UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_148948

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

THE

MISSION OF OUR MASTER

ESSAYS AND DISCOURSES

BY

THE EASTERN & WESTERN DISCIPLES

OF RAMAKRISHNA—VIVEKANANDA.

PRICE RS. THREE

G. A. NATESAN & CO., MADRAS.

FIRST EDITION.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

teachings to need any introduction to Indian readers.

Our object in presenting this collection to the public is to mirror the mind of the Great Sage as reflected in the writings of numerous persons endowed with great devotion and spirituality.

We have made a formal attempt to classify the matter under convenient heads, but of course many of the contributions are capable of being put under more than one head indicated by us.

There are many who seem to think that Swami Vivekananda and his band of co-workers confined themselves to mere philosophical discourses. There could be no greater mistake than that. For Service is the first aim of the Brotherhood whose record of benevolence and charity in connection with innumerable organizations for medical and famine relief forms a bright and glowing chapter in the literature of the Mission. An attempt is made in the last section of this book to give a summary of the practical work of the Mission apart from propagandist activities.

CONTENTS.

Part I.—General.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA
By Swami Vivekananda ... 1

THE COMMON BASIS OF ALL RELIGIONS
By Swami Ramakrishnananda ... 15

PRE-EXISTENCE AND IMMORTALITY
By Swami Abhedananda ... 21

SELF-MASTERY OF A SAINT
By Swami Abhedananda ... 33

POETRY OF THE VEDAS
By Swami Saradananda ... 41

MISSIONARIES IN INDIA
By Sister Nivedita ... 46

CHRISTIAN AND HINDU
By Swami Trigunatita ... 77

THE INDIAN EPICS
By Swami Saradananda ... 92

GURU
By Swami Brahmananda ... 113

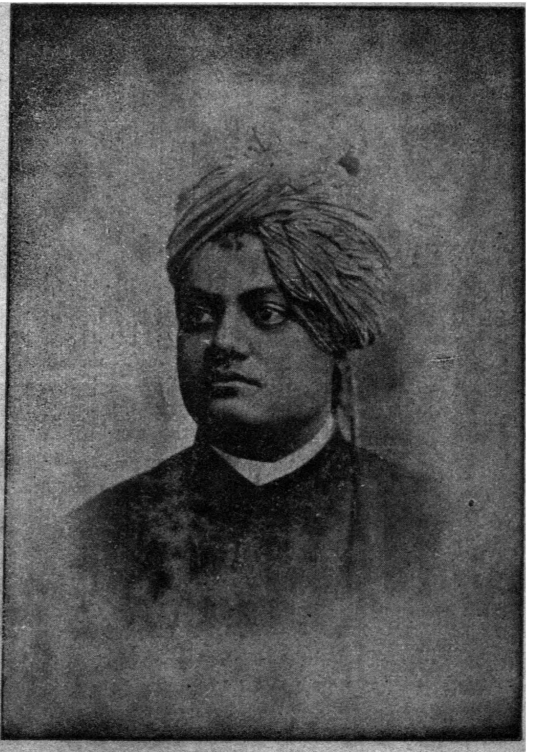
SANKARACHARYA
By Swami Turiyananda ... 126

THE ETHICAL IDEAS OF THE HINDUS
By Swami Saradananda ... 145

Part II.—Comparative Religion.

THE GREAT WORLD-TEACHERS
By Swami Vivekananda ... 175
ZOROASTER
By Swami Paramananda ... 179
DID CHRIST TEACH A NEW RELIGION
By Swami Abhedananda ... 193
SYNTHESIS OF HINDUISM
By Swami Bodhananda ... 204
CONFUCIUS AND HIS PHILOSOPHY
By Swami Bodhananda ... 217
LORD BUDDHA
By Swami Vivekananda ... 226
RELATION OF BUDDHISM TO HINDUISM
By Swami Vivekananda ... 229
LAO-TZE AND HIS TEACHINGS
By Swami Abhedananda ... 232
THE TALMUD
By Swami Kripananda ... 255
THE MESSAGE OF MOHAMMED
By Swami Ramakrishnananda ... 273
THE PRACTICE OF THE CHRIST-IDEAL
By Swami Paramananda ... 276
CHRISTIANITY AND VEDANTA
By S. E. Waldo ... 281
GOD AND FREEDOM IN THE VEDANTA
By J. J. Goodwin ... 290

SISTER NIVEDITA.



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Part III.—Social.

SELFLESSNESS
By Swami Vivekananda ... 297
CASTE
By Swami Vivekananda ... 298
WOMAN'S PLACE IN HINDU RELIGION
By Swami Abhedananda ... 304
THE IDEALS OF THE INDIAN WOMEN
By Sister Nivedita ... 326
MONASTIC LIFE IN INDIA
By Sister Devamata ... 342
THE ELEVATION OF THE MASSES
By Swami Vivekananda ... 354
THE HINDU IDEAL OF NATIONALISM
By Swami Sharvananda ... 367

Part IV.—Personal.

MY MASTER
By Swami Vivekananda ... 375
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND HIS WORK
By Swami Abhedananda ... 410
THE MASTER AS I SAW HIM
By Sister Nivedita ... 435

Part—V. The Mission and Social Work.

THE ADVAITA ASHRAMA
By Swami Virajananda ... 444
THE PRACTICAL WORK OF THE MISSION. ... 448
THE MISSION'S WORK IN FOREIGN LANDS ... 455

Swami Vivekananda

AN EXHAUSTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION OF

HIS SPEECHES AND WRITINGS.

THIRD EDITION.

This publication is the first of its kind. It is the most exhaustive and comprehensive collection of the work of Swami Vivekananda hitherto published. It contains, among others, his eloquent character sketch of "My Master"; his celebrated lecture at the great Parliament of Religions at Chicago; all the important and valuable speeches delivered in England, America and India on Gnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Vedanta, and Hinduism; selections from the inspiring speeches he gave, in reply to addresses of welcome that were presented to him at different towns and cities in India, during his historic journey from Colombo to Almora, on his return from America.

Detailed contents.—My Master; Hinduism as a Religion; Reply to the Addresses of Congratulations from Madras and Calcutta; The Ideal of Universal Religion; God in Everything; Immortality; Is the Soul Immortal; The Freedom of the Soul; Maya and Illusion; Maya and the Conception of God; Maya and Freedom; The Real and the Apparent Man; The Absolute and Manifestation; Unity in Diversity; The Cosmos; The Macrocosm; Realization; Karma Yoga; Metaphysics in India; Re-incarnation; Bhakti or Devotion; Vedanta; The Vedanta in Indian Life; The Mission of the Vedanta; The Sages of India; Christ, The Messenger; The Relation of Buddhism to Hinduism; The True Method of Social Reform; The Reform of Caste; Education on National Lines; The Conquest of the World by Indian Thought; Poems, etc.

Fifth Edition.

Price Rs. 3. To Subscribers of *I. R.*, Rs. 2-8.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

The Mission of Our Master.

PART I.—GENERAL.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA.*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

NON-EXISTENCE can never be the cause of what exists. Something cannot come out of nothing. That the law of causation is omnipotent and knows no time or place when it did not exist is a doctrine as old as the Aryan race, sung by their ancient poet-seers, formulated by their philosophers, and made the corner-stone upon which the Hindu man even of to-day builds his whole scheme of life.

There was an inquisitiveness in the race to start with, which very soon developed into bold analysis, and though in the first attempt the work turned out might be like the attempts of the future master-sculptor with shaky hands, it very soon gave way to strict science, bold attempts and startling results.

Its boldness made them search every brick of their sacrificial altars; scan, cement and pulverise every word of their scriptures; arrange, re-arrange, doubt, deny or explain the ceremonies; turned their

* From the *Prabhuddha Bharata*, Dec. 1918.

and a good many luxuries of life are already there.

Most modern scholars are agreed that surroundings as to climate and conditions purely Indian were not yet working on the race.

Onward through several centuries, we come to a multitude surrounded by snows of the Himalayas on the North and the heat of the South—vast plains, interminable forests, through which mighty rivers roll their tides. We catch a glimpse of different races—Dravidians, Tartars, and Aboriginals pouring in their quota of blood, of speech, of manners and religions—and at last a great nation emerges to our view, still keeping the type of the Aryan ; stronger, broader, and more organised by the assimilation.

We find the central assimilative core giving its type and character to the whole mass, clinging on with great pride to its name of "Aryan," and though willing to give other races the benefits of its civilisation, it was by no means willing to admit them within the "Aryan" pale.

The Indian climate again gave a higher direction to the genius of the race. In a land where nature was propitious and yielded easy victories, the national mind started to grapple and conquer the higher problems of life in the field of thought. Naturally the thinker, the priest, became the highest class in the Indian society, and not the man of the sword. The priests again, even at that dawn of history put most of their energy in elaborating rituals ; and when the

nation began to find the load of ceremonies and lifeless rituals too heavy,—came the first philosophical speculations, and the royal race was the first to break through the maze of killing rituals.

On the one hand, the majority of the priests impelled by economical considerations were bound to defend that form of religion which made their existence a necessity of society and assigned them the highest place in the scale of caste; on the other hand, the king-caste, whose strong right hand guarded and guided the nation and who now found themselves as leaders in the higher thoughts also, were loath to give up the first place to men who only knew how to conduct a ceremonial. There were then others, recruited from both the priest and king-castes, who ridiculed equally the ritualists and philosophers, declared spiritualism as fraud and priestcraft, and upheld the attainment of material comforts as the highest goal of life. The people tired of ceremonials and wondering at the philosophers joined in masses the materialists. This was the beginning of that caste question and that triangular fight in India between ceremonials, philosophy and materialism which has come down unsolved to our own days.

The first solution of the difficulty attempted was by applying the eclecticism which from the earliest days had taught them to see in differences the same truth in various garbs. The great leader of this school, Krishna himself—of royal race—and his sermon, the Gita, have after various vicissitudes brought

about by the upheavals of the Jains, the Buddhists and other sects, fairly established themselves as the "Prophet" of India and the truest philosophy of life. The tension though toned for the time did not satisfy the social wants which were among the causes —the claim of the king-race to stand first in the scale of caste and the popular intolerance of priestly privilege. Krishna had opened the gates of spiritual knowledge and attainment to all irrespective of sex or caste, but he left undisturbed the same problem on the social side. This again has come down to our own days, inspite of the gigantic struggle of the Buddhists, Vaishnavas, etc., to attain to social equality for all.

Modern India admits spiritual equality of all souls—but strictly keeps the social difference.

Thus we find the struggle renewed all along the line in the seventh century before the Christian era and finally in the sixth, overwhelming the ancient order of things under Sakya Muni, the Buddha. In their reaction against the privileged priesthood they swept off almost every bit of the old ritual of the Vedas, subordinated the gods of the Vedas to the position of servants to their own human saints and declared the "Creator and Supreme Ruler" as an invention of priestcraft and superstition.

But the aim of Buddhism was reform against ceremonials requiring offerings of animals, against hereditary caste, exclusive priesthood and against belief in permanent souls. It never attempted to destroy the Vedic religion, or overturn the social order. It

introduced a vigorous method, by organising a class of Sannyasins into a strong monastic brotherhood, and the Brahmavadinis into a body of nuns,—by introducing images of saints in the place of altar-fires.

It is probable that the reformers had for centuries the majority of the Indian people with them. The older forces were never entirely pacified but they underwent a good deal of modification during the centuries of Buddhistic supremacy.

In ancient India the centres of national life were always the intellectual and spiritual and not political. Of old, as now, political and social power has been always subordinated to spiritual and intellectual. The outburst of national life was round colleges of sages and spiritual teachers. We thus find the Samities of the Panchalas, of the Kashyas (Benares), the Maithilas standing out as great centres of spiritual culture and philosophy, even in the Upanishads. Again these centres in turn became the focus of political ambition of the various divisions of the Aryans.

The great epic Mahabharata tells us of the war of the Kurus and Panchalas for supremacy over the nation, in which they destroyed each other. The spiritual supremacy veered round and centred in the East among the Magadhas and Maithilas, and after the Kuru-Panchala war a sort of supremacy was obtained by the kings of Magadha.

The Buddhist reformation and its chief field of activity was also the same eastern region; and when the Maurya kings forced possibly by the bar sinister to

their escutcheon, patronised and let the new movement, the new priest power joined hands with the political power of the empire of Pataliputra. The popularity of Buddhism and its fresh vigour made the Maurya kings the greatest emperors that India ever had. The power of the Maurya sovereigns made Buddhism that world-wide religion that we see even to-day.

The exclusiveness of the old form of Vedic religions debarred it from taking ready help from outside. At the same time it kept it free and pure from many debasing elements which Buddhism in its propagandist zeal was forced to assimilate.

This extreme adaptability in the long run made Indian Buddhism lose almost all its individuality, and extreme desire to be of the people made it unfit to cope with the intellectual forces of the mother religion in a few centuries. The Vedic party in the meanwhile got rid of a good deal of its most objectionable features, as animal sacrifice, and took lessons from the rival daughter in the judicious use of images, temple processions, and other impressive performances and stood ready to take within her fold the whole empire of Indian Buddhism already tottering to its fall.

And the crash came, with the Scythian invasions and the total destruction of the empire of Pataliputra.

The invaders already incensed at the invasion of their central Asiatic home by the preachers of Buddhism, found in the sun-worship of the Brahmanas great sympathy with their own solar religion,—and

when the Brahmanist party were ready to adapt and spiritualise many of the customs of the new comers, the invaders threw themselves heart and soul into the Brahmanic cause.

Then there is a veil of darkness and shifting shadows, there are tumults of war, rumours of massacres, and the next scene rises upon a new phase of things.

The empire of Magadha was gone. Most part of Northern India was under the rule of petty chiefs always at war with one another. Buddhism was almost extinct, except in some eastern and Himalayan provinces and in the extreme south; and the nation after centuries of struggle against the power of a hereditary priest awoke to find itself in the clutches of a double priesthood of hereditary Brahmanas and as exclusive monks of the new regime, with all the powers of the Buddhistic organisation and without their sympathy for the people.

A renaissant India bought by the valour and blood of the heroic Rajputs, defined by the merciless intellect of a Brahmana from the same historical thought-centre of Mithila, led by a new philosophical impulse organised by Sankara and his bands of Sannyasins and beautified by the arts and literature of the courts of Malava—arose on the ruins of the old.

The task before it was profound, problems vaster than what their ancestors ever faced. A comparatively small and compact race, of the same blood and speech and the same social and religious aspiration,

saving its unity by unscalable walls around itself has grown huge by multiplication and addition during the Buddhistic supremacy and divided by race, colour, speech, spiritual instinct, and social ambitions into hopelessly jarring factions. And this has to be unified and welded into one gigantic nation. This task Buddhism had come also to solve, and had taken it up when the proportions were not so vast.

So long it was a question of Aryanising the other types that were pressing for admission, and thus out of different elements making a huge Aryan body. Inspite of concessions and compromises Buddhism was eminently successful and remained the national religion of India. But the time came when the allurements of sensual forms of worship indiscriminately taken in along with various low races, were too dangerous for the central Aryan core, and a longer contact would certainly have destroyed the civilisation of the Aryans. Then came a natural reaction for self-preservation, and Buddhism as a separate sect ceased to live in most parts of its land of birth.

The reaction-movement led in close succession by Kumarilla in the North and Sankara and Ramanuja in the South has become the last embodiment of that vast accumulation of sects and doctrines and rituals called Hinduism. For the last thousand years or more, its great task has been assimilation, with now and then an outburst of reformation. This reaction first wanted to revive the rituals of the Vedas,—failing which, it made the Upanishads or the philosophic

portions of the Vedas of its basis. It brought Vyasa's systems of Mimamsa philosophy and Krishna's sermon, the Gita, to the forefront, and all succeeding movements have followed the same. The movement of Sankara forced its way through its high intellectuality but it could be of little service to the masses, owing to its adherence to strict caste-laws, very little scope for ordinary emotion, and making Sanskrit the only vehicle of communication. Ramanuja on the other hand, with a most practical philosophy, a great appeal to the emotions, an entire denial of birthrights before spiritual attainments and appeals through the popular tongue, completely succeeded in bringing the masses back to the Vedic religion.

The northern reaction of ritualism was followed by the fitful glory of the Malava empire. With the destruction of that in a short time, northern India went to sleep, as it were, for a long period, to be rudely awakened by the thundering onrush of Mahomedan cavalry across the passes of Afghanistan. In the south, however, the spiritual upheaval of Sankara and Ramanuja was followed by the usual Indian sequence of united races and powerful empires. It was the home of refuge of Indian religion and civilisation, when northern India from sea to sea lay bound at the feet of Central Asiatic conquerers. The Mahomedans tried for centuries to subjugate the south, but can scarcely be said to have got even a strong foothold; and when the strong and united empire of the Moguls was very near completing its conquest, the hills and

plateaus of the south poured in their bands of fighting peasant horsemen, determined to die for the religion which Ramdas preached and Tuka sang and in a short time the gigantic empire of the Moguls was only a name.

The movements in northern India during the Mahomedan period are characterised by their uniform attempt of holding the masses back from joining the religion of the conquerors,—which brought in its train social and spiritual equality for all.

The friars of the orders founded by Ramananda, Kabir, Dadu, Chaitanya or Nanak were all agreed in preaching the equality of Man, however differing from each other in philosophy. Their energy was for the most part spent in checking the rapid conquest of Islam among the masses and they had very little left to give birth to new thoughts and aspirations. Though evidently successful in their purpose of keeping the masses within the folds of the old religion, and tempering the fanaticism of the Mahomedans, they were mere apologists, struggling to obtain permission to live.

One great prophet, however, arose in the north, Govind Singh, the last Guru of the Sikhs, with creative genius, and the result of his spiritual work was followed by the well-known political organisation of the Sikhs. We have seen throughout the history of India, a spiritual upheaval is almost always succeeded by a political unity extending over more or less area of the continent, which in its turn helps to strengthen the spiritual aspiration that brings it to being. But

the spiritual aspirations that preceded the rise of the Mahratta or the Sikh empire was entirely reactionary. We seek in vain to find in the court of Poona or Lahore even a ray of reflection of that intellectual glory which surrounded the courts of the Moguls, much less the brilliance of Malava or Vijayanagar. It was intellectually the darkest period of Indian history, and both these meteoric empires representing the upheaval of mass-fanaticism and hating culture with all their hearts, lost all their motive power as soon as they had succeeded in destroying the rule of the hated Mahomedans.

Then there came again a period of confusion. Friends and foes, the Mogul empire and its destroyers, and the till then peaceful foreign traders, French and English, all joined in a *melee* of fight. For more than half a century there was nothing but war and pillage and destruction, and when the smoke and dust cleared, England was stalking victorious over the rest. There has been half a century of peace, and law and order under the sway of Britain. Time alone will prove if it is the order of progress or not.

There have been a few religious movements amongst the Indian people during the British rule, following the same line as was taken up by northern Indian sects during the sway of the empire of Delhi. They are the voices of the dead or the dying—the feeble tones of a terrorised people, pleading for permission to live. They are ever eager to adjust their spiritual or social surrroundings according to the tastes

of the conquerors—if they are only left the right to live, especially with the sects under the English domination, when social differences with the conquering race are more glaring than the spiritual. The Hindu sects of the century seemed to have set one ideal of truth before them—the approval of their English masters. No wonder that these sects have mushroom lives to live. The vast body of the Indian people religiously hold aloof from them and the only popular recognition they get is the jubilation of the people when they die.

But possibly for sometime yet it cannot be otherwise.

THE COMMON BASIS OF ALL RELIGIONS.*

By Swami Ramakrishnanda.

THE ideal of all religions is God, God alone. As different rivers, taking their birth in different places, all flow toward the one ocean, so every religion leads to God. In whatever religion a man belongs, he has to worship the one God. According to the Semitic belief, whatever is not God, is called Satan. The two existences are God and anti-God. What is Satan? If we want to know what Satan is, it is very easy for us; but it is very difficult for us to know what God is. What then is Satan? That which makes me forget my God. And what is that? The ego. The ego makes me forget the Lord and believe that all these things belong to me. So what in Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism they call Satan, in Vedanta we call ego or selfishness. All ideas of "I," "me" and "mine" are Satanic, because they are based on ignorance and put the ego in the place of the Lord of the whole universe. Therefore some philosophers declare that ignorance is Satan and wisdom is God, for it is always ignorance which leads a man to doubt the existence of God. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God."

* Talk given to some Mohammedan students who took refuge in the monastery during a storm, hence the reference to the Semitic idea of a Satan. The young men were so much interested in what the Swami had to say, that they returned every evening for a week to have him expound to them the tenets of their own religion.

It is only out of vanity that men deny the existence of God. Such people make much of the ego and think that the human mind can unravel the mysteries of the universe; but it is as absurd to suppose that this puny mind can understand the workings of the Lord as that an ant can lift up the Himalayas and plunge them into the Bay of Bengal. This human mind by itself is so weak, so slavish in its nature, that we cannot imagine anything weaker or more helpless. Does it remember what it thought or did last week, or last month, or when it was five years old? Has it the power to go beyond this universe? No. Then it is subject to all sorts of temptations. It is led away by anything and everything in the outside world. Can it always even keep itself awake? No, it is often and often overpowered by sleep. It is also like a monkey, with no power to keep quiet even for a moment. For this reason, one of the greatest warriors of India has said that the mind is so unsteady and tumultuous that to curb it is more difficult than to curb the wind. What is the meaning of restlessness? Weakness. It is the weak man who is restless. The weaker a thing, the more it is restless; the stronger it is, the calmer and steadier is it. A little plant bends and quivers at the slightest breeze, but the Himalayas remain unmoved in the fiercest storm. Therefore this constant restlessness of the mind shows its weakness, its flimsiness.

How precarious too is the life of this body! I

am talking here at this moment, then suddenly I may stop, my body will become stiff and people will say that I am dead. Having such a body to call my own, having such a mind to call my own, how can I be vain and proud? That man must be absolutely in the hands of Satan who makes much of this body and mind; or who thinks this body and mind to be his own property. Neither the mind belongs to me, nor the body. To whom then do they belong? They must belong to Him from whom they come. I am evidently not my own master. If I were, I could stay here as long as I chose; but the moment God calls, I must go away and leave parents, relatives, property, all that I care for. So nothing is mine. "Nothing belongs to me, all is Thine, O Lord!" This is true wisdom. "All is mine," is Satanic; "All is Thine," is of God. This every religion teaches.

The essential parts of all religions are the same. It is only in the non-essential parts that differences are to be found. Therefore we need not find fault with other religions on account of their differences in external manners. That which makes up the external is the shell side; it is always rough and hard and difficult to break, but it has one advantage, it preserves the kernel. Religion may be defined as 'giving God his due." God alone is the proprietor of the universe. He alone is the proprietor of me, the proprietor of you; recognizing this and giving up all to Him is religion. Wishing to keep all for oneself is

irreligion. Throw away the idea of "me" and "mine;" give up all to God: this is the essential of every religion. This is what Mahommedanism teaches, what Christianity teaches, what Vedanta teaches, what every religion teaches.

Human nature is all the same. Only dresses differ. What is in the dress? You may wear a coat and trousers, I may wear this one simple cloth; but underneath, the nature is all the same. Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall go away again. But behind all dress, all ceremonies and religious rites is this one idea,—to realize God. Christian, Mahommedan, Hindu, all are striving for this. Jnana-Marga, Bhakti-Marga, Karma-Yoga, Raja-Yoga (the paths of wisdom, devotion, work and self-control) all lead to this. To realize God is consciously or unconsciously the aim of every man. He may seem to be drawn away by a beautiful face, by sense-pleasure or ambition, but he will never find satisfaction until he has reached God. This too is the common basis of all true ethics; for all that takes man to God is morality, and all that takes man away from God is immorality.

In the realm of law, however, there is religious law and there is social law, and we must discriminate between them. God commands us to punish those who disobey Him. Why should we punish them? To make them obedient servants. But Christ says: When a man strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other. Is this not a contradiction? No. The

one is a religious law, the other a social law. The one is meant for those who have given up the world; the other for the householder, who must punish the wrong-doer to protect society.

A man who wants nothing but God, if some one asks him for his house, he will say: "Yes, take it. I do not want it." But that is only possible for a man who is a *Sannyasin*, who has given up the world and all worldly ties; not for one who has a family and still wishes to live in the world. If a householder should practise such non-resistance, there would be general depredation, the good would be destroyed and the wicked would prevail. Punishment is not a bad thing. If you have done something which helps to rectify a man, you have done good to him. We should not let the wicked thrive. In a field there are always weeds, but if you want to reap a good harvest you must pull them out. Yet it must not be done in a revengeful or malicious spirit based on egotism. Satan always wants to revenge. God sent Satan out of heaven because he was not worthy to remain there, but He was not angry with him. The attitude of God towards Satan is always pity; the attitude of Satan towards God is that of revenge, jealousy, hatred. Those are always Satanic who are revengeful or destructive, for vengeance is based on egotism, on the seeing of difference; and the seeing of difference is ignorance, the seeing of sameness is knowledge. This is equally true of those who persecute in the

name of religion, as of those who fight or kill for worldly gain. Vedanta says that a good Jew, a good Christian, a good Mahommedan and a good Hindu are all the same, for they are all faithful servants of the Lord. In whatever country they may live, they are equally God's servants. As Sri Krishna teaches in the Gita: "Whoever seeks me by whatever method, of him do I make the faith firm and unwavering." And again: "Howsoever do men resort to me, even so do I serve them. My dear son, know that all paths have been marked out by me." This is Vedanta. The God of Vedanta was not discovered by Buddha. He was not discovered by Christ. He was not discovered by Mahommed. He is revealing Himself throughout all ages. He has revealed Himself throughout the beginningless past, and He will continue to reveal Himself throughout the endless future.—(*From the Message of the East.*)

PRE-EXISTENCE AND IMMORTALITY.*

By Swami Abhedananda.

ONE of the fundamental principles of the philosophy and religion of Vedanta is the immortality of the human soul. According to the teachings of Vedanta, each individual soul is immortal by nature. However sinful it may appear to be from the moral standpoint, it will continue to exist after the death of the body. It cannot be annihilated or destroyed into nothingness. It can never cease to exist.

On this point the religion of Vedanta differs from the dogmas of those dualistic religions which maintain that immortal life can be obtained only by a few chosen ones as a special gift of God while others will perish. Many of the orthodox Christian theologians hold that the soul's continued life after death in eternal future is not a natural gift but a special gift, being conditioned upon the proper use of this life. They think that immortality is a reward of merit, or of good works, or of an ethical life or faith in the Christ. Here we may ask, who will decide how many degrees above zero one must be, morally, in order to obtain the gift of immortality?

If we examine minutely we shall find that this dogma of conditional immortality is not based upon a rational foundation. It makes God, the merciful Father, partial and unjust. How can we imagine that

* Lecture delivered in America.

a just, impartial and merciful Father will grant immortality to some of his children and allow the rest to perish, simply on account of their immoral acts or mistakes? The religion of Vedanta does not teach this dogma of conditional immortality, but, on the contrary, it says that immortal life cannot be a reward or a gift of any superior being, because that reward or punishment is nothing but the result or reaction of our own actions; and since every human action is finite or limited by time and space, and consequently non-eternal, it cannot produce an eternal effect in the form of immortal life. No human action, either of the mind or of the body, however good or virtuous it may be called, can produce an eternal effect, that is, an effect unlimited by time or by space. It will then be against the law of cause and sequence, which makes every effect or result similar to its cause, both in nature and quality.

There is another important point on which the conception of immortality in Vedanta differs from that of Christianity. Christianity, believing in the theory of special creation of the individual soul at the time of birth, denies the pre-existence of the human soul previous to the birth of the body; yet it admits the continuity of the soul after death in an eternal future. This doctrine again is not based upon a rational foundation, nor is it supported by any fact of nature, because it is impossible for a thing which has a beginning in time to last forever. No one has ever seen or heard of any substance which

began to exist at a certain time but continued forever in future. Can we imagine a stick, the one end of which is in our hand and the other end is endless, unlimited? No, it is impossible. We cannot think of a thing which has a beginning or a limit either in time or in space, on one side, and on the other side is unlimited by either time or space. As we cannot imagine any earthly object, or material thing, of such a nature, how can we imagine that the soul, which had its birth in time and space, will continue to exist forever? We cannot conceive of a soul which came into existence at the time of birth and will remain forever after death in eternal future or endless time. Therefore, immortality, which means the eternal continuity of existence, presupposes the existence of the soul previous to the birth of the body. If we believe in the immortality of the human soul we shall have to admit its pre-existence also, because that which is born must die, and everything that has a beginning must have an end. This is the law of nature. We cannot go against it.

The laws of nature are always uniform and universal; there is no such thing as an exception. All exceptions are governed by other laws which we may or may not know; they are only the expressions of different laws. Anything that is born must be subject to death, and that which has a beginning must have an end. If we wish to be endless or immortal in future we must have to admit that we were beginningless or immortal in the past. Here some people

may think how is it possible that we existed in the past? If you apply that law, that because we exist to-day we could not come into existence out of nothing, then you will get a glimpse of the idea of pre-existence. And for this reason Vedanta teaches both immortality and pre-existence. No theory of immortality can be perfect or complete without admitting the pre-existence of the soul. No theory has successfully proved the necessity of an eternal future life in the case of one whose existence in the past has been proved to be unnecessary. If you say that your pre-existence was unnecessary so your immortal life will be equally unnecessary. If the world could get along without you before why should it not get along without you hereafter? What necessity will there be for an immortal life in future if you did not exist before? If you have come into existence all of a sudden, you can go out of existence all of a sudden. Who will prevent us from becoming such an ephemeral substance?

In Vedanta, true immortality means eternal existence in the past as well as in the future. Pre-existence and immortality are so closely related to each other that if we deny one we cannot accept the other. For logically, we shall be incorrect; we shall go against the laws of nature and our statement will be founded, not upon rational ground, but upon some dogma or doctrine which has no foundation. In Vedanta, therefore, we learn that each individual soul existed before the birth of the body. If we

believe that we shall continue to exist after death we shall have to admit that we existed in the past, otherwise we cannot have immortal life in future. We have not come into existence for the first time out of nothing, but our present is a connecting link in the chain of our past and future existence. We may not know it, we may not possess the memory of our past lives; still we existed just the same.

Here it may be asked, if we existed before our birth why do we not remember? This is one of the strongest objections often raised against the belief in pre-existence. Some people deny the existence of the soul in the past simply because they cannot remember the events of their past. Others, again, who hold memory as the standard of existence say, if our memory of the present ceases to exist at the time of death, with it we shall also cease to be; we cannot be immortal; because they hold that memory is the standard of life, and if we do not remember why then we are not the same beings.

Vedanta answers these questions by saying that it is possible for us to remember our previous existences. Those who have read "Raja Yoga" will recall that in the 18th aphorism of the third chapter it is said: "By perceiving the Samskaras one acquires the knowledge of past lives." Here the Samskaras mean the impressions of the past experience which lie dormant in our subliminal self, and are never lost. Memory is nothing but the awakening and rising of latent impressions above the threshold of consciousness. A Raja

Yogi, through powerful concentration upon these dormant impressions of the subconscious mind, can remember all the events of his past lives. There have been many instances in India of Yogis who could know not only their own past lives but correctly tell those of others. It is said that Buddha remembered five hundred of his previous births. Krishna says, in the "Bhagavad-Gita:" "Both thou and I, Arjuna, have gone through many births; thou knowest them not; but I know them all." This shows that Krishna remembered them because he was a Yogi; and Arjuna could not remember because he had not the power to do so.

Our subliminal self, or the subconscious mind, is the storehouse of all the impressions that we gather through our experiences during our lifetime. They are stored up, pigeon-holed there, in the Chitta, as it is called in Vedanta. "Chitta" means the same subconscious mind or subliminal self which is the storehouse of all impressions and experiences. And these impressions remain latent until favourable conditions rouse them and bring them out in the plane of consciousness. Here let us take an illustration: In a dark room pictures are thrown on a screen by lantern-slides. The room is absolutely dark. We are looking at the pictures. Suppose we open a window and allow the rays of the midday sun to fall upon the screen. Would we be able to see those pictures? No. Why? Because the more powerful flood of light will subdue the light of the lantern and the pictures. But although they are invisible to our eyes we cannot deny their

existence on the screen. Similarly, the pictures of the events of our previous lives upon the screen of the subliminal self may be invisible to us at present, but they exist there. Why are they invisible to us now? Because the more powerful light of sense-consciousness has subdued them. If we close the windows and doors of our senses from outside contact and darken the inner chamber of our self, then by focusing the light of consciousness and concentrating the mental rays we shall be able to know and remember our past lives, and all the events and experiences thereof. Those who wish therefore to develop their memory and remember their past should practice Raja Yoga and learn the method of acquiring the power of concentration by shutting the doors and windows of their senses. And that power of concentration must be helped by the power of self-control. That is, by controlling the doors and windows of our own senses.

These dormant impressions, whether we remember them or not, are the chief factors in moulding our individual characters with which we are born, and they are the causes of the inequalities and diversities which we find around us. When we study the characters and powers of geniuses and prodigies we cannot deny the pre-existence of soul. Whatever the soul has mastered in a previous life manifests in the present. The memory of particular events is not so important. If we possess the wisdom and knowledge which we gathered in our previous lives, then it matters very

little whether or not we remember the particular events, or the struggles which we went through in order to gain that knowledge. Those particular things may not come to us in our memory, but we have not lost the wisdom. Now, study your own present life and you will see that in this life you have gained some experience. The particular events and the struggles which you went through are passing out of your memory, but the experience, the knowledge which you have gained through that experience, has moulded your character, has shaped you in a different manner. You will not have to go through those different events again to remember; how you acquired that experience is not necessary; the wisdom gained is quite enough.

Then, again, we find among ourselves persons who are born with some wonderful powers. Take, for instance, the power of self-control. One is born with the power of self-control highly developed, and that self-control may not be acquired by another after years of hard struggle. Why is there this difference? Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was born with God-consciousness, and he went into the highest state of Samadhi when he was four years old; but this state is very difficult for other Yogis to acquire. There was a Yogi who came to see Ramakrishna. He was an old man and possessed wonderful powers, and he said: "I have struggled for forty years to acquire that state which is natural with you." Sankaracharya, the great commentator of the Vedanta philosophy, wrote his commentary when he was twelve years of

age, and there are very few thinkers and philosophers in the world who can understand the spirit of his writings. They are so deep and so sublime that ordinary minds cannot grasp them. There are many such instances which show that pre-existence is a fact, and that these latent or dormant impressions of previous lives are the chief factors in moulding the individual character without depending upon the memory of the past. Because we cannot remember our past, because of the loss of memory of the particular events, the soul's progress is not arrested. The soul will continue to progress further and further, even though the memory may be weak.

Each individual soul possesses this store house of previous experiences in the background, in the subconscious mind. Take the instance of two lovers. What is love? It is the attraction between two souls. This love does not die with the death of the body. True love survives death and continues to grow, to become stronger and stronger. Eventually it brings the two souls together and makes them one. The theory of pre-existence alone can explain why two souls at the first sight know each other and become attached to each other by the tie of friendship. This mutual love will continue to grow and will become stronger, and in the end will bring these lovers together, no matter where they go. Therefore, Vedanta does not say that the death of the body will end the attraction or the attachment of two souls; but as the souls are immortal so their relation will continue forever. But we must

not forget here that that relation and that love must be mutual. If you love some one and that person does not love you then it will be one-sided. It will not bring the two souls together. There must be mutual attraction. In Vedanta we learn that as immortality means the continued existence in eternal future, so pre-existence means the continued existence in the eternal past; the one cannot exist without the other. And each of these only expresses the one-half of our soul-life, which is eternal, and both of these together make a complete whole; that is the eternal soul-life. It existed before, and it was always unborn, and therefore it will continue to exist in future forever. Our present life is the resultant of the past, and our future will be the resultant of the present. Nothing will be lost.

Modern spiritualism has thrown a little light upon the future, that even the departed spirits do remember their past relations. This shows that memory does not depend entirely upon the physical organism, but memory goes with the soul wherever the soul goes. That is the real memory. The physical organism may be destroyed; it is only the machine through which that subliminal self is reproducing the powers which are latent in it. So our present life is the resultant of the past; it contains all the previous impressions and experiences of past lives; only under certain conditions can they be remembered. But here we must remember that immortality does not necessarily imply that we should go to heaven to

eternally enjoy the celestial pleasures, or to go to eternal perdition in order to suffer punishments on account of our evil deeds. These ideas are not necessarily included in the meaning of immortality. According to Vedanta, immortality includes the meaning of progress, growth and evolution of the soul from lower to higher stages of development; it also includes the idea that each individual soul will manifest the powers which are already latent in the soul by going through different stages of growth and development until perfection and omniscience and omnipresence are acquired. In order to attain to this, in order to accomplish this highest end, the soul must manifest itself in various stages of life and gain experience after experience. That cause which brought us on this plane of existence will continue to bring us here again in future. If the same cause remains in us, even after the death of the body, then nothing can prevent us from coming back to this plane of existence in order to fulfil our desires and purposes. This idea leads to the theory of rebirth and reincarnation of the individual soul. The rebirth and reincarnation of the individual soul is based upon the truth of the eternality of the soul-life which is expressed by pre-existence and immortality. The exodus of the soul after death into heaven or into some realm of punishment or lower realm depends entirely upon the thoughts and deeds of the individual soul, and the soul's stay in these realms is temporary, dependent upon the condition of reaping the results of those

thoughts and deeds. That is, the soul will remain there as long as it has not thoroughly reaped the fruits of its thoughts and deeds. At the expiration of that time the inmates of heavens and other realms will come back on this plane in order to gain further experience, to gain more powers, more knowledge, until perfection is reached. Vedanta does not say that heaven is eternal, but the soul has the power to transcend heaven and go beyond all celestial realms; why should we be limited to one particular spot? If we do not care to return to this realm we shall be dissatisfied even when we have gone to heaven. Then will come the time when we shall try to go further beyond until we have become absolutely perfect and omniscient and omnipresent. Therefore it is said in Vedanta: Even the highest heaven is temporary and non-eternal. The realms that exist between the earth and the highest heaven mark only the phenomenal growth and progress of the individual soul. Those who go there and remain there are subject to birth and rebirth. They will come back again. But those who have attained to perfection transcend all heavens, understand eternal life and remain perfect for ever and ever.

