the laws of Rome approximate closest to perfect legislation. Almost all legal phrases are Latin and borrowed from the legal phraseology of Rome. Even today a jurist is a man versed in the science of law, especially Roman or civil law. In ancient Rome a certain class of prisoners, whether prisoners of war or others convicted of grave offences, were condemned to the galleys. These convicts were employed as oarsmen on vessels of war, the biremes and triremes that comprised the navy of Rome. These galley slaves were identified by the numerals painted upon the benches to which they were assigned. The custom now prevailing in prisons of identifying prisoners by numbers is a Roman custom. These oarsmen neither spoke nor sang at their work; communication between them was not allowed; the oar holes were so covered that the men could not see each other's faces while they laboured. The hortator sat on a raised platform overlooking

the men at work and the speed of the oars was regulated by the strokes of his gavel on a board before him. The slightest sign of laxity was immediately punished by cruel lashings. When the ship went into action the galley slaves were chained to their seats by heavy anklets; if the ship came out safe their fetters were loosened; if the ship went down these men went down with it; for them there was no *sauf-qui-peut*. That was the law of imperial Rome. Even without the perils of the deep and the contingency of being drowned like imprisoned rats the ordinary limit of a galley slave's life was about a year, for the work killed him with the certainty of slow torture.

Modern Europe has worshipped assiduously at the altar of Violence until the goddess has turned round and threatens to rend her faithful votaries. So did the Guillotine devour her own children and the serpent swallows its own brood. It would have made no difference to the history of the world if the science of war had been left where it was in the time of the Romans, the Goths and the Huns. A war is decided one way or another whether ten thousand or a million men partake in it. But if science has opened out a new realm, a new wonderland for men, it has also multiplied many-fold man's inheritance of the curse of Cain. Nowhere has this terrible fact been more fatefully demonstrated than in Europe, which claims to have reached the acme of modern civilization. Such a thing as peace based upon mutual trust is unknown in Europe. Every nation on that continent is a firm believer in violence. Most of them are not satisfied with the territory that rightfully belongs to them. Many of them have succeeded in acquiring territories abroad and this is inseparable from violence. Even little Belgium, which suffered so severely during World War I, has colonial possessions, and the history of the Belgian

Congo is a record of unspeakable violence and greed. It is scarcely to be wondered at that the nations of Europe are distrustful and suspicious of one another. Nations that are frequently at war abroad can hardly be expected to be at peace at home. Their instincts are the same as those of animals and birds of prey, which attack one another just as they attack weaker creatures. This is the reason why Europe has never known unbroken peace for any length of time.

It is the spirit of violence that has prompted the more powerful nations of Europe to employ all the ingenuity and inventive resources of science to produce instruments and engines of war of increasing destructiveness, forgetful of the grim fact that evil reacts upon itself and violence ends by destroying itself. There can be no monopoly in methods of violence; 'all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.'

The constant haggling that goes on in regard to the reduction of armies and navies is due to the deep-seated distrust which pervades the nations of Europe. Not one of them believes wholly the professions of sincerity made by its neighbour. It is difficult to get rid of habits of the mind formed and hardened for hundreds of years.

The mere possession of a large army and navy is a menace to peace and a constant incentive to war. The possession of a large armed force produces a spirit of swagger; it creates a consciousness of strength and the disposition to use it. A king or emperor who constantly reviews his army and insists upon maintaining it in a state of high efficiency wants to see it in action and will seize upon the slightest pretext to declare war. Manoeuvres and mimic warfare do not give much satisfaction; the army itself seeks an opportunity to prove its prowess upon an actual enemy. It is an incubus upon national well-being, it is

an idle monster devouring the largest share of the resources of the State. If Europe is really desirous of lasting peace violence and war will have to be effectively banned. There is the lesson of history writ large for every one to read. No nation that has pursued a course of territorial aggrandizement has survived very long. Destruction is the Nemesis that has followed and overtaken every empire in the world. Quite recently, before our own eyes, empire after empire has perished and disappeared. All the greater reason, therefore, that large armies and navies should be reduced and the panoply of war should not be flaunted in the face of the world. Science should no longer be permitted to invent new infernal machines of death and destruction. Some of those now in use should be banned and destroyed. Such fiendish devices as the torpedo, the submarine, the mine and the bomb dropped from the air must never again be seen in use and all stocks of them must be broken up and scrapped.

