

being declared when only penultimates -- at best -- were in view. And I tended to be more impressed with the academic anaemia of this procedure than with the intellectual inadequacy of its fruits.

SIX SUSPICIONS -- TWO INSIGHTS -- TWO RESULTS

Certain suspicions had been brewing among scholars, especially in Europe, for many years, in fact, back into the 18th Century. These suspicions were various and variously held, but, as they grew in currency, they all united toward one positive, peremptive question: How can we vouch for the historicity, the reality in history, of this fellow called Jesus?

As an aside, we can mention that many -- especially outside academe -- never were bothered by this question and its antecedent suspicions. And among these, there were -- and are today -- many for whom the lack of bother cannot be ascribed to intellectual insophistication or inertia, but, verily, to a genuine and convincing awareness of Jesus both as an historical figure -- familiar, not foreign -- and as God Incarnate in human flesh.

But the scholars, at least in their tomes, were not so contented. And I, for one, will not hesitate to own that I shared the discontent. The suspicions about the historicity of Jesus were altogether too well

founded to be stonewalled or suppressed by any honest scholar. Work had to be done. I complained against the way the work was proceeding and also against the fruits of it, but I never was opposed to the work itself. I supported it with a full heart and entered upon it without the least reservation -- in fact, in the event, with less reservation than the scholars themselves, among whom I am numbered by a probable vote of one, my own.

What were the suspicions? First of all, it was clear to any man of sense and experience that the interpretive tradition had varied widely, if not fundamentally, since the First Century. This raised the question as to whether some eisegetical labors, even as early as the Evangelists(!), had not been engaged in, coloring, untowardly, our view of this Character, Jesus. It is alright to say that a diamond has many facets and that one will describe the facet one is looking at now but that others will be viewing different facets of the same diamond and, therefore, describing the same diamond differently than one does, but, intellectually, this also begs the question whether someone might be describing a facet he has really not seen at all, or is collating several others' descriptions of several facets into a general multi-perspectival description -- and is, perhaps, without direct experience of anything he is talking about.

From these sorts of considerations, of course, the whole issue of evidentiary veracity looms up like a volcano in heat.

Second, the Biblical texts themselves are wildly exotic when approached by a mind unenlightened by the eye of wisdom -- the condition of many

scholars of high renown. For example, the same individual who is in one passage described as taking birth in a cow-shed, apparently amidst the discomfiture of his parents, who were impoverished, wayfarers, foreigners and unprepared for child-birth, is, elsewhere, described as preexisting this physical universe and even being Master of it. Now, before we ridicule the unenlightened mind for not acceding to the cosmic sublimity of this preposterous dissonance, let us take a measure of it by asking the enlightened mind to explain it, really, truly, factually, completely -- in as many words as necessary.

It cannot be done. The ant cannot take the measure of the sea. A fish cannot fathom the firmament. The wildly exotic nature of the Biblical texts cannot be explained even by the eye of wisdom, much less the eye of mere reason, which it merely excites to ridicule (Voltaire). And this fact adds suspicion to the assumption of the historicity of these texts' Subject, both for the enlightened mind (wisdom) and for the unenlightened mind (reason).

Third, there is a huge textual lacuna in the purported life of this fellow, approximately from age 12 to age 28, or, 52% of the total years of his life, over half. When the textual evidence for his life is already scanty (years 1-12) and confusing or, perhaps, contradictory (years 28-31), that enormous a lacuna in the evidence is hardly going to inspire confidence in the veracity of what remains in hand. And for this reason, also, is the historicity of this fellow justifiably suspect.

Fourth, this fellow, Jesus, apparently has no clear idea of who he is, himself.

That observation is based on reading the texts equally, weighting and regarding the Gospels as inherently and essentially co-equal in veracity. Read so, the texts show him saying one thing about himself in one place and quite another in another. This is so not only between Gospels but even within them, e.g. Matthew. Moreover, not only is there difference in appellation (Son of Man, Son of God), but there is also difference in logical type between some appellations: the reading at Nazareth has him as a Prophet/Messenger (Isaiah returned), the discourses at the last Passover have him identified with God the Father ("I am."). Apparently, he had an identity crisis, or his chroniclers did, or both. But, whoever had it, that crisis casts confusion on efforts to picture the fellow historically -- or one may choose to ignore these apparent contradictions in His own lips as to His own Nature.

