

# A Hindu meets Christ

The orphan lad's emaciated body was covered with putrefying sores that filled the air with a foul revolting odour. Kneeling beside him was a clean, well-dressed English lady. Her hands were busy applying some healing ointment to the festering sores, while she murmured soothing words of comfort. This was simply one of India's missionaries doing her run of the mill job, but to me that was the very personification of love in action. It made a profound impression on my adolescent mind and later led me to give Christianity some serious thought.

Before I left Malaya for India for further studies, I had been well 'indoctrinated' in Hinduism by my father. He warned me to steer clear of Christianity. He maintained that for a Hindu to embrace a 'western' religion was nothing short of a disgrace. With these thoughts churning in my mind, I was rather wary of the Gospel. I was obligated to study the Bible because I was at a mission school, but I paid no more attention to it than I did to any of my other subjects.

One night, sleep evaded me for hours, so I looked around for something to read to kill time. After glancing through one or two books within my reach, I pulled out a copy of the Bible and turned by chance to Isaiah 53. These words gripped me: *'He was wounded and bruised for our sins. He was chastised that we might have peace; He was lashed and we were healed. We*



**Dr G. D. JAMES**

Eastern religions are becoming popular as many disillusioned young people search for tranquillity of mind and release from the tension of high pressure living. Eastern thought with its offer of a new kind of life through meditation and simple living looks very attractive to the tense and weary Westerner. Dr G. D. James of Singapore, a former Hindu who became a Christian and an internationally respected Bible teacher tells a different story. This

is his account of how he became a Christian.

Dr James passed away in July 2003 after 65 years of Christian ministry in Asia and around the world.

*are the ones who strayed away like sheep. We left God's paths to follow our own. Yet God laid on Him the guilt and sins of every one of us'. Something wonderful - almost dramatic happened to me at that moment. For the first time in my life, I realised some deep truths. I came face to face with the fact that I was a condemned, miserable sinner, and that I was heading towards a lost eternity.*

## A Good Hindu

Like every good Hindu, I visited the temple regularly. I also read and memorised important parts of the Vedas (the Hindu scriptures). I added to my merit (or so I thought) by fasting on Fridays. But all these religious observances seemed to count for nothing when I stood before a holy God as revealed in the Bible. All my so called goodness seemed to fall like a pack of cards before His magnificence.

We were not allowed to use the electric light in the dormitory after 10 PM so I found myself reading the Bible in the dim, flickering light of an oil lamp. Suddenly, the room was filled with a blinding light and in the centre of that light; I saw the very form of Jesus Christ, as if He were dying then and there. This vision was so glorious that its full impact defies description.

For the first time in my life, I realised that Jesus Christ loved me, that He had sacrificed His life for me. The idea of a God of love was altogether new to me. I had never known the love of a mother and a father because my mother had died when I was very young, and my father was seldom sober enough to make any demonstration of love towards his only son. The idea that Jesus loved me was too wonderful to grasp - I just sat there in utter amazement. Christ's love and sacrifice presented me with a tremendous challenge. With tears streaming down my face, I knelt down and accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour.

This decision was to bring me much pain and suffering and opposition, but the joy that I found in my new Saviour was so great that my suffering seemed a very small price to pay.

This, then, was my first reason for becoming a Christian.

My father was furious with me for forsaking Hinduism for Christianity. He tried to intimidate and threaten me away from my new faith. When that failed to work, he adopted another line of action - wooing me with kindness. He sent me some money and begged me to return to Malaya. I did. When I arrived, I found that he had arranged for me to work as assistant Manager on a rubber plantation. He had also found a Hindu girl for me to

marry. This was evidently his master-plan to lure me away from Christianity, and it broke his heart when I politely but firmly declined both offers.

## A Miracle at Home

My father, my uncles and my other relatives lived a dreadfully sinful life. They squandered what they earned on riotous living and 'wine, women and song'. Their dear ones were neglected and their children ill-clad and poorly fed. Homes were broken and peace and happiness seemed an illusive dream. Tempers flared on the slightest pretext and turmoil enveloped all concerned. Then, one day, something happened. Jesus touched them one by one and they were never the same again. Their homes were completely transformed. Instead of squabbles and abuse, there was prayer and the reading of the Bible. Hatred and misunderstanding gave way to peace and love. Nagging and swearing were replaced by hymns of praise. This was nothing short of a miracle, and these miracles continued to happen practically every week.

I held meetings to tell my relatives and friends about Christ and what He had done for me. The first to receive Christ was my step-mother. Several others followed. My father would attend most of these meetings completely drunk and would make a nuisance of himself to everyone. I had, however, given him a Tamil Bible, which he would read when he was sober. One day, he surprised me by saying that He had received Jesus Christ as Saviour. And it was true enough. The change in him was so remarkable that many of my relatives were attracted to these meetings. Within six months, no less than thirty of my people emerged from the mysticism and superstition of Hinduism to receive the Christ of God as their Saviour.

## Proving Christ

I am proving day by day the presence and power of Christ. Three years after I was confronted by Christ and captured by His love, I offered myself - time, talents and all that I had for His service. I remember vividly the first night I spent at a railway station in South India. I was cold and hungry, but I could feel the love of Christ enveloping me. Jesus was as close to me as any visible person could have been.

Over the past sixty years, it has been my joy to devote all my time to serving God and telling others about Him. No church or organisation backed me financially, yet my Lord and Master has never failed me or my wife and six children. We have failed Him many times, but He has never failed us.