In remarkable contrast with the nations of Europe are the United States of America. These States are peopled and ruled by the descendants of various European nations, chiefly the scions of the British people, but they left the predatory instincts of their ancestors on the other side of the Atlantic. It is impossible to say what would have happened if the United States had yet remained part of the British Empire, but it is fairly safe to assume that the spirit of territorial aggression would have characterized the States as it marks the rest of the Empire. By the War of Independence the Americans not only cut themselves off from the bondage to England but also shook themselves free from the tradition of conquest and annexation. The Red Indian tribes disappeared before the encroachment of European colonists, but once they had acquired sufficient territory for their own expansion and growth the new settlers cried a

halt and busied themselves with the consolidation of the country and its economic and industrial development, so that the American nation is today the wealthiest and most resourceful in the world. The Americans do not maintain a large army and navy to devour a large part of the nation's income; they spend it more profitably — upon the promotion of industry and trade. There is no question as regards the enormous reserve man-power of the States. Whenever America was reluctantly drawn into a war the Government of the United States were in a position to send millions of troops, equipped to the last detail, across the Atlantic to the battle front. The Americans do not breathe and eat fire nor do they talk big of prestige, the mailed fist and imperial burdens, but there is no Power on the Earth that would not be pulverized if it dared the new Power in the New World.

It is well to bear in mind the contingency that were the Republic of the United States guided by the example of the European Powers there would be nothing to prevent it from raising the largest army and navy in the world. With her fabulous wealth she could easily lay down a programme for building a larger army and navy than England in the course of a few years. Had she been bent upon conquest and the building up of an empire she could have annexed the whole of North and South America with the greatest ease and become the undisputed mistress of the New World. But she has not been stung by the ambition that has nearly proved the undoing of Europe. Confident in her own strength she is not suspicious of her neighbours; she does not cast covetous eyes upon other lands and her restraining influence has kept within bounds the territorial ambitions of all other States in America. If she has worshipped the almighty dollar it has been to the benefit of the Allies in Europe, for every one of them is in her debt. The fabric of humanity in America is built upon a larger and broader

base than in Europe. There is no such thing as the advantage of birth or the glitter of a hereditary title. The White House in Washington is open to an errand boy or to a man who started life without a cent in his pocket. Any man may become President by sheer ability. It stands to the high credit of the American nation that in spite of its worship of Mammon it has never identified wealth with political power. No President of the United States—the highest office in the world—has ever been a very wealthy man; contrariwise, no multi-millionaire of America has aspired to the office of President. The Americans have balanced judgement and do not confuse wealth with public service. Much of the emptiness and hollowness of Europe has left them untouched. There is no hereditary House of Peers to block the path of progress, no titles, no pomp of circumstance, no elaboration of ceremonial. Every man is what he makes himself and every man has the same opportunities. If the nations in Europe could follow the example of the United States of America they would find therein the surest guarantee of peace. Unless the creed of violence is definitely and finally abandoned nemesis will overtake the nations of Europe at no distant date.

8. THE GODLINESS OF NON-VIOLENCE

To a large extent the early scriptures of the different branches of the human race are based upon primitive beliefs and primitive instincts. Deeds of violence are held justifiable; vengeance is looked upon as a divine law; retaliation is recognized as a divine right. The slaughter of living animals was enjoined as an offering acceptable to the gods, even when only one God was recognized. The meat of animals so sacrificed was eaten with relish as pure food. Sometimes illness and suffering were attributed to the displeasure of the gods, who were supposed to have human feelings. Even races that claimed a high order of intelligence and believed in one God did not look upon him as a God of compassion and love. He was a jealous God, a God of wrath. Abstinence from violence was not considered a necessary attribute of holiness.

For the first time in the history of the human race the Buddha preached *ahimsa*, or the sacredness of all created life, as a cardinal article of faith, an essential doctrine of the Law. He did not cite divine authority, nor did he base his doctrines upon revealed religion. He relied on reason, not on instinct and intuition, and he always upheld the norm. In the Vedic religion sacrifice played an important part and Aryan kings performed sacrificial rites called *yajnas* in which animals were slain with ceremony. Buddha resolutely set his face against these sacrifices and denied the divine authority of the Vedas. Nothing that breathed the breath of life was to be killed by the hand of man. The Jains followed the same creed and they meticulously avoided crushing even a worm or an ant. In course of time the teachings of Buddha spread all over

East Asia, though in India they were finally rejected on account of the great influence of the Brahmins. Buddha had not only challenged the authority of the Vedas, but he had broken down the caste system among his followers. He made no distinction between a Brahmin and a man of a lower caste and all were subject to the same discipline. If Buddhism had displaced Brahminism in India the occupation of the Brahmins would have gone.

Before the appearance of the Buddha the world had not seen a teacher who had insisted so strongly on the sacredness of life. During the long period of his ministry Buddha showed that his compassion went out to all living beings. Man could not give life, therefore he could not inflict death. Man stood on a higher level than other creatures; the tiger and the hawk killed for food, but man had no need for animal food, since the earth gave him enough from its abundance. Purity of food, purity of thought and purity of action were necessary for man's salvation. Violence had to be avoided in two forms: the active, such as the infliction of pain and death; and the retaliatory, such as the resentment of an insult, or the return of a blow for a blow. The Buddha preached steadily against moral and social evils. In religion he preached the doctrine of the salvation of the individual soul. He recognized no mediator or redeemer. Man passed through many incarnations, the *karma* of one incarnation influencing the next. It was open to every individual to make or mar his destiny. Rectitude of life, rectitude of conduct depended upon a man's own inclinations. He repudiated the divisions of caste because they erected artificial social barriers. He denied that any religion could authorize the taking of life. Propitiatory offerings, according to him, were like bribes to win the goodwill of the gods, who were powerless to intervene in the working of the law of