If, as some scholars would, the texts are read not equally at all but with some distinctions regarding the evidentiary reliability of various passages among the Gospels -- distinctions based on certain rules of evidence that have met with more or less universal acceptance over the years -- then the differences, alternatives and contradictions in the texts regarding this fellow can be magnified by so very high a power as to appear practically inscrutable, not to mention overwhelmingly irreconcilable.

When all of these factors impinge upon the scholar's inquiry, the result cannot fail to loosen his grip on the apperception of Jesus as a figure of history, at least as He has been heretofore represented and imagined.

Now, fifth, as any honest scholar must and as many European scholars did,

we go outside the Christian tradition to search other sources for evidence regarding this Jesus. In His own area and era, we find His general historicity confirmed, but not by yielding the picture of Him arising from the Bible. Terms are different, evaluations are different, sometimes even names. From the Islamic literature comes a picture of a saint, even a Prophet, certainly an aspirant, like any other man. From Jewish literature comes a less appreciative estimate of the man, though not a denial of his existence in fact. From Roman literature come a few brusque remarks reflecting the governmental preoccupation.

Later on, the Jewish and Roman literature becomes more appreciative of the virtuous qualities of Jesus' followers on the whole and Islamic literature, while reflecting the same generous mood, and for the same reason, also focuses on the central "heresy" of Christians, their belief that the Formless, Absolute God has taken on human form and flesh. Christians responded to this thrust by delivering one: Islam is an infidelity, that is, Arabs knew God in Christ and lapsed into a variety of unitarianism, of the Father.

In any case, the effect of this evidence on the scholarly mind was, rightly, to bring the historicity of Jesus, especially as related already suspiciously by the Bible, under further suspicion. The "W's" of What, Who, Where, When and Why kept getting larger.

First Century documentary evidence of the life of Jesus from Oriental sources is not generally known to exist. But, it does, and, significantly, it bears on the years 12-28, that is, on the lacuna, the "lost years."

A Tibetan Buddhist text of early First Century origin declares that Jesus (called Isa) dwelt in the monastery at which the document was kept and that he was an aspirant of high virtue and purity. The same document records his crucifixion as the work of religious authorities and monks in Palestine and as the result of ^(the hatred of) the leaders of the society for this particular Master. The Three Wise Men "from the East" were, in fact, Tibetans. Jesus is regarded in this document as a Master of spiritual practice, a strict adherent of Righteousness (Dharma), a Realized Soul.

This document is contained, in part, in ^{The Jesus Mystery,} Janet Bock, 7911 Willoughby Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046. This book is of uneven quality and contains some interpretive passages which may fairly be classed as historical howlers. However, the authenticity and significance of the Tibetan document found therein has to be accepted by every scholar. In addition, the author's personal reminiscence of her experience in India is warm and satisfying. ← God has used this young, unscholarly lady for introducing an important document in the scholarly community, which has not known of it. We will have reference to the Tibetan document presently.

Another book, THE AQUARIAN GOSPEL OF JESUS THE CHRIST, purports to report on the "lost years," and also the "following years." In the opinion of this writer, this volume is plain rubbish, from cover to cover. The words of Edgar Cayce, as they bear on the life of Jesus, do not ring entirely true for this writer. They are a mixture of truth and untruth, and I am unable to discover a means of separating the one from the other. There is no harm in disregarding the whole corpus of Cayce's words, and I

recommend taking that course regarding it.

[Insert pages 21-22 in [] as paragraphs]

Finally, sixth, the interest of -- especially German -- scholars in Indian and Oriental philosophies and religions prompted a quite natural comparison of discoveries in these fields with religion and philosophy as rendered in Europe.

Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, Marx and even Goethe were deeply impressed with Indian and Oriental philosophies. In the 19th Century, and back into the 18th, German scholars led Western scholarship in study of the Vedas. Indeed, Hegel attempted to conceptualize the Vedic Absolute in his philosophical writing, not realizing that it is a non-dual Principle. (meaning: It has no second, and, therefore, cannot be discussed ^{directly} because It has no attributes to be discussed with or by means of; It is beyond grammar). But, he tried! Marx understood that all men are brothers and made this principle the central truth of a socio-economic theory, Communism. The brotherhood of men is central to Vedic culture, to Indian spirituality. The brotherhood of all men is the essence of socialism and is essentially true. India has been propounding and practicing this Truth since well before the time that Western scholars, (in one of their hilarious conceits), posit as the "dawn of recorded history."

The Christian religion also emphasizes the brotherhood of all men, although the practice of this principle has not always prevailed over Christians' passions, which fact explains the puissance of communist propaganda.

Hegel was trying to apply the principle of non-dualism in intellectual

[Since this writing (1984), two volumes by English writers, An Eastern View of Jesus Christ and Sathya Sai Baba, Embodiment of Love, have appeared purporting to relate the Life of Jesus. Each is said to be based on Discourses by or conversations with Sathya Sai Baba. Neither volume, however, has direct value since each arises from a sectarian prejudice against orthodox Christianity and the words of Sathya Sai are, accordingly, misrepresented in order to satisfy the polemical intent of the authors. In any case, the passages in these books which relate to Jesus are already in the various Discourses by Baba published at India in book and journal form. These are readily available.

A Course in Miracles, purporting to be the words of Jesus mediated through a Freudian Psychiatrist, well represents the old Docetic tradition that arose in the rampant promiscuity fostered by the "Gnostic" movements of early Christian times and that recrudesces at intervals in Western society. The whole thing is rubbish. However, attachment to the body, when waxing, gives force to the derangement that is called Docetism -- now re-styled A Course in Miracles!

All of these books, including that by Bock and the Aquarian Gospel, have a common genius: to discredit the Christian religion.

In contrast is The Lost Years of Jesus, Elizabeth Clare Prophet (1984). This volume compensates the slipshod scholarship of Bock's work in as complete a manner as is possible apart from reference to Sathya Sai. It is aimed at a scholarly audience and covers the basic finds and research by Western sources, principally the Russians, Nicolas Notovitch and the magnificent Helena-Nicholas Roerich. The Buddhist texts and tales herein related have to be taken as fact in germ and fable in detail. So did Roerich take them.

Prophet does not attempt to discriminate fact from fable, but neither does she call the fact fable nor the fables fact. Her ability to sift details is not developed like Roerich's is. Nor does she attempt to do so. But she has done a fine service in drawing the evidence together and presenting it in a comely manner. The pictures by Roerich, alone, are

worth more than the price of the book -- and, for those with inner vision, the book itself.

Ultimately, Prophet has an ideological bias that will displease inexperienced Christians and competing ideologs, alike. The impetus of her writing is commercial, she having ties to properties. Regardless, she has done valuable work, supplying a deficiency of effort in others. If nothing else, she has revealed a glimpse of the mighty sage, Helena-Nicholas Roerich.]

affairs, Marx in economic affairs. Neither was successful in visualizing a workable system because both misunderstood the philosophy of non-dualism to begin with. In fact, Teilhard has some informative points on the intellectual short-comings of Hegel and Marx. But, they tried! And we must endeavor to assure that their efforts to understand Vedic culture receive more of our approbation than their results receive of our circumspection. For -- what is important -- the German scholars were all the while aware that Vedic culture is the root and substance of their own Aryan heritage. Our very language derives from Sanskrit.

Now, this intense study and adoption of elements of Vedic culture served to implant two revolutionary insights in the mind of the Western Intellectual. The first insight was that there are obvious and demonstrable parallels between the textual evidence regarding the life of this fellow, Jesus, and the lives of saints and sages as related in Vedic, and especially Puranic, lore. Situations, discourses, retorts, reports, miracles, deeds and association patterns are so similar as between Biblical and Indian sources as to make one feel quite at home moving between them. This fact would argue strongly for placing the Biblical witness on a level par with the finest evidence from man's most ancient and affluent religious tradition, Sanathana Dharma, the Eternal Righteousness, or what we call Hinduism and Buddhism. The figure of Jesus is instantly familiar to anyone conversant with the Indian Epics. There is just no question that this figure at least could have absolute historical reality, even as "imperfectly" portrayed by the Evangelists. Something in the stories savors of sense and science, that is, of Truth.

