

own professional concern with *Súfism*, I never cease to be appalled at the distance which, but for God's grace, lies between Eastern and Western mysticism. Islamic mysticism grew up wholly outside orthodoxy and was only with difficulty ever made to appear as integrated in it (hence, incidentally, its appeal for many modern European 'seekers'), but the great Western mystics knew no such tension: the Muslim mystic undoubtedly did come to regard the Qur'án, the daily prayers and the Pilgrimage as mere forms, unnecessary to the 'enlightened', but can one see St Teresa viewing the Blessed Sacrament in this light? In a word, Islamic mysticism was never wholly free from the influence of the magical cult, with its grades of initiation, its pseudo-scientific certainty of cause and effect, and its pantheistic goal of assimilation, which, it may be thought, comes closer to annihilation than to the Christian conception of Union.

The compiler surely did right, albeit for the wrong reasons, in refusing to accede to a suggestion that he should include 'a résumé of the methods adopted by the various mystics'; any uninstructed attempt to work through, say, the Loyolan Exercises as summed up by Mr James, the whole being topped off with a reading of these extracts, must surely have resulted in a first-class neurosis. As it is, a certain class of readers can splash about more or less harmlessly in a spiritual lukewarm bath.

There are one or two barbarous transliterations of Oriental names, the most offensive being *Al-Hillaj* for *Al-Halláj*: this is no mere question of taste or pedantic accuracy: *Halláj* is a nickname with a meaning, *Hillaj* means nothing whatsoever, and has never been adopted as a spelling by any Orientalist.

G. M. WICKENS.

**HUMAN PERSONALITY.** Its Historical Emergence in India, China, and Israel. By H. C. E. Zacharias, Ph.D. (Herder Book Co.; \$4.00.)

As Dr Zacharias has studied much in India and was until lately professor at the Catholic University of Pekin, he was well qualified to write this interesting and useful book. World history, in its earlier stages, is tribal and anonymous; if individuals seem to stand out, it is as representatives of their society. The records deal with individuals for their own sake only when tribalism begins to be outgrown. Finally, exceptional individuals start to explore their own inner life, to analyse, educate and appraise themselves. They become aware of their personality and develop their spiritual talents. Philosophy and mysticism begin. With these beginnings the present book is concerned.

The author finds the first impulse to this self-discovery in the impact of Aryan invaders on the Dravidian civilisation of North-west India, by about 750 B.C. The practice of magic and self-induced trances had long been known in India. Now, the shock of novelty, the desire to escape from a disordered society, led many to seek refuge in their innermost self, independent of man and even of God; and in some cases to give expression to what they found there. So doing, it was easy to lose the distinction between the real and mental worlds, and indeed to regard all phenomena and actuality as illusion, allowing reality only to the unmanifested and undetermined. This subjective, negative, often atheist philosophy has, ever since, vitiated the noblest Indian thought.

The chapter on Brahmanism, into which this subjectivism in part developed, will be difficult to many readers. The terminology is complicated and unfamiliar, the ideas with difficulty translatable into Western categories. To us the Bráhma system seems like a maze or a city in the clouds. Yet we can at least grasp some of its leading thoughts: a flux of perpetual rebirths, due to the chain of action, of cause and effect; a knowledge or wisdom, or better, perhaps, intuition, by which escape is possible, in realising the identity of the individual self or essence with the universal, wholly undifferentiated self or essence, the Bráhma. In opposition to the self-sufficiency of earlier Dravidian esotericism, Brahmanism clung to such theism as this; but only by throwing overboard the hard-won recognition of human personality.

It was in reaction from Brahmanism, that Mahavira, in the late sixth century B.C., reasserted the self-sufficiency of the earlier ascetics, and became the founder of Jainism. He taught the possibility of a supreme illumination which frees the soul from the chain of action, so that it becomes self-subsistent and omniscient, a monad, alone with and complete in itself. He inculcated ascetic practices, and also a scheme of ethics, including not merely that harmlessness to man and animal for which the Jains are well known, but continence, honesty and truthfulness. Dr Zacharias sees here an influx of Zoroastrianism; this was precisely the period of greatest Persian influence in India.