cause and effect. The Blessed One did not concern himself with political affairs because there was no need. There was no foreign domination oppressing the people in any part of the country. The Aryan conquest was a thing of the remote past; the Aryans had become permanent inhabitants of the country and there had been an interfusion of blood on a large scale between the Aryans and the original inhabitants. There was no heavy taxation, and the only tax was payable in kind. The king was entitled to a sixth share of the actual annual harvest. He lived a simple life and went about freely among his subjects. Besides, the world in those days was a small world. There were no rapid communications, no means of extensive and fast travelling. Every part of the world was more or less insular and isolated. People had hazy notions of geography and topography. Fantastic theories about the shape and divisions of the world found ready acceptance. The existence of entire continents was unknown. The Buddha himself confined his travels to certain parts of north India between what are now known as Bihar and the United Provinces. He found no signs of discontent among the people, there was no arrogant alien domination, no systematic economic exploitation, no ruinously expensive administration, no army that devoured the largest part of the revenue, no wide-spread and heart-breaking poverty among large masses of the population.

There can be no doubt that the doctrines of the Buddha were bitterly resented by the Brahmins and the priests, and sometimes insulting remarks were addressed to him. But many knew that he came of royal descent and all saw the purity and nobility of his life, his profound passionlessness, the unmeasured depth and extent of his compassion, his humility and meekness, and the overwhelming grandeur of his personality. Everywhere he was

received with the deepest respect, kings came to listen to his teaching and some became his converts and disciples. It is needless to speculate what would have happened if the Buddha had found himself among a people subject to an oppressive form of administration, burdened with heavy taxes and reduced to a state of chronic poverty. He wrestled with such evils as confronted him and political evils were not among them.

The Buddha was the first to conceive of mission work, and sent out missionaries to preach his doctrines. The *Sangha*, or the Brotherhood of monks and the Sisterhood of nuns, consisted of men and women carefully trained and disciplined, and thoroughly initiated into the tenets of the new religion. Renunciation was of course the first principle, for without it no one could enter the *Sangha*. A time came when the Bhikkhus, as the Buddhist monks were called, carried the word of their Master to China and Japan in the far East and to Asia Minor in the distant West. They were sometimes ill-treated and numbers of them were killed, but they never deviated from their principle of non-resistance. Gentleness characterized the Buddha in all his thoughts and utterances, for even when he opposed established beliefs and customs he never used the language of denunciation and invariably spoke without bitterness and vehemence. Nothing ever disturbed his calmness, no provocation moved him to forget the restraint he had imposed upon himself. He was ever the lord of compassion, the personification of meekness and gentleness.

Jesus Christ preached against certain doctrines of the Old Testament, specially the law of violence and vengeance. In the Book of Leviticus sacrifices and offerings of living animals and fowls are enjoined just as in the Vedic rites of the Aryans in India. The blood of the animal sacrificed was sprinkled round about upon the altar. There were

burnt offerings, peace offerings and sin offerings. It is stated that God tempted Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering upon a mountain and Abraham was about to slay his son when an angel appeared and stayed his hand, and Abraham found a ram and 'offered him for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.' The law of offerings and sacrifice is strictly followed by the Jews up to the present day. Christ was profoundly compassionate and he went about healing suffering and sickness. All life was sacred in his eyes and he said a sparrow could not fall without God knowing it. He did not, however, preach against the custom of sacrificing living animals. The Jews were a fierce, fanatical race; to them the laws of Moses were the laws of God, for in the Books of Moses all laws were laid down as issuing out of the mouth of God. Although Jesus spoke no word against burnt offerings he was not the less hated by the priests and Pharisees, who eventually brought about his death.

The most important doctrines of Jesus Christ are embodied in the Sermon on the Mount. In the course of that wonderful sermon he declared the essence of non-resistance. 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.' The law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was a divine law according to the Old Testament. Jesus preached the supersession of this law in favour of his doctrine of non-resistance and non-retaliation. He forbade the habit of swearing and laid down strict injunctions of continence. He declared that an enemy was to be loved as well as a neighbour and hate was to be repaid by good. No man had any right to judge another, 'for with what

judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged : and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' The entire sermon is a luminous exposition of faith, love and non-violence.

When sending out the twelve apostles to preach, Jesus carefully instructed them as to the line of conduct to be pursued. He anticipated that they would be ill-treated, and accordingly taught them to be patient and long-suffering. 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves : be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men : for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.' It is evident that Christ was fully aware that the Jewish priests and their numerous followers hated him and the apostles, and would miss no opportunity for maligning and injuring them. Yet he commanded the apostles to go forth without fear. 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'

It was while upbraiding the cities that repented not, and reproving the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus used the language of denunciation like the Hebrew prophets of old. He called down woe upon the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. The scribes and the Pharisees were justly denounced for their hypocrisy, their greed and the evil they wrought under the cloak of religion. 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men : for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' After he had reproved the Pharisees and scribes he addressed Jerusalem in words of singular pathos, foreshadowing the end that awaited him in that city. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee,

how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.'