## Bible Not a Myth

I am fully convinced that the Bible cannot be a collection of Jewish fables and myths. It is the inspired Word of God. It was written by men from varying educational, cultural and emotional backgrounds, and covers several thousands of years of Jewish history, yet I see an amazing thread of unity running through all sixty-six Old and New Testament Books. Its prophecies and their fulfilment, its relevance to the needs of modern man, its unique power to transform human lives, its unchanging and sublime teachings, all lead me to believe that it is no fairy tale or product of man's mind or imagination. It is the living Word of God.

Whenever I read the Bible, I get the strange, warm feeling that God is speaking to me personally. Its teachings warn me every time I think or behave wrongly and challenge me to be more like Jesus. Its healing words comfort and cheer me when I am in trouble, something that even my closest dear ones may not be able to do.

## Talking with God

I have been given the supreme privilege of speaking to God in prayer, as one friend to another. On two or three occasions, when I was about 10,000 miles away from home, it was a real joy to be able to speak to my wife and children on the trans-oceanic telephone. My experience with prayer has been equally real. Times without number I have dropped on my knees before Him and spoken to Him behind closed doors. And I have heard Him speak to me as loudly and clearly as I heard my family on the telephone.

Prayer is not the chanting of unintelligible mantras or the vain repetition of the name or names of gods. It is an intelligent, loving and meaningful talk with a God who cares. Nor is this communication a one-sided affair. God speaks to me as well. This fellowship is most vital and precious as one faces the challenges, sins and buffetings of life. And the many, many wonderful answers to prayer are further confirmation that God hears, understands and responds to the cries of His children.

## The Joy of Worship

I am greatly thrilled and satisfied with the joy I get through worship in the church. The soul-lifting hymns, the prayers, and the sweet fellowship I enjoy with my Christian brothers and sisters, irrespective of language, race or colour - there is nothing to compare with these wonderful blessings.

I am not implying that Christians are a perfect lot of people. Far from it! We all have our faults, our weaknesses, our failings. But overriding all these, is the common bond of love that is forged between all who are truly trusting Christ, a bond that makes them all part of the same family - the family of God.

When I sing the great hymns of the Christian Church, my soul is filled with joy and ecstasy. The words and music have been written from the depths of personal experience, and are therefore filled with meaning. Little wonder, then, that pious Hindus like Mahatma Gandhi and others enjoyed singing hymns like:

*When I survey the wondrous Cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died;  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.  
Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Hymns like this lift one's mind and attention from the petty, transient and worthless pleasures of life to the realms of heaven itself. I would not miss this experience for anything.

## Knowing for Sure

Unlike those who build upon the shifting sands of religion, tradition and, sometimes, superstition, a heritage from their forefathers, the Christian rests upon the sure, unfailing promises of God as revealed in the Bible. The Christian not only believes in but also *knows* the object of his trust - God - in a real and intimate way.

The Apostle Paul rejoiced and said: '*I know the One Whom I trust, and I am sure that He is able to safely guard all that I have given Him until the day of His return*' (II Timothy 1:12). Many years before Paul, another believer in the living God testified: '*I know that my Redeemer lives*' (Job 19:25). Like these men I have the unshakeable certainty that all my sins have been forgiven and forgotten, simply because I believe in God's unfailing promise that He would forgive me.

That there is a heaven in the hereafter and that I shall be there with Jesus and with all who love Him is something which I know to be a fact, even while I am here on earth. It is not something I hope to find out when I die.

To me, death is not a 'leap in the dark' or a journey into the unknown, but is '*being absent in the body and at home with the*

*Lord*'. Death is not a loss but a gain, because Jesus said He has prepared a place for me in heaven, and I believe Him.

God assures me in His Word that no matter what takes place in the political world, no matter who comes out victorious in the battle for power and superiority between governments, the kingdoms of this world are reserved for Jesus Christ the King of Kings. I believe as firmly in His Second Coming as I do in His first. I expect Him to come at any moment, and look forward to the time when chaos and conflict will give way to peace and love.

I am certain about going to heaven not because of my goodness but because Christ died to pay for my sins and then rose from death. Some may call this arrogance or presumption, but to me, presumption is the act of not taking God's Word seriously and *refusing* to believe what He says.

## Life with Meaning

I have been entrusted with a message - the good news about Jesus. This message meets all people everywhere at their individual points of need and is able to fill the emptiness within them.

There is nothing basically wrong with ethical, philosophical, sociological, psychological and theological studies. I have taken time to study all these, but have found no answer in them to the problems, needs and pressures that plague man. When a man tastes all these in his search for meaning and purpose, and when he finds that they fail to satisfy, Jesus Christ alone will give him what he needs.

Several years ago, a young British soldier came to one of my meetings, and stayed behind for a private talk with me one night. '*I don't know what earthly reason there is for me to live,*' he despairingly confessed between sobs, '*because I don't know who my parents are. I am an illegitimate child. I joined the army in the hope of getting killed. Since then, I have tried to commit suicide many times, but couldn't bring myself to do it.*' '*But,*' he continued, '*tonight you have showed me very clearly that God loves me enough to send His Son to die for me. Now I know there is a purpose for living.*' Today, he is not only enjoying God's love, but is also sharing it with others.

This wonderful reality of life with meaning and purpose can be your experience today. Turn from your sins and give your heart and your all to Jesus Christ.