That the founder of another institutional religion, Cakyamuni, the Buddha, flourished in the same sixth century, was due in part to the same causes. His life and teaching are sufficiently well known. But Dr Zacharias makes the important point that the loving devotion which its founder's personality aroused changed Buddhism from an atheistic escape from actuality into the cult of a personal Saviour. In Hinduism this same devotion is found movingly expressed in the

Bhagavad Gita. Here, however, under the influence of Persian theism, it is directed to the Adorable Lord, the Bhagavan, or Içvara; and is syncretised with the search, by way of negation, for the Bráhman, the universal, impersonal self; but there is no reconciliation of the two. When Indian philosophy is logical, it reduces all things, even the personal Lord, Içvara, to the impersonal, wholly indeterminate Bráhman. . . . Some Christian writers have tried to assimilate this idea of Bráhman to that of the God of Catholic philosophy. Dr Zacharias does not make the attempt.

The section dealing with Chinese thought is a valuable part of the book. It covers the period from the twelfth century to the third century B.C. The great Chinese teachers were concerned chiefly with the maintenance or recovery of social morality and good government in a time of feudal rivalries and warring states. There was never a Chinese metaphysic, though something of the Indian world-forsaking ideas filtered into the South. But Master Kung, known to the Latin West as Confucius, was neither ascetic nor metaphysician. A younger contemporary of Buddha, he was in many ways his opposite. His teaching was a successful reaction against a disordered society and the flight from the world; it was a return to the traditional Way of the ancient kings. The discipline he taught was not merely a matter of custom and ceremonial—though this was a valuable part of it—but of education, of disregard of privilege, and conformity to heaven's decree. This last was no blind fate, but the will of a purposeful Supreme Being, demanding straightforwardness of conduct, altruism, and courtesy. Confucius put before all classes of men a system of lofty natural ethics, having divine sanction. He became for China the Master *par excellence*, and remains so. No wonder the late Dom Pierre-Célestin Lou used to say that, though now a Catholic, he was still a Confucian.

Of other Chinese systems only two or three need be mentioned. That of Ma Di was a doctrinaire egalitarianism balanced by docility towards the head of the State. He taught uniformity and frugality of life; the whole based on utility and commonsense; he condemned the emotions and counselled 'equability'. That he was influenced by Buddhist teaching is shown by his organisation of his followers into a monastic community. A still more successful incursion of Indian idea was represented by philosophic Daoism. Dao is the way of escape from actuality to that pure potentiality which it calls 'non-being', and which lies behind the universe. It is the flight from actual knowledge to ignorance—'Knowledge is not to know'—and from action to inactivity. Daoism was the rival of Confucianism; and it is natural that Master Kung's great fourth-century disciple,

Meng Ke, known to us as Mencius, should have spent his life combating the Daoists and reformulating Confucius's teaching. His ideal was the same: good government, based on wisdom and virtue; reason and goodness, he taught, are natural to man, but both need to be cultivated. The later history of Confucianism, however, brings out its insufficiency as based on natural virtue alone. It lost its earlier theism, it exaggerated ritual and filial piety, and excluded the growth of any real philosophy. But by making explicit the ethics that were implied in the ancient tradition, it had developed the sense of personality, while fitting it into the traditional social pattern.

The last part of the book is an outline of the history of Israel, down to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This outline, as the work of a scholarly Catholic, is based on excellent authorities and given a fully supernatural interpretation.

A few points in this section call for notice. Dr Zacharias puts the Exodus in the thirteenth century, without discussing the possibility—at least—that it took place in the fifteenth. He interprets the older Biblical numbers, both of years and persons, symbolically or conventionally; which of course gets rid of many difficulties. He dates Esdras's arrival in Jerusalem 398, after Nehemias—again without discussion. The death of Herod the Great is given, no doubt by a slip, as A.D. 6, instead of ten years earlier. The book ends with a list of Chinese terms, and some good notes; a glossary of Indian words, also, would have been useful.

JOHN HIGGENS, O.S.B.

HE DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN. By Charles Williams. (Faber; 16s.)

One is tempted to wish that Charles Williams had lived to hear the Church proclaim the doctrine of the Assumption. Not that he was over-eager to accept the definitions of any organised religious body; indeed, one sometimes wonders when reading his works what faith he really had in organised religion as such. On the other hand, he penetrated far into the meaning and implications of the Incarnation, and the chief *lacuna* in his thought was the inability to 'place' the living and articulate word of God in the twentieth century.

With this latest reprint, the publication of the bulk of his theological works is completed. He is one of those who might be unfortunate enough to be described as 'mystical', and the epithet will do him no good, for he combines that scholarly dislike for vividness of definition which marks most dons, with a certain agnosticism about institutions. This means that his writings become obscure because of the convolutions of his own thought and because from the nature of the case they can invoke no authority which might make them clearer and clinch their arguments. Nevertheless it would