SELF-MASTERY OF A SAINT.

By Swami Abhedananda.

EVERY great religion has produced prophets and saints. The history of a religion consists of the lives of its prophets and saints and of the spiritual experiences attained by them. A religion is living which has the power to produce saintly characters, because the saintly character is the proof of the truth of a religion. If a religion cannot produce saintly characters at all times, then that religion is considered to be without life; it has lost its vitality and power. Christianity, Mahomedanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, also the religion of Vedanta, have all produced innumerable prophets and saints, who by their living example have established their mastery of spirit over flesh and animal nature. Genuine saintliness is not attained by one who is not absolutely moral. It is not only the climax of moral virtue, but also the attainment of spiritual realization.

There is a difference between moral virtue and spiritual realization. Spiritual realization does not mean a mere intellectual apprehension of the existence of God, but an actual communion with God. It depends upon the feeling of the Divine Presence in the soul, for at the time of realization the soul becomes devoted to the Supreme Ideal; it constantly thinks of Him, meditates on Him, talks about Him, and serves Him through intense faith and love. The stronger the realization, the more powerful becomes the attachment of the soul to the Divine Ideal. The Divine Ideal gradually absorbs all other interests and

* Abstract of a lecture.

swallows up all earthly attachments and all human affection. These find their true goal when directed toward God. All earthly attachment and human affection must end in God sooner or later. As streams of water, however small and weak they may be in the beginning, must eventually end in the mighty ocean, so human affection and earthly attachment, however scattered they may be at present, will eventually flow into the ocean of Divinity. When the river of the human soul reaches the ocean of Divinity, close spiritual communion is the result. In that state Selfhood, or the sense of I, Me, Mine, melts down, and absolute surrender to the Divine Ideal characterizes the inner nature of the devotee.

The self-surrender of a true saint finds extreme pleasure in self-sacrifice and in the practice of asceticism. A true saint believes that these are the signs of his absolute loyalty to his Divine Ideal. All fear and anxiety then vanish from the soul and blissful tranquillity takes possession of the heart. A true saint does not covet celestial pleasures, nor does he fear the sufferings of hell. In fact, he rises above both heaven and hell. Such a tremendous strength comes to the soul of a saint who has reached Divine communion!

A true saint lives an absolutely pure life in thought, word, and deed. All sensual elements and animal propensities are purged out of the heart and soul of a true saint. His ideal becomes to live a pure and spotless life because God is absolute purity itself. Some saints treat the weaknesses of the flesh with

merciless severity. Along with purity come extremely tender and charitable feelings for all beings. A saint loves all his fellow-beings and feels the presence of his Divine Ideal in every living creature. He treats all with equal kindness and never injures any one physically or mentally. He loves his enemies and practises non-resistance of evil. If a disease attacks him, he believes that it has been sent by God for his own good.

The true saint is extremely humble; he is free from egotism, vanity, pride, self-conceit; he does not think of himself as superior to any human being, but he devotes his life to the service of humanity. A saint feels so strongly for those who suffer that he often tries to relieve their pain by nursing and caring for them. Some of the Roman Catholic saints have made their names immortal by taking care of lepers, or those afflicted with other incurable diseases. We know that St. Francis of Assisi kissed the lepers and exchanged his garments with those of a filthy beggar. Ignatius Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. John of God, and others showed their love for humanity by cleansing the sores of their patients with their tongues. Their love was so great, so intense, so high that nothing, no distinction of good and bad appealed to them.

A true saint practises equanimity, self-resignation, patience. He has intense faith, love, and great moral courage. He is always the master; whenever he is persecuted, it only brings out all these powers of self-mastery. A complete triumph of spirit over flesh and earthly desires was manifested by those great souls

who are now honored as saints and martyrs. Most of the saints withdraw themselves from social life, because the world does not understand them and they do not care to adapt themselves to the foolish requirements of society. Simplicity in food and clothes becomes their ideal, consequently the complex living of worldly people does not appeal to them. This idea was at the foundation of the community life of the monks and nuns in the different religions. All saints practise self-denial and live in the eternal present, without thinking of the morrow. They depend upon the providence of the Heavenly Father, who always feeds His children. There are many examples to-day in India of holy men who live thus from hour to hour and from day to day. True saints of all religions practise self-mastery by denying themselves, by not indulging in their desires, by mortifying their natural passions and overcoming joy, hope, fear, and grief. If the desire arises for tasting the best food, they will enjoy what is most distasteful; if the desire be for the most precious thing, they will seek the most contemptible. If the desire be to possess more and more, a true saint wishes to possess less and less, and thus eventually he becomes perfect master of his mind and body. Poverty is another virtue of the true saint; it is the outcome of extreme self-denial and self-abnegation. Voluntary poverty is a blessing, but when it is forced upon us it is a curse. If you make yourself poor when you can have many things but do not care for them, this is self-denial; but if you

do not possess anything, what are you going to renounce ?

The Sanskrit word for saint is "Siddha," which means literally one who has accomplished the task, who has reached the end of a long and tiresome journey, hence one who has attained the fruit of religion, which is nothing but absolute self-mastery and God-consciousness. Although all saints of all religions eventually reach the same goal, still their methods of attainment vary. According to those different methods the *Siddhas*, or saints, can be classified as first, those who practise the saintly virtues for a long time, live simple, pure, and chaste lives, perform penances and austerities, devote their time to prayers, meditation and renunciation, self-denial, and resignation. Thus through constant practice they reach God and are called *Siddhas*. The second kind are those who have attained God-consciousness by the grace of the Almighty. That grace may come unexpectedly and transform the imperfect character of an individual into that of a perfect saint. After living a virtuous life for many incarnations one becomes fitted to obtain such grace from the Lord. This grace may come directly from the Universal Spirit, or through any of the Divine Incarnations, like Christ, Krishna, Buddha, Ramakrishna. These Divine Incarnations are the mediums through which the grace of the Lord comes to a true devotee. When the Divinity incarnates himself in a human form, a tremendous flood of spirituality inundates the world, carrying the seed of

saintliness everywhere, and all souls which come in touch with that flood will receive certain blessings, certain powers.

There is another class of saints who manifest their God-consciousness from their childhood. They are born perfect. The attractions and limitations of the world cannot affect them. They are called in Sanskrit *Nitya-Siddhas*, which literally means "eternally perfect." They are perfected souls who live from eternity to eternity. They are absolutely free to manifest themselves whenever and wherever they may choose to do so. They are born saints. Their self-mastery is unique; they are perfect masters of themselves as well as of the phenomenal world. They do not have to make an effort to conquer any passion or worldly desire, but they are born self-masters, not only of the body but also of the mind. Saintly virtues are natural with them. They are not drawn to this plane by the force of desires, by the law of Karma, but choose their own parents consciously and come to help mankind. Whenever they wish anything, that wish is instantly fulfilled. Their will-power controls environmental conditions. They possess Divine powers and manifest them whenever they like. They are worshipped as the Saviours of mankind. There have been many manifestations of such perfected souls in India from time immemorial—Sukadeva, Narada, Sankaracharya, and others.

The latest of these manifestations was in the nineteenth century in the form of Bhagavan Sri Rama-

krishna. Those who have read the life and sayings of Ramakrishna, by Professor MaxMuller, or "My Master," by Swami Vivekananda, will remember that this Great Soul was a born saint. From his very childhood he manifested his saintly character and self-mastery. When he was four years old he attained the highest state of *Samadhi*, or God-consciousness, by looking at a beautiful cloud. He remained in that state for a long time, communed with God, and realized God, as also his own mission. Even at that early age he was fond of saints and sages, and wherever he would hear that holy men were living, he would go there; he was naturally drawn to such saints, and would try to imitate their virtues. Worldly attractions did not appeal to him. During his whole earthly career he was not for a moment attracted by the charm of worldly pleasures, which fascinate and ensnare the minds of ordinary mortals. His love for God and for spiritual realization reached a climax when he was in his teens. He would not go to any college or university; he said that if God taught him direct, then he would learn, otherwise not. His elder brother was a professor and insisted that he attend college, that he learn something; but he said: "What does learning amount to? It is all in the relative world. Can you give me the realization of the Supreme through books?" Yet when he was twelve years old he answered the most difficult questions asked by pundits and scholars.

His love for humanity was so great that he made

no distinction of caste, creed, or nationality. Although he was born of most orthodox and pious parents, still in spite of their opposition he mixed freely with all classes of people, always trying to do good to them, to bring them to a love of God. His self-mastery was equally great and unique. He brought his whole body and mind, nay every nerve and muscle, under his control. All the organs of his body obeyed his commands. Even his heart-beat and pulse were governed by his conscious will. His desire and passion were not for any earthly object or for sense-pleasures, but for God alone. He had absolute mastery over lust. In the Bhagavad Gita it is said: "Three are the gates of hell,—degrading to the soul,—lust, wrath, and greed; therefore, these three must be abandoned by one who wishes to become a saint and reach perfection." (Ch. 16, v. 21.) He is not a true saint who has not conquered lust, wrath, and greed, and who has not become master over worldly desires. He is a true saint of the highest type who has conquered these three passions in this life, and he possesses eternal bliss in the soul. In this age of materialism and sensuality, there can be found no more perfect example of self-mastery than in the superhuman character of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He was like the personification of absolute mastery over lust, anger, and earthly desires. Whosoever follows his path will surely reach perfection and God-consciousness even in this life. His grace can be easily acquired through sincere longing and earnest prayers.

POETRY OF THE VEDAS

By Swami Saradananda.

THE universe is the expression of God, that ocean of absolute love, as the Vedas say. The root of poetry is in the absolute love. The expression of that unbounded love is poetry. The Rishis of the Vedas addressed God as the foremost, the oldest of poets, yet the one who never waxes old. Every expression is not only full of poetry, but is poetry; and blessed are they who can see poetry in everything, everywhere, at all times. Every real poet is a prophet, every real prophet a poet. A genuine expression of the human heart in language, under the controlling sense of the beautiful, is poetry. However separated by time and space, by racial or national prejudices, true poetry appeals to all minds. The same old law,—that expression will vary but the essence remain constant, holds good here as elsewhere. The same fulness of reverence and awe and love, which made the Vedic Seer of old thirst after God and righteousness and helped him to rise to the immediate vision of the superconscious, we see in other Scriptures recorded of other men. Wherever we find a genuine expression of the human heart, it is for us to enjoy; let us not be deprived of our joy by any prejudice.

The poetry of the Vedas is wholly religious. The Aryans, at the time of their composition, had evolved

* Extract from a Lecture.

a high civilization and were a strong, sturdy people, full of faith in themselves and in God. In the Rig-Veda, the wonderful experiences of their passage over plains, rivers and vast mountains, became means of expressing their deep emotions. In the later Vedas and Upanishads we see the fruit of their sojourn in India. The writings are full of vigor, purity, simplicity; they are instinct with life. The earlier portions are like the utterances of youth,—rash and exuberant; the later portions are controlled, chaste, conscious of reserve power, the expressions of a fully developed man. In the former, devotion is through fear; in the latter, devotion knows no fear; love is for love's sake, seeking no reward but that of loving. In the former, God is worshipped as the just judge; in the latter, as the soul of the man's soul. In India, of old, man's life fell into four periods: the student life, the family life, the forest life, and the monk life. After he had discharged his duties to family and state, a man retired to the forests on the slopes of the Himalayas, or on the banks of the Ganges, to meditate on the mysteries of life and death, leaving his place to younger men. There, amidst the singing of birds, the warbling of brooks, the wonders of dawn and day and night, he used to come face to face with nature and learn to feel himself a part of it. He dived into himself to the very roots of consciousness, and brought forth into the light of day the answer to the vexed questions of life, sparkling with dews of meditation. "From love Absolute has all this universe come forth,

in love infinite does it continue after birth, towards love unlimited it flows." Need we wonder that the Upanishads are full of living poetry? The Aranyakas, or Forest Books, deal with the experiences of this marvellous third period of a man's life.

"Thou sun! Thou hast covered the face of truth with thy golden disk; do thou uncover it to my vision, for I thirst after true religion. Progenitor and controller of all, O Sun! withdraw thy rays awhile, that I may look at thy blissful form, the real cause of thy power. That form of thine is one with the Infinite Being, and I too am one with Him." The theme of the poetry of the Upanishads is the Inexpressible, the Unknowable. No wonder the songs of the Rishis are paradoxical, often incomprehensible. Yet their imagery brings us to the very threshold of Deity. Nature becomes a translucent veil. Earth, sun, moon and stars grow dim; an ocean of light is revealed to you; you feel yourself grow larger as you read, till your little personality is dissolved and you feel one with that boundless ocean. "The knower is not born, nor dies, nor was born of old. Birthless, eternal, ever-existent, old and yet ever young, not slain with the slaying of the body. If the slayer thinks he can slay, or the slain that he can be slain, both of them know not. It neither slays nor is slain. It is finer than the finest, greater than the greatest, seated deep within the depth of every creature; beholding the greatness and glory of the Self. By His grace the controlled man goes beyond sorrow. He

sits still and yet moves far away. He is all perfect. Who can know that effulgent Being, who is greater than the greatest, except myself? Formless, yet in all form; changeless, yet in all change; knowing that Self, the Lord, the enlightened man never grieves again! That Self cannot be attained by much learning, nor by a keen understanding, nor by the reading of many Scriptures. He whom the Self chooses, by him can the Self be gained. To him the Self reveals His own Essence." "Where the Self is, the eye cannot reach, nor speech, nor the mind; we cannot say we know It, neither do we know how to teach It to others. It is beyond what is known and what is unknown. Thus have we heard from them of old. That which cannot be disclosed by speech, but which gives rise to speech, that is the Self; not this which thou hast been worshipping—know That! That which cannot be measured by the mind, but by which the mind thinks, that is the Self—know That! Those amongst us who think they know the Self perfectly, they know not; those who think they cannot know, they know!"

The characteristic peculiarity of the Upanishads is that they attempt to describe by negations. Metaphor after metaphor is given, only to be cast away. Not this, not this! Further! Beyond! Beyond! They fill the mind with amazing images, only to have them serve as successive rungs of a ladder. "Whence speech falls back with the mind, unable

to attain—That is the ocean of unbounded bliss. Attaining That, the enlightened man goes beyond fear. Neither the sun appears bright there, nor the moon, nor the stars; the flash of lightning is darkness, the brightness of fire, gloom beside It. It shineth, and all else shineth after It; all else is bright alone in Its brightness." Large similes serve to express the omnipresence of the One and the merging of all things in the One. "As the rivers flowing into the ocean become one with it, losing separate name and form; so the enlightened one, freed of name and form, approaches the supreme effulgent being." "As from a blazing fire come out thousands of sparks of the same nature as the fire itself, thus, O Beloved, come out the different existences from that eternal unchangeable Being and enter Him again." Birds, trees, a chariot drawn by fiery steeds, all serve to suggest relations of the individual soul to itself and its divine beginning and end. Allegories abound, picturesque stories, but all have one interpretation, the unknown Knower that knoweth us, in and through us—Whom to know is life eternal.

MISSIONARIES IN INDIA.

By Sister Nivedita.

"Behold I send you forth as lambs among wolves."

"Carry neither purse, nor scrip nor shoes."

"Salute no man by the way."

"Eating and drinking such things as *they give*."

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

"Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purposes, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves."—*Early Christian Mission Charges.*

I.

THE line that says "The soul of Shakespeare could not love thee more," goes to the root of the matter. Another critic of human life so completely competent as William Shakespeare, has probably never been. And his tool, the instrument of his peculiar genius, was surely an abundant kindliness, such as we call love, which enabled him to put himself behind each man's nature, so as to swim with the current of his life and not against it. Which of us would not have dismissed Hamlet in actual life contemptuously as a week-kneed dreamer? Which of us would have distinguished between Othello and a vulgar murderer? But once handled by the vast reverence of the master, the shallowest dare not commit himself to such superficiality. It would seem as if the genius of the great dramatist has lain even more in his gifts of heart than in those of mind.

To read the life and effort of foreign peoples truly, we stand in overwhelming need of this Shakespearian nature. It is an accident of empire that the England which produced Shakespeare should require such persons more than any other country. It is fast thinking that our great bard, who so nobly interpreted the sorrows and the indignation of the Jew, could have failed with his gentle vision to pierce the mask of the Chinaman, the Hindoo, the African or the red Indian, and to set them before us, clothed with universal humanity, men like ourselves, each less large than we in some points, but in others infinitely nobler.

No gift receives the homage of the East like the power of seeing transcendent oneness, where the senses tell only of diversity. The man who can do this in any great degree is called a *rishi*, or soul of perfected insight. Such perfected insight it was that distinguished Shakespeare. He had the gifts to have been, had he lived in the wider opportunity of to-day, the *rishi* of humanity, even as in our eyes he already is of human nature. For to him custom and circumstance and manner of thought were no more than a vast web through which the essential manhood of all men displayed itself in differing garb.

All important eras have left behind them their own poetry. The wandering bards of the early order produced the great race epics. The mediæval Church sang itself through the lips of Dante. With the dawn of the age of adventure Shakespeare sprang

to birth. The period of which a century has gone by is as great in its own way as any of these. It sees life made universal. Never was human power so high, never was the scope of the individual so extensive. Is there then no prophecy appropriate to such an hour? Where are the wandering minstrels, where the Shakespearian sympathy, for the stirring self-utterance of our time?

If it be the destiny of England to contribute anything towards such a work, and if, perchance, one verse of her world-poem be already written, we shall find it, I believe, in a book scarcely yet a three years old, Fielding's *Soul of a people*. In the appearance of one such study more glory has been shed on our country than by unnumbered successes of the military and commercial kind. Humanity needs hundreds of minds like that of the writer in question, and it needs them of all races, for the children of each nationality can see and express things that are hidden from the wise and prudent of all others. Unembittered disinterested witnesses to the facts of things are wanted—and something also of revelation must be added. Something of the function of the poet who sees through and beyond the deed to its goal, through the idea to the ideal. It is only the first step in science to have noted correctly the line of hairs on the chickweed stem, or the spots of colour in the orchis. There must have been a need or a danger to be met by one as by the other. And

when this is understood it still remains to demonstrate their place in the drama of life as a whole.

What is true of flowers and beasts is not less true of man. Every one, however unlearned, has a right to demand three things in the traveller's story: (1) accurate statement of fact; (2) careful elucidation of the meaning of fact; and (3) some attempt to perceive the law to which the fact and its intention stand related. The demand will be answered, of course, with widely varying degrees of ability, but it ought to be impossible to receive credit for an account that ignores any one of these factors.

The study that leads up to such work is by no means easy. Alone, amongst people of alien birth and culture—until we come to a glowing personal enthusiasm for them at least—very little things will wound us in proportion to our sensitiveness. Not only must we be able to forget this feeling, but we must find out the positive meaning of omission or commission. Society the world over hangs together in virtue of the good fellowship and unselfishness of its members, not through their antagonism and mutual indifference. Virtue exactly represents, on the moral plane, the force of cohesion on the physical. To say, therefore that to any people gratitude or honesty or modesty is unknown, is simply to state an absurdity and prove ourself an incompetent witness. What is perfectly credible is that their way of expressing these instincts is unlike ours and follows a divergent line of intention. A trifling illustration occurs to me. As Indian

languages contain no words for "please" or "thanks" it is very commonly held by English people that the courtesy of gratitude for little things has no place in Indian life, and I had felt, as others do, the irritation of apparent negligence on such points. I learnt my lesson, however, one day when a Hindu friend undertook to do something for me that involved a sacrifice and I offered him warm thanks. I can never forget how startling was their effect. "You gave something back" he said, evidently deeply pained as he left the room. To-day, if any Hindu said "please" or "thanks" to me, I should share the sensations of a mother whose children presented their compliments to her. The instance is small, but it represents hundreds of cases in which a little patience and faith in human nature would add unspeakably to our own wealth of expression and sympathy. This truth becomes important on a larger scale. It is obviously absurd to constitute ones own national customs an ideal standard, against which every other country is to be measured. Hindu and Mahomedan women are not seen much in public, either shopping or visiting; we are, we enjoy our custom, and call it freedom. Does it follow that the Eastern woman's restrictions constitute a grievance? Would it not be wise, in attempting to demonstrate this, to share as completely as possible the physical and emotional environment which have conditioned her habit? It is conceivable that having done this we should conclude that even in the climate of India or Persia more

muscular activity and greater social liberty would be of benefit to women; but unless our judgment were fatally warped by prejudice we should at the same time reach the counter conviction that a corresponding power of stillness and meditative peace would be a vast gain in the West.

But the argument supposes that our wandering minstrels have grown critical and didactic. Alas, we are forced to the supposition, for most of them now make pilgrimage from realm to realm with no notion of turning their harp—and singing sweet songs in some strange lord's hall, thence to return, like St. Francis from the Soldan, with tales of fair welcome and hospitality, or with new songs in praise of the courtesy and large charity of the gentle heathen peoples. This is the tone indeed of Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, but this curious and unaccountable child of genius is not of the guild of the singers. Her stories are true instances of the spirit of minstrelsy sounding the note of a nature that loves because it must, and sings out of very gladness of the beauty of others. But Mrs. Steel is a strong poet from another time and class. To-day's bards have done as their fathers did before them, turned missionary, and are devoting their best energies to forcing round pegs into square holes destroying in the process poetry and mythology and folk custom as well as rare and beautiful virtues that they are too ignorant to appreciate. The same thing happened long ago, when emissaries from Rome trampled out Irish culture lest it should make

against the Faith. It happened again in the past century when the Scottish Highlands were rendered barren of the folk tales by the efforts of the Kirk—now far too enlightened to countenance its own vandalism; but the wild growths can never be replanted! It never happened so completely in Scandinavia and in this fact probably lies the secret of the national vigour of Norway.

For there can be no doubt that when all that ought to represent Art and refined pleasure and growth of imagination in a community turns puritan, yoking itself to the car of a single idea, and that foreign, the result is simply loss of culture, of course, the May Day Festival has fled before the face of steam factories and streets at right angles, and the Board School Inspector! But the people whom it has left are *less*, not more well educated by that fact. Lists of European capitals and their sites will never make up to them for love of Nature, and joy in beauty, and eye for form and colour.

Not long ago, an acute critic, comparing visits to England thirty years ago and now, remarked on the number of types common then that have since disappeared. We should look in vain now for a Mr. Pickwick or a Mrs. Poyser. We have organised the national character till it is as monotonous as its prototypes, the yard of calico and the daily paper. Those odd, whimsical, lovable persons of a generation ago, rich in unexpectedness, full of human nature, with

surprising mental areas of illumination every now and then are gone. They belonged to a time when every man was closer to life, and to the smell of ploughed fields, than he is to-day: they could no more have reached their individuation in cities than could May Day or Midsummer's Night, or All Hallow's Elen. Are we glad or sorry for such a happening? Shall we hasten to encourage the repetition of the process elsewhere?

II.

Surely, if missionaries realised, even in a general way, the "lie" of such social phenomena, they would make fewer mistakes in their dealings with their clients, and we should hear less of the so-called criticism which at the present disgraces the English language.

A Hindu father told me how he had allowed his little daughter to attend a school kept by two English women. At the end of eight or nine months he was examining the child as to her progress in reading, and found to his horror that she had acquired the use of a large number of impossible epithets which she employed freely in connection with the names of Rama and Krishna, two epic heroes who are regarded by most Hindus as Incarnations of the Divine Being in the same sense as Buddha or Christ. The man removed his child at once, and most of us will feel that the sense of loathing and distrust with which he henceforth regarded his English friends was richly deserved. For whatever may be thought of the worship of Rama

and Krishna as divine personages—and our estimates of this practice will be as various as our own creeds—we must at least recognise them as the national ideals, guardians of those assimilated treasures of aspiration and imagination that we call civilisation and morals. It is quite evident that were this function of the legendary heroes recognised, even a missionary would take the trouble to think out some theory of them as great men, which, like the unitarian views of the Founder of Christianity, would leave much that they represent intact, and continue their service to social cohesion and amelioration. It is possible that in the particular case in question the fault did not lie with the English women in charge of the school, but with some low class Christian servant or Eurasian student. But if this were so, it is all the more clear that Christianity in India does not stand for social integration but rather the reverse. For it is one of the functions of religious sects to put their followers in touch with the great formative forces of life about them. Whatever its faults may be, the Salvation Army does this, amongst ourselves. The virtues which it applauds may be elementary—sobriety, honesty, cheerfulness, for instance—but they are virtues which we all recognise as such. The men and women to whom it introduces its recruits may be crude sometimes of type lacking many of the graces of the drawing-room, but they are good and earnest, however limited in range and ideal and they make steadily for strong and hearty citizenship. On a very different plane, Comtism

fulfils a similar function. It binds its members into great cosmopolitan and cosmoœval groups substituting world and race for the sect and party of a lower definition but taking just their method of emphasising accepted virtues—the high intellectual passion for Truth, and the widest reaches of human sympathy, this time—and following them up to the characters and ideals in which they all converge.

The sect that fails to do this, the religion that tells a man that all he has hitherto held to be right is really wrong, is bound to do social mischief, incalculable social mischief, since the learner is almost certain to infer that in like manner what he has hitherto held to be wrong is right. No wonder then that Christianity in India carries drunkenness in its wake, and that so many of those who can afford to choose will have any rather than a Christian servant.

India has had her own great religious and social reformers, had them repeatedly, continuously, abundantly. She has known no abuses which they have not laboured to remove. Ram Mohun Roy in the nineteenth century did not combat *Sati* more *zealously* than Nanak in the fourteenth. Mr. Benjamin Waugh amongst ourselves is no more eager a foe of infanticide than was the same teacher. Our Socialist friends do not work so unsparingly for equality as did Chaitanya of Nuddea in Bengal. And these men were no futile dreamers. Nanak founded the Sikh nation, and is a strong influence to this day. Chaitanya did more to Hinduise non-Aryan castes than any other

with his followers. And the saint or the poet never yet was to whom all was not human and all more beautiful than myself. To such men condemnation is not easy, slander is impossible. An orgy of sensation provoked by libel, be it of individuals or of nations, whether at afternoon tea or from a church pulpit, would seem to them unspeakable vulgarity. They could not breathe in such an atmosphere. Yet something of the saint, something of the poet, we might surely hope to find in those whose lives are given to spread a message of glad tidings in far-off lands. And surely there has been the sainthood of a good intention. Has there been that of a noble execution?

If there has, why have emissaries so rarely, on their return, a good word to say for those amongst whom they have been? Why, to take explicit instances, do we never hear from them of the strength and virtues of Indian women? Why only of their faults and failures?

Why have the missionaries created and left in tact, wherever people were ignorant enough to be imposed upon, the picture of the crocodile luncheon of babies served up by their mothers, along the Ganges banks? Everywhere I have met people who believed this story, and I have never heard of a professed apostle of truth who tried to set the impression right. Infanticide occurs in India, under pressure of poverty and responsibility, as it occurs in all countries; but it is not *practised* there any more than

here, nor is it lauded as a religious act; nor is it perhaps anything like so common as amongst ourselves. There is no custom of insuring a baby's life for £ 5, when the funeral expenses are only £ 2, nor is there any infant mortality ascribable to the intemperance of mothers in that country. Why have we never heard from the missionaries of the beauty of Hindu home life, of the marvellous ideals which inspire the Indian woman, of the Indian customs teeming with poetry and sweetness?

Is the answer to be found in the preconceived idea which blinds the would be observer, or is it the intellectual ignorance which keeps him unaware that there is anything to be observed? Or is it possibly a meaner motive still, the idea that if a true and lofty tone is taken, money will not be forthcoming to support his own career? I have had the privilege of listening to the accounts of three classes of persons who were supposed to be warm religious friends of the Indian people, educational missionaries, lady doctors, and modern occultists. Their statements were sincere and deliberate expositions of the outlook they had been enabled to take on Hindu life. I listened in vain for one strong word of appreciation for the problems which Indian society has undoubtedly solved, or a single hint that they understood the positive ends for which that country was making. But in every case the conviction seemed to be, that the dignity and hope of the speaker's own gospel depended absolutely upon

showing the hollowness and rottenness of other form of life. The last mentioned exposition was easily disposed of. It was confined to a discussion of *sattee*, infanticide, and thuggism as the most representative factors of Indian experience which could be discovered; touched upon also the worst sides of caste, and propounded the theory that England's responsibility to the East would be fulfilled when she had persuaded Oriental people to "give up their ridiculous old habits" and take to ways which occultists would consider more rational. From lady doctors we hear of the medical and surgical darkness of the Indian village—greater, if they are right, than that of parallel populations in England fifty years ago. One of the most offensive customs, to their minds, is that of the isolation of a woman at the moment of child-birth. Now, whatever this custom shows—and it is not perhaps universally applied with the full consciousness of the reason that prompted it originally—it does certainly indicate a very elevated state of medical culture at some past epoch in Hindu history. The room in which birth takes place must afterwards be broken up and taken away. Hence a simple mud-hut is built outside the house. When once the child is born, for some days the mother may not be visited by any member of the household. She is attended only by an old nurse and whatever medical advise may be called.

Is this treatment then so very inhumane? Yet it is exactly what we blame the Hindu people for not

adopting in cases of plague and other infectious diseases. It is, of course, easy to imagine that rules of such a nature may often be badly, even stupidly, applied; but there can be no doubt that they demonstrate very clear and distinct ideas of bacteriology at their inception. All through the caste rules, and regulations for bathing, run similar scientific conceptions which astonish competent observers by their hygienic desirability. It is, of course, a pity that medical science everywhere is not up to the twentieth century London level; but in this respect India is not more degraded than England, Scotland and Ireland themselves. There is no country district, far from railways, strong in old traditions, and containing persons who have not had the inestimable benefits of Board School instruction, where, at the same time, doctoring is not done that the city hospitals and the London physician would refuse to countenance. But this fact is a phenomenon of ignorance (or good sense, as the case may be): it is not due to the wrong and vile nature of the Christian religion. It rouses sometimes our regret, occasionally our admiration, but never with any justice our contempt or hatred. One of the evils of our present organisation of skill is the complete inability induced by it to appreciate the value of tradition and mother wit. It is easy to point out flaws in Indian village medicine, midwifery, and what not; but how do we account for the great dignity and suppleness of the general physical development, and for the marvellous freedom of the race from

skin blemish of any kind? This, too, in a country where the germ fauna is at least as dangerous as that other fauna of the jungle which includes the tiger and the cobra. In urging these points I am not denying that modern science can aid, but only that it has no right to despise village lore.

Every system, of course, mistrusts every other. This is the superstition of party. To this fact I trace the phenomenon, detailed by the medical missionary sometimes, of men of sufficient means saying, "If you can cure her for 20*s*. (probably ten rupees) you may do so"—alluding to a wife or some other women-member of the speaker's household. The Christian charity of the lady doctor rushes immediately to the conclusion that his wife's or mother's health is a matter of complete indifference to her client. *Ergo*, that most Hindu men are similarly careless. *Ergo*, the Hindu men hate and despise Hindu women.

Supposing the anecdote to be the true, and I raise this doubt advisedly, could reasoning be more absurd? It does not occur to the physician that her knowledge or honesty may be viewed with suspicion as against old and tried methods of treatment in which everyone has confidence.

It is impossible to deal at length with other and more wide reaching charges. Caste, in missionary eyes is an unmitigated abuse. They confine themselves to an account of its negations and prohibitions, ignoring all its element of the trades guild and race protection type. And they say all this while every

moment of their lives in India has been a ratification of that new caste, of race prestige which is one of the most striking phenomena of an imperialistic age. But if I were a Hindu I do not think that missionary criticisms of caste would disturb me much. I should realise that this was the form which the life of my people had assumed, that in it was comprised all that the word honour connotes in Europe; and that the critics in question had given no sign as yet of understanding either their own society or mine intelligently. The point that I should find seriously annoying would be their animadversions on the position of women in India. To prove that these can be very galling I need only say that in one speech to which I listened I heard the following thirteen statements made and supported: (1) That the Hindu social system makes a pretence of honouring women, but that this honour is more apparent than real; (2) That women, in India are deliberately kept in ignorance; (3) That women in India have no place assigned to them in heaven save through their husbands; (4) That no sacramental rite is performed over them with Vedic texts; (5) That certain absurd old misogynist verses, comparable to the warnings against "the strange women" in the Book of Proverbs, are representative of the attitude of Hindu men to their women folk in general; (6) That a girl at birth gets a sorry welcome; (7) That a mother's anxiety to bear sons is appaling, "her very wifehood depends on her doing so; (8) That the infanticide of girls is a common practice in

India; (9) That the Kulin Brahman marriage system is a representative fact; (10) That the parents unable to marry off their daughters are in the habit of marrying them to a god (making them prostitutes) as an alternative ("The degradation of the whole race of Hindu women lies in the very possibility for any one of them of the life which a temple girl must live"); (11) That Hindu wedding ceremonies are unspeakably gross; (12) That the Hindu widow lives a life of such misery and insult that burning to death may well have seemed, preferable; (13) That the Hindu widow is almost always immoral. To which in like manner the following replies may be made:

(1) That the observer must have been incompetent indeed. There are few great relationships in human life like that between a Hindu man and his mother. Hindus cannot even excuse Hamlet for reproaching Gertrude. "But she was his *mother*" they exclaim, when all is said. And this little fact is very significant.

(2) That the incompetence of the observer is evident once more. It is clear that illiteracy is the form of ignorance referred to. It is not true that women are deliberately kept so; but if they were, is their knowledge of house-keeping and cooking of no value? Is their trained common sense worthless? Can a woman even be called illiterate when it is merely true that she cannot read and write, though at the same time she is saturated with the literary culture of the great Epics and Puranas?

It is interesting to note that the best-managed estates in Bengal, are in the hands of widows. Lawyers invariably respect their opinions. Ahalya Bhai Rani was an instance of the same kind in the Maharatta country.

(3) What this means I have been unable to find out. If it had been said that the husband had no place save through his wife it would have been more intelligible. For the Vedic views made the man a responsible member of the religious community only after marriage, and as long as both lived.

The whole motive of *Sattee*, moreover, was that the wife's sacrifice might ensure heaven to the husband. Was the speaker perhaps thinking of Mahommedans? Even on their behalf I would repudiate the statement.

This appears to be simply untrue. Some of the greatest teachers mentioned in Hindu Scriptures are women. And it is now many hundreds of years since the *Bagavat Gita* was composed for the sake of bringing recondite truths to the knowledge of even unlearned persons, including women and the working-classes.

(5) The speaker does not mention that every Hindu husband names his wife "my Lukshmi" or "Fortuna."

(6) This may be true in some cases, as it is in England, and in all patriarchal societies. I know numbers of families in which the opposite is true, and such an attitude is unthought of, as we expect to be here.

(7) Generally speaking a Hindu woman's wife-hood no more depends on her bearing sons than an English woman's. The need of a son can always be met in India by adoption.

(8) Infanticide of girls did occur commonly at a given period amongst certain Rajputs, and amongst these only. It is in no sense a common Indian practice, any more, if as much, as it is a common London practice.

(9) Another instance of the same kind. Kulin Brahmans are a particularly high caste. If a marriage cannot be made for a daughter of this caste, her father may give her to any man of sufficient rank—and the marriage may be merely nominal, or may extend to making her once a mother. This is an abuse of caste. It concerns a very small number, however, and began to die the instant the modern organisation of information drew the attention of society to it. A leading orthodox Hindu, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, led the crusade against it. I should like to add that the custom is not, to my thinking, an abuse of the worst type—such as the desire of parents to make eligible matches for their daughters may lead to in all countries—since it is quite compatible with the physical vigour of the bride, and with her efficient discharge of whatever duties of motherhood may fall to her share.

(10) The expression "marriage to a god" is nowhere in use in Northern India. The statement bears its regional birth mark on its brow. It is southern and perhaps Western in application. We touch here

on a new class of social phenomena—Indian prostitution customs. To say that it occurs to the respectable Hindu father to make his daughter a prostitute because he cannot find a husband for her, more easily than the same idea would present itself to an English gentleman, is utterly untrue. It is absurd on the face of it. The whole of caste is born of the passionate depth of the contrary sentiment. The chastity of women is the central virtue of Hindu life. "The degradation of the whole race of Hindu women lies in the very possibility for any one of them of the life which a temple girl must live." This is no more true of Hindu women than a corresponding statement would be of English women. There is a sense in which the pitfalls of life yawn before the most favoured feet. But it is a limited sense. If a Hindu woman once leaves her home unattended, without the knowledge and consent of her mother-in-law or her husband she may be refused re-entrance for ever. But this is a witness to the severity of the moral code, not to its laxity.