There is one sentence in the Sermon on the Mount which is not in accord with the doctrine of non-resistance that pervades the whole sermon. The sentence is this: 'I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement.' If anger can be justifiable when there is cause for it the entire doctrine of non-resistance falls to the ground. When a man is slapped on the cheek by another is not that just cause for anger? This obvious conflict in the teaching of Christ was accepted without hesitation by theologians; 'the interpretations of the Fathers of the Church are chiefly directed to explaining when anger is excusable and when it is not excusable.' But these interpretations did not satisfy Tolstoy. In his remarkable book *A Confession and What I Believe* there is a chapter dealing with the five commandments of Jesus Christ. Tolstoy was greatly perplexed because the whole trend of Christ's teaching is forgiveness without end. The word used in the Greek text of the New Testament means 'without purpose', 'inconsiderably'. Tolstoy writes that the whole meaning of the passage was destroyed for him by the words 'without a cause'. No man who is angry admits that he loses his temper without just cause. After prolonged and persistent enquiry Tolstoy found that the word is an interpolation. Most of the ancient manuscripts do not contain the word at all. It is not to be found in Tischendorf, the oldest text, nor in the translation of Luther. Jesus never held anger justifiable, with or without cause. His doctrine of non-resistance was flawless.

This spirit of non-resistance is closely allied to humility.

Christ said: 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Repentance is the mood of humility and fits in well with non-resistance; a sense of righteousness tends to a mood of exaltation. The very first sentence of the Sermon on the Mount refers to poverty in spirit, that is, humility. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Again: 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.' Mark Twain sarcastically wrote that the British people come under this designation, for they own a large portion of the earth. The irony lies in the fact that meekness is no part of the British character. Jesus spoke of an inheritance, not of conquest and annexation. He never praised temporal power or earthly possessions. The meek never aspire to rule over other nations or to employ force for the purpose of domination. A man comes into his inheritance lawfully and without violence. The inheritance of which Christ spoke is spiritual. The meek inherit the earth in the sense that they have the largest share in influencing the affairs of men. It would be perfectly correct to say that the Buddha inherited a large portion of the earth, and he was meek. Christ himself was meek and all the lands that profess the faith he taught may be said to be his kingdom.

Both Buddha and Christ insisted upon non-violence and non-resistance to evil as a rule of individual conduct, as a means to the perfection of character. Buddha taught the monks and nuns of the *Sangha* to abstain from violence and submit to evil. Christ taught the apostles and his followers not to return violence for violence and not to resist evil. They did not, however, suggest the use of non-violence on an organized and extensive scale for regaining the lost liberty of a nation, or for compassing an object calculated to benefit the world. In the case of the Buddha there was no need, for he did not find a people groaning under a foreign yoke,

nor were the people around him constantly humiliated. There was no occasion for the rousing of the patriotic feelings of the Buddha. As regards Christ he left the question of temporal authority severely alone, for he thought and spoke always of the kingdom of heaven and the establishment of God's kingdom upon earth. So short was Christ's time upon earth, so small and doubtful was his following that he could not rely on the fidelity of even the twelve apostles chosen by him, one of whom betrayed him and another disowned him.

For the first time in the history of humanity non-violence is being used for a larger purpose than the shaping of individual conduct. A prophet who will undoubtedly rank with Buddha and Christ has consistently preached non-violence as an instrument for shaping the destinies of nations. This non-violence is not mere submission to violence, the passive non-resistance to evil, but a patient and persistent challenge to violence until it exhausts itself and is overcome. In this conflict between violence and non-violence it is being realized for the first time that by its very nature violence must be short-lived. It is an eruptive disorder and must cease when it is exhausted. There can be no such thing as an active volcano for all time or a perpetual tornado. If a man is habitually and constantly violent he ruptures a blood vessel, or gets a fit of apoplexy and there is an end of him. When a Government is violent it generally comes to a violent end. There is no instance on record of the survival of any Government that habitually resorts to violence. On the other hand, the quality of non-violence, if properly cultivated, is inexhaustible. Violence can be put down by violence, but no violence can put an end to non-violence. When violent waves break against a rock it is the waves that are broken, the rock stands fast and is unaggressive.

