

through to a deeper and truer openness to the Holy Spirit.

Finally, how does one set about getting the gift of tongues? Well, you ask for it. Just place yourself in prayer, and, as simply as you can, pray to the Lord, who never refuses his Holy Spirit to us when we ask (Luke 11, 13). Ask for tongues, and then, in faith, just *start*. You do the speaking, the Lord chooses the words. You may find it helpful to get somebody else, or a group, to pray with you, and lay hands on you, but this is not essential. If nothing happens at first, don't worry. It may come to you in prayer a few hours later, or a few days; it may take years. Don't worry, and don't turn back: you have made your petition, now stick to it. Don't wonder whether you are going to get it or not, or whether you have been wrong to ask. 'Everything that you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it shall be yours' (Mark 11, 24). Continue to pray for it, and to yearn for it (the Lord may hold it back for a time, to increase your desire), until it is yours. Then persevere in it; it is a good gift, and the devil will probably try to take it away from you, and your old Adam is likely to kick back too, with all the resources of your subconscious. You may find that, after a blissful week or month, tongues will become utterly repugnant. Don't worry! Just persevere, and the joy will come back all the deeper. Fight back—and tongues is, in fact, an excellent weapon in prayer. Remember, every time you pray in tongues, you declare mysteries in Spirit, you assert the kingship of Christ, you praise God. And that is one thing that the devil cannot stand. So, praise God! 'And all the people said, "Amen", and praised the Lord' (I Chron. 16, 36).

## Remembering Gandhi

### by Agnes Yendell

Gandhi is much too easily dismissed, sweepingly over-simplified, decried as an unpractical idealist, and thought to have failed in what he set out to do. It depends on what you call failure. Jerusalem stoned the prophets, the Messiah was crucified, Gandhi and Martin Luther King were assassinated, and their teaching seems only to survive precariously. But as Horace Alexander writes,<sup>1</sup> 'The impression he has made in circles where people are trying to break away from the hideous tyranny of violence and counter-violence, which threatens quickly to destroy the whole world, is specially worth examining'. This interest seems to be more in his philosophy of life than in this or that political action, but Gandhi himself never separated politics from his religious philosophy. He is a world

<sup>1</sup>*Gandhi Through Western Eyes*. Asia Publishing House, London, 1969. 211 pp. £3.

figure, who has a message for mankind, and we have in this book an account of his message less in words than in events, although the illuminating reasons for his decisions are always given.

Horace Alexander was possibly Gandhi's closest English friend after the death of C. F. Andrews; he was frequently with him in India, and was closely connected with all that went on between him and the British Government. The account he gives is that of a very well-informed observer and historian. We might almost say a psychological historian, because he shows such a sympathetic understanding of Gandhi's political opponents. There were times when it seemed almost impossible for the British authorities to see why Gandhi was making what appeared to be unreasonable difficulties; and there was a time preceding independence when he and the Congress leaders had to be cured of a mistrustful scepticism. They could hardly believe, when that time came, that the British Government was seriously trying to find a way by which the government of India should be handed over to the Indians. It was then that an unofficial group of concerned people, sponsored largely by the Quakers and led by Horace Alexander (if that is the right word for his unassuming position), was able to be a means of creating trust and understanding between the Government mission and the Indian leaders. Communications between the two often needed to be re-interpreted if they were not to be misunderstood.

From the author's position of intimacy and sequential experience we may see what Gandhi meant by non-violence in the hands of those who fully believed in it, and were willing to suffer in the practice of it. Gandhi was certain, and was over and over again proved correct in the belief, that violence always breeds further violence and encourages tyranny. On the other hand he was not unrealistic. The fact that he openly supported the action of the Indian Government in sending troops to Kashmir, to drive back the raiders from the North West Frontier, has been used as evidence that he had abandoned his convictions about non-violence once independence was gained. But in the case of Kashmir he knew that where there had been no education and training in non-violent resistance such tactics were out of the question and armed resistance was necessary. He never permitted belief in non-violence to be used as an excuse for doing nothing.