(11) "That Hindu wedding ceremonies are unspeakably gross. They are not so, amongst people who are not gross. Like the Church of England Form for the Solemnisation of Matrimony, they may sound a note in the music of life more serious and responsible than is to the taste of an afternoon tea-party. Colebrook's "Essays" give all the details and translations which will enable the student to compare the two rites. All that I can say is that I have been

present at many Hindu weddings, and have been deeply touched by the beauty and delicay of all the proceedings. There is a good deal of nonsense and teasing of the young bridegroom in the women's apartments. Not unlike such half-obsolete festivals as All Fools' and Saint Valentine's Days. On this occasion the youth makes friends with his future sister-in-law. The fun is a little more exuberant than grave elders may enjoy, but it is one of the few opportunities of the kind which Hindu breeding permits to boys and girls. It requiries vulgarity of mind to read more serious offences into it.

(12) As to the misery of Indian widows, it is not too much to say that every statement yet made by a Protestant missionary has been made in complete ignorance of the bearing of the facts. Hindus are a people amongst whom the monastic ideal is intensely living. In their eyes the widow, by the fact of her widowhood, is vowed to celibacy and therefore to poverty, austerity, and prayer. Hence her life becomes that of a nun: and if she is a child her training must lead to the nun's life. It is not true that she is regarded by society with aversion and contempt. The reverse is the case. She takes precedence of married women as one who is holier. We may regret the severity of the ideal, but we have to recognise here, as in the case of monogamy, that it indicates intensity of moral development, not its lack. It may bear hard upon the individual, but redress cannot lie in lowering of standard, it must rather

consist of a new direction given to the moral force which it has evolved.

(13) The last contention which I have noted is the most serious of all, and I have heard it repeatedly in England and America in the course of missionary descriptions. I need hardly say that I know it to be grossly untrue.

It is interesting to note that these thirteen statements fall into three different groups, (a) statements which are absolutely and entirely false—(1), (3), (7), (11), (13); (b) statements which are the result of misinterpreting or overstating facts—(2), (5), (12); and (c) statements which may be true of certain limited localities, periods or classes, but to which a false colour has been given by quoting them as representative of Hindu life in the whole—(4), (8), (9) and (10).

The last group is the most important for two reasons; in the first place it has an air of seriousness and security which goes far to give credibility to the whole argument, and in the second it furnishes a complete exposure of the method of making up evidence.

In the case of (4), we have a quotation from an old catechism of many centuries ago: "What is the chief gate to hell? A woman. What bewitches like wine? A woman," &c., &c.; made as if it were the most up-to-date collection of modern Indian proverbs. We see the use of the thing the moment we look at it, but the missionaries continue to quote it with their

accustomed gravity. One understands that in their eyes anything is justified that will warn the heathen of the error of his ways, but surely this poor little dialogue has been seriously over-worked. I have never read a missionary publication on the woman question in which it was not used, and I have never met with a Hindu, however learned, who would otherwise have known of it. On investigation one discovers that sentiment of this kind was common in the monkish literature of the Buddhist period. It could probably be matched from the monastic writings of our own middle ages. In (8) we have an abuse which concerned one caste in the Rajput districts, used as if it were true of all castes all over India, and this in face of the terrible *tu quoque* which might be retorted against the accuser. It cannot be too clearly understood that India is a continent, not a country; and that to gather together the exceptional vices and crimes of every people and Province within her borders and urge them against "India" or "Hinduism" is about as fair as to charge a Norfolk farmer with practising Corsican vendetta, on the strength of the latter's being a "European" custom. In (*a*) one more we have the sin of a small and high caste charged in a way to make it seem true of the whole country. Kulin Brahmans cannot be more than one in 1,000 of the Bengali population, *and they exist only in Bengal.* We have also the deliberate ignoring of the way in which Hindus themselves have worked against the abuse.

And in (10) we have the sweeping-in of prostitution customs, without a word of warning, as if they were part of the respectable recognised life of the Indian people, and as if in the possession of such a class at all, the Indian people were incomparably depraved. Do the missionaries really affect such innocence? But if they do, at least let them observe the Indian fact accurately. In this custom of marriage to a god (or to a tree, as in Bengal), quaint as it sounds, there is a tremendous protecting fence thrown round girls. No Hindu man, however abandoned will outrage the unwedded maiden. Before these poor victims, therefore, can take up the practice of their profession, they have to go through a form of marriage. Hence the device in question. Can we make as good a statement for ourselves?

If the outrage were on the other side, if Hindus had been in the habit of sending in their emissaries to convert us from the error of our ways, and if these emissaries on their return had grossly abused our hospitality; had forgotten the honour of the guest and blazoned our family misfortunes to the whole world; had made harsh criticisms on us as individuals, because they had been allowed the opportunity of seeing us by the hearthside, when the formalities of public life were put aside, if in fact they had violated our confidence, what should we have felt? What should we have said? Yet their doing so would have been comparatively insignificant, for power and influence are in our hand, not in theirs. Probably

no single fact has tended to widen the distance between the races in India like this of missionary slander. Certainly nothing has so deepened our contempt. For, say what he will, the only class of Europeans who have been admitted to Hindu homes at all, and have made a business of reporting what they saw there, has been Protestant missionaries, medical and other. It sseems as if to them nothing had been sacred. In all lands, doctors and clergymen see the misfortunes of the home, and professional honour keeps their lips sealed. But here all has been put upon the market. Medical records (always unpleasant reading) have been detailed in public, from platform and pulpit. And the professional consideration that ought to have prevented such dishonour only intervene, if at all, to forbid the use of speaker's names in connection with statements made by them in full publicity to large audiences.

Another miserable fallacy remains. There are three classes of people whose opinions are quoted by missionaries in evidence of the sins and weaknesses of Hinduism. They are; (1) native reformers; (2) Christian converts; and (3) any exuberant fool who has been discovered.

We all know how much the first kind of evidence is worth. Just picture the "Woman's Rights" agitator comparing the positions of Eastern and Western women! How does she receive the suggestion that the Oriental has points of right and of authority which she cannot emulate? The idea is

intolerable to her. Yet only an hour ago she may have been pointing out the bitter degradation of her own position, classed as she is in the voting lists with "criminals, lunatics, and paupers." It is evident that the anxious reformer uses languages amongst its equals that he would be very sorry to hear taken *au pied de la lettre* by the would be interpreters of his country's customs. He would be the first then to point out that the expressions he had used had a purely relative value.

Much more is this true of the utterances of the reformer who has lived for years blinded by the ink of his own gall. We know how in such cases there can be a growth of bitterness and perversity which isolates the thinker and makes his conclusion on social problems absolutely worthless.

Christian converts in India are isolated by the very fact of baptism. And the present generation having been born Christian, have often little more than the missionaries account of it, for the life habits of their own country people.

It cannot be too widely understood that one writer like Mrs. Steel, or one disinterested student of Indian life like Fielding in Burmah, is worth all that has yet been contributed from all missionary sources put together. And if it is too late to change the present generation of workers, surely it is only the more timely to demand on the part of English people such a standard of sympathy and culture that the missionary without a through and appropriate education for

his task shall twenty years hence be a thing of the past.

III

We have held up a double standard of the artistic opportunity open to the class we have been considering, and of the obligation of professional discretion. When we hear the banker publicly discussing his client's accounts or the physician making known his patient's poverty and ignorance we conclude that at least these people are not held as human beings, since service of their need has no more bound the server to keep their confidence than it would bind the veterinary surgeon or the dog doctor. But it is not, at any rate conscious. The whole *raison detre* of the missionary's positions is a passionate impulse of human brotherhood. The idea that the souls of men are in eternal peril if they do not hear a certain tabulated historical statement may be true or false. It is sure that as long as such an idea appeals to conscientious people they are bound to make some missionary efforts. And the intention must approve itself to us as noble. But that sustained integrity which constitutes nobility of action is a vastly more difficult matter than this. And at this point the missionary is hampered by the tradition of his class. A certain given interpretation of caste, of zenana, of the native intellect, is imposed upon him at the outset, and few minds could break through such preconception even to the extent of fulfilling the first conditions of the disciplined student of phenomena.

As artist and scientist then we must perhaps consider him lost. There still remains the ideal of the religious teacher. Why should he not succeed in this? It is a part that admits of sectarian bitterness, provided only it be backed up by holiness of personal life in some form that we can understand. It admits also of intellectual ignorance, provided there be spiritual insight. Was not the strongest empire that the world ever saw converted by a few fishermen. The Apostle need not be a scholar, he need not be an artist, he must be a saint.

It is here that we come upon the most curious paradox of all. Preaching an Eastern religion to an Eastern people, the ideals of the East are for once perfectly in place. It is a golden moment Count Tolstoi may have difficulty in obeying the words of Christ literally, while fulfilling the demands of life. But in India the one teacher who would be understood would be he who possessed neither gold nor silver nor brass in his purse, who had not two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves who saluted no man by the way being too much bent on the errand before him, and the repetition of the Name of God; who would be absolutely indifferent to the consequences for himself personally, offering himself up in very truth as a lamb amongst wolves. Every door in that country would swing open before such a visitor even if he railed against the family gods. The Christian ideal might be demonstrated successfully in India now as it was in Italy, in the days of St. Francis, by the

Begging Friars, for India has retained the ideal of such life even more completely than Italy ever had it. To the Individual Christian therefore who is willing to accept the charge laid upon him, the way is clear. Let him go forth to the gentle East strong in his mission filled with burning renunciation "as a lamb amongst wolves." There will be no room here for marrying and bringing up of children; no room for distinctions of rank or of race; no room for anxiety about provision or gain.

Is this the ideal that the Missionary follows? If not, why not? True it is not the only useful career that he may adopt. An educator who has deeply understood the problems of India, and is ready to help her to solve them in her own way is perhaps even more necessary. The poet who makes two races love each other and the country is worthy of all the admiration he excites.

But has the missionary any right to claim the indulgence without the criticism of all these rolls? Has he any right to be fanatical like the religionist without being ascetic like him? To be wanting in common sense and accuracy like the poet, without contributing joy and beauty? To be in receipt of regular pay and live a comfortable life like the pro-fessional man, without any regard for the professional man's honour?

And are the public, who have so long permitted this thing to be, entirely without blame? Let us demand something better, and something better must be offered. The appeal is to Cæsar.—*Westminister Review.*

IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CHRISTIAN AND A HINDU?*

By Swami Trigunatita.

TO-NIGHT'S subject is whether there is a difference between a Christian and a Hindu; but I think I ought to add one word more: whether there is a difference between a *true* Christian and a *true* Hindu. Or, rather, is there any difference, in reality, between any two religions of the world? In this wider or more Catholic way, we will deal with our subject of to-night. It is not that I being a Hindu shall try to defend *my* faith only. The Hindu is the real and great "Defender of Faith" in general—of all the faiths in the world: Let us see:

We know Christianity is the name of a religion; and Hinduism, also, is the name of another religion. We say *a* religion. Religion is a word that is considered as a common noun, not a proper noun; and if it be a common noun, then it must be a general term and not one particular name for one particular thing. Had there been only one religion in the world, then we would have called it *the* Religion, written with a capital R. When there are several religions in the world, we are not to suppose that one religion must be an exclusive one for the whole world. It is a generic term. If you look into a dictionary you will

* A Sunday lecture delivered in the rooms of the Vedanta Society, San Francisco.

find that the meaning of religion is a mode of worship of God,—*a mode*. That is religion. There are many religions on the face of the earth; many modes of the worship of God—many different paths to the same goal. In former days some Christians and some sectarian missionaries thought that *their* religion would be the exclusive one for the whole world; but now, in these days of comparative study, nothing can be exclusive. When we compare all the religions of the world, we find some unity in all of them. Comparative study has that great advantage. Unless we compare things, we cannot know general or common laws, we cannot discover the science and philosophy that are underlying every one of them.

To speak of even science itself, we cannot say that there is only one science in the world. We must say several sciences—science of man, science of beast, science of trees, science of earth, science of even history, philosophy and religion, etc. When we compare all the sciences, we find some grand unity, some grand truth, some great uniformity, common to every one of them. This is the science of sciences. This is the Truth. And this Absolute Truth must be truth at all times, and must never fail to be so in any condition. This is the essence of science, of all sciences. This Absolute Truth is the ultimate aim of every religion, of every philosophy, either directly or indirectly; nay, of every science, of every art, of every nation. That is our goal. That is the goal of every being, of every thing, of the whole creation.

Every mind, every life, nay, every doing of ours is tending towards the same Absolute Truth, either consciously or unconsciously. One thread passes through every pearl in the garland, and that keeps them all in order. All radii meet at the same centre. There is no difference, in reality, between any thing in the universe, be it animate or inanimate, abstract or concrete; such being the case, how can it be possible for a *religion* which deals with *God*, the highest ideal, the highest truth attainable, to bear any difference from any other religion? No wise man finds any difference in any religion. There is no such thing as *difference*. All—one. All differences are just on the surface; they are all apparent, not in reality. All ideas of difference are relative. There cannot be any shade of difference in the real truth, in the Absolute truth. There cannot be any difference in the eye of God, He being our Absolute Truth. We do not want apparent truth or apparent God. We do not want relative truth or relative God. God is the one Great Centre without a second, and all the religions are but the radii, all equal straight lines, leading to the same Point. So, all are equal. There is no difference.

Take another point of view: If we say that truth may be both absolute and relative; and when we make any difference between any two religions, we make it from a relative point of view. Now, even in this case, we are mistaken. In the first place, as we have just said that we do not want relative or

apparent truth. We do not believe in it. Relative or apparent difference is no difference at all. We cannot accept it. So long as the centre is one—God, there is no difference or inequality in the radii even if they individually come from several directions or various starting points in the great circumstance of the universe. If the difference be not in reality, then it is not worth our consideration. We want *real* things; we deal with real things, the things—the ideas—that will lead to the One Real Thing. We want to realize that One Reality in everything. How can we then look into anything with an idea of finding some difference in it? So long as a person finds any difference in anything, he cannot be expected to realize the One Absolute Reality in everything. When we shall see God, we shall see God in everything. If we want to see God, we should look upon everything in the light of God. Our life, our character, our ideal, all will be built on our thoughts or ideas. If we ourselves are good, the whole world will be good. The world is the projection of our ideas. It is the reflection of our mind. Not only that; as a matter of fact, no difference can be of a real nature.

In the next place let us take even the scientific point of view of relative truths. What is science? Science means "knowledge arranged under general principles and truths." These general laws, principles and truths must not fail at all under certain conditions. If any department of knowledge is found to contain such laws, it is called a science.

So with religion there are some common laws, and those laws must abide in every religion, and whatever religion teaches those common laws must be taken as a true and scientific religion.

As a matter of fact, every religion, nay, every sect, contains such general laws of mental, moral and spiritual growth of man. When we compare properly all the religions of the world, we find that every religion has the same object in view and bears strong similarities with every other religion. We will mention later on some such similarities. Of course, different modes of thinking may be adopted by the different systems of faith or religion. But all these different modes and thoughts are arranged under general laws and principles, and they all produce the same effect on the spiritual growth of man.

We must remember that we must be very sincere. Or, the spiritual laws of any religion will never produce proper effect. When we serve a person, we should do it very sincerely. When we adopt a religion, we ought to be very faithful to it. We must fulfil all the conditions put forth by that religion, to be fulfilled by us, or that religion cannot produce any effect on us. When we say we are Hindus, or Christians, or Buddhists, we ought to prove ourselves as true Hindus, or true Christians, or true Buddhists. Otherwise we are untrue; we are, as the Bible says, hypocrites, not true to our words; and, you know, in some places in the Bible, it is said that we shall be judged by our words.

We should mean with all our hearts whatever we utter. Before we speak anything, before we utter any word, we ought to think of what we are going to say. You know, when we speak a word, we spend some energy. When we speak, what happens? We spend some energy, and what is the process? First we think of something that is within us; then we feel it; then we express it in words. And when we think or feel or mean within us, we give rise to an energy that is stored up within us. We are full of energy. Our existence, our lives, are stores of energy. Life is nothing but energy. And whenever we think, whenever we feel, we give rise to some energy which is immediately expressed. Of course, speaking is less impressive and less expressive than doing a work. Let us take the lowest expression of our energy—speaking; if we do not fully mean what we say, then we lose our energy; and loss of energy, is, you know, a check of growth, a loss in our growth.

If we want to have a steady spiritual growth, we must be very true in our every word. Whatever we say we must mean in its full significance. Hindus also say the same thing very strongly. Our Master used to say in Bengali very often that "*man mookh akkara.*" That is, "make your mind correspond with your word." You must mean whatever you will say. That is the first step.

Nowadays, many words have been losing their significance. Formerly, when a word first came into

use, it had its full significance; but in the course of time, unconsciously, it commenced losing its significance, and now we utter most of our words without any meaning, so to say. For instance, when we say that all are one, we simply say it in words. We do not mean it to its full extent. If we meant fully well what we said, that we are all one, then and there we would realize that unity along with our words, along with that force. You know, everything is but force. Everything is a different manifestation of the same force; and if we do not abuse that force, then we can grow very quickly and steadily, and if that force be utilized to its best advantage, then whenever we utter a word, we shall gain something. If we say that we are all one, if we do not mean it to its full extent, if we mean it only partially, then we can only get a partial gain. And if we simply utter words like parrots, then we lose all our energy. That is the reason why we do not grow so quickly; why we do not get any benefit from our spiritual culture. We are not true to our words even, far from speaking of our deeds! We do many things without using our knowledge, nor our consciousness, nor our reasoning.

God is a thing to be worshipped, to be known. That is our problem. How to know him? There must be several ways, several modes, although God is one. Every great religion says that God is one; but in what sense? I say I have *my* father; you say you have *your* father; some one else says he has *his* father. Now, do you mean that *my* father should

be the same as *yours* and *his*? Not necessarily. But all these persons are fathers, no doubt. They are called by the common name "father," although they have each a different personality and an individual name, as John, James, Charles, etc. They are fathers of different sons. It is not meant that there should be one person as the father to all men. It is the same in regard to God. God is God, but He may be worshipped in different ways and forms. He may be termed in different words. Different nations worship differently. No wonder. Different nations must have different manners. Their manners, customs, modes of life, modes of worship, everything must be different. If there had been no difference of manners and customs and of nations, there would not have been the beauty of nature, the grandeur of nature. The grandeur of nature is in variety and not in unity. Unity is in the essence; but the external thing, the outward expression is variety. That is the grandeur, the beauty. As an illustration, in embroidery, there is one ground work, and over that we do our superficial work. So with everything. Nature is uniform everywhere, in every department. So with religion. Every religion must be different, and free. Whenever we study comparative religions, we find that all the religions bear some common truths, and because they bear these common truths, they are taken as *religions*. If we say that in our religion we have these tenets and that no other religion has the same, then we are wrong; we have not studied the other

religions deeply. If we study very closely, we shall find common laws, common rules, common doctrines.

Let us take, for instance, Christianity and Hinduism. One of the principal doctrines of Hinduism, is re-birth, transmigration. Christians say that we cannot be born again. There is either eternal heaven or eternal hell. But some students who have studied comparative religions thoroughly will say: no; Christianity admits this principle. In the Bible, if we read the Bible very closely, we shall find that somewhere in Matthew it is said that Elias came again, and Christ meant—in the body of John the Baptist. If Christ had no belief in the transmigration of the soul, in re-birth, how could he have said that Elias would come in the body of John the Baptist. In several other passages, we find that Christ believed in re-birth. Of course, mortals with limited knowledge and reason cannot understand every scripture. If we come across true Christians, they will tell us, yes, everything is possible. Nothing can be impossible in the creation of God.

The next great doctrine, say in Christianity, is the belief in Christ. Unless we believe in Christ, we cannot be Christians and we cannot be saved. That is the common faith, but true Christians will not say that. When they say that Christians must believe in Christ and Christians only will be saved, then we must understand that they have not sufficiently advanced even in their own religion, in their practical life of religion. If we study the matter thoroughly,

we shall come to know that 'Christ' means anointed, or consecrated. It is a Greek term, meaning anointed, consecrated. Anybody that is consecrated can be a Christ.

Now, Jesus of Nazareth was the first person who became specially anointed by spiritual power and he was called "The Christ." But, in the course of time Christians came to mean that the term, "Christ" should be applied only with reference to Jesus of Nazareth. Now this is a creation of man, and not of Christ or of God. Christ never said that no other Christ would ever come, that no other Saviour would come. The statement that Christ would only come once was only promulgated by later generations. There are several passages in the Bible where Christ said that he would come again. Now, Christians of modern times think that Christ meant the resurrection, but it is not clear in those passages that he meant the resurrection. Did He ever die? Has He ever died, that He might have a resurrection? His coming means appearing before us in human form. He can appear before us hundreds of times, in different ages, among different nations, in different forms, and in different ways.

Christ is ever living. He said in one place, "Do not touch me: "I have not yet ascended to my Father." He said that after his physical death. "You do not touch me, I have not yet ascended to my Father and yours, to my God and yours." He said those very words. We learn two great things from this. First,

that He was a pure Vedantist, and not an ordinary religionist. When his physical body died, people thought that He died, but He did not, He was the spirit. He cannot die. He is immortal. His body died. In the next place, before His death, He entered into Samadhi, or trance. He gave up all consciousness of His body, and was simply in His spirit, and it was then that the cruel people could crucify Him. He remained in Samadhi all the time. In Hinduism we have this same tenet, that whenever a person goes into Samadhi, no other person should touch him. In the case of our Master, when he entered into trance, we never touched him. If we happened to touch him, then he suffered terribly, and afterwards told us never to touch him again whenever He would go into a trance. And so, when Christ said "do not touch," it meant that He was in Samadhi, that He was separate from his body.

When He said to his disciples in one place "If your enemies kill you, you do not think they can kill your soul. They will kill your body, but they cannot kill your soul." So, it is said in our Gita, that the soul cannot perish, cannot be killed, cannot be burnt. The soul is quite separate from the body. It is infinite, eternal, imperishable. Body is perishable. Body dies. We are not bodies. We never die. So, Christ says in the Bible. "You cannot die. Your soul cannot be killed. You are the soul; you are the spirit."

There are several other passages where there is a great similarity with Hinduism, and not only

with Hinduism, but with all the other religions of the world. For instance, in the Bible Christ says "You give up everything; you sell everything and give away to the poor and follow me;" and in another place, He says "Whoever loves his father, mother and children more than he loves me, does not love me." The Gita says the same also, "Giving up all your duties, you follow me; you do what I say and I will deliver you from all sin." And so, Christ says, "You follow me; I will take care of you." In every religion it is mentioned that the worship of God is the highest duty.

Not only in these few cases, but in several other cases, we find such similarities. For instance, Christ says: "Whenever you enter into a house, you salute." Hindus also when they enter into a house, first salute. They first remember God and then they enter into that house. In another place, Christ says, "Whatever will be given to you, you will eat with pleasure." So, in the Gita, it is said that whatever will be given to us to eat, we should be satisfied with.

There are many other similarities between the different religions of the world. Let us take the word "Om" "Om" is the symbol of the Absolute, and the word "Om" is pronounced in the beginning and in the end of every prayer or *mantra* or chant or anything like that. So you have "Amen." "Amen," in sound even, has much similarity with "Om." And Amen means, may it be so. So, also, the word

"Om" means may it be so. It is the fulfilment of the prayer, or of the *mantra*.

Then, there are several customs in the Church that have a great similarity with ours in the temple. For instance, touching the forehead with the hand, and saying, "In the name of the Father;" then touching the stomach, "In the name of the Son;" then the left shoulder, "In the name of the Holy;" and then the right shoulder, "Ghost." So, "In the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, in the name of the Holy Ghost," we make on our body the sign of the cross. Hindus also say certain words while worshiping, words similar to the above, and we call it in Sanskrit ANGANYASA, meaning purification of the body. If we place some ideas of God on our body, then we think that our body is consecrated, and if the body is properly consecrated the mind will necessarily be so. With such a body and mind, we can worship properly.

There is another thing about the mission of Christ. You know, the word "Christ" means anointed, and it also means Messiah, or mediator. Now, if the word "Christ" means mediator, then it just corresponds with our "Guru." Guru is the mediator. He is in the middle. He is the Son of God. He has come from heaven to save man. And our Guru means the illuminator. He will illumine our soul. And we take the Guru as God himself. There is no difference between Christ and God, between God the Father and God the Son.

There is much similarity between the Roman Catholic religion and Hinduism; some high Christian monks do not act like priests; they do not attend rites; neither do the Vedantists or high Hindu monks. At the time of death the dying persons are brought to some sacred and open place in some Catholic communities; and other people chant, pray and anoint the dying persons. Anointing is something like the Hindu *Chandrayana* or the rite performed for the deliverance from sins.

When a person advances greatly in his spiritual growth, he gets a very intense love toward God. We call it Bhakti. Bhakti means in English, love of God. When that love of God increases, he becomes united, as it were, with God. He becomes one with God, in the fervency of his love. In that love he thinks that he and God are one. In some Christian churches, even now, some nuns and monks think that Christ is their most beloved. Some nuns put rings on their fingers as a sign that they are married to Christ. They receive the ring from the Communion. Some persons think that Christ is their own brother. So, also, in Hinduism, there are sects who cultivate the practice that God is their brother. We call it Sakhya Bhava, meaning brotherly affection. We establish some relation with God; and in order to get nearer to Him, in order to be closer and closer, we establish some closer relationship. The closest relationship is that of husband, or of father, or of mother, or of brother. In every religion there are such

pious persons who practice in that way. We have to go about it in a practical way, so we take up all these means. And when our love has increased very much, we feel as if we had lost our individuality in the existence of God; and that is union. Whether a person be a Christian or a Hindu, he becomes united with God. Then he does not say Christ, or Buddha or Krishna, but God, Iswara, Brahman, The Absolute. When that love increases to such a pitch, then there is no difference; then there comes the union of the soul, the union of everything.

THE INDIAN EPICS.*

By Swami Saradananda.

———:o:———

India is a land of extremes. In the physical, in the mental and even in the spiritual realms, you will find the display of extremes. Here the mighty Himalayas, rising tier above tier, losing their heads in snow and clouds remind you of the everlasting rock of ages, and there the plains in the east and south, stretching far and wide for miles and miles, touch the horizon at every point of the compass, and not a sigle knoll or mound breaks the monotony of the scene. Here the mighty rivers rushing headlong towards the sea, drown acres in their fulness during the rains, and there for miles around lie spread the golden sands of the western desert, where water is as precious as gold itself. In the realm of literature, that sure representative of the minds of the people, we find the same wide *varieties.* It has its heights of spirituality, which will carry you to the very door of the Infinite, its rushing, tumbling, tearing, rational flows which will sweep everything before them, its calm and graceful meanderings through banks of love and poetry charming to the senses and appealing to what

* A lecture first published in the *Brahmavadin.*

is beautiful in human nature and its depths of treasures untold, inexhaustible and of purest ray serene. Where in the history of literature do you find such exuberant growth of religious poetry as you find in the Vedas and the Puranas† ? Where so many Epics of the first order to elevate and enlighten the sense of the beautiful and present ideals of character and beauty which will yet take hundreds of years for the race to attain in any nation or clime ? Where did the lyric and the drama first attain to that sublime height yet unsurpassed in any other language ? Whence did music and medicine and mathematics and a thousand other arts and sciences which have given so much for the betterment of man physically, morally and intellectually, come to the boasted civilisation of the West ? The researches of the antiquarian, have proven undeniably that the gladdening sun of civilisation rose first in the East; that sages from the far west in the shape of arts and sciences did really travel and bless the new Messiah, the new born babe of civilisation who has saved the West from the bondages of superstition and ignorance; that plague-smitten, famine-stricken and down-trodden though she be at present, India lent her helping hand in the far past, and helped us to rise to the realms of light and prosperity. But to return to our subject.

Vast and wide as the dark blue oceans rolls the sea of the Indian Epics. In volume the two great national epics, the Ramayana and the Maha-Bharata alone will eclipse the glory of the epics of any other

language. The seven books of the Ramayana*† which is regarded by the Hindus as the older of the two, and which according to the western scholars were said to have dated about 1,000 B. C., contain 48,000 lines, while the eighteen books of the Maha-Bharata (1,200 B. C.) contain 220,000 lines. The 24 books of Homer's Iliad contain 13,693 lines and the 12 books of Virgil's Æneid, 9,868 lines; while the central story alone of the Maha-Bharata, leaving aside the various episodes which serve as feeders to the main theme, contains 50,000 lines and is regarded by the scholars of the west, to be as old as 1,200 B. C. Add to these the two Epics of the Raghu-Vamsa, the adventures of the family of Raghu, the great scion of the solar dynasty and the Kumara-Sambhava or the birth of the God of war, by the great poet Kalidasa, and the various other epics written in the different dialects in comparatively modern times and you will see that the comparison of Indian Epics with the ocean is not an exaggeration. The two latter Epics of Kalidasa were written, according to Jacobi who judges from astronomical dates in the works themselves, about 350 A. D. Kalidasa, according to the tradition was not only the best dramatist and one of the best Epic poets of India, but his lyric, 'The Cloud Messenger' was one of the best of its kind.

* The Puranas alone contain 1,600,000 lines and their date as assigned by the scholars of the west is between 8th and 16th centuries A. D. But there is reason to believe that at least a part of them were composed much earlier.

† Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith, M.A.

The strict adherence to the unity of action, the wide variety and complexity and yet subserviency to the main story of the numberless episodes, the beautiful and natural painting of persons and characters, the deep vein of moral and religious sentiment that pervades the whole, and the beautiful yet faithful painting of nature and man as acted upon by her, all these will ever preserve the position of the Indian Epics in the highest rank of literature; *and are not these the essentials of Epic poetry*? Apart from the aid which the Ramayana and the Maha-Bharata have rendered to the student of antiquity, apart from their value to the student of history, apart from the incalculable benefit, which they have rendered to the people of India, by holding up constantly before their eyes the lofty ideals of strength and virtue, they will always preserve their first rank amongst the noble specimens of art. Hundreds of dramas and epics and lyrics have drawn their inspiration from these fountain heads, hundreds have been supplied with their themes from the numerous episodes pervading the two, hundreds have drawn thence the ideals of art and poetry and beauty and perfection and the grace of finish and yet they remain exhaustless as ever, shedding their influence now as in the remote past. What epic in the history of the world has supplied the devotee of religion and the higher life, with godly ideals, which have charmed, fascinated and governed his whole life? What has soothed the aching heart of a mother bereaved of her only child and spread the

calm and repose as of the morning over her troubled breast? What has steadied the faltering steps of weakness and sin? What has held up hope before the eyes of abject penury and made the inequalities of human conditions and the disappointments of life more bearable? What has worked miracles in healing the diseased, raising the dead, and perfecting the imperfect as have the Ramayana, and the Maha-Bharata? Stand back or approach with reverence meet in the fields of the Epics of India, "for the ground thou treadest is holy ground." Ages have rolled since Rama, the son of a petty prince, saw the light for the first time in the vales of the beautiful and peaceful Ayodhya, ages have gone since he played those boyish pranks by the side of the rushing current of Sarayu, made immortal by the pen of Valmiki, ages have passed away since he first experienced the ups and downs of our mortal life, the caresses and buffets of that mysterious something which ever transcends the human vision, ever slips our eager grasp, call it the fate inexorable or Karma or heredity or chance or what not, ages since he was nominated one day the successor to the throne and banished the next through the jealousy and intrigue of his step-mother and yet the painting is so vivid, the charm so potent, that we live and move again in that dim hazy light of bygone time. We see him pass with his beautiful and ever-devoted wife, the divine Sita, the pure, the chaste, the matchless, the goddess-ideal of noble womanhood for all times in all

India, followed by his ever faithful brother. We see and feel the burden in his heart, the throbbing of his breast from shattered hope, the abject hopelessness of the whole situation, and yet we see also the bright sunshine through the lowering clouds in the sense of duty done, of promise fulfilled, of conscious moral strength, of the consecration of the love of a noble woman and a noble man. We see clouds and sunshine, lights and shadows, misery and joy, despair and hope all fused and blended and intertwined in one great panorama and feel and realise what complex beings we are, how contradictory the actions of the organ called the mind, how wide a field for the ever-raging battle of the gods and demons, and how man, the noble child of nature, as soon as he is sure that the gods must conquer the demons; the noble, ignoble; the pure, the impure, the perfect, the imperfect; the spirit, the flesh in him; he finds his place for ever in the bosom of the "intense inane," above all sorrows and afflictions, all joys and pleasures, all hopes and despairs, and realises that noble truth of ages, "thou, thyself are the ocean of light and love absolute, eternal and infinite." To return to our story. On went the three never to return to the home of their childhood till fourteen long and weary years were passed. They crossed the Ganges and struck through the heart of the hills and forest of Central India; the trees of the forest supplied them with food and cooled their heat by fanning them with their tender, graceful arms; lovely brooks chased their thirst

away and spoke of peace and consolation by their sweet murmurs, and the birds sang the lullaby and put them to sleep as they laid themselves in their lowly beds of grass and moss, under the shade of the star-bedecked sky. What else could they want, what more delight, they who were satisfied with their love for one another and ready to lay down their lives for one another? They travelled from one place to another, from one hermitage to another and formed warm friendships with sages and their wives. Let none wonder at the mention of hermits living with their wives, in the shady retreats of beautiful forests. In India marriage was a relation not of the body to the body but of the soul to the soul and the name for wife was 'partner in religion.' They lived above the desires of the flesh and even now you will find rare instances of such lives though bound to each other by marriage forever. And is not that the ideal of all marriages or ought it not to be? Aye, man! you can raise a thousand arguments against it, you can deceive yourself and say that if all live up to that high ideal the world will run its course through to-morrow, as if to save the world from utter ruin and fall you deliberately sacrifice yourself and live in the flesh, you can brand it with the terrible brand of renunciation and condemn it and think you have performed a sacred duty for the preservation of the race, but when you retire into your own heart, you will find that you are a slave to your passions and emotions, that you have been led to defend carnality through

selfishness, that the preservation of energy for spiritual ends is also obeying the natural laws and the higher laws of nature, and your heart will of itself bow down and worship those who have got that perfect self-control, which is never disturbed by the ever fascinating call of the senses. And yet thou who art struggling hard to gain the sound sense of self-control, despair not if by habits contracted through distant births, thou art allured to the tempting waters of the senses. Know that sooner or later thy efforts will be crowned with success, that from immorality man rises to the higher ground of the moral laws, and the perfect obeying of the moral laws, makes him one with the Father, the Ocean of light and love, absolute. But to return. On went the three through shady groves and virgin forests, by the banks of leaping, tumbling streams, to the tops of green-clad hills, till charmed by the scenery at the entrance of the southern plains they built little cots of wood and straw and determined to spend the remaining year or two of their forest life there where the sweet-speaking Narmada rushes out of her marble embankments and hastens to meet the outstretched arms of her beloved ocean. All went smoothly for a time. Sita, the ever-patient Sita, forgot all the troubles of her wandering in making friendship with birds and deer and trees and stones and looking after the comforts of the two brothers. But this did not last long; the enemy came in the form of the powerful king of Ceylon, who charmed

by the beauty of this lovely lotus in the forest, carried her by force when the brothers were away. The clash of steel sounded then by the cocoanut groves of Ceylon and the king defeated and killed, Rama returned with his wife and brother to his native land and ascended the throne, rewarding his generals for their devotion and valour with suitable grants and presents. The story goes on here to relate the latter portion of the life of Rama. One chapter of his life is finished with his ascension to the throne. Will the next be a happy and peaceful one? The brief respite that followed after these hard trials and troubles, will that last till all troubles are ended in the deep sleep that knows no waking? The enchanter raises his rod again; the dim shadows begin to move before your fascinated gaze. We see the ideal king in Rama, his hopes and joys, his troubles and sorrows all blended, fused, unified with the destiny of his people. He does not seek his enjoyment outside that of his people. He is sacrificing his pleasure and comfort and consolation and whatever he might call his own on the altar of duty. But the god would not be satisfied, the sacrifice would not be complete till he bears to the altar the one being, for whom he would willingly lay down his own life a thousand times, the one heart whose genial rays have enriched, beautified and made sunshine on his soul in the dark days and hours of trial affliction. Deeds of heroism and sacrifice, when man forgets himself entirely in the abundance of love for

others, when looking upon life in a broad, all-embracing universal way he feels the throb of the universe in his own heart, the pulsation of the over-soul in his own, when the fulness of the relative life and love raises him to that high pinnacle of glory, where he sees and feels the glimmerings of the grand old truth, "through every hand He works, through every foot He moves, through every eye sees and every ear hears; He pervades in and out of all," mysterious and wonderful, though we may call such acts madness and fanaticism they will always appeal to the inmost heart of humanity. Who will not be moved by the unshaken faith of Abraham over his son's pyre, the calm smile of Socrates over the cup of Hemlock, the "Father forgive them" of Jesus on the cross, the renunciation of Buddha to bring light to the suffering millions, the sacrifice of Rama of his dearly beloved, Sita for the good of his people? The palace closed its wide portals over the lady of sorrows, never to open again but the hermitage threw open its poor latch but wide sympathetic heart and embraced her and her sons as its own kith and kin: And Rama completed his sacrifice by raising a golden image of Sita and making her the queen of the realm and carrying a never-failing love and devotion for that ideal of noble womanhood who never complained under the burden of her sorrows and ever looked upon Rama as her own, her beloved. Thus ends the main story of Ramayana. I have dealt with it at length in order that it should make us better understand the ideals of

the people. The oldest bard of India, Valmiki, exhibited a wild enthusiasm over the beauties of nature. Whole chapters of the Ramayana are full of the most minute observations of the rising and falling shades of the dawn and night, of the change of seasons, of green glades and murmuring brooks, of the constant shiftings of the clouds over the blue bosom of the infinite heavens and of the swelling, surging, foaming waters over the bosom of the dark deep.