This was the first revolutionary insight: that other religious traditions, and especially the Vedic, sound very much like the Christian tradition, at least as regards the lives of saints and sages. And this insight quite expectably inspired another: that people other than Christians are saved by calling on their chosen God, or, more precisely, God can be called by more names than Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- maybe even Allah, to use a neighborly example. In other words, if we believe in the Brotherhood of Men, as we must, we are obliged to hold equally to the Fatherhood of God. All men are His and all religions bear witness to His Glory. There is but one God and He has many Names. In fact, God has no second.

Let me restate: two revolutionary insights arose from the primarily but not exclusively German preoccupation with the study of Vedic culture: (1) the centrality of Christianity in world religious history, and (2) the equality of Christianity as among other major religions.

As a result of these two insights, two things happened. First, Churchmen, whether scholars or not, were henceforward denied any grounds for claiming exclusive validity and vitality for the Christian religion. This was an emotional blow from which few Churchmen have recovered, much less even admitted receiving. Schweitzer is clearly trying to understand it in his most heart-breaking soliloquy, OUT OF MY LIFE AND THOUGHT. Many younger people today, insofar as they consider Christianity at all, tend to take these two insights for granted, well below the level of verbalization.

And the second result of these insights has been to drive the inquiring

spirit of Western civilization backward in both time and space toward its now-intuited roots: Vedic culture. This has been a repentance, a turning around, on such a vast scale that many have even earned a lively living catering to it. From beggar to diplomat, from professor to plumber, Western people have been going "East" in search of Truth and Peace. It is an unavoidable, unimpedable and unimpeachable flood of human sentiment, bouncing, jostling, swaying, stumbling backward, away from the precipice in hope of finding the Way. Whether the pilgrims know it or not -- it does not matter -- the object of their search is the Sanathana Dharma, the Eternal Righteousness, which is, has been and always will be embodied in Vedic culture, in India, just as the German scholars discovered. India always has been and always will be the religious heart of this planet and its inhabitants, each and every one of them. India or Bharath (which means, "the land with attachment to God") is the gold which men from all times and climes come to mine. Sanathana Dharma is the Nectar on which the bees feast with no other thought than its incomparable sweetness.

So, we have two insights -- the centrality of Christianity in world history and its equality as among its "neighbors" -- and two results from these insights -- the denial of exclusive validity and vitality to Churchmen and the driving back of "Western" people onto their "Eastern" roots.

And now we have to say that this whole phenomenon contributed to, nay, sharpened inexorably, the already-brewing suspicions regarding the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth and God. For, once the doors to Vedic culture are thrown open and the vast, delightful mansion of it is even

just sniffed into -- as Christians tend to do at first -- the question of who this Jesus is and where He fits in the ever-enlarging picture takes on the persistence and power of a Divine, Peremptory Imperative.

A stupid, dull person will run after a new-found God like any mare in heat, forgetting the old one standing beside in the pasture. But a person of care and conscience will never be flippant or foppish. Such a person will proceed by regular approaches to discover the integration and communion of the "old" and the "new," the familiar and the fascinating. This has been my unerring course for 14 years.

To go East, one must cross the Middle-East, at least when starting from the eastern side of the West. To get to Sanathana Dharma, the Root, one has to go back through the branch of that primal religion in and on which one took birth. To get interested in "Eastern Thought," as it is so foolishly styled, is precisely to meet in Person one of its leading practitioners, Jesus of Nazareth. So, it must be said that the whole swing of "Western Thought" toward an exploration and exploitation of its "Eastern" Genesis is going to deposit the sum total of the former at the Feet of its Guru, Jesus of Nazareth -- and God -- pleading for Wisdom and Peace.