Gandhi's fasts were for penance and purification. He fasted for the sins of others as the Curé d'Ars fasted for his erring parishioners, and he sought enlightenment through asceticism. Most British ministers and officials regarded his fasts as an unfair forcing of their hands, and of course as a great nuisance. But if freedom from British control had been all he cared for, and he thought he could get this by fasting, such extreme measures would have taken place much more frequently, and have been more clearly directed against the British. They were more often undertaken on account of weakening in non-violent methods among his followers or on account of communal

strife, and in each of these cases his fast was effective in bringing about a change of heart. Although Gandhi is often thought of as primarily a politician, there is no doubt that his heart was always in the villages of India, with the poor and needy, and above all with the Untouchables, as they were then, and as they still are in some places in spite of his influence for reform. He cared as much for social justice within India as he did for her independence.

There was probably more understanding between Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax) and Gandhi than between Gandhi and any other Viceroy, because both were primarily religious men; this meant that although they did not immediately reach mutual understanding, it came after some perseverance. Lord Halifax in his memoirs writes:

‘There was a directness about [Gandhi] which was singularly winning, but this could be accompanied by a subtlety of intellectual process which could sometimes be disconcerting. To appreciate what was passing in his mind it was necessary, if not to start from the same point, at least to understand what was the starting point for him; and this was nearly always very human and very simple.’

There are other times in this history when the blindness of conventional British imperialism is only too obvious and destructive, and when we may also regret the extreme standpoints of Indian power seekers. We shall never know what would have happened in India if Gandhi’s policy for independence had been followed. He wanted the British to hand over power to an interim Indian government, which would then resolve internal tensions in its own way. By this means, Gandhi fully hoped, India would remain a united country containing many religions. Dr Jinnah strongly opposed this with his demand for a Moslem state, although many Moslems disagreed; it says much for Gandhi’s objective outlook that he was willing for the interim government to be formed either under Jinnah or the Congress leaders, whichever the British thought best. But the British would not risk such a course, and the final settlement had to include the partition of India and Pakistan.

One of the most impressive chapters in the book is the eye-witness account of how independence came to Calcutta, where the worst communal strife and bloodshed was expected. Gandhi’s personal presence, along with the public confession and retraction of a Muslim League leader, recently a bitter critic of Gandhi, but who now stood by him, sent a wave of peace and sanity over the restless city, and this lasted through the ensuing months. As Horace Alexander writes:

‘When you have lived for most of a year in a city that has been given over to violence and hatred and fear, suddenly to find that all the clouds have lifted, and that the sky is blue and serene, gives a sense of what can best be called “miraculous”. No wonder that people spoke of “the miracle of Calcutta”, and no wonder they associated Gandhi’s name with it.’

The book includes an interesting reprint of an essay by the same author on 'The Political Ideas of Mahatma Gandhi' written in 1949, and also some personal correspondence between Gandhi and himself (unprinted until now), which reveals something of Gandhi's warmth and sweetness of character. He never failed in personal contact, and very often lightened the burdens of others by the humour and sense of proportion derived from his own self-discipline. Horace Alexander believes that the great love which he inspired in millions of people, some of whom had never met him, was due to his untarnished simplicity of life. 'Even when he was world-famous, he was still easily accessible to everybody. When, at the end of his life, he could have become Prime Minister or President of India, he took no office and continued to have no assured personal income. He identified himself with the poor as much as was humanly possible to the day of his death. Fame did not spoil him.'

There are those who still hold that India was better off under British rule, and that the world has lost and not gained by the independence of the states which have since been liberated from the old imperialism. At the same time there is a world-wide passion for freedom which sometimes tends towards violence. In Gandhi we have a man who felt and acted on a more fully human level than either of these because he lived with God. He stands not between the two extremes, in the land of compromise, but in a dimension which transcends both. Surely Christians must not fail to heed him and to appraise what he achieved. There is a good account of it in this book.