The painting of the conflicting passions of human mind, the dramatic situation of human events, and the viewing of human life from a high artistic standpoint, will make the Ramayana to be regarded in all ages as one of the best Epics in the world. We have not had time to refer to the beautiful portraiture of brotherly love that pervades the whole book. The deep vein of moral and religious sentiment and the high ideals of human relations that run through the poem are engrafted deep in the hearts of the millions of India. Every girl is taught by the mother to store in the inmost recesses of her heart the divine ideal of Sita and to strive in her life to emulate her example. Many a man begins or ends the day with a chapter or two of the poem and looks upon it not only as a work of art but also as a sacred scripture, and Rama has found a place for ever in every Indian heart as one of the Divine incarnations, for his purity, love and unselfishness and noble sacrifice for the cause of his people and country and of the whole world. Lives of such as these are not limited by time or

space. They are the everlasting rock of ages, giving shelter to the drowning millions in all times; of them it is spoken in the Scripture. "Wherever thou seest a wonderful and extraordinary manifestation of power, beauty or spirituality, know that I, the Lord, am manifesting myself in those forms."

Grand as are the paintings of nature and man in the Ramayana, those of the Mahabharata are not less so. The simple pathos of the former is like the beautiful Ganges flowing gracefully and quietly over the plains, while the intense throes of the tragedy of the latter is like the rushing, tumbling, roaring mountain current cleaving its path through rocks and stones in its way to the bosom of the infinite ocean. The one has the beauty and solace of a comedy while the other rises to the sublime height of tragedy. Here too as in the former the scene lies now among the intrigue and jealousy of courts and kings and anon amid the calm repose of forests and hermitages, only, the ups and downs of human life, the constrast and complexity of human events, the conflict and contradictory nature of the human sentiments and emotions, all come out with a clearer, brighter and more intense light and vividness. To bring before your mind the picture of the age of which the poet speaks, you will have to recall to yourself, the age of Greek history when Socrates lived and moved, or the condition of Palestine at the birth of Christ, when a mighty race and people had fallen into the sloughs of darkness and unbelief and the mire of

hypocrisy and immorality. Such an age in any nation or clime, requires and necessitates as the history of the world shows, the birth of a Socrates, a Buddha, a Christ, or a Krishna. The Indian society was undergoing such a throe and convulsion. The wave of progress which had carried it to the pinnacle of high morality and civilisation, had been followed by a depression and the time had come for the rise of another wave. The poet paints with wonderful vividness such a portrait of such a people. The characters in the poem are on the one hand a noble galaxy of brave, strong, pure, sacrificing and unselfish men, at the head of whom appears the noble and charming sun of the groves of Brinda, the Divine Krishna, and on the other a set of mean, selfish, greedy and immoral and yet powerful men, who are ever inclined to make a bad use of their power and position. The main story describes the conflict of two cousins for the power and supremacy and the throne of a kingdom whose capital was Hastinapura, a place very near to the famous modern town of Delhi. One had the right by birth but the other, whose blind father was the guardian of them both and acted as king during their minority, tried every means to dispossess the former. He made many attempts on the life of his rival, but was ultimately overthrown in the great battle of Kurukshetra, in which all the kings of the northern India and many outside of it joined on one side or the other.

The poet raises his gigantic structure on that

subtle conflict of the human emotions, the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, the self and the non-self, the duals, the opposites which form the basis of the manifold manifestation of the physical, the mental and the spiritual realms. Our poetry and philosophy, our science and art, our morals and religion, all that tend to improve, better and elevate man, from the flesh to the mind, and the still higher realm of the spirit, all have their origin there—Hail, Mother of all distinctions, goddess divine, Nature! Where would have been our progress and improvement, our knowledge and enlightenment, our visions of the sense and of religions above the sense, if thou hadst not spread Thy charm and lived and moved in and through all? All that move and do not move, all that feel and do not feel, all that think and do not think, what are they but Thou: the infinite breath of the infinite Love? And what is that, that is beyond Thee? the unspeakable, the unthinkable, the unknowable, and yet the Power whose light makes the sun and the moon and the stars bright, makes the fire burn and the mind think, and attaining which we go beyond what is known and unknown. "The lethe of nature can't trance him again, whose soul sees the Perfect, which his eyes seek in vain."

The poet of the Mahabharata is instensely practical. You are thrown at once in the midst of human events, of striking situations. The clamour and noise of the court rouses your attention, you see the contending cousins from their infancy, and the germ of jea-

lousy between them which sprouts up and ultimately develops to a gigantic tree; your heart goes out towards them when you see the five brothers worn with persecution turn their heavy steps towards the forest, straining their eyes to look at the faint ray of light in the belief that the right shall conquer, that truth must come out victorious, you feel the vanishing of all light and hope and the gradual settling down of the darkness, the subtle temptation to forsake the path of truth and righteousness and the struggle of the brave mind which says "get thee behind me, tempter, and come out victorious." You get blended with their hopes and joys, sorrows and afflictions, trials and temptations, and rise with their rise and fall with their fall. A strong vein of religious sentiment pervades the whole of the poem. Here too is a religion which is to be carried into the very midst of our daily life, amid the roar of battle, as well as in sweet and dear relations of hearth and home, amid the strife and confusion of the business-life as well as the calm and repose of the hermitage. Mark the opening of that beautiful episode, the Bhagavad-Gita, in the poem and you will be convinced of this intense practicality of the religion of India. Amidst the lowering clouds of intense human events, flashed that dazzling light of spirituality, which attracted the attention of the north and the south; roared that mighty thunder, whose peal is still reverberating through the East and the west. Amidst the deafening din of the meeting of armies, amidst devouring jealousy, anger and hatred,

amidst the intense madness and hysterics of excitement, amidst every possible distraction that can be thought of or imagined, rose the calm and sonorous voice of the Divine-human Krishna, assuring us that every man is following the path of religion and rising higher and higher by whatever he is doing, that through resistance, he is rising to the higher plane of non-resistance, through morality to that of spirituality, through diversity to that of unity, and perfection. Krishna, the sweet blending of justice and love, of religion and practically, of the highest philosophy, elevating above the bounds of time and space, above the realms of law and causation, with intense work for work's sake, Krishna, the beautiful union of heaven and earth, what language can express the deep debt of gratitude which humanity owes to Thee? The ignorant and blind alone deride Thee and criticise Thy actions, for they have not the eyes to see nor the ears to hear! the bright visions that Thou sawest or the music that Thou heardest. But Thou, who sawest the fall of heroes in the mighty battle of Kurukshetra with perfect calm and composure, who sawest the death of Thy own flesh and blood with a sweet smile on Thy lips, who met Thine own end with perfect peace and joy, who art the harmonious blending of love and non-attachment, nothing can remove from Thee the halo of glory and majesty and peace and blessedness, that surrounds Thee for ever and ever. But to return. Beautiful as is the episode of the Bhagavad-Gita, and striking and picturesque

its position, it is one among many of such philosophical discourses, which serve as ornaments to the graceful body of the Epic. The thousand other episodes, such as that of Savitri, the faithful wife, who by her devotion brought her dead husband back to life, of Sakuntala and her love, of Bhishma, the moral hero, and his sacrifice, that have supplied the theme to a vast number of dramas and other writings in after times, and which are entirely of a different type to the former kind, are so beautiful in their settings, elegant in grace and finish, complete in their parts and appealing to the sense of the beautiful, that they will ever attract the admiration of the learned. Truly it has been said "that the grand Epic of the Mahabharata is an epitome of the whole world" and that "whatever you do not find in that Epic, you will not find in the whole of India." It is impossible to estimate the influence of these two Epics on the daily lives of the people. It is difficult also to determine whether they have exerted greater influence on the moral and religious sentiment of the teeming millions as sacred writings or on the sense of the beautiful on account of their literary and artistic excellence. Old and young, learned and ignorant, women and men all know of the wonderful exploits of Rama, the ordeal of fire and banishment of Sita the noble lady of sorrows, the heroism of Arjuna and the Herculean strength of Bhima. In caves and temples, in window and door sills, in the houses and cottages, in copper and brass utensils and, in short, everywhere

you will find some portion of the history of Rama or some part of the Mahabharata, carved in grotesque or beautiful figures. The boys in the glow of the evening with wide open eyes hear these stories from their mothers and get excited over the exploits of the heroes or shed tears of joy at the account of innocence protected or virtue rewarded and evil punished. The girls hear the wonderful story of the faithfulness and love of a Sita or a Savitri and observe fasts on days in which it is written, they were born. The old treasure up in their minds the grand truths of philosophy and religion which flowed from the lips of the God incarnate, a Krishna or a Rama.

We will conclude the paper with a few words on another Epic of India. The divine singer Kalidasa marches at the head of the noble procession of the poets of India. The smooth and easy flow of language, the purity of diction, the accurate painting of nature, above all the striking illuminating similes and epithets and the sublime height to which he rises in his description of nature and man, carry you along to the very inmost sanctuary of the temple of the Muse and leave you charmed, intoxicated and yet refreshed with the sweet grace of her form. Mark his description of Uma, the noblest ideal of divine womanhood, for ancient and modern India, in his Kumarasambhava. Her childhood, her faint recollections of a former existence, in which she laid down her life on the altar of love and faithfulness, her intense love and admiration for Siva seen at first in

the germ, then developed into a mighty banyan sending root after root and holding the ground with firmer and firmer grasp, the unfolding of the innocent beautiful bud into a full-blown flower, all bring her in a real tangible form before you. You see her graceful form, bright as a sunbeam, playing with her friends, you almost feel you would turn her from her intense purpose of conquering the flesh by austerity and meditation, and at the next instant realise that it is in vain, the waters of the river though soft hew down the rocks and find their path to the ocean and no one can turn them back to their source. The mother persuades in vain. Will she succeed? Will this frail delicate flower which trembles and droops at the weight of a bee, hold her head at the heavy weight of a bird? She goes; she succeeds; she finds out her destiny, that she is to be the bride of One who cares neither for wealth, nor power, nor prosperity, whose only power is self-control and only riches illumination, whose love and sympathy have made Him a refuge of the fallen and the weak and whose unbounded knowledge has raised Him to the position of the lord of lords. True and faithful to his first love, he was passing his days in meditating on the deep mystery of life and death, unfathomable even by gods, on the "One without a second," who manifests Himself as the many. High above in the shady groves of the Himalayas, where the stately pines sing of peace and strength, and birds of wondrous plumage chant their matins and speak of love, where the crystal foaming

brook, like a maiden rushing to meet her lover, dances down from rock to rock, and the deer roams freely filling the air with the perfume of musk, Siva the god of gods, the matchless, the pure, was sitting on a boulder, like a graven image, immersed in meditation, his mind like the flame of a lamp unmoved by the wind, rising straight on the bosom of the infinite Self. Nothing can be compared to the sublime height to which the poetry rises here in this description of the meditation of Siva. The great peculiarity of Kalidasa's writing is his wonderfully striking similes. They speak like a beautiful painting. In describing a thing his method is to throw picture after picture before the reader's eyes and to sum up the whole in one grand panorama. Mark the verse where by the command of Nandi, the devoted admirer of Siva, whose nature became still and silent so as not to disturb the meditation of Siva: "The trees stopped swinging their boughs, the bees silenced their humming noise, the birds left off singing in the trees, the deer stopped their roaming; the whole face of the forest looked as if painted on a canvas, as soon as he gave the command." Then again the beautiful picture given a few lines below of the sudden appearance of Spring and Cupid on that peaceful forest to move Siva from his deep meditations and bring his mind down to pleasure and love, is simply marvellous. But to return to our story. Uma finds Siva in this sequestered spot, began to serve him in little ways and by and by gained his attention.

Then follows the burning of Kama, the personified carnality by the wrath of Siva when he felt himself moved by the beauty of Uma and finally a spiritual union between the two.

Thus ends the story in the sacred writings of the love of Siva and Uma; the poet of course deviates more or less from it. His other epic the Raghuvamsa, recounts the whole story of the Ramayana and is full of striking pictures, and has a life and originality of its own. The various other Epics written from the fifteenth century downward in the present spoken dialects of India, we have neither time nor space to deal with. Enough to say that they too have charms and beauty of their own and are full of the genuine expression of the human heart.

GURU.*

By Swami Brahmananda

IN the present age we find religious agitation more or less almost everywhere. And even the highly educated English-knowing people instead of being mere atheists side with some agitation or other. Among the religious inquirers we find men of different natures. Some say, 'as it is the custom, be initiated by the hereditary guru, count the beads and perform religious austerities, which we see people doing, and you are sure to realise God. One should not forsake his hereditary guru, it is a great sin to do so, consequently whatever be the character of the guru without any ado be initiated by him and perform religious rites'. They themselves do the same. Sometimes they read or hear the Mahabharata or the Puranas and some of them go through the Tantras also.

There are some men who read some of the Sastras by themselves. Now-a-days translations of the Gita, the Puranas, the Upanishads, the Vedanta Sutras and of works on the Philosophy of the Yoga have been published and some by the help of these books, without any assistance of a Pandit try their best to make out the real essence of the Sastras and take up some method of prayer from them according to their personal choice and follow the same in

* Translated from the Udbhodana.

practice. Either they do not acknowledge the necessity of a guru or if they admit they do not profess it to be unavoidably necessary. Some people do not pay the subject particular attention. Among them there are some who say that if you have not a Siddha Guru (*i.e.*, one who has realised God) it matters little whether you have a guru or not. So he says 'when I find a Siddha Guru I will adopt him as my guru'. Some of them associate with Sadhus and some do not do anything at all.

God is omniscient, He will surely hear if you pray to Him. He will give you whatever you want so what is the necessity of an external guru? This is the opinion of a few others. Again those who hold the opposite view say that nothing can be done without a guru but any guru will not do, a Siddha Guru is necessary. These who are initiated by their hereditary guru and are performing religious rites according to the prevailing custom—if they are asked about their practices, they reply that they are merely following their guru's instructions but do not know whether we are progressing or not. Have the disturbances of the mind settled down? No, that is not even appeased. Moreover it is seen that their love towards God is not increasing day by day, the attraction that they have for wealth and their lust, not a spark of that even, have they for God.

From these various opinions the question arises whether the Guru is necessary in any way for one's salvation or for leading a religious life?

If the reply is in the affirmitive then it is an unavoidable necessity i. e., it is impossible to gain salvation without a guru. And what qualifications should a guru possess ?

For a proper solution of these problems we must depend on reason, the Sastras, and the sayings of the sages.

Firstly, let us see what follows from discussion. Those even who think very little will easily understand that prayer and ceremonial are but individual actions, but the world has never seen a person who just after coming out of the womb went to some lonely place and sat in meditation without getting up again. Many people understand this for there is no such fool as will deny that by reading the Sastras or other books and by hearing various religious discussions and discourses from many persons, a person forms some idea about God and religion. Those who insist on the necessity of a guru are wanting perhaps in such knowledge as that by associating with a sadhu or by passing long hours with a sage and observing his practices there can be no advancement or from earnest devotion in prayer, from benevolent actings and other qualifications a desire to possess those qualities does not always come. Perhaps they fear that they have to pay respect to a single individual and have to follow his teachings for ever. How far is this true ?

In reply to it, it may be said that whatever branch of knowledge a man desires to learn some how or other he feels the necessity of a teacher. Not

that a man cannot learn anything without depending upon any external help but it takes longer time, much perseverance and a great deal of suffering. As a general rule we learn first what our forefathers had learnt and then try to acquire something more personally. This acquirement from others is not like a brainless creature chewing the cud supplied to it by some one, but it requires great self-effort. To learn from others means to make them one's own. This is also true in the case of a spiritual guru. If we can bind ourselves in some strong spiritual bond to some really great man, the truths that he conceived during his life-time become easy of acquirement in this life of ours.

Furthermore a really advanced guru has a special power in that he clearly understands the spiritual nature of his disciple and knowing that he explains the way being led through which the disciple may easily attain salvation or realise God. Moreover if there is any possibility of constant association then he helps him up to the last moment by interpreting the means of avoiding all possible disturbances during sadhana and by teaching the higher and higher methods of attainment according to the advancement of the disciple. Every one of those who is fortunate enough to get a real guru holds this opinion that there is a great difference between the initiation by a true guru and the hereditary guru in general. A true guru imparts a special spiritual power with the mantram during initiation and he

teaches the mantram also according to the nature of the disciple so that by far less effort and Sadhana, the follower becomes successful.

There is another advantage which a disciple gains from a true guru. The guru in fact carries the burden of responsibility i. e., if perchance the disciple slips astray, he employs various means both external and spiritual to set him again in the right path. In case any disciple after acquiring a perfect knowledge of all the teachings of his guru seeks for a far higher conception, then he is at liberty to take up another higher guru but unless the disciple is far advanced it is better to depend wholly on a single guru; otherwise he cannot hold his spiritual conception firm and fast. Regarding the obedience to guru's orders it may be said that a true guru never commands unjustly and also it is necessary to observe for a long time before taking up any one as a real guru. Those who are desirous of having a real guru should so long live with and examine his character of a guru till they get a real and earnest belief in him as a true Sadhu?

Some one may discuss that if I have the capacity to judge a real guru then I myself am a guru. Regarding this it may be said that it is simply false logic. Do you not really distinguish good from bad in every step? If you are destitute of that judgment why do you call some good and some bad? If you have not the power of judging a man by observing his character and by finding out whether he has conquered lust, anger, has high devotion and wisdom and

is uncovetous, then you should rather sit in a lonely corner and with folded hands pray to God and ask "O God! give me the power of judging good and evil." Some are cheated for the reason that they do not examine the guru properly but take him to be perfect. When you have once taken him as your guru why do you hesitate carrying out his orders in every respect? Can he ever lead you in an evil way? Then it is clear that they alone who have not in the least derived any benefit from being initiated by the hereditary guru and who are really eager to realise God, that are at liberty to adopt a real guru. If it so happens that after being initiated by a real guru, it becomes impracticable to have his association, either due to his having given up the mortal garb or due to his stay after, then if one thinks it necessary, he may learn from any other great man without giving up the method of Sadhana he has already learned from his guru. It is said that Avadhut adopted 24 minor gurus.

Now let us see what the Sastras say about this. It is impossible to discuss the subject of guru fully with the help of Sastras in this short article. I will discuss it elaborately in another article. Here I quote a few passages from the *Sruti* which is the fountain source of all authority. Thus says the *Sruti*:—

In order to know Him, the disciple with pieces of firewood (for Yagna) on his hand should go to a guru who is well versed in the Vedas and has supreme devotion to God.

He who has an Acharya (guru) gains wisdom.

'*Ashcharyo bakta, kushalosya labdha*' He who teaches and he who learns about the Supreme Soul, both of them should possess marvellous qualifications.

'*Na narenabarena prokta esha subijnayo bahuda chintyamanah.*'

If He is interpreted by a defective guru, even by a good deal of long meditation He cannot be well understood.

"*Yasya deve para bhaktiryatha deve tatha Gurau*
Tasyaite kathitahyarthah prakasante Mahatmanah"

He who has deep devotion to the Supreme Soul and has equal devotion to his guru, within the heart of that great man blooms forth the truths taught by the Sastras.

There are good many such instances in the *Sruti*.

Most of the people know that lots of such evidence are to be found in the Tantras also. In them there are nice discussion about the qualifications of a guru and prohibitary rules regarding the selection. It is needless to lengthen the article by quoting them here. The entire purport of them all is that realisation can be attained by performing Sadhana under the guidance of a true guru. 'Whatever be your hereditary guru be initiated by him.' Such like statements are also made in some places but these are no doubt words introduced by the selfish gurus after their downfall. Religion is not a mere social affair

and there is not in the least any feeling of mutual obedience or social popularity. The hereditary guru i,e., he who was my father's guru may be honoured socially, and if I am able I may give him sufficient money but when that sincere restlessness as 'O God! how shall I realise you' arises in the heart where shall I go then except to that place where my yearning will be satisfied? Where shall I go in search of water leaving him by whom my thirst will be quenched?

The great sages, if they are asked, say that by learning the methods of Sadhana from a guru who has realised God, being advised by him in every step, being enlightened in every pace by the light of truths realised in his life, we have come to this state. If you really want to realise you also have to follow the same method. All great men hold this opinion that a true guru only can interpret the difference. It is seen that wherever there was a marvellous expansion of any religion there was a really great man as helper in the background. People in their ordinary parlance, say that this man's power is due to the blessings of his guru. We have read in the Sastras that there is a God, men say that there is a God but a real guru says 'I have seen God.' He shows his disciple also the way to see God and leads him slowly on the way. At the very sight of a real guru a devotional feeling towards him naturally arises. From his very appearance it seems as though he has tasted some supernatural happiness and is absorbed in the bliss

sinking deep day by day. As soon as one goes near him all the sorrows and miseries of the world pass away and not a bit even of worldly thoughts is left in the mind. By his holy touch the sleeping power of Brahman within is awakened and the disciple sees the ocean of bliss on all sides.

What cannot a disciple do for such a guru? Is it not natural for a disciple to be grateful to him? 'Know thy guru as the Brahman,' says the Sastra. Can this be done to a professional guru? But we do it easily to one who has realised God. Those who bring forth such childish reasoning at that it is not right to know a man as God, it is profanity against the Almighty, and are not inclined to recognise the Guru as Brahman himself but owing to ignorant dualistic views always imagine an indefinite gulf between the creator and the created, we advise such people to read and understand carefully the Advaita Vedanta and to practise Sadhana along with it.

No question can arise whether this guru is a Brahmin or Sudra, Hindu, Mahomedan or Christian, Sanyasin or a householder. He who knows Brahman is a guru and Brahmins etc are mere titles.

What more is there to say? I have seen many gurus in this world and have taken advice also but to no purpose, because they bear no testimony of having known the Brahman. Their worldly attachment had not fled. The power of consciousness and renunciation is not to be found in them. To take advice from ordinary gurus is as fruitless as to ask the direction of

a place from a blind man. That power they cannot introduce with their advice. I have heard and also believe that a guru who has known the Brahman introduces with the mantram such a strength in the mind of his disciple that the disciple acquires altogether a new life. From that very day he begins a new faith and a fresh life. I have heard good many advices from ordinary gurus but none has left any impression on the heart. Once I heard a story on this subject from a great man :—

Once upon a time a king had a dislike for the world. He heard that Parikshit gained divine wisdom by hearing the Bhagavat for seven days. So he called upon a neighbouring Pundit and began to hear the Bhagavat. He heard it daily for two months but he gained no wisdom. Then he asked the Brahmin that while Parikshit heard Bhagavat for seven days only and gained divine wisdom how it was that he gained nothing though he was hearing it for two months and told him if he did not give any satisfactory explanation by the next day that he would not get any remuneration whatever. The Brahmin returned home exceedingly sorrowful dreading the terrible displeasure of the king but he could not find out any reply even after much thinking. He was sorely troubled and began to think of this world and the next putting his hand over his face. Now he had an intelligent and much devoted daughter. Seeing her father so sorry she worried him to tell her the cause of his grief and at last moved by filial affection he was

obliged to give out to her the cause of his sorrow. The girl laughed and said 'O Father do not mind it. I will give the reply to the king.' The next day the Pundit appeared before the king's court accompanied by his daughter and said 'My daughter will give the reply to your question.' The girl said, 'If you want to have the reply you must hear what I say.' The king consented and the Brahmin's daughter ordered the sentries to bind herself as well as the king against two pillars. Being ordered by the king, they did so. Then the girl said 'O King, release me out of this bondage.' What! You speak of an impossibility, I myself am in bondage and how can I release you?' said the King. The girl then laughed and said 'O king! this is the reply to your question. The king Parikshit was a hearer who earnestly wanted salvation and the preacher was no other person but Sukhadeva who had renounced everything, was much devoted to Brahman and was very wise. Hearing Bhagavat from him the king Parikshit gained divine wisdom. But my father who is excessively attached to the world is reading the Sastras in order to get money. How can you get that wisdom from him?

From this illustrative story it can be made out that there is no chance of our being free from bondage without being guided by a true guru.

We hear a few other remarks on this subject. Some people say that howsoever be the disciple if he can get a real guru, he is sure to get salvation. Others again say that whatsoever be the guru, the

disciple attains salvation if he possesses faith, love and devotion. We disagree with them both for such cases are very rare in this world. As a general rule both the guru and the disciple should be proper people. We see great many differences among the disciples of the same great man. It is so owing to the natures of the disciples themselves. If the disciple possesses devotion, humility, and perseverance, then he can easily assimilate the essence of the teachings of a guru. From what we read in our sastras about the guru and his disciple it is generally well understood that the duties that are laid down for the disciple so discipline his mind and body that he turns out to be a true man.

It may be said that we hardly find that sort of devotion now-a-days and many are strongly for doing away with it. If this devotion to guru becomes extinct from our land, then all good qualities as ardour, faith, uprightness etc., will surely vanish and selfishness will reign in society in the name of freedom. You may examine him before you adopt any person as your guru but having adopted him once, you must form your mind in such a manner that you will sacrifice your life even at his word. Many persons may think that if we depended on the guru in such a way our freedom of mind would disappear and gradually we would become a lifeless mass. There is no ground for such an apprehension. A real guru never checks the freedom of mind but rather so guides his disciple that he finally gains mental freedom, is able to stand

upon his own legs, shaking off the bondages of the senses, mind, family, society and soars high like a free bird. How much obligation do men feel for a small sum of money or a little corporeal help from others! Why then do you think it unjust to show your gratefulness to him from whom you have come to know the essence of life or the means of getting the greatest thing and from whom you have received constant help to acquire it? There is no nation so grateful as the Hindus. The day on which the Hindus forget their devotion to their gurus, there will no more exist the Hinduism of the Hindus. Remember the story about the devotion of Upamanyu to his Guru in the Mahabharata. That devotion, that uprightness, that boundless faith in the guru's words, once raised India to her highest pitch of glory. If India rises again she will rise through this devotion to guru, through the recognition of guru as God, not mere God of imagination but as God visible. If we become ready to sacrifice our lives for him, then only we shall be able to perform great actions. Not only shall we be able to secure our own salvation but we shall also be able to do something for our Motherland and for our nation also.

— ❧ —

SANKARACHARYA.*

By Swami Turiyananda.

"WHENEVER religion is abused and irreligion prevails, I manifest Myself. To save the righteous, to put down the evil-doers, and to establish religion again, I take birth in this world from age to age." These are the words we find in the Bhagavad-Gita declared by Sri Krishna, the teacher of mankind, when explaining the laws of nature, and thereby freeing and making conscious of His true self to his disciple, Arjuna, in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, some five thousand years ago.

We have not heard them repeated by anybody since then, perhaps, in the same way, but we have seen their actual performance, their fulfilment in this world of ours, in different countries, whenever occasion demanded it from time to time. But nowhere do we mark it so vividly as in India, the cradle and motherland of all the religions of the world, so to speak.

When, long after Sri Krishna's time, there began to be perpetrated all sorts of iniquities and slaughter in the name of Vedic Religion in India, then and there we find the advent of Sakyamuni Gautama, the Buddha, thundering against the malpractices of the time with the authority of an Avatara, and setting things right again. The force of religion and morality

* Lecture delivered in America.

which Buddha gave to the world acted in the land of its birth for a long, long time. The students of history know what an amount of marvellous effect it produced throughout the length and breadth of India ; nay, far beyond it, at the time of the celebrated King Asoka the Great, and after.

But nothing is permanent in this world, nothing is constant, nothing perfect. Like all other things of this world, subject to change, subject to reaction, there came a reaction even in the doctrine preached by the Buddha himself, in course of time, through the ignorance which resides in men's minds ; and again there began to be practised all sorts of inhuman and barbarous acts in the name of religion to gratify the animal nature of man, thus drowning the country in rank materialism and superstition once again.

When in this way the whole of the Indian religious sky was made gloomy and fearful, there appeared once more in one corner of it a luminary, who, by his wonderful power of light, of reasoning and spirituality, chased away the darkness for good and made the atmosphere healthy again. And this luminary was our Sankaracharya himself.

As in the case of all other Divinities on earth, we hear many miraculous stories about the birth of Sankara ; but I would not speak much of them here. He was born in a family of a high-caste Brahman in a village of Kerala, in Southern India, about 800 A.D.

His father was a religious devotee of an orthodox type, whose great pleasure consisted in the worship of

Shiva, the presiding Deity of peace and benevolence. A truly learned and good man, Shivaguru, for that was the name of Sankara's father, spent all his life in the performance of religious duties and had become old. He was happy in all other respects except that he could not pay off his debts to his Pitris (the manes). This alone made him unhappy. A man, according to the Sashtras which Shivaguru followed, is involved in three debts from his very birth. Deva-rina, Rishi-rina and Pitri-rina ; the debts to the Gods, the bright ones,—the debts to the seers, the sages,—and the debts to the fathers, the manes. And these debts are paid off by a man in three different ways. By leading a pure religious life and making sacrifices to the Gods, one is freed from the first of these debts. By studying the Scriptures and becoming quite conversant with them, one pays off to the seers the second of the debts; and by giving birth to a legitimate child, one is freed from the debt one owes to the fathers, which is the third in the list. Now Shivaguru got rid of the first two debts by all the means he could; but as to the third, he was quite helplessly involved. As he became old he had very little hope of making himself free that way, but he believed in the grace of God. So he made up his mind to undergo certain penances prescribed by the Shastras in order to obtain a son by Divine grace, the last resort one can possibly take to. Shivaguru, after consultation with his devoted wife who was none the less miserable for want of a child, repaired to a lonely place convenient for his

purpose of devotion, and betook himself to all sorts of austerities and worship by the observance of fastings and repetitions of Mantrams, of the holy name of God, and the like. In this way, when he was engaged in his sincere prayers one night, he saw in his dreams his Ishtam, the Ideal, who appearing before him, said: "Get up, my son and go thy way. I am well pleased with thee. Thou shalt have thy wishes fulfilled. I will be born to thee as thy son." This pleased him beyond expectations. He went home and related everything that had happened to his wife and they were both exceedingly happy. In time, Visista, the wife of Shivaguru, bore a beautiful son, and as they got him through the grace of Shivam, the Sankara, they liked to call him Sankara. We need not go through the miraculous occurrences that are described regarding his birth and so forth. Let me say that he was born and grew gradually till he was five years old, when his parents became thoughtful about his education; for it is the custom with the Hindus to send their children to school even when they are five years old, after initiating them in the ceremony of Vidyarambha, the inception of education. The lives of the Hindus are so indissolubly connected with religion and God that they can seldom do anything without the performance of some religious ceremony. Hence we find so many ceremonies performed in the lives of the Hindus, as we see done nowhere else. With the Hindus every ceremony has some deep meaning; every ceremony brings some vital change in life.

The seers of old in India had through the light of spirituality and truth, determined for certain, that human life was not created for the purpose of the gratification of the senses, but it has some higher end in view to perform. They found that the sense enjoyments to which men become attached, and for which they strive so much, are not peculiar to them alone, but all other animals are prone to them in common with men. All other creatures of the world eat, sleep, beget children, and feel pleasure and pain, and become afraid, just in the same way as men do. There is not much difference between them in these respects. But to men alone is given the power of distinguishing good from evil, of having control over their passions, of becoming masters of them all, if they only desire it, and of trying to act conscientiously and with a firm determination in that direction, and thus make themselves free; and by making themselves free from all bondages, they can know their real self and get beyond all the dual throngs of this world of relativity and serve the purpose of life once for all. This is possible for men alone, and therefore it behoves them well to at least try for that laudable end, without giving themselves up as slaves to their passions and acting according to their dictates for life long, thus being put in the same class with the brutes, only having better opportunities.

This the seers of old in India understood and realised in their lives; and in order that men may obtain this freedom from all passions and have mas-

tery over them all even in this life, they enjoined upon them in the Shastras to divide their lives into four parts; namely, Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, and Sanyasa, with their allotted duties to be performed in each. In the first part of life is to be observed the Brahmacharya, Brahma meaning the Vedas, the Scriptures, and Chara, to follow; that is, to lead the life of a religious student. We all know how opportune it is for anyone to learn when young. In childhood the mind remains unsullied, ready to receive and eager to know all it can, and the impressions it receives at that time are never effaced during the whole life; and so it is the purpose of the Shastras to suggest to the young minds of the children all the truths and moral teachings that might be useful to them when they would become men. Not only this, the pupils are asked to live in the house of their teachers and always remain in their company, from whose life's example they might learn how to live rightly and form their own character. When they have grown old enough and have made themselves well versed in all departments of knowledge and quite able to think for themselves, they would return to their homes and take to some useful profession according to their individual taste and capabilities and try to carry out the principles in life which they learned as students.

Now our Sankara came to that part of life which was considered to be fit for Brahmacharya, and his father, who had himself enjoyed that blessedness in

life in its time, was not slow to make arrangements for his beloved son to enter into it. On an auspicious day he had him initiated and led him to the abode of a competent teacher and committed him to his care. Sankara, who evinced signs of greatness and genius even from his infancy, began to learn from his teacher all the Scriptures with their branches in a regular way and by his inborn power of retentive memory and extra-ordinary merit, became quite proficient in them all in a very short time. In short, he turned out a true master of all the branches of knowledge of the time, before long, and his name and fame went far and wide as a great genius in learning. Learned men from all parts of the country came to meet him, were extremely satisfied with his gentle behaviour and simple manners of life, and went away well pleased with his vast erudition, power of grasp, and tact of explaining things in a way which they had never found anywhere else. Now, when in this way Sankara had made himself known as a great exponent of Shastras, his father one day came to see him, and after being acquainted with his exceptional virtues, both of character and knowledge, became highly pleased with him and asked of his teacher if he could take his son home. The teacher, who felt himself proud of having such a student and who loved him more than his own son, was sorry to part with him, but, nevertheless, he gave his consent and blessed him and asked him to continue in the study of the Vedas and in explaining them to students like himself. This was the

fifth year that he had been living with his teacher, and in this short time, even in his tenth year of life, he could make himself a great authority in matters of education and learning. He not only read and digested all the difficult books then extant, but freely discussed them and made commentaries on them for the convenience of others. His power and method of argumentation were unique, and he did not let a thing go unless he made it perfectly clear and popular.

Now after taking leave of his teacher, according to the Shastric rules, he came back to his home where his mother had been waiting for him with a longing heart to see her only child who had become renowned even at such a young age. He was very happy to meet her and made obeisance to her. Thus Sankara lived in his father's house once again, now as a teacher expounding most difficult parts of Shastras, and making friendships with all the learned and great men of the time from far and near. Men began to pour in to have the opportunity of hearing and learning from him, and he too was glad to teach them untiringly and well. In this way he taught a goodly number of students in all the branches of knowledge and was able to make his position in society a prosperous and influential one. In fact, now, he had almost everything in life that could make a man happy in this world. Wealth, honour, fame, friends, health, education, character, he had all these things. But in spite of all these Sankara could not feel happy.

Sincere and true to the principle, Sankara began to think that true it was that he had learned a good deal and had become so famous, but had he become truly learned? He had not solved yet the problem of life at all. He had read many things in the Shastras, but had he realised them in his life? If not, what was the good of his learning them? They were only a burden to him rather than being any good to him. He understood very well that an ounce of practice was really of more worth than tons of theories. He began to think how should he realise in his life the truths he had learned in the Shastras. He looked around him and he became all the more sorry. For the condition of society was very miserable at that time. Learned men there were many, but their learning consisted in books only. They could speak nicely and explain the Shastras well, but their words did not correspond with their actions. They did not themselves do what they asked others to do, and their minds were solely engaged in earning money and enjoying material things. Sankara saw this and became more anxious for himself. His sense of responsibility was so great that he began to blame himself for all these things, and determined in his mind to become a good example for them all himself. He thought that without Spiritual regeneration there was no way to better the condition of men. But how to do that was the question.

When Sankara was in this state of mind, it so happened that Shivaguru, who had become very old

breathed his last. This sudden death of his father brought a great change in Sankara's life. He performed the funeral ceremony of his father according to the prescribed rites with the help of his friends and relatives, and observed all the injunctions made in the Shastras for the occasion. He did all these coolly and well, but there was something acting within him which brought about a complete change in his life. He loved his father very dearly, and his death, his removal from the earthly existence struck him severely. He had been discussing about life and death in his mind since some time past. Now the actual death of one whom he held nearest and dearest brought the question home afresh and made it vitally intense. He grew serious at once and began to think about the question of death very earnestly. He determined to solve the question once for all, by any way he could. He knew that to accomplish such an object in life, one must be wholly devoted to it, must try with his heart and soul to make it a success. He read in the Upanishads that by knowing Him, the Paramatman, one gets beyond death. There is no other way to it. Neither by progeny, nor by wealth, but by renunciation alone, man attains to immortality. So he became eager for renunciation. He wished to give up everything for the sake of the Knowledge of Self. But when he remembered about his mother, he thought his case to be hopeless. Nevertheless his determination for realising the Spirit grew so strong that at last he resolved to speak his

mind to his mother and take her permission on the subject.