This truth, so simple and so patent, is coming home to the minds of the nations because of its application for the solution of national problems. The remarkable coincidence is in its appearance at a juncture when there is a world-wide moral revolt against the doctrine of violence. So far this revolt has not gained sufficient strength to put an end to violent methods, but the moral revulsion of feeling is noticeable everywhere. The world has witnessed so many excesses of violence that it is prepared to welcome warmly the permanent defeat of violence and the introduction of more peaceful methods for the settlement of all difficulties. The passive resistance movement in South Africa attracted attention because of the unequal nature of the struggle and the high character of the leader. From a lawyer engaged in dealing in the niceties and intricacies of the law Mr Gandhi was transformed into the inspired defender of the weak and the oppressed. He was not a mere mob leader or a noisy agitator, but a man full of apostolic fervour, an upholder of the truth, of blameless purity of life. Hatred he repelled by love, bitterness he overcame by sweetness. Non-violence he mobilized as a force against tyranny and oppression. His countrymen of all religions promptly flocked under his standard. They were completely disciplined in an incredibly short space of time. They cheerfully faced the ruin of their business and followed their leader to prison. The godliness of non-violence was not manifested in individual submissiveness but in collective action, in repeated conflicts with laws that were a disgrace to humanity, and the struggle did not cease until those laws were repealed. It was a war of truth against untruth, humanity against inhumanity, the spirit against the flesh, soul against muscle.

For the nobly poignant drama that was enacted in Africa the stage was a small colony and the actors con-

sisted of a few thousand men. Some sympathy and some applause greeted them but no great importance was attached to what was looked upon as a local struggle. When Mr Gandhi returned to India it was firmly believed that the curtain was finally rung down upon the stage and the ceiling and the footlights were put out for good. It was not realized that what had been witnessed in South Africa was only the beginning of a new great human drama and the scene had merely shifted from Africa to Asia. The great apostle of non-violence would not submit to injustice in India any more than in Africa. The circumstances that led to the Non-co-operation movement have been mentioned in the chapter 'Trials of Mahatma Gandhi'. It has been also explained why that movement was stopped by him. He has a steadfast faith in the efficacy and godliness of non-violence. The movements that he has led are certainly movements of opposition, but no argument can prove that he countenances violence in any form. His whole life, his teachings, his ideals, his love for all mankind are a sufficient answer to such an accusation.

The astonishing rapidity with which the movement has spread, the readiness with which thousands have courted imprisonment and have submitted uncomplainingly to severe assaults have arrested the attention of the whole world. The full truth is not yet known, because the truth is not permitted to go out without being perverted or garbled. The bureaucracy which finds itself in conflict with this movement proceeds on the assumption that it must be associated with violence. History holds no record of another such struggle. How can people without arms and carefully deprived of all arms for a long time ever hope to attain its object by violence? Undisciplined and mob violence can be crushed in no time by a disciplined and armed force. Violence is attempting to suppress non-violence with the

old familiar weapons of violence. It is a struggle of profound significance to the whole world, because the world lately had a surfeit of violence. The divinity of violence has been challenged by the godliness of non-violence and the issue may lead the world to freedom from the thralldom of violence.

Sri Krishna was a king, a wise political leader and also a very great religious teacher. Let us recall the part he played in the epic Kurukshetra war as the unarmed charioteer of Arjuna, the generalissimo of the Pandava army. When Arjuna, the third Pandava Prince, and Duryodhana, the Kaurava King, waited on Sri Krishna to bespeak his help in the coming war he offered them the choice between himself, unarmed and taking no part in the conflict, and his fully equipped and formidable army. The first choice was Arjuna's and he unhesitatingly chose Sri Krishna while Duryodhana was delighted with having the famous Yadava army at his command instead of its unarmed and non-combatant leader. Yet Arjuna made the wiser and better choice, for his charioteer Sri Krishna piloted him to triumph and victory, while the Yadava army perished with the other forces of Duryodhana. Do we not see the unarmed charioteer again, charioteer and chief in one, leading an unarmed army to victory? Is not the world learning a new theory of war that the soul is mightier than all the weapons invented by science?

9. THE CULT OF THE SPINNING WHEEL

On the tri-colour flag of the Congress—white, green and ochre—accepted throughout the country as the national flag of India there is a figure of the charkha, the Indian spinning wheel which, before the introduction of machinery and the importation of foreign cloth, was the main cottage industry in India and was to be found in almost every village home. There are no figures of lions or royal Bengal tigers, couchant or rampant, no double- or single-headed eagles, no fabled unicorn or dragon suggestive of swift and terrible power, and the dealing of sudden death. The Indian national flag is the emblem of a peaceful and humble industry. Formerly, one of the rites which brides in Bengal had to perform before the actual ceremony of marriage was the turning of a spinning wheel, while a shuttle was placed in the hands of the bridegroom by the ladies of the family. This custom still prevails in Bengal. Marriage means the start in keeping house, a fresh unit of the group of families called society. The ceremony means nothing else than that while the wife had to spin the yarn the husband had to weave the cloth on the loom, a natural and proper division of labour for the production of the cloth required for the family. Before weavers became a separate caste and the weaving of cloth a profession by itself, every family produced its own cloth. There was a spinning wheel in every house, though every house did not have a handloom. The more prosperous people had their own looms and the use of them was permitted to humbler neighbours for a small consideration.