By imbibing the insights -- and their results -- of the German Schoolmen, one is going to run square^{ly} into the issue of the historicity -- and fictile facticity -- of this fellow, Jesus. The preoccupation with the study of Vedic culture has caused the question of the historicity of Jesus to come full forward for scholarly scrutiny.

No other course can be taken by any scholar who carries even the least dosage of sincere honesty. Integration, Communion, Conservation -- these have to be the goals of every scholar who aspires to be worthy of the name. During my career, I have aimed at these goals and achieved them with unerring accuracy, by unswerving devotion.

Neither a century ago nor now is there wide agreement as to the validity or the significance of these two revolutionary insights. But, that both insights -- the centrality of Christianity in world religious history and the equality of Christianity as among other major religions -- have been permanently injected into the consciousness, however reluctant, of the Western Intellectual is a fact that no scholar of sound mind and body can henceforth deny, obfuscate or deride. Today and henceforward, these two insights must be handled, intellectually, as residing in the life blood of the Western Intellect, academic and otherwise.

If the sprint of the German tanks failed to clear the way for an Autobahn linking Berlin with Toulon, the spirit of the German thinkers succeeded in clearing the way for an Attitude of admiration linking the "West" with her roots in the "East." Western civilization is a species of Indic, Vedic, Aryan culture. Even the religion of Western civilization, Christianity, is Vedic in origin, starting with its Founder, Jesus Himself, as will be shown presently. For opening our eyes to this great Truth, we must render a most profound emotion of gratitude to the German Schoolmen. And if, as the irony of history would have it, we are indebted more to the non-Christian than to the Christian German Schoolmen for these great insights, that fact detracts not one whit from the grandeur of their gift.

Let me now summarize to this point. The historicity of this fellow, Jesus, has been much in doubt among scholars. A deep and persistent search for an adequate apperception of Him in historical terms has been mounted and in progress for well over 100 years. Much meritorious labor, energy and expense has been poured into the quest. But the results have been unstable and unsatisfying.

I have tried to identify six major factors which evoked suspicion regarding the historicity of this fellow. First, the intrepreative tradition is richly diverse and divergent in reporting about him, perhaps eisegetically so. Second, the Biblical texts are exotic and eccentric for the unenlightened mind -- such as is in possession of many scholars. Third, there is an enormous lacuna in the chronicle of his life, embracing more than half of it. Fourth, the Biblical text has him identifying himself in terms which differ not in degree, only, but, verily, in kind. Fifth, the extra-Christian witness to this fellow, drawn from his own area and era, gives a much different, and usually much lower, estimate of his person and mission than the Christian witness from the same period does. And finally, sixth, the discovery of, primarily, German scholars that Christianity is to be ranked as a major religion of mankind and also as one among several others, co-equal in validity, forced Churchmen to relinquish their claim to exclusive validity and vitality for the Christian religion and, simultaneously, drove the whole of Western civilization back on its supports: Vedic culture, Indian spirituality.

Each of these factors intensified the quest for the historical Jesus. But, that Quest, that Pilgrimage, has not -- officially, among scholars,

at least -- issued in a satisfactory denouement. The knot, though perhaps loosened, some of its threads more clearly revealed, has not been untied, the threads laid straight and true, in unrestricted extension. That remains to be done here and now. So, let us proceed without further delay.

MOHAMMED AND NICAEA

The easiest and most direct way of untying the knot is to get inside it. This can be done with dispatch by the simple means of declaring that both the Islamic and the Christian statements regarding the Nature of Jesus are absolutely true and correct. By this one means that He is both an aspirant rising up to God and God descending as man. The Christians will disagree with the rising and the Mohammedans with the descending. So, obviously, we have as complete a difference of opinion and perception, as clear a knot, as it is possible to get.

But, I am saying that both opinions are correct and even self-sufficient. By this I mean that neither opinion or perception is in need of the other, or of any modification, in order that a complete and verifiable theological position be maintained and that each position so obtained will be equal in validity and vitality with the other. And, while the man of common sense and reason may by now wish to conduct me to a chair in the corner