When he was in this mood he composed very beautiful pieces of poetry, and I like to present some of them to you in their translation form. They are full of renunciation and are indeed " Moha Mudgaram." a blow to illusion. They run thus:

" What use is there in your thinking of gaining wealth and possession, there is not a particle of happiness in them. ' Even from a son there is danger for the rich,' is a proverb told everywhere.

" Who is thy wife,—who is thy son ? This world is very curious indeed. Whom do you belong to and where do you come from ? Think about the truth of all this, brother."

" Be not proud of your wealth or relatives, neither of your youth, for time steals them all in the twinkling of an eye, so subject to change they all are. Know this, and detaching yourself from all these, quickly enter into the realisation of Brahman."

" In enemy or in friend, in sons or in relatives, take no heed of making strife or peace. Be even-minded to all if thou desirest to attain to the state of being universal without delay."

" Unstable as the water on a lotus leaf, so is the life of man. The company of sages in this world, even for a moment, can be like a boat to cross the sea of birth."

" Day and night, evening and morning, autumn and spring, come again and again. The time is passing

and our lives are ebbing, but the wind of hope is not abating. Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, ignorant as thou art."

"Wrinkled becomes the body, the head grows grey, toothless becomes the mouth, and the staff held by the hand shakes terribly, still the cup of desire remains unchanged as ever. Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, ignorant as thou art."

"A child, always engaged in play; when young, busy in making love; in old-age, merged in anxiety; not one is mindful of the Lord Supreme. Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, ignorant as thou art."

"Where there is birth, there is death, there is lying in the mother's womb again and again. This is the manifest evil in this world. How can you, O man, expect to cross this shoreless sea of Samsara without the grace of the Lord? Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, ignorant as thou art."

Now he not only thought and wrote all this, but actually settled in his mind to live this life. He said to his mother that unless a man dies even when he is alive, he cannot be free from the anxiety of death. He had read in the Shastras that sages die in their life time by being initiated in Sanyas, and he fully believed it. So if she would kindly allow him to take Sanyas, she would make him really happy. He said he had never before asked anything from her, and he hoped that she would not refuse him this first boon. His mother, who was of a very spiritual nature, quite understood the truth of his sayings, but

could not easily be persuaded to yield. But at last, however, she was prevailed upon to give her consent to let him go, on condition that he should come and see her before her death and do the needful at that time. Sankara agreed to her proposal and left everything behind him for the purpose of gaining the knowledge of the self beyond death. After consoling his mother to every possible way and after making arrangements for the needs of her life, Sankara took leave of his friends and pupils, and went out on a pilgrimage, first in the hope of finding a true sage who had attained his real self and thus had become free, in order that he also in his company and by his instructions, might attain to that state. He travelled in different parts of the country and came to the banks of the river Narmada, where he met Goudapada, an old Sanyasin, living in a cave. Sankara instinctively understood that he was a man who had attained his real self, and he asked this sage to initiate him into his holy order. Goudapada, who thought Sankara to be a fit person in every way, was very glad to make friendship with him, but as he had taken a vow to remain completely absorbed in Brahman, he did not undertake to initiate him, but asked him to see Govindapada, his favourite disciple, for the purpose. Accordingly, he went to Govindapada, and finding him just the type of man he wanted, gave himself up to him and implored him for his deliverance.

Govindapada was extremely pleased with Sankara's worth and abilities, took him into his care and

initiated him into the order of Sanyasins, which he claimed to have come down from the beginning of this Kalpa or cycle. However that may be, after taking the necessary instructions from his spiritual teacher, Sankara engaged himself in deep meditation on his real self which survives death. He tried to join his speech to his thought, then that to intellect, and again those three in the soul, and finally these all into the Paramatman which is the Real Self. This was a process of Yoga or union with the Supreme. He practised this for sometime, being regularly, trained up by his Guru, the spiritual guide who had perfected himself in this path. For such a gigantic thinker like Sankara, sincere and true to the backbone in his principles, it did not take a very long time to realise his true self with the help of one who had already realised it. Sankara, after working out his own salvation in this way, became free and happy. Now he bowed down to his teacher, thanked and praised him, and asked his advice as to what he should do next. His teacher, finding him thus illumined with the light of the knowledge of truth, which was added to his already vast amount of other powers, both moral and intellectual, requested him to preach the truth he had realised in his own life. Sankara, whose mind was so full of sympathy for others, was happy to receive such an order from his teacher, and began his preaching in right earnest.

Before Sankara left home for good, we have seen how deplorable was the condition of the learned

men of society, and where the condition of the men of light and learning was such, we can easily imagine what must have been the condition of the generality of the people. In short, there was no fixed principle among the people. They were divided into various sects, whose object in life was Bhoga, enjoyment. "Eat, drink, and be merry. Death ends all,—there is nothing after death."—this materialistic doctrine was preached everywhere, and this thought reigned supreme. The effect was that men tried their best to enjoy themselves in the pursuit of sense pleasures, without ever arriving at satisfaction. There was no order, no peace in society. In this state of things Sankara began his preaching of Spirituality, by meeting the best men of the time and convincing them about the spiritual truth he realised in his life, thus making converts of them first, and then of their followers, with much ease. In this way he travelled throughout the length and breadth of India, and by his own example and force of advanced thought, vast learning and power of argument and influence of spirituality, succeeded in stemming the tide of materialism that was flowing through the country with an irresistible force.

Of all the brilliant converts he made Mandana Misra, subsequently known as Sureswaracharya, was supposed to have been the greatest. He was the principal of a College of a great University of the time, and was considered to be an intellectual giant in the land. Sankara heard about him and went there to

meet him. At first he was denied an interview, for Mandana had no respect for the Sanyasins of that time, most of whom were very much degenerated, but at last he met Sankara and was defeated by him in a great discussion which lasted for days together. The most interesting part of the discussion was that it was presided over by a very learned lady who was chosen as umpire, and she was no other than the wife of Mandana himself. With the conversion of Mandana to Sannyas, there came a regular revolution in the then society. He had many other learned disciples besides Mandana, and with their help he succeeded in changing the minds of men to better thoughts by the diffusion of his Vedantic ideas broadcast.

When everything was going on well in this way, Sankara felt a strong desire for seeing his mother, and became anxious to start. Soon he went home but was very sorry to find her sick. She was thinking of him and became exceedingly happy to see him again, but that happiness of hers did not last long, for in a short time she gave up her mortal form. Sankara did all to please her in every way he could in her last hours, and managed to do all the necessary things on the occasion according to her will.

Here we see another example of the truth of the saying that prophets are not honoured in their own native land, for he was very much ill-treated by his relatives and own men at home during this time. But, even-minded as Sankara really was, it did not affect him at all. After some time, he again left his native

land to see his disciples and instruct them to do good works for humanity. He wished them to continue their preaching and teaching among all classes of men by founding schools and centres in different parts of India.

In this way establishing order and peace in the country and finding the people once more engaged in virtuous deeds, Sankara made his way towards the Himalayas to enjoy a peaceful rest which he so badly needed. But he could not enjoy it for long. There in the silence and peace on the summits of the Himalayas, with the lofty ideas in his brain which he depicted in his writings and the commentaries, which though given out more than one thousand years ago, are so much appreciated by the best thinkers of today, even among the Oriental scholars of Europe and America, Sankara merged his Prana in the Universal in his thirty-second year of life, and became one with Brahman, the Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.

Sankara did not preach any doctrine of his own, but he expounded and taught the philosophy that existed in the Upanishads from time immemorial. He wrote commentaries on sixteen books, which are commonly known as the " Three Prasthanas," the three ways to salvation. They are on twelve of the principal Upanishads, on Bhagavad-Gita and on Vyasa Sutras or Uttara Mimamsa, which is very comprehensive and exhaustive and is famous by the name of Sariraka Bhashya, and also two other very useful books called Vishnu Sahasranama and Goudapadiya

Karika. Besides these, he composed a good many original books on Vedanta philosophy in which he tried his best to make the Vedanta philosophy very popular and explanatory.

The object of the Vedanta philosophy is to make man free from all bondages of life by making him conscious of his real self called Paramatman, the Supreme Being. Vedanta philosophy, in short, teaches that Brahman alone is real, everything else is unreal, and the human soul is the Brahman, not separate from Him. He is one without a second. Existence, Knowledge and Bliss is His nature. So the human soul is immortal, ever conscious and free and full of bliss. As the sun, though really one, appears as many in different water-pots; as one sky appears as many in different enclosures, so the one indivisible Atman appears as many in different bodies which are the creation of Maya, the Nescience. As different ornaments made of gold, though they have different names and forms, yet are all one gold essentially, so is the Paramatman one appearing as many in names and forms through Maya. As the wave is nothing but water although it has a name and form for itself, so are the names and forms apparent only. Maya is the cause of them. This Maya is the power of the Brahman. It is ignorance without beginning. It has three qualities by which it binds all creatures. The Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; the calmness, the activity and the inertia. These have many different phases by which Maya creates the whole world. It is neither

real nor unreal. It is not real, because after a man has attained his real self, it does not exist. It is not unreal, because it exists when a man does not realise his real self, but thinks that he is a body and has name and form. It is very inscrutable, this Maya, an indescribable something. But this is true, that it vanishes after the realisation of the Brahman, which is pure, One without a second. He that knows this Brahman as his own self gets rid of all fears, for all fears come from the knowledge of another different from the self. When a man knows all to be One, and that One his own self, of whom then shall he be afraid? So Vedanta philosophy teaches discrimination of real from unreal things. It teaches one to give up the unreal. It teaches self-control, both internal and external. It teaches patience, concentration of mind, and respect and faith in Truth. It asks men to hear about Atman, the Self, to think on It, to meditate on It, and then to realise It. For no sooner is the Atman realised than all the knots of the heart are rent asunder, all doubts are cut off, and all the duties of life are fulfilled. Blessed is he indeed who can attain this. Blessed is he who strives for this. May the Dispenser of all good turn our attention to this. May we all become really happy and blessed.

———: o :———

THE ETHICAL IDEAS OF THE HINDUS.*

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA.

HE, who has tried to penetrate the dim vistas of time in the history of India with a fair and candid heart, must have been impressed with the wonderful systems of philosophy, and ethics, and religion, which the Indian mind produced even at a period when the rest of the world was sleeping in darkness and ignorance. All along the way he may see signs of the tidal waves of spirituality which from time to time covered the length and breadth of the land, of mighty religious tornadoes which swept away everything that stood as an obstacle before them, and of great religious upheavals which raised the country higher and higher, till it reached the highest point of development in spirituality to which man has ever risen, and probably can ever rise, in the principles of the Vedanta,—principles wide as the heavens, and embracing all the different particular religions which have already come, or will ever come in the future. Reason stands aghast at finding that all the difficult problems in religion and metaphysics with which it has been grappling for a solution through all these years have already been solved by sturdy old minds; and not only solved, but carried into practice in daily life. It can at first scarcely credit that Kapila propounded the Sankhya theory of cosmic evolution and

* From the Brahmavadin.

involution thousands of years before the Christian era, that the doctrine of Karma goes further in explaining the diversities of human life than the theory of heredity, that the Vedanta has proved beyond the least shade of a doubt the ultimate unity of all individual souls in the One indivisible Ocean of Knowledge, Existence, and Bliss, and that all the different religions are so many different ways leading to that One, call it God, or the Absolute, or the Brahman, or by any name you please. But our duty this evening is not to deal with these high flights of Indian thought, but to see what effect it has had in developing the moral and ethical side of the Hindu mind. And, at the very outset, the question meets us—is any high philosophy, or religion (for philosophy and religion are synonymous in India) possible without a high standard of morals? The answer which the Vedanta gives to this question is always in the negative. No one can rise to the highest stage of spirituality without being perfectly and absolutely pure and high in point of morality. Look at the founders of the different religions; were they pure, or impure? Examine the lives of the Vedic Rishis ("the seers of thoughts") who attained to super-consciousness; or of Buddha, or Christ, or Sankara, or Chaitanya, or even of the founders of the lesser sects in India or elsewhere, as Nanak, or Kabir, or Knox, or Calvin—were they pure or impure men? Has God ever manifested Himself through an impure channel? Never. These founders have always been men pure in thought, word,

and deed; and what did they teach, every one of them? That morality must be the basis, the foundation, upon which spiritual life should stand; it must be the corner-stone of the spiritual building. Here the Vedic Rishis, and all the Prophets of other religions, are at one. This has been beautifully expressed in the *Katha Upanishad*, where Nachiketas, the son of a king, goes to Yama, the God of Death and the controller of all, to know the way to perfection. Yama teaches him first how, by fulfilling all duty, and being moral, he will go to the higher spheres, and have the exalted enjoyments which those spheres afford. But Nachiketas is not satisfied until he is taught the secret of death,—which part of us is eternal, and which dies. He values knowledge far higher than the enjoyments even in other and higher spheres. So Yama enters upon that beautiful discourse on soul, and on the attainment of the higher spiritual life which transcends the sphere of morality and duty, which we find in our famous *Katha-Upanishad*.

Examining into Buddhism we find there also the same thing. The teachings of the Buddha have been divided into two main parts, one the *Hina-Yana* (the lower way, or the preparatory way, to be followed by householders, and men living in society), and the second the *Maha-Yana* (the great way, which directly leads to Nirvana, and which is to be followed by the monks, or those who, though living in society, are practically out of society.) In the first way, duty and morality have been

particularly expounded and insisted upon; and in the other it is taught that, when a man is perfectly established in them, when morality has become as natural to him as breathing itself, he may attain to that highest stage which is beyond all morality and immorality, because it is beyond all relativity. Looking into Christianity we again find the same thing there again. When a young man came and asked of Jesus the way to perfection, He told him to live according to the laws (and what are laws but morals ?). The young man was not satisfied. and said he had been living according to the laws from his childhood; to which the Son of man replied in those deeply impressive words: "If thou wilt be perfect go and sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and then come and follow me."

But to return to what the Vedanta says on this point. The Vedanta insists that the one condition that is essentially necessary in the man who is trying to attain to the super-conscious state by following its principles is that he should be perfectly established in the "fourfold ways." These fourfold ways are:— 1. The conviction that absolute truth is outside the pale of all, phenomenal existence. 2 That the enjoyments which this life in other spheres, affords, are trifling indeed, and not worthy to be aimed at. 3. The possession of these six treasures:—(*a*) the control of mind; (*b*) control of body and the organs; (*c*) the bearing of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and all the *duals*, to a certain extent without feeling

disturbed ; (*d*) the gathering of the mind from external objects at will, and directing it to the internal ; (*e*) the faith in the fact that there is a stage and a better stage of life beyond, of which the sages speak—and they speak the truth ; (*f*) the holding of the mind to one chain of thought, and forgetting all others. 4. An intense desire to gain liberation by knowing the truth. We can see from this how highly morality is regarded by the Vedanta ; and indeed it teaches from the beginning that the man who has not established himself in morality can never attain to high spiritual truths. Then again, according to the Hindus a man is born with the four following kinds of duties, and he must fulfil them first, before he can pass on to any higher stage of spirituality. The duties are described as so many debts which every man owes by the circumstance of his birth. The first is the debt to his fellow-beings, or all humanity ; and this is to be paid by men becoming good members of society, by charity ; and by doing unselfish good to all. The second is the debt to all the Rishis, or seers of truth. How is this to be repaid ? By believing in them, by studying the Vedas, of such books as contain the revealed knowledge which these Rishis discovered, and by trying to realise the high spiritual truths taught by them and by trying to live up to them. The third is the debt to the forefathers. This is to be repaid by becoming a good and dutiful son, by keeping up the line of the family unbroken by begetting children in marriage, and by bringing them up in the path of truth and

religion. The last debt is the debt to the gods or the bright ones, and this is to be repaid by worshipping them by means of sacrifices. These fourfold debts were in ancient days, repaid in the first three of the four stages into which the life of a man was then divided, namely (1) *Brahmacharya* or the life of a student, in which absolute continence was kept up; (2) *Garhasthya* or family-life, into which the student entered by marriage after finishing his studies; (3) *Vanaprasthya* or forest-life, which the man took upon himself after fulfilling the duties of family-life by bringing up his children and doing his duties as a member of society; (4) *Sanyasa* or monk-life, in which he gave all ceremonials and devoted all his time and energies to realising his own oneness with the one infinite ocean of knowledge and Bliss. This was the general way in which men passed from stage to stage of their lives in olden times. But there were special laws for those who were exceptionally spiritual. They passed from the student-life at once to the life of a monk, as was the case with Sukha, the son of Vyasa and with Vamadeva and some others. In modern India the life of a Hindu man is practically made up of only two stages;—*Grahasthya* or household-life covers the first three divisions of the old arrangement, and then there is *Sanyasa* or monk-life. Even now the married man cannot take upon himself the duties of monk-life unless he has performed and fulfilled all the duties of married life. In the *Maha-Nirvana-Tantra* it is said,—"He, who forsakes a

devoted wife and young children and takes to monk-life, will never be able to realise God, and will incur sin;"—and this law has not at all become dead letter. Marriage in India has ever been regarded as a sacrament and a very holy bond; it has never been intended to serve as a charter for unbridled display of passion. The name for wife there is *Sahadharmani*, *i. e.*, one who practises religion with her husband, or a partner in religion. This word itself shows how highly the marriage-relation between man and woman is looked upon. Man and wife were regarded as forming one whole, one unit, as is expressed in the term *ardhangi*, another name for the wife, meaning the half of the body. The Gods could not be pleased, no prayers would be heard, if worship was not performed jointly by husband and wife in their family-life. A beautiful story illustrating this is related in the *Sankara-dig-vijaya*, or the *Conquests of Sankara*, the greatest metaphysician the world has ever produced, whom the Hindus regard as a divine incarnation. It is said that, when he was travelling all over India and converting the country back to Vedantism after the downfall of Buddhism, he met a very learned man, a great leader of men, who was teaching the ritualistic portion of the Vedas to a large body of pupils. He was of opinion that the one end and aim of human life was to go to higher spheres of enjoyment by performing meritorious works here on earth, and that all the Vedas and all the old seers (Rishis) taught to the same effect, and that to gain the superior enjoyments

which the higher world afforded, was one end and aim of the life of man. Sankara, when he met this man, told him that he was teaching a false doctrine, which the Vedas never advocated. So they entered into a discussion, making the wife of the man the umpire between the two, and with this condition, that the man defeated would become the disciple of the other. Days and nights were passed in discussing the question and both sides held their ground very well; till, on the seventh day, the man was defeated by Sankara and had to admit that not enjoyment but knowledge was the end of life, not going to the heavens but becoming one, with the infinite Ocean of Knowledge and Bliss was the gist of the whole teaching of the Vedas. According to the condition with which they started the man was called upon by Sankara to enter the monk-life by becoming his disciple. But the wife, who decided impartially in favour of Sankara, interfered, and said "My dear sir, don't be overjoyed. You have conquered only the one-half of my husband. Here is the other half; you will have to conquer this before you can make a monk of him." And Sankara had to defeat the learned lady before he could make the man his disciple. Those who have read the book know that he met with very hard work in his argument with the wife. This man eventually became one of the greatest of the disciples of Sankara, the best commentator on the writings of his teacher, and a great leader of the monks of India.

The one great point of the teachings of Vedanta is that man's spiritual evolution does not stop with the evolution of a high code of ethics alone, but there is another higher step to which he reaches, another link in this process of evolution and involution which completes the circle. And this step is to be gained, not by denying, but by the fulfilling of all laws,—not by throwing overboard all duties, but by the right performance of all duties, not by discarding society, but by being useful members of it, not by contracting the self, but by expanding it to its farthest limit, not by a man's thinking of himself as a cut and dried entity separate from the universe, but by feeling and realising that he is one with this universe. This universe, according to Ramanuja, the great leader of the qualified Monists in India, has been produced by the contraction of the knowledge of the soul, by the soul's forgetting that it is the store-house of all knowledge and bliss, and that it is one with the Infinite Ocean of Knowledge which forms the background of the universe, and called God, or the Absolute, or Brahman, or Atman, or by so many different names. And liberation is to be attained by the expansion of the knowledge of the soul, when it will feel its union with the Divine and with the universe which is nothing but a projection out of the Divine. Monism goes only a step further than the position of Ramanuja and teaches that perfect liberation is to be attained when the individual soul will not only feel this union and see the unity in the

sum-total of all these differentiations, but will feel its identity with the Deity. This stage the Vedanta describes as the state of realisation, or the super-conscious. The three states of the human mind, the sub-conscious, the conscious, and the super-conscious, are not three distinct minds, but the three different stages of the one and the same mind. Modern science has discovered the process in the theory of evolution, how the sub-conscious develops into the middle plane, the conscious existence, and the Vedanta is one with it as far as it goes, but it says further that this leaves the evolution (or as the Vedanta says the involution) incomplete; the conscious will have to develop into the super-conscious, and then alone will the process be complete. All our struggles individual, social and human are for that end trying to gain that higher stage. There alone will man find the permanent basis of ethics, of religion, of everything. . . . There, if an illiterate men enters, he will come out a sage, a prophet. The founders of the different religions, the religious giants whom the world has produced, and will produce in the future, have been and will be men who raise and will raise themselves to this higher stage. This is the stage which was described by Buddha as Nirvana, by Christ as being one with the Father, by the Mahomedan Sufis as Analhak, union with the truth, and in the famous aphorisms of the Vedanta as "Thou art that Infinite Ocean of Knowledge and Bliss" or "I am that Absolute Brahman."

The universe according to the Vedanta is one indivisible whole. It is by mistake that we think ourselves separate from the rest of the world. In the external world our bodies represent so many different points in the one vast ocean of matter, in which there is no break. Behind that lies expanded the one universal ocean of mind, in which our minds but represent so many different whirlpools, and behind that even, is the Soul, the Self, the Atman, the store-house of all knowledge, power, and bliss. So though there is but one soul shining above, there are so many millions of reflections on the millions of whirlpools in the mental ocean. and these reflections are nothing but so many individual ages. So that when a man raises himself to the super-conscious, he sees the One Sun that is shining above the mental ocean, he knows that he is not a particular reflection but the Sun himself, who has given rise to all the reflections in the ocean of fine matter, called the mind. And where lies the basis of all ethics? In the fact that I am one with and not separate from the universe, that in injuring you I injure myself, in loving you I love myself. In the fact that behind this manifold diversity there is unity, or, as the Vedantist says, behind these names and forms there is that one eternal, unchangeable Ocean of Knowledge, and Bliss, which is our real nature. "This universe has been projected out of that Ocean of Bliss Absolute." That Divine is trying to manifest itself through all these names and forms, and the evolution of nature into higher and higher forms

is caused by this struggle of the Divine within, to manifest itself better and better. Or as Patanjali says in his Yoga Aphorisms. "The change of one species into another is by the infilling of nature."

Every form or organism is a conduit through which the Divine is trying to manifest itself and all that we need to do is to remove the barriers, which obstruct this flow of the Infinite within. With every act of love and sympathy, every performance of duty, every observance of morality, man is trying to go beyond himself by feeling himself one with the universe. He is abnegating his lower self, and does not in this self-abnegation lie the basis of all ethics? Examine all the ethical codes which the world has ever produced and you will find this one great fact taught,—to live up to the higher self by denying the lower. Consciously or unconsciously every code of ethics is leading to that. They may not give you adequate reasons why a man shall be moral and deny himself, but are we not thinking according to the laws of logic with every act of reasoning, though we may not have read a single page of logic? The Vedanta supplies the reason why we should be moral, why we should do good to others, why we should love all humanity as ourselves. Behind all these varied codes of ethics lurks that one great truth that we are one with the Universe. He who lives up to that one central truth has truly renounced himself. He who does not know this truth but tries to become a perfectly moral man, in thought, word, and deed, he too is unconsciously living up to

that truth. This word renunciation has got a very bad name now-a-days. Yet every religion has enforced it often and often. It is the corner-stone upon which all religions, all ethics have been built. Nay we are practising it every day of our lives consciously or unconsciously. A man loves his wife, his children, his country, what is he doing all the time? Is he not renouncing himself? True renunciation, which every religion teaches, do not consist in isolating one's self from everything and every being, but in expanding one's self more and more widely, embracing the whole of the universe in one's self by love. For not in isolation or contraction, but in expansion, consist life and progress; this is the teaching of the Vedanta.

Examining the different standards of ethics in different countries and different religions, we find that they vary from one another in many particulars. What is regarded as moral in one country and one religion is not regarded so in another. In short take the most general principles and you will find them almost identical with one another, but go to the particulars and you will find them differ from one another, more and more widely. What makes this difference? Does the Vedanta give any answer to it? Yes. In order to understand this we shall have to examine a little what the Sankhya says about the origin of the cosmos, and the supplement of the Vedanta upon it. Maya, or Prakriti, or the creative principle of Iswara, the ruler, is made up of the harmonious and even flow

of the three qualities or particles (for they are synonymous) of Satwa (the bright and effulgent), Rajas (or active), and Tamas (or dull and opaque). This even flow is disturbed at the beginning of the cycle, when creation starts afresh, and the three begin to act upon one another. They produce first the Prana (the cosmic or primal energy) and the Akasa (the primal matter). Then the Prana begins to act upon the Akasa and produces or evolves first the mental ocean (or the universal consciousness) and the individual whirlpools (which represent the individual minds). Then out of this mental ocean is evolved the gross ocean of matter and the gross individual forms. So that as individual whirlpools in the ocean of mind and as gross manifestations we shall always vary. Look at the particular differentiations and you will never find any two of them exactly alike. But there is unity behind the diversity, there is a centre to all these radii. Grasp it and you grasp the whole thing. Nothing which is true for one mind exactly fits another. What is law then ? It is the method or manner in which our minds grasp and connect a series of mental phenomena. It is also internal and not external, and what is known as general or universal laws, such as gravitation, etc., which apply to all individual minds, are the methods by which our minds connect themselves with one another and with the whole of this mental ocean. These universal laws are also relative, and apply only to those minds which are in the same degree of vibration, or, in other words, in the same

plane of existence. But to beings whose minds represent matter in a different degree of vibration these laws will not hold good. They have different laws for their plane of existence, different methods by which they perceive the connection between themselves and the whole mental ocean. So we see that if we pay attention to particulars, we shall find that every particular differentiation has its own laws. If we rise a little higher in generalisation we shall find different laws for different planes of existence, and when we rise to the highest, to the Ultimate Unity we go beyond the province of all law; for how can there be any law where there is no differentiation, no two, not even the subject and the objects. There alone the law-maker, the law, and the objects of law become one, and this is the highest point of evolution. Law is only possible in the realm of relativity.

This wonderful system of ethics, and the philosophy of ethics, was not built in a day. It must have taken ages for the Hindu mind to evolve it. It is very difficult to determine the exact date when it was found out. But this at least can be said, that the Hindus were the first to discover it; and from the day of its foundation, it has helped and still is helping almost all the great religions of the world. It influenced Buddhism, the first missionary religion of the world, directly. Through the Gnostics and the Alexandrians, it influenced Greek philosophy. It is said that Pythagoras went to India and the influence

of Hindu ethics is distinctly traceable in his doctrines. And lastly this system of ethics influenced directly or indirectly Zoroastrianism and Christianity.

In order to trace the gradual evolution of ethics, and the philosophy of ethics, it is necessary that we should consider a little of the history of India. The one great peculiarity of India that the student of history finds, is that the Hindus never regarded anything as unnecessary, to be thrown away ; they believe that man travels from truth to truth and not from error to truth. What is truth for one mind under some circumstances might not appear as truth when one arrives at a higher stage in the process of evolution; yet that apparent error helped him to come up to the higher truth, and there will always be found minds which have arrived only at that point in the appreciation of truths. For is not truth as we know it as much relative as anything else, and have we arrived at any truth which will always remain unchanged, however much the environment may vary. So the Hindus always preserved the lower truth which helped them to come up to the higher ones. For instance starting from Dualism when they discovered or evolved the higher truths of qualified Monism and ultimately Monism, they did not throw away dualism, or qualified Monism, but regarded them as stages in the process of development. They had no quarrel with them, for they knew that in order to come up to Monism man must rise through the other two stages. And so on with all other physical, social,

and moral truths. For instance, they knew writing thousands of years ago, and yet committing the Vedas to memory and not depending upon the books is regarded as sacred even now, and there are many who do it up to the present day. The production of fire by friction with two pieces of dry wood was probably the primitive method pursued thousands of years ago and yet it is done by the priests even now in performing some of the sacrifices. These instances will suffice to convince that if there is any country in which the greatest number of links in the process of evolution in any department can be found, it is India, for in other countries men have always considered that they are travelling from error to truth and have thrown away as unnecessary all the lower steps of the ladder by which they have come up to the higher. This extreme veneration for the past has preserved many things as they were thousands and thousands of years ago.

The first great positive fact that comes before us in the early history of India is that Vyasa, a great sage, divided and classified the Vedas into the four great divisions the Rik, the Sama, the Yajus, and the Atharwan, and that he collected all the historical narratives up to that time and called them the Maha-Bharata, or the history of the great descendants of the king Bharata. This Vyasa was a contemporary of Sri Krishna, whom the Hindus regard as the greatest of all divine incarnations. Vyasa divided each of the first four divisions into three parts, the Samhitas (the hymn portion), the Brahmanas (the application of the

hymns to different sacrifices and the directions how the different sacrifices are to be performed), and the Upanishads (the knowledge portion). So each of the Vedas was divided in fact into two great portions, the sacrificial or work portion, which included the Samhitas and the Brahmanas, and the knowledge portion, or the Upanishads. After classifying the Vedas, Vyasa wrote also the famous Aphorisms of the Vedanta, or the philosophy of the Vedas, based on the knowledge portion of them. He had a great disciple, who supplemented his master's works by writing a philosophy of the work portion of the Vedas, known as the Purva-Mimamsa. It is difficult to determine the age of Vyasa and Krishna, but Hindu scholars are one in their opinion that the age of Krishna preceded the age of the Buddha, and that Rama, the hero of the great Epic Ramayana, was born before Krishna. So the early history of India before the advent of Buddhism may be divided into these three great periods :

(1) The earlier Vedic period, before the Vedas were classified.

(2) The period of Ramayana, the age of Rama and Vasishta.

(3) The period of Maha-Bharata, the age of Krishna and Vyasa.

The first of these three periods must have covered many thousands of years, and all that we know and can know of the period is from the narratives in the Vedas themselves. The facts that we gather from these narratives show that the Aryans have

already come to the rich valleys of the Indus and the Ganges, and have already settled there by conquering the aborigines. They were a nation of growing people, with young blood in their veins, highly moral, and religious. They were pushing their inquiries into every department. Truthfulness and morality were regarded very highly. The marriage system had already been introduced, and chastity in women was highly honoured. The caste system was already growing naturally amongst them, and they had divided themselves into the two castes, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas (or the warriors). Those who were highly advanced in spirituality in society and were devoting all their energies towards that end were regarded as Brahmins, and the rest, who were devoting their energies to conquest and war and other affairs, were the Kshatriyas. We find that this caste system was not regarded as very rigorous—the best men in society were regarded as Brahmins, and the qualities of a man made him a Brahmin and not the circumstances of his birth. We find that men from the lower ranks were continually coming up and being regarded as Brahmins, and that Brahmins were not only teachers of spirituality and performers of sacrifices, but that they were joining the armies in times of necessity, and some of them were great generals and teachers of the art of war, down to the time of the Maha-Bharata, where it was related that almost all the famous warriors of the age had learned the art of war from Brahmin teachers. Everywhere we find the trace

that the caste system arose naturally on account of social conditions, as in every other nation, and had nothing to do with their religion. Then again we find that they had already made considerable advances in material civilization. Grammar, Astronomy, and Music, were regarded as essentially necessary for a man's education, and for the reading of the Vedas. In reading the Upanishads or the knowledge portion of the Vedas, which must have evolved long after the Samhitas, or the hymn portion, we find that the Hindu mind had evolved with long strides. They had already found out a great system of philosophy, the Sankhya system, for we find mention of the founder of this system (the sage Kapila) in one of the Upanishads.

"Thou who gave birth to the great seer of truth, Kapila, in the beginning," etc. The polytheism of the Samhitas has already come to monotheism; nay, some of the great sages have already arrived at the truths of monism and the unity of the soul. The Devas, or the bright ones of the Samhitas, have come to be regarded as so many positions in the universe which good and righteous men go and occupy for a certain number of years, by performance of meritorious actions here, and the higher spheres, or heavens were regarded as being as much subject to change and destruction as this earth. The theory of the cosmology of Kapila, that nature is evolving and involving from all eternity, has been universally adopted. Looking at material civilization, we find descriptions of the courts of good and great kings, as Janaka in the

Chandogya, of female education, and institutions of female monks, who were discussing abstruse metaphysical questions with the men in the courts of kings, the description of Aranyakas, or men who with their wives were living the latter part of their lives in beautiful forests or by the sides of rivers, and devoting themselves entirely to religion and meditation. All along we find traces of the fact that the development of a high spiritual life, by becoming moral in thought, word, and deed, and by fulfilling all the duties in the family and in society, has become the end of the life of man.

Another curious fact comes to our notice in reading the Upanishads. The Brahmin caste we have seen is highly extolled in the Samhitas, or the hymn portion, as in the hymn to the Purusha, or the Supreme Being, in the Rig Veda Samhita, where the evolution of all nature, or all the particular manifestations from the infinite being, have been described. The Brahmin caste is described as having come out of the mouth of the Supreme Being, thus showing its supremacy over all others. But in reading some of the Upanishads, we find the Kshatriya, or the warrior caste, extolled above all. The Kshatriyas are described as the founders and teachers of the great truths of monism. This shows plainly that the word Brahmin, applied to men originally in its literal sense of the knower of the Brahman, or the infinite being, has become degenerated and the word Brahmin has come to be applied to the priests, who have made the church and religion their

profession. Coming to the age of Ramayana and the Maha-Bharata, we find that the Brahmin caste has again risen to the top. The caste must have produced some very great seers, as Vasishta and others, whose noble lives helped to bring the caste forward again. This went on very well for some time, till, long after the influence of Krishna and the Bhagavad-Gita had gone down, we find the Brahmins degenerated again into priestcraft, trying to shut out the real religion of the Vedas from the mass of the people and preaching to them only of sacrifice, and going to heaven, as the end of man's existence. But before we pass to the consideration of the reform and life brought back again to the people by the mighty heart of Buddha, we shall have to trace the evolution through the two ages of Ramayana and the Maha-Bharata.

The ages of Ramayana and the Maha-Bharata are interesting to the student of history inasmuch as they show the effect which the high ethics and philosophy which the Hindu mind evolved during the time of the Upanishads, had on the daily life and progress of the people. High ideals of character in the social and religious field come before us one after another Great men in every department of life attract our attention, and women who were ideals of chastity and virtue. The family relations and the social relations were based on as good a ground of morality as we have now, at the present day, in any country or society. Nay even more so; judging from the

records of the period we find that the people of that age obeyed the moral laws far more than we do at present with all our boasted talk of ethics and ethical standards. Mark the truthfulness, the self-control, the love of what is good and noble in Rama, or Yudhisthira, how many of us come up to that to-day ? or the noble self-sacrifice of the great hero Bhishma ; is it any way inferior to the sacrifice which the noblest of us has made to-day for love of our parents ?

Looking to society we find that with the extension of kingdoms and the growth of a high order of civilization, the caste system has grown side by side. The people have been divided into the four castes, and the caste laws have grown more rigorous than in the time of the Upanishads. The lower castes are fast becoming in a way hereditary trade-guilds, but between the two higher castes we find communication, and intermarriages ; and it was not until after the age of Krishna and the Maha-Bharata that we find the two upper castes absolutely separated. The battle of Kurukshetra marks a great change in the social and political life of India, and not only of India but the adjacent countries of Afghanistan and Persia, and the kingdom of Bahlika or Balkh ; for in the Maha-Bharata we find that all these countries belonged then to the Hindus ; the people intermarried with one another and the kings of these countries fought in the same field, either on one side or the other. Of course the whole of India and the adjacent countries were divided then into little states, and the

ruler of each state was called the king of that state and the king who conquered in battle all the others was recognised as the emperor of all. Almost all the kings who joined in the fight at Kurukshetra were killed. One great factor of society, the warrior caste, became thus almost annihilated. The result was that the other half, the Brahmins, suddenly rose to great power. The high spiritual teachings of Sri Krishna and the Bhagavad-Gita, went on very well for some time. But the disturbed balance in society was never restored, and the conservation of power grew more and more on the side of the priests. Education which was up to this time in the hands of the upper classes, fell entirely into the hands of the Brahmins. The Brahmins thus forgetting their real aim in life became more and more selfish and tried to obtain more and more power in society. They began to preach that pleasing the gods, the bright ones, by means of sacrifices and going to heaven is the end of man. The real religion of the Vedanta was practised by a few only, and those few left society and took to the forest-life, or the life of a monk, and the great mass of people in society had become more ignorant and superstitious day by day, when the great Buddha, "the ocean of light and compassion" took his birth. He joined the order of monks in his thirtieth year and by means of his pure life and courageous preachings, succeeded in bringing back the true Vedanta religion to the people. He preached against the caste system, the killing of animals in sacri-

fices, and against sacrifices in general. Before the birth of the Buddha, the people of India were a great race of meat-eaters and wine drinkers. He preached against both, and drove these vices from the country; and the influence of his teaching is still there in as much as the Indians even at the present day are a nation of vegetarians and teetotallers. Buddhism was in fact a great social reform. It broke down the caste system and freed society from its evils, and it brought education and religion from the forest back again into society; for the religion which Buddha taught is nothing more nor less than the Karma-Yoga of the Vedanta, which teaches that unselfish work will lead men to the highest stage of development, the super-conscious state.