The charkha in India is just what it was long ago. It has been neglected for a long time and no improvements

have been made in the simple and primitive contrivance. Yet on the charkha was spun the magic yarn of the famous and almost fabulous Dacca muslins, stuff finer than cobweb and gossamer, nearly unreal things woven by fairy hands. That marvellous art has been lost as surely as many of the glories of the past have been lost.

The spinning wheel was not always used by humble people alone. Queen Victoria the Good did not disdain this humble instrument. In her Highland home at Balmoral she spent some time every day in spinning wool with her own hands. Clothed in a plain dress with a widow's cap on her head she industriously plied the spinning wheel and was not ashamed to be photographed while engaged in this occupation. The woollen yarn spun by her was given away to poor women living in cottages on the Balmoral estate. She gave away the yarn with her own hands and often 'honoured and delighted her humble tenants by taking a cup of tea with them.

The yarn spun from cotton was not always a poor man's possession. In the list of the untold wealth of Solomon enumerated in the Book of Kings it is stated : 'Solomon had brought out of Egypt linen yarn ; the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.' It is evident that even in those times Egypt was a reputed cotton-growing country.

When mills were introduced in India and the spinning wheel fell more or less into disuse Indian mills were not permitted to turn out fine counts of yarn and all the finer Indian cloths were woven on handlooms with foreign yarn. The finer kinds of Deshi or Swadeshi cloths were misnomers, for the yarn used for them always came from foreign countries, almost exclusively from England.

In the agitation in which Gandhiji, was engaged in South Africa the spinning wheel did not figure, because the

nature of the struggle was quite different from that in India. In Africa the passive resistance movement was intended to obtain equitable treatment, in India the agitation was aimed at securing the right of a people to administer their own affairs. Apart from the economic aspect of the extensive use of foreign cloth Mahatma Gandhi has a strong objection to the dehumanizing effects of the mill industry. Machinery is soulless, ruthless; its giant wheels are like the wheels of Juggernaut crushing human beings to death. It has emphasized the degrading disparity between capital and labour. It seems somewhat inconsistent that Mahatma Gandhi, whose every thought is for progress and who represents reform in every direction, should be so uncompromising an opponent of production by machinery. The reason is that his insight is deeper than that of average people and he realized that the introduction of machinery has not added to the sum of human happiness while it has acutely accentuated the distinction between the wealthy and the poor.

In insisting on the revival of the spinning wheel and its universal acceptance throughout the country Mahatma Gandhi declared that it would hasten the emancipation of the people of India and bring them Swaraj. Of course many of his own countrymen, including some distinguished men, scoffed at the idea as an idle dream of an impractical idealist, but no one is in a position to say that the scheme was tried and has failed. If every household in India had taken to the spinning wheel and produced its own yarn and cloth India would have become independent of the large imports of foreign cloth and surely when a country is self-contained and self-reliant it is the beginning of Swaraj.

His nature and his scrupulous avoidance of everything that is inspired by hate have made him a resolute opponent

of a declaration of boycott, whether in the Congress or outside. His position is perfectly clear. He wants his country to attain freedom and to that end it is essential that India should begin by providing all her own needs. India can produce all the cloth she needs; there is an abundance of cotton, there is plenty of wool. It is a shame that hundreds of thousands of bales of raw cotton should be exported from India to come back as manufactured cloth to cover the nakedness of the people of India. Raw products can be exported only after supplying the requirements of the country that produces them.

In the days of the first Non-co-operation movement in 1921 Mahatma Gandhi led the destructive programme of the creed of Swadeshi, namely, the public burning of foreign cloth. The wearing of foreign cloth was a public badge of humiliation; clothes made of such cloth could not be given to beggars, for it would be an infliction of humiliation upon them. The burning of foreign cloth was a method of purification. So did the Americans begin the War of Independence by throwing shiploads of tea sent out from England into the New York harbour. It was a boycott in effect and with the beginning of Civil Disobedience in 1930 the boycott of foreign goods became one of the most effective weapons of the non-violent struggle.

It has also given an immense impetus to the cult of the spinning wheel. It is being plied everywhere by all classes of people and is to be seen in the houses of the wealthy as well as the poor. Mahatma Gandhi himself never neglects the spinning wheel. He is one of the busiest of men, but every day a certain number of hours are set apart for the production of yarn. On the famous march to the salt marshes at Dandi to break the Salt Acts the charkha was always in evidence in the hours of the midday rest. A great portion of Monday, the day of silence, is spent in spinning

yarn. In the prison he spends eight hours in turning the wheel and producing several hundred yards of yarn every day. The followers of his gospel have also taken to the takli, a hand spindle of either metal or wood consisting of a short rod with a disc at one end, the spindle being spun by one hand while a sliver of cotton is held in the other. The takli can be used anywhere, even when the person using it is walking along the streets. Women and boys awaiting trial and conviction in the law courts spin on the takli with perfect unconcern. Boys under arrest and on the way to the police station hold up these little instruments to policemen and laughingly declare, 'Have you seen our machine guns?' The innocent takli is sometimes as great an eyesore as the inoffensive Gandhi cap. Magistrates who have an exaggerated notion of their own importance forbid the use of the hand spindle in their court, though the spinning is done in perfect silence. Boys have been actually punished by some Magistrates for using the takli.

