

1. **THE BIBLE TREMBLED : THE HINDU CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSIES OF NINETEENTH CENTURY CEYLON** by R. F. YOUNG and S. JEBANESAN. 1995. Pages 204. Price not given.

2. **VAIN DEBATES : THE BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSIES OF NINETEENTH CENTURY CEYLON** by R. F. YOUNG and G. P. V. SAMARTNA. 1996. Pages 236. Price not given.

3. **MADHVA UND SEINE UNBEKANNTEN LITERARISCHEN QUELLEN : EINIGE BEOBACHTUNGEN VON ROQUE MESQUITI.** 1997. Pages 151. Price not given.

All these three books are edited by Prof. Gerhard Oberhammer, Institute of Indology, University of Vienna. Commission agents : Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

The first two books deal with the encounters between Christians (Catholic and Protestant) on the one hand and the local Hindus and Buddhists on the other hand during the nineteenth century in Ceylon. Buddhism is prominent in the South and Hinduism (especially Śaivism) in the North. The indigenous socio-religious revival movement of the nineteenth century was articulated in reaction to Christianity. An academic review of the encounter is possible only when reviewed from the overall colonial milieu of which Christianity was a dominant feature. The Christian missionaries naturally portrayed their own religion in the best possible light, but the Buddhists and Hindus often took it as the invitation of the spider to the fly, 'Come into my parlour, dear friend'.

The Hindu Christian encounter in Ceylon in the nineteenth century had its repercussions in Tamilnadu also. *The Bible Trembled* deals with that exhaustively. The use of the term 'heathen' to Indians and Ceylonese non-Christians, compulsory teaching of the Bible in missionary schools and the like, often with the British government's approval created tension in the

land. The Vellala reaction in Jaffna produced anti-Christian literature profusely. Cankara Panditar's *Kristumata Kaṇṭanam* is an example. The present well-documented survey will be of interest not only to students of religion, but also to those who want to get relevant source material on social changes during the nineteenth century A. D.

II. Theosophy under the leadership of Col. Olcott and Blavatsky attracted the attention of the Hindus and Buddhists and gained a sure foothold there. Olcott's attempt to bring Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna together by preparing a catechism acceptable to both was appreciated. Theosophy was giving importance to the wisdom of the east. The reputation of Olcott as a practitioner of Mesmerism (Hypnosis) was considerable. When Olcott and Blavatsky landed in Ceylon in May 1880, they were welcomed as virtual Bodhisattva-s. The Buddhist revivalists got their organizational expertise to encounter the Christian missionaries. Later, however, Theosophy's universalistic, inclusivistic and eclectic presuppositions began to stand in the way of the developing naturalism and sectarian biases of the Buddhists. Theosophy was considered only a Protestant Buddhism and not real Buddhism. (It may be noted that the Ārya Samājists who worked with Theosophists in the beginning resented encroachments of Buddhism in Theosophy, and the alliance could not continue.) The authors of this monograph (1996) say that according to Blavatsky 'real Buddhism is the pre-Vedic Brahmanism'. According to them *Isis Unveiled* is in part a pastiche of plagiarism from books of occult lore popular in the mid-century.

The Hindu-Christian controversies in North Ceylon have been studied carefully by the authors. Jabanesan was the Principal of Jaffna college which was occupied by the Indian Peace Keeping Force. Muttukumāra Kavirāyar, Capāpati Nāvalar and Tāmotarān Pillai were leaders of the anti-Christian fight in North Ceylon.

III. The main problem in studying Madhva texts has been put in clear terms by one of his staunch followers B. N. K. Sharma thus : 'The inaccessibility of many of these sources at the present time and difficulty of tracing many of these quotations in the extant sources also raised a problem as to the genuineness of these passages and the degree and extent of their reliability and of the Vedānta based on them.' (*A History of the Dvaita School of Vedānta and its Literature*. P. 112, 1960. Bombay). Venkatasubbayya says, 'The charge has often been brought against Madhvācārya that he is addicted to the fabrication of evidence, and that he very frequently cites passages from books which do not, and did not at any time exist'. Even ancient writers of repute like Appaya Dīkṣita charge him with citing fabricated Vedic and other texts in support of his doctrines.

A milder way of presenting the problem is to say that copies of the books existed in a library to which Madhva had access and these copies were unique, and no other writer except Madhva had access to that library. We find that Madhva quotes in round figures from fifty Śruti-s, forty Saṃhitā-s, twenty-five Purāṇa-s, ten Tantra-s, five dictionaries, two works on logic, one grammar and hundred and forty miscellaneous works.

The present book on Madhva is a detailed and comprehensive examination of the problem. Appaya Dīkṣita seems to be the first to raise the cry : Bhaṭṭoji and Venkatanātha followed him. The quotations are given and the problem discussed separately. Here is a serious work done carefully, and will be of interest to students of philosophy.

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