Freed from the trammels of ignorance by the powerful touch of the Buddha, society and the people rose again to a high stage in progress. The condition of India of this period can best be seen by reading the accounts which the Greeks have left of the country and the inscriptions of the Buddhist king Asoka. In the Greek accounts we find that the people are strong and brave and highly moral, so much so that in many places there was no use for any law-courts. Truthfulness is natural to them. The women are all chaste and beautiful and educated. They are a very kind people and extermely hospitable.

In the inscriptions of Asoka we find that India is the first country which sent missionaries of religion to Persia, to China, to Antioch, to Alexandria, and to various other countries. The root of all religion, so

runs the inscription, consists in this— "to reverence one's own faith and never to revile that of others. Whoever acts differently injures his own religion, while he wrongs another's. Duty is in respect and service. Alms and pious demonstrations are of no worth compared with the loving-kindness of religion. The king's purpose is to increase the mercy, charity, truth, kindness, and piety of all mankind. Good is liberality; good it is to harm no living creature; good is the care of one's parents, kindness to relatives, children, friends, servants."

In time Buddhism got mixed up with phalla's worship and other symbols and ceremonials prevalent in Tibet and other parts of Asia, and degenerated India more than elsewhere. The Buddhist preachers began to teach that total extinction or annihilation was the meaning of Nirvana and the end of life, and that there was no soul, no after-state of existence. The result was the people became degenerated day by day as is shown in the mass of writings of the period, the later Puranas and the lower Tantras. But nowhere has been the truth of the saying of the Bhagavad-Gita, so much illustrated as in India, "When virtue becomes corrupted, and irreligion prevails, I take my birth, and establish religion again." The birth of the great teacher Sankara at this time saved the country again from the bondage of vice and corruption. He is perhaps the greatest philosopher that India has ever produced. His pure life and great genius enabled him to guide the country

safe through the period of religious anarchy which prevailed at the downfall of Buddhism. He wrote his famous commentaries on the Vedanta aphorisms while he was only sixteen, the study of which made Schopenhauer predict "that the study of Vedanta will produce as great a revolution in the West as the Renaissance did during the middle ages." He joined the order of monks early in his life and spent the last sixteen years of his life—for he lived only up to his 32nd year—in converting India back to Vedantism from the corrupted form of Buddhism.

The ethics and the philosophy of all ethical standards according to Sankara, we have already seen. It remains now only to see what effect the teachings of Sankara had on the life of the people. The date of Sankara is, like the chronology of most other things in India, wrapped up in mystery. The Hindus place him nearly as far back as the first or the second century after the birth of Christ, while modern scholars place him between the 6th and 7th centuries of that era. In any case the Mahomedan conquest of India took place long after the birth of Sankara and the account which the Mahomedans give of the country and the people will suffice to show the high ethical conditions in India brought about by the teaching of Sankara's philosophy. The Mahomedans when they first came to India found the people brave, loyal, truthful, kind, and hospitable. They would not be false to their enemies or use any unfair means even in the battlefield. They would

not march their soldiers over their enemies' corn fields, or poison the wells, which the Mahomedans did often. The women were very chaste, and the men were perfectly moral and peaceful. The women had an almost equal position in society, as the laws as regards property and inheritance show. Then again reading the history of the Mahomedan period we find that almost all the great generals and politicians were Hindus. Names as Mansingh and Jaya Singh and Todar Mall were the great supports of the empire. The immortal bravery of Rama Pratap of Chitore, and Shivaji in the south shows that the nation had not died out. The immortal names of many noble women, who shed their blood for the country confront us. The heroism and wonderful military genius of Chand Bibi, the bravery of the women of Chitor and the calm and well balanced political abilities of Ahalya Bai, strike us with admiration. But the general effect of the Mahomedan rule was deteriorating to progress. The caste system grew more and more rigid as the Mahomedans tried to force their religion on India. The Zenana system was a copy of the conquerors in some places and in others a natural outgrowth of their persecutions. But the conquerors gained much. The study of Hindu philosophy and ethics calmed their fanaticism, produced amongst them the order of the Sufis and brought them to a high condition of moral development. The change which has been produced in them by coming in contact with the Hindus is well seen when we compare

the Mahomedans outside of India with those who are living there.

One more influence remains to be traced. It is that of Christianity. Those who believe that Christianity will supply India with a higher system of ethics or a higher religion are mistaken indeed. The student of history knows well the fact that high system of ethics which Christianity teaches evolved in India long before the birth of Christ and not only evolved but was carried into practice in the daily life of the people. But the one great thing which Christian people have done in India is the revival of free-thought. Before the English arrived the country was too much tied up with the old authorities and liberty of thought was almost abolished. Western education has helped progress by bringing back again the liberty of thought. Then again trade competition with Western nations is breaking down the trammels of the caste system every day. The comparative study of the different religions has brought home the conviction that the ethical standard of Vedanta, if not superior to all is inferior to none. But the one bad thing which the Christians have done and still are trying to do is to belittle and destroy the high ideals of the nation. If India knows anything and has anything to give to the world, it is her religion, and she knows only too well how to judge of a system of ethics and religion, if it is not carried out in the daily life of its preachers. Day by day it is coming out clearly that India will accept Christ as one among her many high

ideals but will never become Christian by giving up her own.

The one strong fact which shows the strength of the Vedanta and its ethics is that it has survived and triumphed in its turn over all the numerous invasions of the existing great religions. It does not require a strong centralised government to push its ethics and religion which many other religions do as shown in history. Where is the old religion of Zoroaster, now that the political supremacy of the Persians has gone down? Or of Islam? Going down every day. But the principles of the Vedanta religion have survived and triumphed above all, though India has been in political bondage for many hundreds of years. The religions of the Huns, the Goths, the Parsis, the Mahomedans, and of the Buddha, and Christ too, have tried and are trying to assert their influence, backed by strong centralised governments. But the Vedanta has incorporated them all within itself and will ever do the same, because it is based on principles broad as the heavens, which underlie every particular religion, because it teaches that the whole universe is one indivisible unit so that by loving you I love myself, and by hating and doing injury to you I am doing the same to myself, and because it teaches the grand truth that all the different religions are true; they are so many different ways to attain to that Infinite Ocean of Knowledge, Existence, and Bliss.

PART II.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

I. THE GREAT WORLD-TEACHERS*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

MOST of us are born believers in a personal religion. We talk of principles, we think of theories, and that is all right; but every thought and every movement, every one of our actions shows, that we can only understand the principle when it comes to us through a person. We can grasp an idea only when it comes to us through a materialized ideal person. We can understand the precept only through the example. Would to God that all of us were so developed that we would not require any example, would not require any persons. But we are not; and, naturally, the vast majority of mankind have put their souls at the feet of these extraordinary personalities, the Prophets, the Incarnations of God,—Incarnations worshipped by the Christians, by the Buddhists, and by the Hindus. . . These are the sign-posts here and there, which point to the march of humanity; these are verily gigantic, their shadows covering the earth,—they stand undying, eternal! As it has been said by Jesus of Nazareth: "No man has

* From "The Message of the East.',

seen God at any time, but through the Son." And that is true. And where shall we see God but in the Son? It is true that you and I, and the poorest of us, the meanest even, embody that God, even reflect that God. The vibration of light is everywhere, omnipresent; but we have to strike the light of the lamp before we can see the light. The Omnipresent God of the universe cannot be seen until He is reflected by these giant lamps of the earth,—the Prophets, the man-Gods, the incarnations, the embodiments of God. . . . .

We all know that God exists, and yet we do not see Him, we do not understand Him. Take one of these great Messengers of light, compare His character with the highest ideal of God that you ever formed, and you will find that your God falls short of the ideal, and that the character of the Prophet exceeds your conceptions. You cannot even form a higher ideal of God than what the actually embodied have practically realized, and set before us as an example. Is it wrong, therefore, to worship these as God? Is it a sin to fall at the feet of these man-Gods, and worship them as the only Divine beings in the world? If they are really, actually, higher than all our conceptions of God, what harm is there in worshipping them? Not only is there no harm, but it is the only possible and positive way of worship. However much you may try, by struggle, by abstraction, by what-soever method you like, still so long as you are a man in the world of man, your

world is human, your religion is human, and your God is human. And that must be so. Who is not practical enough to take up an actually existing thing, and give up an idea which is only an abstraction, which he cannot grasp, and is difficult of approach except through a concrete medium? Therefore, these Incarnations of God have been worshipped in all ages and in all countries. . . .

Let us therefore find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth but in all the great Ones that have preceded Him, in all that came after Him, and all that are yet to come. Our worship is unbounded and free. They are all manifestations of the same Infinite God. They are all pure and unselfish. They struggled, and gave up their lives for us, poor human beings. They each and all suffer vicarious atonement for every one of us, and also for all that are to come hereafter.

In a sense you are all prophets; every one of you is a prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your own shoulders. Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great prophets were giants—they bore a gigantic world on their shoulders. Compared with them we are pigmies, no doubt, yet we are doing the same task; in our little circles, in our little homes we are bearing our little crosses. There is no one so evil, no one so worthless, but he has to bear his own cross. But with all our mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright spot somewhere, there is still

somewhere the golden thread through which we are always in touch with the Divine. For, know for certain, that the moment the touch of the Divine is lost there would be annihilation. And because none can be annihilated, there is always somewhere in our heart of hearts, however low and degraded we may be, a little circle of light which is in constant touch with the Divine.

Our salutations go to all the past prophets, whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, clime or creed! Our salutations go to all those God-like men and women, who are working to help humanity, whatever be their birth, color or race! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future,—living Gods,—to work unselfishly for our descendants!

ZOROASTER.*

By Swami Paramananda.

THE life of Zoroaster and his teaching take us back to a period of history which is dim to the human mind, because we have to depend more on tradition than on actual historical facts. If, however, we reject everything that is not proved absolutely true by history, there are many noble and lofty ideals which we shall be forced to leave out. How little is historically recorded about the life of Jesus the Christ! In our studies therefore we should follow the example of the Indian swan, who, when a cup of milk mixed with water is placed before it, knows how to separate the milk from the water and drink only the milk. In the same manner we must learn to take the essence and concern ourselves less with material evidence. If we would benefit by the study of the Great Ones we must open ourselves to the inspiring influences shed forth by their lives and words, and seek to apply these in our own life. Sri Ramakrishna tells of two men who went into a mango orchard: one of them busied himself with the statistics of the orchard, counting the trees, the branches, the leaves and the fruit; while the other man went straight to the gardener, made friends with him and gained permission to eat the mangoes. Similarly there are two different types of

* A lecture delivered in America.

truth-seekers. One type is always busily engaged in dry intellectual details; the other troubles himself little about historic accuracy but seeks realization of the spirit. Intellectual investigation has its place and can be of great assistance and profit; but when it creates prejudice and limits our scope of vision it becomes a serious obstacle to our higher progress.

From this broader view-point let us now try to study the life of the great prophet of Persia. The Persia of Zoroaster however was a very different Persia from that of modern times, for the people who lived there at that period were not Semitics but were one of the original groups of the Aryan family. When the ancient Aryans migrated from Central Asia, the earliest settlements about which we know were in India and Persia and these two branches were closely akin in their language, thoughts and ideals. John Fiske writes in his "Excursions of an Evolutionist": "From a minute survey of the languages and legends of this whole region, it has been well-established that the dominant race in ancient Persia and in ancient India was one and the same; that it approached India from the North-west; and that a great religious schism was accompanied by the west-ward migration of a large part of the community, while the other part proceeded onward, and established itself in Hindustan." There can be no doubt that the Zend spoken by the Aryans who settled in Persia resembles wonderfully the Sanskrit of the Indo-Aryans; and Max Muller declares: "In a wider sense India, or at

all events the Aryan conquerors of India, may even claim some share in the ancient religion in Media and Persia, known to us by the Zend-Avesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrians. The most ancient portion of the Avesta, the Gathas, and the hymns of the Rig-Veda are certainly the products of the same intellectual soil."

The conception of God as One Supreme Deity found in the Avesta is identical with the One Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss of the Rig-Veda. The Iranians (the name given to those ancient Persians) worshipped one God, the Loving Ruler of the Universe, known as Ahura-Mazda; and they possessed the same lofty social and religious ideals as their brothers in India. But after a full tide of culture there nearly always follows a low tide of what we call degradation. Not that the moral and spiritual ideals are lost, but the people fall into superstition. They lose the spirit of religion and deal with only the letter, the outer forms. This was what happened in Persia prior to the advent of Zoroaster. The wonderful ideals of meditation, prayer, renunciation of wordly ambitions degenerated into laziness and love of material gain. Contemplation became the occupation of indolent beggars who resorted to it as the easiest means of livelihood. The conception of Ahura-Mazda as the One Ominscient, Omnipotent Being was gradually obscured; and evil-worship, devilworship, black magic, sorcery, and other religious abuses became prevalent.

It was in such a period of eclipse that Zoroaster was born. Great divergence exists in the dates given for his birth, but it is now generally accepted that it occurred in the seventh century before Christ—not long previous to the time when the Jews were carried into captivity, while their return to Jerusalem took place less than a generation after his death. He is also spoken of as a contemporary of Thales and Solon and we find various Greek and Roman authors alluding to him as the leader of the Magi as well as a very great sage. His family, it is said, belonged to the royal house of Minocheher, one of the most powerful rulers of Persia. Different stories are told of the miraculous character of his birth. One of them recounts that the glory, emanating from Ahura-Mazda, passed down from heaven to earth and abode in the house of Zoroaster's mother, Dughdu, until she was born. It then entered into her and dwelt there until she had attained the age of fifteen, when she gave birth to her first-born, the Saviour of Iran. But prior to his coming, it is related, she shone with such splendour because of the Divine Glory within her that her father believed her bewitched and sent her away into the land of the Spitamas, where in due course she married the son of the lord of the village in which she was sojourning. This explains the surname "Spitama" which the prophet bore and which signifies "holy" or "sacred."

Many supernatural happenings accompanied Zoroaster's advent, the Avesta and other records tell

us. Trees, plants, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, all showed unusual signs of rejoicing : a divine light shone in the house, while Ahriman and his evil demons fled and hid themselves in the nethermost regions. There is also a tradition, as old at least as the time of Pliny, that the child instead of crying as he came into the world laughed aloud. Various cruel attempts were made on his life, we are told. Wicked sorcerers sought to burn him in a great fire but he was miraculously rescued. Then they tried to have him trampled to death by a herd of oxen, but the leading ox stood over the helpless little form and protected it from the feet of the herd. At another time he was thrown into a den of wolves but instead of being harmed he was guarded and suckled. All these narratives show a striking similarity to those told in India of the miraculous escapes of the Baby Krishna from the cruel persecutions of the wicked King Kamsa several centuries earlier.

From his infancy Zoroaster gave evidence of remarkable gifts. At the age of seven he began his education under a wise teacher ; and later, we read in certain of the Pahlavi writings, those very sorcerers who had so long plotted against him are openly rebuked and confounded by the young boy in much the same way as Christ put to confusion the learned Rabbis in the Temple at Jerusalem. At fifteen years of age he was given the Kushti or holy thread, which must have been a very ancient Aryan rite marking the second or spiritual birth. The custom still exists

in India today, and by the sacred thread every Brahmin boy at an early age is initiated into the spiritual life thereby becoming a *Dwija* or "twice-born." From this period Zoroaster manifested an ever-deepening spiritual yearning and distate for wordly pleasure as well as a growing compassion for suffering humanity, until at the age of twenty "abandoning wordly desires and laying hold of righteousness," to quote the text of the Zat-sparam, he left his father's house and wandered forth to seek new light. "There are no other specific details in Pahlavi literature," Prof. Jackson writes, "to fill up the period from this moment to the coming of the revelation when he was thirty years old. They were undoubtedly the years of meditation, reflection, and religious preparation that correspond to similar periods of divine communings and philosophic introspection in other religious teachers. Parallels might easily be cited. It is to this period of Zoroaster's life that the scholiast of the Platonic Alcibiades apparently alludes when he relates that Zoroaster kept silent for seven years; and it is referred to by Pliny in the statement that for twenty years Zoroaster lived in desert places upon cheese. According to Porphyrius and Dio Chrysostom, he passed his time upon a mountain in a natural cave. The mountain is illuminated by a supernatural fire and splendour. Lightnings and thunders were about the summit of Sinai also, and clouds and thick smoke shrouded its sides, while the base of the mountain quaked violently, when the voice of the Lord spoke

unto Moses. The Avesta mentions the 'Forest and the mountain of the two Holy Communing Ones'—Ahura Mazda and Zarathustra—where intercourse was held between the god head and his prophetic-representative upon earth." These years of seclusion in the wilderness disprove conclusively the claims of many who suppose that Zoroaster was against the life of contemplation and renunciation.

It was in his thirtieth year that the first revelation came to him. While standing at dawn on the bank of the river Daiti, he beholds a resplendent figure of the archangel Vohuman (Good Thought) approaching him, bearing in his hand a shining staff. The archangel, after bidding him cast off his mortal garment, leads him before the Lord, Ahura Mazda, and Zoroaster offers his worship to the Deity, after which he goes "forward and sits down in the seat of the enquirers." The prophet then receives the command of the Lord to carry the new Message to the people of Iran. Three times in the same day does the vision come to him. Thus inspired and strengthened the great teacher sets out to accomplish his God-appointed mission. For ten years however he meets only struggle and opposition and then at last succeeds in gaining just one convert, his own cousin. Throughout this time, we learn from the Avesta, the prophet is constantly tempted and assailed by Ahriman, the Evil One or devil of the Zoroastrian Bible; but through his unswerving faith and unfaltering devotion to Ahura-Mazda he overcomes the Tempter, as

Christ did in the Wilderness and Buddha under the Bodhi tree.

With the conversion of King Vishtasp Zoroaster entered on a new and more triumphant period of his mission. Like Constantine in Christianity the king became the staunchest upholder of the new Faith. But this was achieved not without toil and persecutions. For two years the prophet strove against bitter priestly enemies at the court, who dominated both king and courtiers; and he was forced to bear imprisonment, denunciation and ceaseless dispute. When however the king became convinced of his supernatural power, he made Zoroastrianism the State religion and even waged holy wars to establish it. The thirty-five years which elapse after King Vishtasp embraces the new religion up to the time of the prophet's death in the seventy-seventh year of his age mark a period of tireless activity. Records of far missionary journeys are preserved and stories are told of conversions in Greece, India and even in Babylon. But few of these can be authenticated and it is generally believed that most of them were added later by enthusiastic adherents of the faith. There can be no doubt however that the new Message spread in time throughout Iran and probably passed the border into some of the neighbouring countries.

What was the Message? Dualism is the characteristic feature of Zoroastrian teaching. Ahura-Mazda, the all-knowing Deity, the Lord of Light, stands on the one hand, while on the other stands Ahriman,

Lord of darkness, waging unceasing war against Him. Corresponding with these spirits of Good and Evil, we find an eternal heaven and an eternal hell similar to those of Christian theology. The weapons given to man by Zoroaster with which to conquer the Evil One and attain heaven are Good Thoughts (*Humata*), Good Words (*Hukta*), Good Deeds (*Hvarshta*). Every good thought deals a blow at Ahriman, who is perpetually trying to overthrow us and turn us away from the kingdom of heaven by enshrouding our mind in darkness. When man performs a good deed he strikes another blow at the Tempter, so likewise when he speaks good words. "Turn yourself not away from three best things—Good Thought, Good Word, and Good Deed," is Zoroaster's admonition. "I praise the well-thought sentiment, the well-spoken speech, the well-performed action." All his social. moral and religious ideals are based on this triad of virtues. By "Good Thought" man is able to meditate and commune with his Creator. By "Good Words" and "Good Deeds" he fulfills his duty towards his fellow creatures. "Good Words" include integrity and truthfulness in all dealings with others. A man who practises this virtue must never break a contract or bear false witness or fail to repay his debts; he must also refrain from hurting the feelings of others, and he must foster brotherly love for all his fellows. By "Good Deeds" he is directed to relieve suffering and distress; to help the poor, whether worthy or unworthy; to irrigate and cultivate the soil, to drain the marshy

places, to provide food and fresh water wherever needed, and to devote the surplus of his riches to charity.

It is evident from these injunctions that the prophet's chief aim was to bring the spirit of religion into every day life. The people, who were growing visionary in spiritual matters, were given something tangible to do. The long forgotten ideals of their ancient faith once again blossomed into beautiful realities. It was not a new message that was brought, for the spiritual necessity of purity in thought, word and deed permeates all Ancient Aryan teaching; but Zoroaster gave it with new force and insistence.

"Purity is for man, next to life, the greatest good—that purity is procured by the law of Mazda to him who cleanses his own self with Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds.

"Make thyself pure, O righteous man! Anyone in the world here below can win purity for himself, namely, when he cleanses himself with Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

"Commit no slander, so that infamy and wickedness may not happen unto thee. For it is said that slander is more grievous than witchcraft.

"Form no covetous desire, so that the demons of greediness may not deceive thee, and the treasure of the world may not be tasteless to thee.

"Indulge in no wrathfulness, for a man when he indulges in wrath becomes then forgetful of his duty

and good works and sin and crime of every kind occur unto his mind, and until the subsiding of the wrath he is said to be just like unto Ahriman (the devil.)

"Commit no lustfulness, so that harm and regret may not reach thee from thine own actions.

"Bear no improper envy, so that thy life may not become tasteless.

"Indulge not in slothfulness that the duty and good work which thou shouldst do may not remain undone.

"With enemies fight with equity, with a friend proceed with the approval of friends. With a malicious man carry on no conflict and do not molest him in any way whatever. With a greedy man thou shouldst not be a partner and do not trust him with the leadership. With an ill-famed man form no connection. With an ignorant man thou shouldst not become a confederate and associate. With a foolish man make no dispute. With a drunken man do not walk on the road. From an ill-natured man take no loan.

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through any happiness of the world, for the happiness of the world is like as a cloud that comes on a rainy day, which one does not ward off by any hill.

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through much treasure and wealth, for in the end it is nccessary for thee to leave all.

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous

through great connections and race, for in the end thy trust is on thine own deeds.

"Thou shouldst not become presumptuous through life, for death comes upon thee at last and the perishable part falls to the ground."

Such are some of the fundamental commandments of the Zoroastrian faith, which show us how high was their standard of morality and how erroneous is the prevailing idea in the West that Parsis are mere fire or sun-worshippers. One can as well call the Christians cross-worshippers. A Parsi scholar in referring to this writes: "It is popularly believed that the Parsis are sun-worshippers or fire-worshippers, and thus once more do we stumble up against the old fallacy of confusing the symbol with the idea it represents—the shadow with the substance. In brief, fire is always fire to the Parsis, but it is sacred in so far as it symbolizes the great truth of purification, the divine law. And the fire temples, where fire is kept constantly alight by burning sandalwood and incense, are symbolical and intended to remind them of the wise maxim, 'Try and live a pure life by Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.' This maxim may indeed be said to contain the whole essence and substance of the Zoroastrian teaching." In the Vedic Scriptures also fire is regarded as one of the most perfect symbols of the Infinite because it swallows up all impurities, remaining itself pure and uncontaminated.

Zoroaster's influence did not die with his bodily

death but it continued to inspire and glorify his race, lifting Persia to such great eminence among the civilized nations of ancient times that Max Muller even claims that had Darius conquered Alexander the Great at the battle of Marathon, a pure form of Zoroastrianism would have driven out the whole Greek pantheon. From century to century the new faith continued to flourish and gain ground until the Arabs struck it a death blow at the battle of Nehavand in 642 A.D. From that time Persia became a Mohammedan country while a mere remnant of faithful followers of the prophet of Iran, unwilling to adopt the new creed, took refuge on the western shores of India. Thus driven out from their own soil, they once more found shelter with their Aryan brothers from whom they had parted long before. Hear they have lived ever since, freely and independently, building their own temples and continuing to worship their Supreme Deity according to their own ancient customs. The Hindus have not accepted the religion of the Parsis, nor have they tried to influence the Parsis by their own religion, for India has always been the land of tolerance. The very basis of Indo-Aryan civilization indeed is universal sympathy. The Vedic philosophy and religion give a wide platform on which all the different races, creeds, denominations and faiths of the world can stand and recognize the One Divine Spirit as the common Father of all.

Zoroaster is not the name of an individual, just as Christ or Buddha is not the name of an individual

it means a state. Zoroaster signifies "Righteous." Some also give to it the meaning "Holy Singer," one who came and dedicated his life to singing the glory of Ahura, the Lord of Light. The truths which this great prophet brought still live and inspire men; so although we may not know positively from an historical standpoint who he was, what he was, how long he lived, we know that his message of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds not only uplifted his own community or race, but it sounds a note which reaches all races, all peoples. And if we take the essence of that which he gave, we may uplift ourselves and realize that Supreme Spirit, Whom he called Ahura-Mazda and Whose Symbol he proclaimed as Fire. Let us too light an altar fire in our hearts, the Fire of Love and Wisdom, and cherish it with pure thought, good words and right action, that we may be cleansed of all impurity and attain that Highest Goal to which all true religion leads.

DID CHRIST TEACH A NEW RELIGION?*

By Swami Abhedananda.

THE religion of Jesus the Christ was not like the orthodox Christianity of to-day; neither did it resemble the faith of the Jewish nation. His religion was a great departure from Judaism in principles and ideals, as well as in the means of attaining them. It was much simpler in form and more sublime in nature. The religion that Christ taught had neither dogma, creed, system, nor theology. It was a religion without priests, without ceremonials, without rituals, or even strict observances of the Jewish laws.

As in India Buddha rebelled against the ceremonials, rituals, and priestcraft of the Brahmans and introduced a simpler form of worship and a religion of the heart, so among the Jews, nearly five hundred years after Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth rebelled against the priestcraft of Judaism. Jesus saw the insufficiency of the Jewish ethics and ideals and the corruption and the hypocrisy of the priests. He wished to reform the religion of his country and to establish a simpler and purer form of worship of the Supreme Being, which should rest entirely upon the feelings of the heart, not upon the letter of the law.

The God of Jesus was not the cruel and revengeful tribal deity of the house of Israel; He was the

* A lecture.

Universal Spirit. He was not like the tyrannical master of modern orthodoxy, who kills, damns, or saves mankind according to his whim; He was a loving Father. Jesus's worship consisted not in ceremonials, but in direct communion between his soul and the Father, without any priestly intermediary. The idea of God as the "Father in heaven" did not, however, originate with Jesus the Christ, as modern Christians generally believe; it existed in the religious atmosphere of northern Palestine as a result of the Hellenic influence of the worship of Jupiter—Greek, Zeus-pitar; Sanskrit, Dyus-pitar, which means "Father in heaven," and hence *Father of Universe.* The worship of Jupiter was introduced into Babylon and northern Palestine by Antiochus Epiphanes between 175 and 163 B.C. Although the orthodox Jews revolted against this innovation, yet there were many liberal-minded Jews among the Pharisees who liked the idea, accepted it, and preached it. One of the most prominent of the Jewish priests, who was considered by many as the true master and predecessor of Jesus and who was held in great esteem by the Pharisaic sect of the Jews, inculcated this belief in the merciful and fatherly character of God. His name was Rabbi Hillel. The Talmud speaks of this Babylonish teacher in glowing terms, declaring that he was next to the prophet Ezra. It was Hillel who first preached the Golden Rule among the Jews. He used to spend much time in meditation and study, and recommended such practices to his

disciples. Hillel died when Jesus was about ten years old.

Thus we see that the idea of the Fatherhood of God existed in northern Palestine at the time of Jesus, and was preached in public by Rabbi Hillel. Moreover, at the same time Philo and other Neo-Platonist Jews in Alexandria were teaching the fatherly character of God and the only-begotten Sonship of the Logos, or Word.' Both the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of the Word were known to the Greeks and other Aryan nations, especially the Hindus of ancient India. Jesus of Nazareth took up this grand Aryan idea and emphasized it more strongly than any of his predecessors in Palestine.

At the time that Jesus appeared in Galilee the religious atmosphere of the place was permeated with Persian doctrines, Hellenic ideas, Pythagorean thoughts, and the precepts of the Essenes, Therapeutæ, Gymnosophists, and the Buddhists of India. Galilee was aglow with the fire of religious enthusiasm, kindled by the ardour of social and political dissensions. The Jews were already divided into three principal sects—the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. Each of these was trying to gain supremacy and power over the others. The Sadducees were the conservative and aristocratic class, while the Pharisees and the Essenes were essentially liberal. It was a time of great disturbance—of intrigues, insurrections, rebellions, and wars. Such a period naturally kindles the fire of patriotism in the hearts of a nation and

forces its members to become active in every possible way. The misfortunes and calamities that befell the descendants of Israel made them remember the promises of Jahveh which were handed down to them through the writings of the prophets, and forced them to seek supernatural aid in the fulfilment of those promises. The unconquerable pride of the sons of Israel—that they were the "chosen people" of Jahveh the only true God, who was their governor and director—stimulated their minds with the hope that through the supernatural power of Jahveh, the kingdom of their great ancestors would be restored: that a member of David's house would appear as the Messiah (the Anointed), sit on the throne, and unite the twelve tribes of Israel under his sceptre, and govern them in peace and prosperity. This was the first conception of Messiah that ever arose in the minds of the Jews. It was the principal theme of the poets and prophets who lived during the Babylonian exile. The glory of the house of Israel and the earthly prosperity of the sons of Jahveh were the highest ideals of the Jews. They did not mean by *Messiah* a spiritual Saviour of the world. The Christian idea of this term owes its origin to the Zoroastrian conception of the "coming Messiah" *Soshiyanta*, who, according to the promise of Ahura-Mazda, would appear on the Day of Judgment, destroy the evil influence of Ahriman, and renovate the world. This idea was accepted by the Pharisees, while the orthodox Jews repudiated it.

Although the mind of Jesus, according to the synoptic Gospels, was not free from the superstitious beliefs of the Jews, and the national traditions of his time; although he accepted the Zoroastrian conception of a "coming Messiah" that the end of the world was immanent, as well as the Persian ideas (which did not exist in Judaism before the Babylonian captivity) of the renovation of the world, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgment, the punishment of the wicked, and the salvation of the righteous; although Jesus believed with the Pharisees in the Persian conception of heaven and hell and the devil, and saw many angels ascending and descending over his head—yet he realized that the kingdom of God was a spiritual kingdom: that it was within himself. He felt the presence of the Father within him, and asked his disciples to feel likewise. The Jews understood by the kingdom of Jahveh the kingdom of this world and the prosperity of the house of Israel. But Jesus spiritualized that ideal and taught a reign of righteousness and justice; not a reign of strife between nations, but a kingdom of peace and love. Jesus preached this idea among his people in the same way that Buddha declared that he came to establish a kingdom of peace and love and righteousness upon earth. Buddha did not use the expression "kingdom of God," but preferably "kingdom of justice, peace, and love." Jesus had to use the former expression because it was dominant in the minds of the people about him.

These ideas regarding a kingdom of peace and love were scattered in northern Palestine for at least two centuries before the Christian Era by the Buddhist missionaries. It is indeed a well-known historic fact that the gospel of peace, good-will and love was preached in Syria and Palestine by Buddhist monks nearly two hundred years before Christ. Their influence was felt most deeply by the Jewish sect called the Essenes, or the Therapeutæ, to which sect, as many scholars believe, Jesus himself belonged. It is interesting to note the similarities between the Essenes and the followers of Buddha. The Buddhists were also called *Theraputta*, a Pali form of the Sanskrit *Sthiraputtra*, meaning the son of Sthera, or Thera: one who is serene, enlightened, and undisturbed by the world. Thera was one of Buddha's names. These people had the power to heal disease.

Readers of the history of India are aware that in 249 B.C., Asoka the Great, the Buddhist emperor, made Buddhism the state religion of India and sent missionaries to all parts of the world then known to him to preach the gospel of Buddha. He sent missionaries from Siberia to Ceylon, and from China to Egypt. These missionaries preached the doctrines of Buddhism, not by bloodshed and sword, but by scattering blessings, good-will, and peace wherever they went. The edicts or stone inscriptions of Asoka were written during his lifetime. One of these edicts mentions five Greek kings who were Asoka's contemporaries,—Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemaos of Egypt,

Antigonus of Macedon, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epiros. The edict says that Asoka made treaties with these kings and sent Buddhist missionaries to their kingdoms to preach the gospel of Buddha. "Both here and in foreign countries," says Asoka, "everywhere the people follow the doctrine of the Beloved of the gods, wheresoever it reacheth." Mahaffi, the Christian historian, says: "The Buddhist missionaries preached in Syria two centuries before the teaching of Christ, which has so much in common (with the teaching of Buddha), was heard in northern Palestine."

The labours of these Buddhist monks were not fruitless in these places. They continued to preach through parables the highest ideals of religion, from generation to generation. Their communities, bound to a life of celibacy, which was not a Jewish custom, increased from age to age as outsiders joined their ranks. Even the Alexandrian Neo-Platonist Philo, who was a contemporary of Christ, mentions in his writings once or twice the "Indian Gymnosophists," or Buddhists, and says that the Essenes numbered about four thousand at that time. The doctrines of the Essenes, their manner of living, and the vows of their communities show the results of the Buddhist missionary work during the two centuries immediately preceding the birth of Christ. Pliny says:—"The Essenes live on the western shore of the Dead Sea. They are a hermit clan—one marvellous beyond all others in the world, without any women, without the

joys of domestic life, without money, and the associates of the palm-trees."

One of the peculiar practices of the Essenes was the *bath of purification*, which was also a peculiarity of the Buddhist monks. The life led by John the Baptist was typical of that of a Buddhist monk. Exactly like a Buddhist, the Essene rose before sunrise and said his morning prayers with his face turned towards the East. When the day broke he went to work. Agriculture, cattle-breeding, bee-keeping, and other peaceful trades were among his ordinary occupations. He remained at work until 11 o'clock; then he took a bath, put on white linen, and ate plain vegetable food. The Essenes abstained from meat and wine. They also wore leather aprons, as did some of the Buddhist monks. The Essene novice took solemn oath to honor God, to be just toward his fellow-man, to injure no one either of his own accord or by order of others, not to associate with the unrighteous, to assist the righteous, to be ever faithful to all, always to love truth, to keep his hands from theft and his soul from unholy gain. There were some who joined the order after having lived a married life.

Ernest Renan says: "The Essenes resembled the Gurus (spiritual masters) of Brahmanism." "In fact" he asks, "might there not in this be a remote influence of the *Mounis* (holy saints of India)?" According to Renan, "Babylon had become for some time a true focus of Buddhism. Boudasp (Bodhisatta),

another name of Buddha, was reputed a wise Chaldean and the founder of Sabeism, which means, as its etymology indicates, baptism." He also says: "We may believe, at all events, that many of the external practices of John, of the Essenes, and of the Jewish spiritual teachers of the time were derived from influences then but recently received from the far East"—meaning India. Thus we can understand that there was an indirect influence of the Buddhist monks upon the mind of Jesus through the Essenes, and especially through John the Baptist.

Although Jesus never pretended to have created the world, nor to govern it, yet his followers worshipped and loved him as the Messiah; and later on the writer of the fourth Gospel identified him with the "Word" or Logos, of Philo, about the latter part of the third century of the Christian Era. According to the synoptic Gospels, the idea of the advent of the end of the world and of the reign of justice and the kingdom of God grew so strong in the mind of Jesus that apparently it forced him to think that he—the Son and the bosom friend of his Father—must be the executor of God's decrees, and that through him such a kingdom of justice and goodness should be established. This thought gradually led him to believe that, as he was the Son of God, he should be the universal Reformer, born to *establish* the kingdom of God.

The fundamental principles of the religion of Jesus, however, were purity, charity, self-denial,

control of passions, renunciation of and non-attachment to wealth and to earthly things, intense faith, forgiveness and love for enemies, and the realization of the unity of the soul with the "Father in Heaven." During the one year of his public life as a spiritual teacher, Jesus taught his disciples these principles and showed them the way to practice them by his living example. But all these grand ethical and spiritual doctrines, upon which the religion of Jesus was founded, were practised for nearly three centuries before Christ by the Buddhist preachers in Babylon and Syria, and they were taught in India for ages before that. The same ideas were inculcated by the Vedic sages, by the Vedanta philosophers, and afterwards by the Avataras, or Incarnations of God, like Rama, Krishna (who lived about 1400 B.C.), Buddha (547 B.C.), Sankara, Chaitannya, and Nanak, and also by Ramakrishna of the nineteenth century. If we study the lives of these men, we find that, like Jesus, each one of them lived a pure, spotless, and unselfish life of renunciation, always loving humanity and doing good to all.

Those who have read the doctrines of Buddha know that the ethical teachings of Jesus seem like repetitions of what Buddha taught. Those who have read the Bhagavat Gita, or the Song Celestial, will remember that the fundamental principles of Krishna's teachings were purity of heart, self-denial, control of passions, renunciation, love towards enemies, forgiveness, and the realization of the unity of the soul with

the Father. In short, the religion of Christ was taught before Him by Buddha and Krishna in India. Like Jesus the Christ, Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita: "I am the path. Follow me and worship one God. I existed before the world was created. I am the Lord of all." And again: "Giving up the formalities of religion, come unto me; follow me; take refuge in me. I shall free thee from sins and give eternal peace unto thee. Grieve not."