Quite apart from the political or economic significance of the spinning wheel and the hand spindle their importance in promoting habits of industry and exercising a steadying influence on character cannot be overlooked. An idle hand usually finds something disreputable to do, but the hand that is engaged in the India of today in turning the spinning wheel is not only usefully employed but is helping in moulding the destiny of the nation. The ancient industry of the cottage has been exalted to the dignity of national service. Every turn of the wheel brings nearer the economic and political deliverance of India. The spinner does not think merely of earning a scanty wage, but of the great and noble struggle in which the country is engaged. The spinner feels like a warrior fighting a good fight.

In the home also the spinning wheel has a beneficent

influence. Much of the time that used to be spent in idle gossip, small talk and scandal is now taken up by the spinning of yarn and in thinking and speaking about the future of the country. Old women and young, men and boys have all become earnest and serious minded. The spinning wheel represents more than an humble industry, it is the symbol of India's freedom. As it turns so turns the wheel of destiny presaging that better times are coming and the day of the emancipation of India is close at hand. The gospel of the charkha is a message of freedom for India.

APPENDIX

NAGENDRANATH GUPTA

BY RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE

Nagendranath Gupta, whose death has been announced at Bandra (Bombay), was a journalist of great reputation. His father, the late Babu Mathura Nath Gupta, was a Sub-Judge in Bihar.

Nagendranath was educated at the General Assembly's Institution (now known as the Scottish Church College) Calcutta. Among his class-fellows was Swami Vivekananda, with whom he stood on terms of friendship. That friendship between the two continued till the death of the latter. When Swami Vivekananda came to Lahore in the year 1898-99, he stayed with Nagendra Babu, who was then a neighbour of Lala Lajpat Rai, of whom, too he was a friend.

His knowledge of English literature was extensive. Though he did not take any degree from any University, he had once to take the M. A. class in English in a college at Lahore.

In his early days he was fond of shooting and took keen interest in physical culture, especially Indian wrestling, which he practised himself and about which he knew much. His interest in wrestling continued even when he was old. It was owing to his interest in wrestling that he developed friendship with the well-known Indian wrestlers Ghulam, Kikar Singh and Gama and this friendship continued up to the end. He used to invite these gentlemen to his house very often.

When he grew old the only exercise he used to take was brisk walking. He was so much interested in foot-ball and hockey that while in Calcutta he seldom missed watching any match in these sports.

He commenced his journalist career in Karachi, where he owned and edited an English weekly, the *Phoenix*. As editor of the *Phoenix* he was once sentenced to a term of imprisonment, because he would not divulge the name of a correspondent whose letter had given rise to a lawsuit. He had intimate friends among distinguished Sindhis. He loved Sindh. Even late in life he visited that province once a year. From Karachi he came to Lahore, where he took up the editorship of the *Tribune* in 1892 from Mr Shitalakanta Chatterjee. The *Tribune* was then a semi-weekly. Before he gave up its editorship in 1899 the paper was being published thrice a week. Nagendra Babu went back to his home province and in Calcutta started a Bengali weekly called the *Prabhat*. In Calcutta he conducted for some time a monthly called *The Twentieth Century* with his friend Brahmabandhaba Upadhyaya.

In 1905 he shifted to Allahabad and took up the editorship of a weekly, the *Indian People*, started by Mr (now Dr. Sir) S. Sinha, which later on was incorporated with the *Leader*, of which he and the late Dr. Sir C. Y. Chintamani became joint editors. In Allahabad he came into contact with the late Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Sunder Lal, Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya, Dr Satish Chandra Bannerjee and other distinguished citizens.

From Allahabad Nagendra Babu came to Lahore and because of his personal friendship with the late Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia, the illustrious founder of the *Tribune* he once again became its editor in 1909 and left in 1912.

He worked as editor of the *Punjabee* of Lahore in 1913.

As a journalist he had the good fortune of coming into intimate contact with Dadabhoi Naorojee, Messrs Hume, Ranade and Gokhale, and Lala Lajpat Rai.

He wrote a number of Bengali novels, three of which were contributed to *Prabasi*. He translated Tagore's poems many of which were published in book form in America. His translation of Tagore's *Urvashi* possesses considerable merit. It appeared in *The Modern Review* for July 1927.

He contributed numerous articles to *The Modern Review* and an English novel or romance, *A Planet and a Star*, in which the reader is taken beyond the limits of the Earth and its atmosphere to a star. It appeared in *The Modern Review* from September 1932 to April 1934. To the Bengali monthly *Prabasi* also he contributed many short stories and articles, besides three novels, as mentioned above. Occasionally he contributed articles to the *Hindustan Review* also.

In 1913 he gave up journalism as a profession and became Private Secretary to the Maharaja Monindra Chandra Nandy of Cossimbazar. From there he went to Bandra to live with some of his sons. He worked with the Tatas also for some time.

At the time of his death he was leading a retired life.

At Bandra, Bombay, where Nagendranath died, he was a neighbour of Mr K. Natarajan and his son Mr S. Natarajan. The latter writes in *The Indian Social Reformer* from personal knowledge :

'The late Mr Nagendranath Gupta : The death which took place last Saturday morning of Mr Nagendranath Gupta, a prominent figure in Indian journalism in the early years of the century, a distinguished author in English and Bengalee, a man of varied information and wide culture, has passed almost unnoticed in the Indian Press. Mr Gupta was attracted from journalism to a business career thirty

years ago and has for some ten or twelve years past been living a retired life in Bandra. His broad human interests made him a favourite with his neighbours without distinction of race or creed...His death, it is no exaggeration to say, has left a void in the circles where he had been almost an institution for many years. Our deep sympathy goes out to the family.'

The Leader, edited by Sir C. Y. Chintamani, Nagendranath's former colleague, pays the following tribute to his memory :

'We deeply regret the death announced in Sunday morning's *Leader*, of Mr Nagendranath Gupta at the age of 78 at a nursing home in Bombay. Mr Gupta was a distinguished journalist. He first came to be known to the public as editor of the *Phoenix* of Karachi. But he rose to fame later as editor of the *Tribune* of Lahore, whose proprietor, the late Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia gave him his full confidence. The *Tribune* became so influential under Mr Gupta's editorship that once the local Anglo-Indian paper, the *Civil and Military Gazette*, asked whether the province was being governed by Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick or by the editor of the *Tribune* !.....In the autumn of 1905, he was brought over to Allahabad by Mr Sachchidananda Sinha to edit the *Indian People*. He did so for four years after which that paper was incorporated with the *Leader*. Of this paper he was the first editor with Mr Chintamani, but he severed his connection with it after seven months.....Mr Gupta had command of a fine literary style and wrote still better on literary topics than on political. He was also a story-writer, poet and artist. Altogether he was one of the most cultured of men and always lived a peaceful life.'

The Tribune itself has come out with a fine editorial eulogy on the most famous of its former editors, which runs, in part, as follows:

‘By the death of Mr Nagendranath Gupta, familiarly known as Mr N. Gupta, India has lost one of the most eminent journalists of a generation that has all but passed away. He had at different times been connected with some of the leading newspapers of India, notably the *Tribune* and the *Punjabee* in this province, the *Leader* of Allahabad and the *Bengulee* of Calcutta. But it was his editorship of the *Tribune*, which he raised to the pinnacle of glory and made one of the first papers in India in his time, that brought him conspicuous fame. He wielded a powerful and facile pen, wrote English with the ease of a consummate master, had a charming literary style and a commanding grasp of political and social problems. He told the present writer that Mr A. O. Hume, the founder of the Congress, paid to the *Tribune* as edited by him the compliment of having the best written editorials in India. To the younger generation of Punjabis he is probably no better than a name, but in his own time he was a power in the province and the *Tribune*, as edited by him, then practically the only Indian newspaper in this part of India, commanded an influence and authority which few newspapers can equal and none surpass in these days when there are so many powerful competitors in the field.....’

Again :

‘But it is not merely as a journalist and a writer of chaste and idiomatic English that Mr Gupta made his mark, though it is in these capacities that he is best known outside his own province. In his own province, as to the Bengali-speaking population in the rest of India he is also known for his valuable contributions to Bengali literature. As a novelist, a writer of short stories, and an annotator of some of the classical Bengali poets Mr Gupta earned a reputation simultaneously with his distinction as a journalist, and he maintained this reputation to the closing days of his life.

Mr Gupta was so active with his pen and had such a variety of interests that until a short time before his death there had hardly been a month in which some newspaper or periodical or other did not contain an article from him. His taste was literary, and his journalistic work itself, unlike that of so many others, bore unmistakable marks of this taste.

The death of such a man is, indeed, a great loss both to journalism and to literature.'

With his passing disappears one of the few remaining links between a former generation of *litterateurs* and the present one.

Mr Gupta's fine literary style referred to by both *The Leader* and *The Tribune*, was referred to by Prof. Amaranatha Jha in his presidential address at the recent first English Conference at Lucknow, when he spoke of 'Nagendranath Gupta, who has retained a fine literary finish even in his most hasty compositions'.

The literature of his province has been enriched by his novels, short stories and articles and by his scholarly edition of the *Padavalis* of Vidyapati, claimed as their own by both Bengal and Mithila, which have had almost the same script for centuries. He undertook to prepare this edition at the suggestion of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad. He also edited the *Padavalis* of Govindadas.

Nagendranath had intimate experience of six provinces — Bihar, Bengal, Sindh, the Punjab, United Provinces and Bombay, and enjoyed the friendship of some of the most eminent sons of India. No journalist or *litterateur* of his generation or of the present possessed or possesses such wide experience. The autobiographical reminiscences of such a man must be very interesting and instructive. If he has left any, his sons will render a service to the country by publishing them.