But although Jesus the Christ did not teach a new religion, still he came to fulfil and not to destroy. He gave a new life to the old truths, and by his wonderful personality impressed them upon the minds of his own people.

SYNTHESIS OF HINDUISM.

By Swami Bodhananda.*

HINDUISM is a very old religion. Scholars have failed to assign any date to its beginning. The Vedas are the source of this religion, or it may be said to have existed since the first Vedic inspiration. By Hinduism we must not understand a religion that shows the way to liberation alone, but it is the science of the origin, growth, and maturity of all the relations between God and man, between soul and soul. It does not consist in dogmas and doctrines, but teaches us how to realize the fundamental harmony that underlies all phenomena. In this sense it is eternal. So long as there has been creation, there has been this religion also. It is the very backbone of the universe.

According to the Hindus, the Vedas are not the work of man. They are the accumulated treasury of the knowledge that has been revealed to the saints and sages of all countries and all times. The Hindus do not take anything merely on personal authority, but on principle. They know that truth is eternal and unchangeable, and from whatever source it comes it is acceptable to them. They have solved the problem of existence and discovered the grand unity that is the background of all variety. They

* A contribution to the "Vedanta Monthly Bulletin."

hate no religion, criticise no creed, but harmonize all the methods of self-knowledge or God-consciousness from the stand-point of ultimate unity.

The Vedas declare, "That which exists is one; sages call it by various names." The whole universe is the projection of Brahman. He is the material and efficient cause of the universe. He has not made it (in the manner of a potter or a goldsmith) out of a material that existed beside himself, but he has manifested himself in the form of the universe. Since He is one without a second, nothing could exist where He was not. Hence, the Hindus say, creation is eternal. They do not admit of the beginning of creation, because "beginning" means something coming into existence that did not exist before. They believe in cycles, *i.e.*, the projection of the universe out of Brahman, its existence in the manifested form for a length of time, and its dissolution into Brahman again. In admitting the beginning of creation there would be a great fallacy. In the first place, that would make Brahman cruel and partial. Because "beginning of creation" means beginning of Karma. Why did he create Karma that binds us and subjects us to all sorts of sorrows and sufferings? Why in His reign should there be inequalities and iniquities? The Vedas say Karma is eternal. It eternally rests in Brahman. In the dissolution, Karma remains in seed-form; in the projection, it sprouts up and bears fruit. If Karma is eternal, is there, then, no escape from it? Yes! By knowing Brahman we can

escape the clutches of Karma. Knowledge is the only means to go out of Karma. In the second place, beginning of creation would make Brahman limited. What would He create if He is the only entity that exists? Why should He have desire for creation? He is full and perfect. He wants nothing. If He should want anything He would no longer be infinite and free, but bound and limited. The Vedanta solves the problem in this way. It says the universe is projected from Brahman and is dissolved into Him without any desire or effort on His part, as we inhale and exhale without any voluntary effort whatsoever.

Brahman is characterized by *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda*, *i. e.*, He is Existence absolute, Knowledge absolute, and Bliss absolute. But the question naturally arises, If Brahman is existence, knowledge, and bliss, whence do all these evils (relativities and dualities) come? The Vedas declare there is no such thing as evil. It is ignorance, delusion, that makes us see evils. This delusion is an inscrutable and mysterious force resting in Brahman. It is beginningless in itself, but it has an end. With knowledge it ceases to exist, for the individual. The dispersion of this delusion or attainment of knowledge is the one great task in our life.

It may be further argued, if Brahman is sometimes manifested and sometimes unmanifested, then He is subject to change, and as such unreal. No. These are the different states of Brahman. As a snake is

now moving and now motionless, but is the same snake all the time, so it is the same Brahman with different forms. The sea with waves and the sea without waves is still the same sea. The sum-total is constant and invariable. This is the Vedic conception of creation and creator.

Besides the Vedas, the Hindus have a number of other Scriptures known as the Smritis and Puranas. The word "Smritis" means "things remembered." They embody the traditional or memorial laws and institutions handed down by inspired legislators. These laws and institutions are not eternal and universal. They change with the change of circumstances. They do not hold good for all ages and all countries. The ancient Hindu sages knew that human mind always adapts itself to environments. What is good under a peculiar condition may not be good under a different condition. So they laid down special laws suited to the special social conditions of a certain epoch. These Smritis are recognized as true in so far as they do not disagree with the Vedas. If any part of them differ from the Vedas, that part is rejected. So we see these Scriptures have no eternal value. They change in every stage of social evolution, and as such have a local and temporary value only. The Puranas comprise the whole body of Hindu mythology;—ancient history, legends, traditions, symbols, etc., etc.

Thus we see that the Scriptures of the Hindus are divided into philosophy, ritual, and mythology.

The philosophic portion is based upon the Vedas, the ritualistic portion is embodied in the Smritis, and the mythological portion in the Puranas. These divisions show the deep insight of the Hindu teachers into the various natures and dispositions of human mind, and the various conditions through which a human society evolves. For each stage of evolution they prescribed special laws and conditions. As one dish cannot suit the taste of all persons, so one mode of thought or religion cannot suit the taste of the whole human race. Different individuals must have different creeds, according to their individual nature, tendency, and capacity. The Hindus at a very ancient time discovered that all religions lead to the same goal. The Hindu child is taught to chant in his daily hymn: "As the different streams rising from different sources all flow into the sea, so, O Lord, thou art the one goal for the different paths of religion that human mind takes through different inclinations."

In a Hindu family each member may have his own creed. The husband may be an Advaitist (monist), the wife a Dvaitist (dualist), and the son or daughter a Vishistadwaitist (qualified monist). They never quarrel because of their difference of creed. They know that purity or sincerity of heart is the only thing necessary to attain to knowledge or to see God. God is omniscient and all-merciful. He looks through our heart. He resides in our heart. If the heart is pure, if it is full of devotion and love, He is sure to

come to us. He does not care for external forms of worship. Call Him father or mother, friend or master, it makes no difference to Him. The Hindus are thus wonderfully liberal and tolerant in matters of faith. They know that we, every one of us, are children of God and are sure to reach Him sooner or later. Every individual has started from God and is sure to end the march in God. From the highest flight of Vedantic monism down to the grossest form of fetishism and materialism, each one has a place in the Religion of the Hindus. They know that different methods are necessary for different individual conditions. From the perfected man down to the smallest worm, each one is manifestation of Brahman. The difference lies in degree and not in kind. The one thread runs through the whole string of manifestation.

Their philosophy says that in nature there are three elements, *satva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The characteristic of satva is illumination, of rajas activity, and of tamas darkness. The whole range of creation is comprised in these elements. Every individual is struggling to manifest himself, to perfect himself. This is the Hindu idea of Evolution. In every individual there is soul which by its nature is bright and luminous but is covered by the veil of nature. The whole struggle is to break through this veil. Absolutely there is no difference between individuals and individuals. Each one will attain perfection sooner or later. Taking his stand on this broad conciliatory

principle of synthesis, the Hindu says even the atheist or the materialist is not without religion. The materialist believes in matter as a constant entity. The Deist believes in God. Both believe in something. That man is really atheistic who does not believe even in himself, in his judgment, reasoning, etc. He believes his conclusion to be true and infallible which is the result of his own judgment, which again is the outcome of the consciousness of his Self or Ego. Why would he not allow another man to believe in his own consciousness when it tells him that there is an entity like God or Brahman or Soul? The materialist or atheist is as much a believer in some permanent entity as the theist or Deist. The Hindu calls that man an atheist who can deny his own existence, which is impossible. For by what will he deny himself? The sense of ego permeats all his actions and thoughts. So according to the Hindu the term atheist is a misnomer in the sense of an unbeliever. This ego is a permanent quantity.

The Hindu conception of theism is based upon the belief in an eternal entity. Call him by any name —God or nature or reasoning or soul. It does not matter in the least. The Hindu Scriptures emphatically say God is personal and impersonal and beyond them all. He is with name and form if you choose to think Him so. He is without name and form if you call Him so. Name and form are mere superimpositions, limitations. He is the absolute existence,

the permanent basis, the noumenon behind all changes, all manifestations and all phenomena.

Now a word about Hindu image worship or symbol worship or idolatry. The Hindu is never a worshipper of idols, but he worships an *ideal*. In his idol he sees the representation of his ideal. His idols are never awkward or ugly. They are very beautiful and attractive. They call their idols Devas or Devis (bright and beautiful ones). They do not look upon them as made of stone or clay or wood, but they always see their highest ideals manifested in them. They worship these images with love and devotion and ascribe to them all the divine qualities, such as all-powerfulness, omnipresence, omniscience. They regard them as spiritual helpers, and practise concentration on those divine images. In their temples one will always find a holy association, a holy vibration, a holy atmosphere.

We, every one of us, are more or less image-worshippers. Some worship a mental image, some a material image. The one internal and the other external, or the one concrete, the other abstract. The Hindu knows that our mind is always scattered on external objects. He gathers together that scattered mind and fixes it on an external object first, which is very attractive and beautiful, and gradually concentrates it on an internal image or object or quality. His idea is to go from the concrete to the abstract and from the abstract to the absolute. His process is always slow and steady. Because a violent

process always brings a nervous disorder. When he has been able to concentrate on an external concrete image which to him is very lovely and holy, he passes on slowly and puts his mind on an internal or abstract image or quality; and when he has become well practised in that, he sends his mind on to the absolute which is superconsciousness. This is the Hindu idea of image-worship. Now, he uses some words in his worship which also represent an ideal. In these short words he puts a large sense. He uses one word, say, for three or four sentences. The whole essence of those sentences is compressed in that one word. That one word is therefore very sacred and valuable to him. He repeats it and thinks of its meaning and thus saves a good deal of time and strain. The image worship and the symbol worship show the artistic and economic side of Hindu mind. These images and forms are the perfections of Hindu art. Of course now-a-days one may find caricatures, distortions, and abuses of these images, but these are more due to the degeneration of Hindu art for want of culture and encouragement than to the fault of the Hindu conception of idol worship or form worship. Idol worship or symbol worship is not in fault at all; the men into whose hands it has fallen are altogether responsible for these misrepresentations and misinterpretations.

To the Hindus religion is a practical thing. It is a matter of life, a matter of realization with them. As in the moral world, laws are necessary as means

to enable us to go beyond laws, so in the religious world symbols and usages and images are necessary as means to enable us to reach the end of realization. No amount of laws can make a people moral and good unless they feel from their heart the necessity of being moral and good. The government is making so many laws, the society so many restrictions, but why are the people still immoral, still vicious? The secret of making a people moral does not necessarily lie in enforcing external laws, but in changing their habits by awakening in them the sense of a dignified manliness. Unless and until they can be roused to that sense of dignity and self-respect there can be no true morality for them. This is the Hindu idea of morality, to go beyond laws through laws. The Hindu does not like the idea of being kept down by a whip or by fear of punishment. He believes in natural growth and unfoldment. According to him, unless a man can think that he is part of God, that he is pure and perfect by nature, he cannot be truly moral. Liberty is the condition of growth. Give liberty, give high suggestions, and everything will come right. If we really want to make a man moral we must rouse this lofty consciousness in him, we must suggest to him that he is not sinful, he is not vicious, but he is pure and perfect. The Hindu always sees divinity in man. He loves all men as gods on earth. He hates none, he injures none. His whole struggle in life is to feel religion, to live religion, to make it his blood and pith and

marrow, and to help others to realize this ideal of religion.

Whenever there is any extraordinary manifestation of prowess, valor, skill, purity or love, the Hindu worships it as God. He worships Rama, he worships Krishna, he worships Buddha, Jesus and Sankara; he adores Vyasa, Mapila, Socrates, Plato and Kant. He admires the genius of Bhaskara, Kalidas, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Nelson, Newton, Faraday, Galileo and Marconi. He sees the manifestation of the absolute Brahman in all these teachers and philosophers and heroes and scientists. He knows that holiness, purity and perfection are not the exclusive possession of a country or nation. Wherever and whenever there is any necessity for them, they manifest themselves.

The Hindu teachers have taught four principal ways of attaining to God: by knowledge, by devotion, by unselfish work and by meditation. Those who take up the way of knowledge practise discrimination and dispassion. They always distinguish the right from the wrong, the real from the unreal. They say that the universe is unreal and Brahman or God is real; and according to them, becoming one with Brahman is the highest freedom, greatest bliss. Those who choose the path of devotion worship God in some form, either as an incarnation or teacher or hero or the Lord of the universe. They establish some relation with their God and through intense love they try to reach Him. They call Him father, mother,

Lord, or friend or any other sweet name, and think Him as the nearest and dearest to them. They give up everything in the world in their devotion to Him. The unselfish workers look upon work as the be-all and end-all of their life. They do not even care for their own salvation. They are ready to serve humanity at the cost of their health and wealth and life. They forget all selfish considerations in their sympathy for humanity. The way of meditation consists in the eight-fold practice, like posture, breathing, concentration, attention, etc. Those who follow this way observe some restrictions of food, habitation and action. They are very moderate in everything. The Hindus look upon these paths as so many radii of a circle. They start from different places but all converge to the same centre. Sri Krishna, the great harmonizer of creeds, practised in his own life all these methods and declared: "Through whatever way men follow me I reach them in that way. They are all coming unto me (knowingly or unknowingly)." As the sun is the one great source of heat and light, so the one, infinite God is the source of all true knowledge.

Hinduism is thus the great synthesis of religions. Within its wide arms all the creeds and faiths of the world are welcome. It excludes none, but harmonizes all, sympathizes with all. The one thing that it avoids is sectarianism, bigotry and insincerity. Its watchword is "peace and not fight, love and not hatred, co-operation and not disintegration."

Universality and practicality are its chief features. It shows the ways to material, moral, intellectual and spiritual advancement. It lays down special duties for special conditions of life and the methods of fulfilment of those duties. It wants us to be strong and straightforward, to be loving and energetic, to be pure and sincere. Its goal is freedom of self-realization.

CONFUCIUS AND HIS PHILOSOPHY. *

By Swami Bodhananda

CHINA defies the world in three things,—her age, population, and industries. The Chinese come from the Turanian race, that migrated from Western Asia and settled on the banks of the Hoang-Ho 4,000 years before Christ. The recorded history of China goes as far back as that age and her civilization is one of the oldest in the world. The Chinese population is over 400,000,000, or more than one-fourth of the whole human race. Chinese industries are famous all over the world. The Wall of China is one of the great wonders of the world. It was built in the third century B.C., to protect the country against invasions. It is 1,200 miles long, twenty-five feet high and broad enough to permit six horsemen to ride abreast. It is said that "in it there is enough material to build a belt six feet high and two feet wide that would reach twice around the world."

The Chinese are the most moral nation in the world. In China there is only one criminal in every 3,787; while in Scotland, one of the most civilized Christian countries, one in every sixty is a criminal. Among Mohammedans one is a criminal in every 856.

In China only one is a criminal in every 3,787 of the masses, and still your people send missionaries to

* Abstract of a lecture delivered in America.

China. You who have read Chinese history will recall how it is said that in spite of the preceding Greek and Roman civilizations and 1,300 years of Christian teaching, Europe in the fourteenth century was 2,000 years behind the China of Confucius. You may have also read how the Prime Minister of China, during the opium war over sixty years ago, wrote to Queen Victoria, imploring her not to import opium into China—an article she would not have introduced into her own country. He said, in part: "We think you are a good and gracious Queen, but why do you want to do that to others which you would not have done to yourself?" This was one of the first teachings of Confucius and the Chinese endeavor to live up to it. Confucius was born in 551 B. C., in the State of Loo. The sixth century B.C. is a remarkable period in the history of the world. It saw the birth of Buddha in India, of Pythagoras in Greece, and of Confucius in China. Royalty was abolished in Rome in 509 B. C., the last Roman King, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, being deposed and driven out in that year. Democracy was established in Greece, and the Jews were delivered from the Babylonian captivity by the Persian Emperor, Cyrus the Great, in this century.

The father of Confucius, Shooh Leang Hie, was a military officer. He was a man of Herculean strength. Report says that once, when his men besieged a city, the gates were purposely thrown open to entice them in and as soon as they entered the portcullis dropped. But Shooh Leang Hie by

his giant force raised it and held it up until all were out and thus saved them from instant death.

When seventy years old he married a second time. He was a widower and had nine daughters, but he thought of perpetuating himself, through a son. He went to the family of Yen (one of the most respectable Chinese families) and applied for a daughter. There were three marriageable girls but the age of the suitor was against him. The father, Yen interceded for the noble man and pointed out to his daughters the virtues that adorned his hoary head. He said: "He is old and austere, but you need have no misgivings about him; which of you will have him?" The older daughters answered not a word, but the youngest maiden, Chingtsze said, "Why do you ask us, father? It is for you to determine." "Very well," said her father in reply, "you will do it." She accordingly married Shooh Leang Hie and within a year there was born to her the now world-renowned reformer, Confucius.

When Confucius was three years old his father died. His mother was a very clever and good woman. She devoted all her energies to the training of her son. At fifteen he had learned all that his masters were able to teach him. When seventeen, he accepted the position of magistrate and revenue collector in an agricultural district. At the request of his mother he married when nineteen. He had a son and a daughter. The duties of office required his separation from his wife after four years of

marriage. His mother died when he was twenty-three years old. He resigned his position and shut himself up in his house to spend in solitude the three years of mourning for his mother. This was the custom in that country. He spent these three years in study and contemplation. Then he traveled through the country. Two distinct periods of his life were spent in travels. In these wanderings he used to be accompanied by three disciples. He divided his disciples into four classes. To the first he taught morals, to the second rhetoric, to the third politics, and to the fourth the style of written composition. Confucius was a great moral and political reformer; he was not a religious teacher. His older, contemporary, Lao-Tze, was an ascetic and his teachings were mystic, monistic and transcendental, while those of Confucious were dualistic, agnostic and practical. He taught practical ethics.

When he was traveling one day he saw an old woman weeping by a tomb. He sent one of the disciples to inquire the cause. She said her husband, father-in-law and son were killed by a tiger in that place. The disciple said, "Why don't you then remove from here?" The woman replied, "Because here there is no oppressive government." On hearing this from the disciple, Confucius remarked, "An oppressive government is really fiercer than a tiger.' Another time, when visiting statues in a royal palace, he saw a big metal statue of a man with a triple clasp on the mouth. On the back of the statue were inscribed

these words: "The ancient people spoke little and like them we should avoid loquacity. Many words invite many defeats. Those who talk much are sure to say something it would be better to have left unsaid." He drew the attention of the disciples to these words and said, "Observe, my children, these words are true and commend themselves to our reason." On another occasion he arrived at the summit of a mountain, and, looking below, he heaved a heavy sigh as of pain. The disciples inquired the cause and he sadly said: "My children, looking from this height on people below. I find they are continually running after worldly pursuits and trying to get ahead of each other. There is scarcely one who is not thinking how he can best gain advantage over and if necessary destroy his neighbor. Sadder still it is to be incapable and helpless to remedy the evil. You have probably thought this matter over. Tell me in turn what you would do if you had the power." One of them replied: "I would defend the weak and the oppressed and, if necessary, would conquer and execute the oppressor and thus establish right and order." "You speak as a soldier," Confucius quietly commented. The second disciple then said: "I would throw myself between the contending parties and dilate on the horrors of war and blessings of peace, the ignominy of defeat and the miseries brought on the bereaved widows and orphans and thus establish peace." "You are an orator," said Confucius. The third, after much reluctance, gave this opinion:

"I would, if possible, educate and elevate these people by my life and example." "You speak like a sage," was the master's reply.

When fifty-one years old, Confucius obtained a splendid position in his native State of Loo. He was appointed Minister of Crime by the Duke of that State. He discharged his duties so ably and well that crime practically ceased. Dr. Legge says, "The penal laws lay unused, for no offenders appeared. Dishonesty and dissoluteness were ashamed and hid their heads." This prince was very much devoted to Confucius. About this time he had among his disciples 500 mandarins. But the prosperity and success of this State awakened the jealousy and fears of the Duke of the neighboring State of Tsze. He at first tried various methods to turn the Duke of Loo from his able minister but all these failed. At last he devised a plan which succeeded. He sent a present of eighty beautiful maidens to the Duke of Loo whose duty it was to recall the Duke from public duties to the enjoyment of personal pleasures. The Duke now listened to his minister with scant attention. His suggestions were neglected, his advice was spurned. He was too high spirited a man to accept such treatment, yet he was loath to resign a post that enabled him to do so much good to his country. But he could not stand idly by and see the Duke openly defy the laws and treat him with contempt. He finally resigned his post and left the capital.

He then recommenced his travels. But this time

his wanderings were unpropitious and he was not appreciated. State after State refused him appointment. At last, when sixty-nine years old, he returned to Loo and devoted the remaining few years of his life to the completion of his literary works and teaching disciples. Confucius died when seventy-two years old (in 479 B.C.). He was buried with great pomp and multitudes observed mourning for three years. The Empress of the Shun dynasty erected a marble statue on his grave, which bore this inscription: "The most sagely ancient Teacher. The all-accomplished and all-informed King." The eighteenth day of the second moon is kept sacred by the Chinese as the anniversary of his death. A few days before his death, his son and a favourite disciple died. He was saddened by these bereavements and one morning, rising from his bed he said:—

"The great mountain must crumble,
The strong beam must break,
The wise man wither away as a plant."

The same evening he took sick and in a few days died.

Confucius was silent on all theological and metaphysical questions. To all such questions his one reply was: "Do your duty." He did not localize or recognize heaven, hell or purgatory. The Chinese word for "heaven" is *Shangte*, which means neither a person nor a place, but the universal spirit or life—or the law that governs all things. To him the universe was a stupendous mechanism. He did not believe in special creation.

Once a disciple asked him about the service of the spirits of the dead. Confucius said: "While you are not able to serve men alive, how can you serve their spirits?" The disciple then asked about death and the master's answer was; "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"

Confucius left no theology. He had great veneration for ancient customs and usages. According to him upon the observance of the laws of five fundamental relationships all social and political well being and happiness depend. Those are between the sovereign and the subject, between the parent and the child, between brother and brother, between friend and friend, and between husband and wife. If these relations are rightly observed and the duties appertaining to them, are properly performed, then all happiness in individual and social life follows.

A disciple asked, "Is there not one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?' Confucius said. "Yes; it is 'reciprocity'—What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others."

Confucius inculcated practice of virtues and not the observance of ceremonies only. He laid down five virtues as cardinal which must be practised that right may prevail. These virtues are (1) Humanity (Love, and charity towards all); (2) Impartial justice; (3) Conformity to ancient rites, laws and usages; (4) Rectitude of intention; (5) Sincerity.

Confucius was a great writer. For centuries his writings comprised the literature of China. He wrote

five books (called "Classics"); these with four others written by him and his followers form Chinese literature.

The original name of this sage was Kong-Futze (Kong, the master). Kong-Futze was Latinized into Confucius by the Jesuit missionaries in the 16th Century A.D.

The Emperor of China visits the tomb of Confucius twice a year, kneels and bows his head before it, invokes blessings and makes offerings. So tremendous is the influence of the teachings of Confucius in China and so highly is his memory held by Chinese that even little children sing every day:—

"Confucius! Confucius! How great was Confucius!
Before him there was none like him!
Since him there has been no other."

Confucius was confessedly a great and good man—an intellectual giant. He never claimed to be an "original thinker or maker but a transmitter." He strove to direct the attention of men to the duties of social and political life in the most unassuming way. "I teach you nothing," he said, "but what you might learn yourselves." He aimed exclusively at fitting people for conducting themselves honorably and prudently in life.

Confucius neither spoke nor knew of any *Vox Dei*, neither feared nor flattered *Vox Populi*.

LORD BUDDHA. *

By Swami Vivekananda.

IN every religion we find one type of self-devotion particularly developed. The type of working without a motive is most highly developed in Buddhism. Do not mistake Buddhism and Brahmanism. In this country you are very apt to do so. Buddhism is one of our sects. It was founded by a great man called Gautama, who became disgusted at the eternal metaphysical discussions of his day, and the cumbrous rituals, and more especially with the caste system. Some people say that we are born to a certain state, and therefore we are superior to others who are not thus born. He was also against the tremendous priest-craft. He preached a religion in which there was no motive power, and was perfectly agnostic about metaphysics or theories about God. He was often asked, if there was a God, and he answered, he did not know. When asked about right conduct he would reply,—Do good and be good. There came five Brahmans, who asked him to settle their discussion. One said,—Sir, my Book says that God is such and such, and that this is the way to come to God. Another said,—That is wrong, for my Book says such and such, and this is the way to come to God; and so did

* In the course of a lecture delivered in Detroit, U. S. A., Swami Vivekananda made the above remarks on Lord Buddha

the others. He listened calmly to all of them, and then asked them one by one. "Does any one of your Books say, that God becomes angry, that He ever injures any one, that He is impure?" "No, Sir, they all teach that God is pure and good." "Then, my friends, why do you not become pure and good first, that you may know what God is."

Of course I do not endorse all his philosophy. I want a good deal of metaphysics, for myself. I entirely differ in many respects, but, because I differ, is that any reason why I should not see the beauty of the man? He was the only man who was bereft of all motive power. There were other great men, who all said they were the Incarnations of God Himself, and that those who would believe in them would go to heaven. But what did Buddha say with his dying breath? "None can help you; help yourself; work out your own salvation." He said about himself, "Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky; I, Gautama, have reached that state; you will all reach that too if you struggle for it." Bereft of all motive power, he did not want to go to heaven, did not want money; he gave up his throne and everything else, and went about begging his bread through the streets of India, preaching for the good of men and animals with a heart as wide as the ocean. He was the only man who was ever ready to give up his life for animals, to stop a sacrifice. He once said to a king, "If the sacrifice of a lamb helps you to go to heaven, sacrificing a man

will help you better, so sacrifice me." The king was astonished; and yet this man was without any motive power. He stands as the perfection of the active type, and the very height to which he attained, shows that through the power of work we can also attain to the highest spirituality.

To many the path becomes easier if they believe in God. But the life of Buddha shows that even a man who does not believe in God, has no metaphysics, belongs to no sect, and does not go to any church, or temple, and is a confessed materialist, even he can attain to the highest. We have no right to judge him. I wish I had one infinitesimal part of Buddha's heart. Buddha may or may not have believed in God; that does not matter to me. He reached the same state of perfection to which others come by Bhakti—love of God, Yoga, or Jnana. Perfection does not come from belief or faith. Talk does not count for anything. Parrots can do that. Perfection comes through the disinterested performance of action.

RELATION OF BUDDHISM TO HINDUISM

By Swami Vivekananda.

I AM not a Buddhist, as you have heard, and yet I am. If China, or Japan, or Ceylon follow the teachings of the Great Master, India worships Him as God incarnate on earth. You have just now heard that I am going to criticise Buddhism, but by that I wish you to understand only this: Far be it from me to criticise him whom I worship as God incarnate on earth. But our views upon Buddha are that he was not understood properly by his disciples. The relation between Hinduism (by Hinduism, I mean the religion of the Vedas) and what is called Buddhism at the present day, is nearly the same as between Buddhism and Christianity. *Jesus Christ* was a Jew and *Shakya Muni* was a Hindu, but with this difference: the Jews rejected *Jesus Christ*, nay, crucified Him, and the Hindu has exalted *Shakya Muni* to the seat of Divinity and worships Him. But the real difference that we Hindus want to show between modern Buddhism and what we should understand as the teachings of Lord *Buddha*, lies principally in this; *Shakya Muni* came to preach nothing new. He also like *Jesus*, came to fulfil and not to destroy. Again, I repeat—*Shakya Muni* came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus.

The religion of the Hindus is divided into two parts: the ceremonial and the spiritual; the spiritual portion is specially studied by the monks.

In that there is no caste. A man from the highest caste and a man from the lowest may become a monk in India and the two castes become equal. In religion there is no caste; caste is simply a social condition. *Shakya Muni* himself was a monk, and to his glory he had the large-heartedness to bring out the truth from the hidden *Vedas* and throw it broadcast all over the world. He was the first being in the world who brought missionarising into practice—nay, he was the first to conceive the idea of proselytising.

The great glory of the master lay in his wonderful sympathy for everybody, especially for the ignorant and the poor. Some of his disciples were Brahmans. When Buddha was teaching, Sanskrit was no more the spoken language in India. It was then only in the books of the learned. Some of Buddha's Brahman disciples wanted to translate his teachings into Sanskrit, but he steadily told them: "I am for the poor, for the people; let me speak in the tongue of the people." And so to this day the great bulk of his teachings are in the vernacular of that day in India.

Whatever may be the position of Philosophy, whatever may be the position of Metaphysics, so long as there is such a thing as death in the world, so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the human heart, so long as there is a cry going out of the heart of man in his very weakness, there shall be a faith in God.

On the philosophic side the disciples of the great Master dashed themselves against the eternal rocks of the *Vedas* and could not crush them, and on the other side they took away from the nation that eternal God to which every man and woman clings so fondly. And the result was that it had to die its natural death in India, and at the present day there is not one man or woman who calls himself a Buddhist in India, the motherland of its birth.

On the other hand, Brahminism lost something—that reforming zeal, that wonderful sympathy and charity for everybody, that wonderful leaven which Buddhism brought into the masses and which rendered Indian society so great that a Greek historian who writes about India was led to say that no Hindu was known to tell an untruth and no Hindu woman was known to be unchaste.

We cannot live without you, nor you without us. Then believe that separation has shown to us that you cannot stand without the brain and philosophy of the Brahman, nor we without your heart. This separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmans is the cause of the downfall of India. This is why India is populated by 300,000,000 of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last 1,000 years, Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahman with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the Great Master.

———:o:———

LAO-TZE AND HIS TEACHINGS.*

BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.

THERE are three religions in China:—Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism; or in other words, we may say that the religion of China inculcates the tenets of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. For nearly two thousand years these three have existed in perfect harmony, moulding the social, political, moral and religious ideals of nearly four hundred millions of people. Confucianism and Taoism are religions indigenous to the country, while Buddhism was introduced from India in the year 65 A.D. The founders of the former were Confucius and Lao-Tze, both of whom lived at the same time in the Sixth Century B.C. It is very remarkable to notice how the tremendous tidal wave of spirituality inundated the Asiatic Continent, revealing four great shining stars, the perfected souls on the highest crest of that spiritual wave:—one in Persia, Zoroaster, the great prophet of Iran, and the founder of Zoroastrianism; the second in India, Buddha, the great founder of Buddhism; while the third and fourth were in China. They all appeared almost simultaneously in the same spiritual cycle, brought divine wisdom with them and afterwards became the moral

* A lecture delivered before the "Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science."

and spiritual leaders among different nations. Each of them helped mankind by distributing that wisdom, and by founding the religion which was suited to the people among whom they flourished.

The two Chinese prophets, Confucius and Lao-Tze, are not regarded as saviors, like Krishna and Buddha, but are known as great sages and philosophers. The teacher of Taoism was fifty-three years older than Confucius, but they met each other, and the substance of their conversation has been handed down to us by Chinese historians.

Unlike Confucianism, Christianity, Buddhism, or Mahomedanism, the religion of Taoism was not named after its founder, Lao-Tze. He was born 604 B.C., in the third year of the reign of the Emperor Ting Wang, of the Cho Dynasty. We do not know the name of his parents. Tradition says, "The Master Lao was conceived under the influence of a star. When he received the breath of life we cannot fathom, but once when asked, he pointed to the plum tree (in Chinese "Li"), under which he was born, and adopted it as his surname. We do not understand whence came the musical sounds that were heard, but he kept his marvellous powers concealed in the womb of his mother for more than seventy years. When he was born the hair of his head was already white, and he took the designation of Lao-Tze (Old Boy)." These words were inscribed in 586 A.D. by the Emperor Wan-Ti on the stone tablet in the temple built in memory of Lao-Tze at

his birth place, in the village of Chu-Jhren, Li County, belonging to the Ku province of the State Chu. It lies in the East of what is now the province of Honan. Besides this inscription on the stone tablet, we find a very brief account of Lao-Tze's life in the famous historical records, or Shi-Ki of Sze-Ma-chien, the Herodotus of Chinese history. This Shi-Ki was completed in the year 91 B.C. We have still another short account of Lao-Tze's life, by his renowned follower, Chwang-Tze, who lived in 330 B.C.

Both of these accounts say that the family name of this great Soul was Li (plum tree), and his name war Er (ear), but after his death he was called Tan, meaning (long lobed), long lobes being a sign of virtue. His appellation was Po Yang, or "Count of Positive Principle." He was popularly called Lao-Tze (the Old Boy, or Philosopher), which signifies "One who remains childlike even when old." Lao-Tze was one of the recorders at the Royal Court of Cho, and especially in charge of the secret archives, as State Historian.

In the year 517 B.C., Confucius (who was then about 35 years old), went to the library of Cho in order to consult Lao-Tze on some ceremony regarding ancestor-worship. Referring to the ancestors, Lao-Tze said to Confucius:

"The men about whom you talk are dead, and their bones are mouldered in dust; only their words are left. If a nobleman finds his time he rises, but if he does not find his time he drifts like a roving plant,

and wanders about. I observe that the wise merchant hides his treasures deeply, and appears as if he is poor; and that the wise man, though his virtue be complete, assumes an attitude as though he were stupid. Put away your proud airs, your many desires, your affectation and wild plans. They are of no advantage to you, Sir. This is all I have to tell you, Sir."

Hearing this, Confucius left, and being unable to grasp Lao-Tze's ideas, he said to his disciples: "I know how the birds can fly, fishes swim, and animals run; but the runner may be snared, the swimmer hooked, and the flyer shot by the arrow. But there is the Dragon—I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds, and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Lao-Tze, and can only compare him to the Dragon."

The Historian also says that Lao-Tze lived most of his life in Cho, cultivated the Tao and its attribute and his chief aim was to keep himself concealed and unknown. But seeing the decay of the dynasty, he left Cho, and went away to the barrier gate leading out of the Kingdom on the North-West frontier. There the custom house officer, Yin Hsi, said to Lao-Tze, "Sir, you are about to retire, let me request you to compose a book for me." To fulfil his request, the old philosopher wrote a book in two parts, setting forth his views on Tao and its attributes, in more than five thousand Chinese characters. Then he departed; no one knows where he died.

This is the whole of the historical account of Lao-Tze's life that we can get. Some European scholars, like Prof. Douglas, believe that Lao-Tze was a descendant of the Western nation of the Chinese Empire, which may have been in connection with India in ancient times. He also maintains that his peculiar long ear was the sign of his non-Chinese tribe, which inhabited the Western frontiers of old China. His surname, Li, indicates that perhaps Lao-Tze descended from the important tribe of that name which was dispossessed by the invading Chinese, and was driven to seek refuge in South-Western China. Furthermore, Prof. Douglas says: "However that may be, it is impossible to overlook the fact that he imported into his teachings a decided flavor of Indian philosophy." He goes so far as to say that Lao-Tze's Tao resembles the Brahman of the Vedanta of pre-Buddhistic Indian Sages.

The teachings of Lao-Tze are contained in the book which he wrote himself in the Sixth Century B.C., and which is known as Tao-Teh-King. This title was given by Emperor Ching, of the Han Dynasty, 156-143 B.C. He issued an imperial decree that Lao-Tze's work on Tao and the Teh, which means the virtue or characteristics of Tao, should be respected as a canonical book or "King." Hence it is called Tao-Teh-King.

The term "Tao" has been a subject of great discussion among different European scholars. Some have translated it as "The Way"; others have

called it "The Eternal Word or Logos"; others again "Eternal Being." Some called it "Reason," others say it is the same as "Nature" of modern science. The Buddhists use the term "Tao" for enlightenment, and so on. It literally means "Path" or "Way" or "Method." As the word "Brahman" of Vedanta cannot be translated into English by one word, so there is no English term for "Tao."

Lao-Tze says Tao is One; it was in the Beginning, and it will remain for ever. It is eternal and immutable, it is omnipresent, bodiless, immaterial and imperceptible by the senses. It is nameless and indescribable. We look at it, and do not see it, and we name it the Equable; we listen to it, and do not hear it, and we name it the Inaudible; we try to grasp it and we do not get hold of it, and we name it the Subtle; with these three qualities it cannot be made subject of description, hence we blend them together, and obtain the One. It is called the mysterious abyss of existence. It is the mother of all phenomena, of heaven and earth, it existed before the personal God. It is the producer of God, just as in Vedanta, we know that Iswara, or the personal God, is the first manifestation of Brahman.

Tao is impersonal, yet it is individualized in all living creatures, especially in man. As in Vedanta, Brahman, the Absolute being, when individualized, is called Jivatman, so Tao, or the Way of Heaven, when individualized, is called the Tao, or Way of Man. The Way of Heaven, and the Way of Man

are far apart, yet they are one in reality. Chwang-Tze says: "What is it that we call the Tao? There is the Tao, or Way of Heaven; and there is the Tao, or Way of Man. Doing nothing and yet attracting all honour is the Way of Heaven; doing, and being embarrassed thereby, is the Way of Man. It is the Way of Heaven that plays the part of the Lord; it is the Way of Man that plays the part of the Servant. The Way of Heaven and the Way of Man are far apart. They should be clearly distinguished from each other." *

Thus the student of Vedanta will be able to understand the Philosophy of Lao-Tze more easily than the majority of European scholars who do not know Vedanta. Tao is prior to God. Lao-Tze says: "I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God." †

"I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao (the Way or Course). Making an effort (further) to give it a name I call it The Great.

"Great, it passes on (in constant flow). Passing on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns. Therefore the Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the (sage) king is also great. In the Universe there are four that are great, and the (sage) king is one of them.

"Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth

* Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXXIX, page 306.

† Tao-Teh-King, Ch. IV, Verse 3.

takes its law from Heaven ; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is." *

"The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name."

"(Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of Heaven and earth ; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things."†

It is difficult for Christians to believe that there can be anything that is prior to God ; or in other words, that which is God's Ancestor or Father. But according to Lao-Tze, Tao is the Father of God. This idea we do not find in any other philosophy than Vedanta, which teaches that the *Absolute Brahman*, which is nameless, formless, incomprehensible and yet the source of all phenomena, like the Tao, is prior to *Iswara*, the personal God.

Again, Tao manifests itself in the Laws of Nature. Tao is not merely an abstract principle, it is the object of awe and reverence. In an interview with Confucius, Lao-Tze spoke about Tao, as given in the texts of Taoism :

"When Confucius was in his fifty-first year, he had not heard of the Tao, and went South to Phei to see Lao Tan, who said to him, 'You have come, Sir ; have you ? I have heard that you are the wisest man of the North ; have you also got the Tao ?' 'Not yet,'

* Tao-Teh-King, Ch. XXV, Verses 2, 3, 4.

† Tao-Teh-King, Ch. IV, Verses 1, 2.

was the reply; and the other went on, 'How have you sought it?' Confucius said, 'I sought it in measures and numbers, and after five years I had not got it.' 'And how then did you seek it?' "I sought it in the Yin and Yang, and after twelve years I have not found it.' Lao-Tze said, 'Just so! If the Tao could be presented (to another) men would all present it to their rulers; if it could be served up (to others) men would all serve it up to their parents; if it could be told (to others) men would all tell it to their brothers; if it could be given (to others) men would all give it to their sons and grandsons. The reason why it cannot be transmitted is no other but this—that if, within, there be not the presiding principle, it will not remain there, and if, outwardly, there be not the correct obedience, it will not be carried out. When that which is given out from the mind (in possession of it) is not received by the mind without, the sage will not give it out; and when, entering in from without, there is no power in the receiving mind to entertain it, the sage will not permit it to lie hid there. Fame is a possession common to all; we should not seek to have much of it. Benevolence and righteousness were as the lodging houses of the former kings; we should only rest in them for a night, and not occupy them for long. If men see us doing so, they will have much to say against us.

"The perfect men of old trod the path of benevolence as a path which they borrowed for the occasion, and dwelt in Righteousness as in a lodging

which they used for a night. Thus they rambled in the vacancy of Untroubled Ease, found their food in the fields of Indifference, and stood in the gardens which they had not borrowed. Untroubled Ease requires the doing of nothing; Indifference is easily supplied with nourishment; not borrowing needs no outlay. The ancients called this the Enjoyment that Collects the True.

"Those who think that wealth is the proper thing for them cannot give up their revenues; those who seek distinction cannot give up the thought of fame; those who cleave to power cannot give the handle of it to others. While they hold their grasp of those things, they are afraid (of losing them). When they let them go, they are grieved, and they will not look at a single example, from which they might perceive the (folly) of their restless pursuits: such men are under the doom of Heaven.

"Hatred and kindness; taking and giving; reproof and instruction; death and life:—these eight things are instruments of rectification, but only those are able to use them who do not obstinately refuse to comply with their great changes. Hence it is said "Correction is Rectification." When the minds of some do not acknowledge this, it is because the gate of Heaven (in them) has not been opened." *

Chwang-Tze, the follower of Lao-Tze, says: "This is the Tao; there is in It emotion and sincerity but It does nothing and has no bodily form. It may

* Sacred Books of the East, Vol, XXXIX, pp. 354-357.

be handed down (by the teacher) but may not be received (by his scholars). It may be apprehended (by the mind), but It cannot be seen. It has its root and ground (of existence) in Itself. Before there were heaven and earth, from of old, there it was securely existing. From It came the mysterious existences of spirits, from It the mysterious existence of God. It produced heaven ; It produced earth. It was before the primordial ether." *

Does this not remind one of similar passages of the Ancient Upanishads which describe the nature of Brahman ?

Regarding Tao, Lao-Tze himself says that Tao produces all things, and nourishes them, it produces them and does not claim them as its own ; it does all yet it does not boast of it ; it presides over all, and does not control them. That is what is called The Mysterious Quality of the Tao.

" All things are produced by the Tao, and nourished by its out-flowing operation. They receive their forms according to the nature of each, and are completed according to the circumstances of their condition. Therefore all things without exception honor the Tao, and exalt its outflowing operation." †

As Brahman the Absolute is the corner-stone of the philosophy and religion of Vedanta, so Tao the Absolute and Eternal One is the fundamental princi-

* *Ibid*, p. 243.

† Tao-Teh King, Ch. LI, Verse 1.

ple of the philosophy and religion of Lao-Tze. The word "God" (in Chinese "Ti") is mentioned only once in Chapter IV, describing Him as posterior to Tao. Lao-Tze never identified Tao with God as his later followers have done. Furthermore, there is a great similarity in the methods of realizing the Tao as given by Lao-Tze, to those given in Vedanta, especially in Raja Yoga. Lao-Tze speaks of what is called in Raja Yoga *Samadhi*, in these words: "The excellence of mind is in Abysmal stillness." He also speaks of purity, kindness towards all living creatures, contentment, self-control, and higher knowledge as the means for attaining the Tao. Concentration and breathing exercises are also considered to be helpful in the path of Tao. Lao-Tze says: "When one gives undivided attention to the vital breath and brings it to the utmost degree of pliancy he can become as tender as a babe; when he has cleansed away the most mysterious sights (of his imagination) he can become without a flaw."

Again he says: "He (who knows the Tao) will keep his mouth shut, and close the portals (of his nostrils), (the gates of the senses). He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will attemper his brightness, and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity (of others). This is called the 'Mysterious Agreement.'

"(Such an one) cannot be treated familiarly or distantly; he is beyond all consideration of profit or injury; of nobility or meanness; he is the noblest man

under heaven." * Compare the above with the teachings of the Bagavad Gita.

Chwang-Tze says: "What is meant by 'the True Man?' The true Men of old did not reject (the views of) the few; they did not seek to accomplish (their ends) like heroes (before others); they did not lay plans to attain those ends. Being such, though they might make mistakes, they had no occasion for repentance; though they might succeed, they had no self-complacency. Being such, they could ascend the loftiest heights without fear; they could pass through water without being made wet by it; they could go into fire without being burnt; so it was that by their knowledge they ascended to and reached the Tao.

"The True men of old did not dream when they slept, had no anxiety when they awoke, and did not care that their food should be pleasant. Their breathing came deep and silently. The breathing of the true man comes (even) from his heels, while men generally breathe (only) from their throats. When men are defeated in argument, their words come from their gullets as if they were vomiting. Where lusts and desires are deep, the springs of the Heavenly are shallow.

"The True men of old knew nothing of the love of life or of the hatred of death. Entrance into life occasioned them no joy; the exit from it awakened no resistance. Composedly they went and came. They did not forget what their beginning had been, and

* Tao-Teh-King. Ch. LVI, Verses 2, 3.

they did not inquire into what their end would be. They accepted (their life) and rejoiced in it; they forgot (all fear of death) and returned (to their state before life). Thus there was in them what is called the want of any mind to resist the Tao, and of all attempts by means of the Human to assist the Heavenly. Such were they who are called the True men."*

When love and enmity, profit and loss, favor and disgrace do not affect the sage—he becomes world-honored. Does this not remind us of the sage described in the Bhagavad Gita by Krishna, in 1,400 B.C.?

Lao-Tze, like Krishna spoke of non-attachment to the works of the senses.

"The way of the Tao," says Lao-Tze, "is to act without thinking of acting; to conduct affairs without feeling the trouble of them; to taste without discerning any flavor; to consider what is small as great, and a few as many; and to recompense injury with kindness."

Lao-Tze describes the heart of a holy man: "The holy man possesses not a fixed heart. The hundred families heart he makes his heart. He universalizes his heart and the hundred families fix upon him their eyes and ears. The holy man treats them as all his children. The holy man does not travel and yet he has knowledge. He does not see the things, and yet he defines them. He does not labour and yet he completes."

* Sacred Books of the East Vol. XXXIX, pp. 237, 238.

Lao-Tze taught self-restraint and renunciation. He says: "No greater sin than yielding to desire; no greater misery than discontent; no greater calamity than acquisitiveness."

As Christ said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." So did Lao-Tze teach nearly 600 years before Christ, "Let the eternal Tao have its way, and otherwise be heedless of consequences, for all will be well."

Virtue according to Lao-Tze meant, "To imitate in all things Heaven's Tao."

Lao-Tze taught the virtue of simplicity in habits, saying: "Abandon your scheming; put away your gains, and thieves and robbers will not exist,

Hold fast to that which will endure,
Show thyself simple, preserve thee pure,
Thine own keep small, thy desires poor."

He taught his disciples, "Renounce learnedness, and you have no vexation."

According to Lao-Tze the holy man or sage is he who manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech: "The multitude of men look satisfied and pleased, as if enjoying a full banquet, as if mounted on a tower in spring. "I alone," says Lao-Tze, "seem listless and still, my desires having as yet given no indication of their presence. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled."

Lao-Tze believed not in artificial modes of

government by making strict laws, not in war, but in allowing nature to take its own course. He says: "I will do nothing (with purpose), and the people will be transformed of themselves. I will be fond of keeping still, and the people will of themselves become correct. I will take no trouble about it, and the people will of themselves become rich; I will manifest no ambition, and the people will of themselves attain to the primitive simplicity."

Lao-Tze requests the government simply to administer, and not to govern. He does not believe in its interfering with the natural development of the people, but he urges everybody to practice non-acting, non-meddling, non-interference. His ideal was: "The less laws and prohibitions there are, the less crime will there be. The less welfare of the people is forced by artificial methods, the greater will be their wealth and prosperity."

Through this kind of non-action (or "Wu-Wei" in Chinese) everything can be accomplished. Philo, the Neo-Platonist, conceived of God as "Non-action." He called God the "Non-actor." By this he did not mean that God is passive, but that He is Absolute Existence. Indeed, God's activity does not mean exertion, as many people think, but it means "His Omnipresent Effectiveness."

Lao-Tze's philosophy exerted a strong influence on Tolstoi, who also regarded non-action as a virtue, while labor is not a virtue. Thus Lao-Tze's philosophy stands in strong contrast to the philosophy of

Confucius. Confucius stood for good government, laws of propriety, good manner, but Lao-Tze did not believe in moralizing, but in natural spontaneity of the heart of the people, and independence. Confucius sought the favor of kings and princes, while Lao-Tze renounced them all. Confucius wanted to reform the external habits of life, but Lao-Tze wanted to reform the internal bent of the heart of the people.

"At an interview with Lao Tan, Confucius spoke to him of benevolence and righteousness. Lao Tan said: 'If you winnow chaff, and the dust gets into your eyes, then the places of heaven and earth and of the four cardinal points are all changed to you. If mosquitoes or gadflies puncture your skin, it will keep you all the night from sleeping. But this painful iteration of benevolence and righteousness excites my mind and produces in it the greatest confusion.' If you, Sir, would cause men not to lose their natural simplicity, and if you would also imitate the wind in its (unconstrained) movements, and stand forth in all the natural attributes belonging to you!—" why must you use so much energy, and carry a great drum to seek for the son whom you have lost? The snow goose does not bathe every day to make itself white, nor the crow blacken itself everyday to make itself black. The natural simplicity of their black and white does not afford any ground for controversy; and the fame and praise which men like to contemplate do not make them greater than they naturally are. When the springs (supplying the pools) are

dried up, the fishes huddle together on the dry land. Than that they should moisten one another by their gasping, and keep one another wet by their milt, it would be better for them to forget one another in the rivers and lakes." *

Confucius taught the Golden Rule for the first time in China in the Sixth Century B.C., although it was inculcated in India by the Vedic sages as well as by Krishna and other Saviors. [The Christians claim that Christ taught it for the first time, but the fact is that it was Rabbi Hillel (who died when Christ was ten years old), who preached it among the Jews for the first time.] Confucius, however, put the same idea in a negative form, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." But Lao-Tze, like Krishna and Buddha, went beyond this in the field of Ethics, by teaching, "Return good for evil." When Confucius was asked by one of his disciples regarding the truth of this teaching of Lao-Tze, he replied: "What then will you return for good? Recompense injury with Justice and return good for good." Hearing this Lao-Tze said: "The good I meet with goodness, the bad I also meet with goodness, for virtue is good throughout."

"There are three precious things," says Lao-Tze, which I prize and hold fast. The first is gentle compassion; the second is economy; the third is humility (not presuming to take precedence in the world). With gentle compassion I can be brave, with

* Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXXIX, p. 357.

economy I can be liberal. Not presuming to claim precedence in the world, I can make myself a vessel fit for the most distinguished services." Indeed, Lao-Tze was a great Yogi!

Thus we see that Lao-Tze's philosophy inculcated the highest ethics, the purest method of living, and a grand discipline for mind and body. It had also the germ of a monistic religion, like that of Vedanta, although it was never developed in the same manner as it was in India.

The followers of Lao-Tze retired from the world, lived in caves and forests like the Yogis of India and practised the virtues taught by their Master. The list of the Taoist hermits in China is a very long one. They spent their lives in secluded retreats shut in by mountains, sheltered from the burning sun by the thick foliage of trees, striving to rise above love and hatred, pleasure and pain, and to attain the original purity and simplicity of Tao. Even now there are to be found some Taoist hermits in the caves of the Mount of a Hundred Flowers. Their arms are crossed against their breasts and their nails have grown so long that they curl around their necks. Some of them are over three hundred years old, according to the Taoists of China.

Chwang-Tze, the renowned follower of Lao-Tze, was a great sage. He realised Tao, and interpreted the Master's ideas in his lucid and elegant style. He considered the world as a dream. He says; "How do I know that the love of life is not a delusion?

And that the dislike of death is not like a young person's losing his way, and not knowing that he is (really) going home? . . . Those who dream of (the pleasures of) drinking, may in the morning wail and weep; those who dream of wailing and weeping may in the morning be going out to hunt. When they were dreaming they did not know it was a dream; . . . . but when they awoke they knew that it was a dream. And there is a great awaking, after which we shall know that this life was a great dream." *

Does not this sound like the utterance of one who is a true Jnana Yogi?

There is a very interesting story told of Chwang-Tze himself on his deathbed. At the last moment he requested his weeping relatives to leave his body uninterred. He said, "I will have heaven and earth for my sarcophagus, the sun and moon shall be the insignia where I lie in state, and all creation shall be mourners at my funeral." When his friends implored him to withdraw his request because the birds would mutilate his corpse, he smiled and said, "What matters that? Above are the birds of the air, below are the worms and ants; if you rob one to feed the other, what injustice is there done?"

Taoism did not begin to be a popular religion until after the introduction of Buddhism in China. At that time the pure teachings of Lao-Tze were mixed with all kinds of superstition, ancestor-worship, spirit-worship, pursuit of Alchemy, search after the

* Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 194-195.

pills of immortality, black magic and sorcery. These corruptions are still very predominant in modern Taoism. Like the Delai Lama of Tibet, and the Catholic Pope of Rome, Taoism has its Pope, whose name is Chang, and who is commonly called Chang Tien Shih, or Chang, the Heavenly Teacher. He is the incarnation of the first Chang Tao-Ling, or Pope, who lived in the First Century, A.D. He has a palace in the province of Kianghsi, where he has all the comforts and luxuries of an actual sovereign. He is a great exorcist, and wards off evil spirits, many of whom he has bottled up in big jars kept in long rows in the palace.

As in Buddhist temples in China, there are images of three precious ones, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; so in modern Taoism there are three pure or holy ones: the Perfect Holy One, the Highest Holy One, and the Greatest Holy One. The Perfect Holy One is the first. It represents something like God the Father, who presided over chaos at the beginning of the evolution of the world. Here we should remember that Taoism does not believe in Creation, neither in a Creator, but in evolution, and Tao is the starter of evolution, the transformer. The second of the Taoist Trinity is called the Highest Holy One, who is the most High Prince, Lao, the usual title of Lao-Tze. The Third is the Greatest Holy One, or the great virtue of Lao-Tze and his teaching.

Taoism has borrowed from Buddhism this idea of Trinity as well as its form of worship, liturgies and

temples with images which did not exist before the advent of Buddhism in China. Like Buddhism, Taoism has its monks and nuns who wear yellow caps. Taoism has also borrowed from Buddhism the idea of a Purgatory and of the reward and punishment after death, as also the idea of rebirth. But Lao-Tze believed in the immortality of the soul and said: "He who dies and yet does not perish has longevity." He also advocated the theory of reincarnation or transformation of the soul after death. He never feared death, but called it a natural end of coming. The greatest of Lao-Tze's appeals was for self-conquest. As in Vedanta, self-conquest is considered as the highest virtue, so Lao-Tze says: "He who overcomes others is strong, but he who overcomes himself is mighty," According to Lao-Tze the realization of Tao through self-conquest is the attainment of Salvation.

"The Heaven-honored One says: Sincerity is the first step towards (the knowledge of) the Tao; it is by silence that that knowledge is maintained; it is with gentleness that (the Tao) is employed. The employment of sincerity looks like stupidity; the employment of silence looks like difficulty of utterance; the employment of gentleness looks like want of ability. But having attained to this, you may forget all bodily form; you may forget your personality; you may forget that you are forgetting. He who has taken the first steps towards (the knowledge of) the Tao knows where to stop; he who maintains

the Tao in himself knows how to be diligently vigilant; he who employs It knows what is most subtle.

"When one knows what is most subtle, the light of intelligence grows (around him); when he can know how to be diligently vigilant, his sage wisdom becomes complete; when he knows where to stop, he is grandly composed and restful.

"When he is grandly composed and restful, his sage wisdom becomes complete; when his sage wisdom becomes complete, the light of intelligence grows (around him); when the light of intelligence grows around him, he is one with the Tao.

"This is the condition which is styled the True Forgetfulness;—a forgetting which does not forget; a forgetting of what cannot be forgotten.

"That which cannot be forgotten is the True Tao. The Tao is in heaven and earth, but heaven and earth are not conscious of It. Whether It seem to have feelings or to be without them, It is (always) one and the same." *

* Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XL, pp. 266-267.

: o :

THE TALMUD
ITS ETHICS, DOCTRINES, AND SAYINGS.*

BY SWAMI KRIPANANDA.

"In proportion as we love truth more and victory less, we shall become anxious to know what it is which leads our opponents to think as they do."—Herbert Spencer.

THE *Talmud*, which forms the subject of our present essay, represents the main literature of a nation which has produced some of the greatest lawgivers, prophets, poets, philosophers, and statesmen, that according to Monsieur Renan and others, it furnishes us the clue to the understanding of the New Testament, and that in this treasure-house of the Hebrews may be found the rarest gems of religious thought and lofty morality, of sound doctrine and deep learning, as may well be expected from a book which—to borrow an expression from the great humanitarian Reuchlin—"was written by Christ's nearest kinsmen."

* * *

The word *Talmud* is derived from the Hebrew verb *Lamad*, to teach, to learn. It comprises the body of "Oral Law," or the juridico-political, civil, and religious code of the Jews, and forms as such a kind of complement to the Mosaic or written Law, which it explains, amplifies, and enforces.

This Code, like that of Justinian, embodies all departments of national, civil, criminal, and local law,

* Abridged from a contribution to the *Brahmavadin*.

but unlike all other works of this kind, it not only compiles and classifies the sanctioned decrees but also argues and discusses them, and we are made to see with the vividness of the drama how the final decision is being arrived at from amidst the conflict of opinions and the *pros* and *cons* of their arguments. Scholars and schools of many centuries take part in these discussions. The subjects discussed have not merely reference to religion but also to philosophy, metaphysics, medicine, jurisprudence, history, science, ethics and what not. Buxtorf does not exaggerate in maintaining that the *Talmud* contains all and everything. The chief elements of, and the thread running through, these discussions however are the Scriptures, for, as an ingenious writer well remarks, "Every verse and every word in the latter became, as it were, a golden nail upon which it hung its gorgeous tapestries."

It is really touching to see how faithful, in weal and in woe, these world-wanderers of centuries cling to this book and what an amount of love and tenderness is being lavished on it. The tender relation between Israel and its Scripture is beautifully expressed in the *Talmud* by the simile of bride and bridegroom. There was once a man who betrothed himself to a beautiful maiden and then went away, and the maiden waited and waited, and he came not. Friends and rivals mocked her and said, "He will never come." She went into her room and took out the letters in which he had promised to be ever faithful.

Weeping she read them and was comforted. In time he returned and inquiring how she had kept her faith so long, she showed him his letters. Israel in misery, in captivity, was mocked by the nations for her hopes of redemption, but Israel went into her schools and synagogues and took out the letters, and was comforted. God would in time redeem her and say, "How could you alone among all the nations be faithful?" Then Israel would point to the Law and answer, "Had I not your promise here?"

And so they kept on studying these letters, and every generation during the first seven centuries of our era thought to discover therein some hidden meaning, some new interpretation, and what they found they deposited in the *Talmud* or rather the *Talmuds*; for there are two collections bearing this name: first, the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, or "Jerusalem Talmud," edited by R. Iochanan ben Eliezer, called also Bar Naphha or the "Son of the Blacksmith," rector of the academy of Tiberias, about three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem (250 A. D); second, the *Talmud Bavli*, or "Babylonian Talmud," which has been accepted as a fixed rule, edited by Rabbi Ashe ben Simai, surnamed Rabban *i.e.*, our teacher, president ot the Babylonian Academy, and completed in the year 498 by his disciple and friend, Rabbi Abina. The former consists of four, the latter of twelve big folio volumes, which embody the *Mishna*, the two *Gemaras* or "Complements of the *Mishna*," the *Thoseftath* or "Appendices," the *Boraithoth* or

"Supplements," and an endless variety of *Hagadoth* or traditions:—

"Where the charming olden stories,
Tales of angels, famous legends,
Silent histories of martyrs,
Festal songs and words of wisdom,
"Hyperboles, far-fetch'd it may be,
But impressed with deep conviction,
Full of glowing faith—all glitter,
Bloom and spring in great abundance."

There is an essential consideration never to be lost sight of in the appreciation of the spirit of Talmudism. It is that every portion of the *Talmud* is a compound of two distinct elements, *viz.*, the *Halacha* (rule) and the *Hagada* (saying), or to quote again from Heine, who, following "the unerring instinct of the poet," has given some remarkable information about the *Talmud*, speaks thus of this feature in his *Romancero*:—

"As the heavens pour down upon us,
Light of two distinct descriptions:
Glaring day-light of the Sun
And the moon-light's softer lustre—
Thus two different lights the *Talmud*
Also sheds, and is divided
In *Halacha* and *Hagada*....."

The *Halacha* has been extracted from the complicated Talmudical discussions by a system of canons, the application of which requires many years of hard study and practice. Heine justly compares it to a....

"Fighting school, where the expertest
Dialectic athletes both of
Babylon and Pumpeditha
Carry on their mental combats."

The Talmudic student whose brain is reeling from witnessing those mental combats on rules, rites,

regulations, and observances, seeks refuge in the *Hagada*, which includes all the Talmudical allegories, parables, proverbs, maxims—ingenious and touching applications of Scriptural examples; in short, all that tends to point a moral and adorn a tale. We cannot refrain from mentioning here two names at least of those dialectic athletes in order to show of what material some of the men were made who contributed to the production of the *Talmud*—Rabbi Hillel, the Great or Elder, of whom Renan in his *Vie de Jesus* said; "Hillel futile vrai maitre de Jesus, s'il est permis de parler de maitre quand il s'agit d'une si haute originalite"* (p. 35), and his grandson Gamaliel I., the Elder, (30-51 C. E.) at whose feet sat the Apostle Paul thus owing his great mental achievements to the intellectual discipline of the *Talmud*.

Speaking of Hillel, it occurs to us that the golden rule, the pride and praise of Christians, was not originated by Jesus. Long before him this maxim was taught by Krishna, Manu, Buddha, Socrates, Seneca, Lao-tse, Aristotle † Isocrates ‡, Confucius, § and

* (Hillel was the real teacher of Jesus, if we may say teacher when speaking of so lofty an originality.)

† *Diogenes Laertius* relates that Aristotle (died after 322 B. C.) being asked how we ought to conduct ourselves towards our friends answered: "As we would wish they would carry themselves towards us."

‡ *Isocrates*, who lived 400 years before the publication of the Gospels, said: "We must not do to others, that which would cause anger if it were done to ourselves."

§ "What you do not wish done to yourselves, do not to others"; or, as in the *Conversations* (Book XV. c. 23,) where it appears condensed like a telegram: *Ki su pok uk uk su u ing i.e.*, "Self what not wish, not do to man."

others. But besides Jesus another Jew—and would to God every Christian anti-Semite bore always in mind that the man he worships as God belongs to this despised race!—another Jew, we say, gave utterance to this noble sentiment. It is related in the Talmudic *Treatise Sabbath* (page 31) that once a gentile came to Hillel and declared his readiness to embrace Judaism provided he could teach him the whole law during the time that he could stand on one leg. He thought to confound the *Rabbi* by this strange and, to his mind, hardly realizable condition; but how great was his surprise when Hillel unhesitatingly replied that he could satisfy this condition. "Whatever is not pleasant unto thee," he said, "do it not unto thy fellow-man." "But what of the great number of books filled with laws, commandments, doctrines, rituals, etc.?" the gentile exclaimed somewhat disconcerted. "They are," replied the *Rabbi* benevolently, "but the commentaries upon this one fundamental precept. Go and reflect upon it," and thereby won over the man to the Jewish religion.

Monsieur Renan is right in claiming that the New Testament can only be understood by the light of the *Talmud*, and we find therefore that Wettstein and others use it, in illustration of it. It is indeed the great fountain by which the New Testament has been fed. Of every noble sentiment, every sublime truth, every admirable trait of Jesus we find there numerous examples. "The following parallels from

the *Talmud* to the sayings of Jesus contained in the Gospels will bear out this statement.

Matt. V. 7
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Sabbath, fol, 151, col. 2: Rabban Gamaliel said—He who is merciful towards his fellow-creatures shall receive mercy from heaven above.

Matt. V. 44.
Blesss them that curse you.

Sanhedrin, fol, 48, col. 2, 49: col. 1: Rabbi Yehudah said, Be rather of the accursed than of those that curse.

Matt. VI. 1.
Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them.

Chagiga, fol. 5, col. 1: Rabbi Yamai said to a man who gave alms in such a public manner:—You had better not give him anything. In the way you gave him you must have hurt his feelings.

Matt. VII. 2.
For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged.

Sabbath, fol. 127, col, 2: The post-Mishmaic teachers said: He that judges his neighbour charitably is himself judged charitably.

With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

Sanhedrin, fol. 100, col. 1: Rabbi Meir said: With what measure man metes, it shall be measured to him from heaven.

Matt. VII. 4. Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye.

Baba Bathra, fol. 18, col. 2: Rabbi Johanan, surnamed Bar Napha, said: Do they say, Take the splinter out of thine eye, he will answer, Remove the beam out of thine own.

Matt. VII. 5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see, etc.

Baba Metzia, fol. 107, col. 2: *Baba Bathra*, fol. 60, col. 2. Resh Lakesh said: What is the meaning of the passage, Examine thyself and search? (Zeph. II. II). He who will reprove others must himself be pure and spotless.

* * *

The Talmudical standard of ethics, as already may be seen from what has been given above, is very high. The largest philanthropy is recommended toward all classes of human beings. "Feed the hungry among the idolators," says the *Talmud*, "clothe the naked, mourn with the bereaved, and bury the dead, to the end that peace and good will may prevail among all the families of man." There is a beautiful picture in the *Hagada*: "When the Egyptian host lay dead on the sands of the Red Sea, the heavenly choir chanted hymns before the Almighty; but the Lord forbade them, saying, 'Know ye not that the Egyptians are my children no less

than the Israelites?" The liberality of the Talmudists manifests itself in the maxim adopted: "The upright of whatever creed shall inherit a portion of the world to come." The equality of men is pointed out in the words, "And these are the ordinances by which *men* shall live"—not Israelites, not the priests, not the Levites, but *men*. The law given on Mount Sinai, the masters said, though emphatically addressed to one people belongs to all humanity. It was not given in a king's land, not in any city or inhabited spot, lest other nations might say, "we know nothing of it." It was given in God's own highway, the desert, not, in the darkness and stillness of night, but in plain day, amid thunder and lightning. And why was it given on Sinai? Because it is the lowliest and meekest of the mountains—to show that God's spirit rests only upon them that are meek and lowly in their hearts.

* * *

The following Talmudian maxims are well to be remembered.

"Do not laugh where others cry, nor cry where others laugh, and do not make noise where others sleep." (*Jalkut* I.)

"Do not rejoice at the fall of thine enemy, for God who permeates thee dislikes such a thing." (*Abot*, 4, 19,)

"He who is liked by men is also liked by God but he who is disliked by men, he also will not find favour in the eyes of God." (2)

Rabbi Hillel's maxim was, "If I do not act for myself, who can do it for me? When I am alone by myself, what am I? If I act not now, when shall I? He also taught: "Judge not thy neighbor until thou art placed in the same circumstances."

"Let a man believe that whatever occurs to him is from the Blessed One. For instance, when a wicked man meets him and

abuses him, and puts him to shame, let him receive it with love, and say. The Lord told him to curse, and he is the messenger of God on account of my sin.' " (*Kitzur Sh'l'h*, fol. 7, col. 2.)

" If—which God forbid !—thy neighbor has done thee an evil, pardon him at once ; for thou shouldst love him as thyself. If one hand is accidentally hurt by the other, should the wounded hand revenge its injury on the other?" (*Ibid* ., fol. 9, col. 2,)

" A man should always desire that his neighbor may profit by him, and let him not strive to profit by his neighbour. Let his words be pleasant with the children of men if they shame him, and let him not shame them in return. If they deceive him, let him not deceive them in return and let him take the yoke of the public upon his shoulders, and not impose it on them in return." (*Ibid*, fol 8, col. 1.)

The passages inculcating charity and almsgiving in the *Talmud* are so numerous that they by themselves would be enough to fill a whole volume. Here are a few specimens:—

Rabbi Simon : " He who gives charity becomes rich."

Rabbi Eleazar: " He who gives charity in secret is greater than Moses."

Rabbi Ashe: "Charity is greater than all. The house which opens not to the poor will open to the physician."

Rabbi Judda: " No one should sit down to his meals until he has seen that all animals dependent upon his care are provided for."

" He who sets aside a portion of his wealth for the relief of the poor will be delivered from the Judgment of hell." Of this the parable of the sheep that attempted to ford a river is an illustration. One was shorn of its wool and the other not; the former therefore managed to get across, but the latter being heavy-laden sank. (*Gitten*, fol. 7, col. 1.)

Both Rabbi Yohaman and Abba say, " It is better to lend to the poor than to give to them; for it prevents them from feeling ashamed at their poverty and is really the more charitable manner of aiding them."

The Rabbis have always taught that kindness is more than the mere almsgiving of charity, for it includes pleasant words with the more substantial aid.

* * *

To woman the *Talmud* ascribed all the blessings of the household. "All the blessings of a household come through the wife, therefore should the husband honor her." Again, "Love thy wife as thyself; honor her more than thyself." "He who lives unmarried, lives without joy." "If thy wife is small, bend down and whisper in her ear." "He who sees his wife die has, as it were, been present at the destruction of the sanctuary itself." "The children of a man who marries for money will prove a curse to him." Rabbi Jose said, "I never call my wife 'wife' but "home," for she indeed makes my home." Another Rabbi has said: "Men should be careful lest they cause women to weep, for God counts their tears."—"Tears are shed on God's altar for the one who forsakes his first love."—"Who is best taught? He who has learned first from his mother."—In a case of charity where both men and women claim relief, the latter should be first assisted. If there should not be enough for both, the men should cheerfully relinquish their claims.

A propos of woman, and as a set off, the following romantic story, paraphrased from the *Midrash Shir Hashirim*, will be read with pleasure: (From *Talmudic Micsellany* of Paul Hershon).

A certain Israelite of Sidon, having lived many years with his wife without being blessed with offspring, made up his mind to give her a bill of divorcement. They went accordingly to Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, that legal effect might be given to the act of separation. Upon presenting themselves before him the Rabbi addressed them in these fatherly words: "My children," said he, "your divorce must not take place in pettishness or anger lest people should surmise something guilty or disgraceful as the motive of the action. Let your parting therefore be like your meeting, friendly and cheerful. Go home,

make a feast, and invite your friends to share it with you ; and to-morrow return and I will ratify the divorce you seek for." Acting upon this advice, they went home, got ready a feast, invited their friends, and made merry together. "My dear", at length said the husband to his wife, "we have lived for many a long year lovingly together, and now that we are about to be separated, it is not because there is any ill-will between us but simply because we are not blessed with a family. In proof that my love is unchanged and that I wish thee all good, I give thee leave to choose whatever thou likest best in the house and carry it away with thee." The wife with true womanly wit promptly replied, "well and good, my dear." The evening thereafter glided pleasantly by, the wine-cup went round freely and without stint, till first the guests one by one and then the master of the house himself fell asleep, and lay buried in unconsciousness. The lady, who had planned this result and only awaited its *denouement* immediately summoned her confidential handmaids and had her lord and master gently borne away as he was to her father's house. On the following morning, as the stupor wore off, he awoke, rubbing his eyes with astonishment. "Where am I ?" he cried, "Be easy, husband dear", responded the wife in his presence. "I have only done as thou allowedst me. Does thou remember permitting me last night in the hearing of our guests to take away from our house whatever best pleased me ? There was nothing there I cared for so much as thyself ; thou art all in all to me, so I brought thee with me here. Where I am, there shalt thou be ; let nothing but death part us." The two thereupon went back to Rabbi Shimon as appointed and reported their change of purpose, and that they had made up their minds to remain united. So the Rabbi prayed for them to the Lord, who couples and setteth the single in families. He then spoke his blessing over the wife, who became thenceforth as a fruitful vine, and honored her husband with children and children's children.

* * *

We have already seen that the *Talmud* contains almost all the ethical doctrines of the Gospels, but it offers also a great number of maxims for which we search in vain in the New Testament. Take for instance those referring to study and the acquisition of knowledge. "No boor," we are taught "can become pious, nor an ignorant man a saint." (*Avoth*, chap. 2. mish. 6). Hillel taught : "Study is more

meritorious than sacrifice." Again, "The man who hunts after fame shall lose his good name; he that does not care for knowledge goes backward; he that does not progress in knowledge commits suicide; but the man that uses learning for self-glorification deserves to be forgotten." (*Abot*, 1, 13.) Rabbi Tyra said: "The best preacher is the heart, the best teacher is time, the best book is the world, the best friend is God." "Say not," exclaims the *Talmud*, "I will study the scriptures and the explanation of its teachers, in order that people may praise me as a *Chaham* or sage, as Rabbi or master; but study from pure love to God and to bind thyself closely to Him through the knowledge and understanding of His word. Love, not reward, love of truth, let this be the word of redemption when thou sittest at the feet of the Masters of the Law." (*Nedarim*, 62.) "See," it says, "there are studies which are ice-cold, without soul-warmth and without love:—these are those whose object is not self-ennobling and the instruction of others but only selfish purposes. Opposed to such are those studies which seek and wish nothing but truth and knowledge and their diffusion; these are studies of love to God and thy neighbour." (*Sukkah*, 49).

* * *

Of the high esteem in which learning and the office of a teacher are held among the Jews, the following, extracted from the *Talmud*, gives evidence: "He who learns from another *one* chapter, *one* halacha, one verse, one word, or even a single letter

is bound to respect him." (*Avoth*, chap. 6, mis. 3.)

"There was drought, and the most pious men prayed and wept for rain, but none came. An insignificant looking at length prayed to Him who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall, and instantly the heavens covered themselves with clouds and the rain refreshed the earth. 'Who are you?' They cried, 'whose prayers alone have prevailed?' And he answered, 'I am a teacher of little children.'"

Education is one of the virtues the interest of which the Jew considers he enjoys in this world, while the capital remains intact against the exigencies of the world to come. These are:—The honoring of father and mother, acts of benevolence, hospitality to stangers, visiting the sick, devotion in prayer, study, and promotion of peace between man and man (*Sabbath*. fol. 127, col. 1)

* * *

The Talmudists were quick to recognize the fact that man is bound with innumerable ties to the world, that for our lives, our destinies, our very thoughts we are dependent on our fellow-men, in short that the individual *Karma* is intricately interwoven with the *Karma* of Humanity. This dependency upon others was the ever-recurrent subject of reflection and discussion of the *Talmud* teachers. None realized this dependence more than they who

saw their own lives constantly subjected to its hard and heavy torture. But while realizing their mutual dependence on one another, the Talmud sages also realized in this inter-dependence the necessary condition for the welfare both of the individual and the whole of mankind. "In the whole alone," we read in *Midrash rabba*, "we are of some significance, but outside of it, nothing, for in the whole alone our individual shortcomings are mitigated." This thought most beautifully shines forth in the explanation given of the symbol of the *Lulab*, the festive nosegay prepared by the Jews for their Feast of Tabernacles. "In this nosegay," they say, "there are represented two kinds of fruit-bearing trees, the palm and the *hadar*, and two other kinds of trees which bear no fruit at all, the myrtle and the water-willow—as here the one belongs to the others, as the former without the latter would constitute but half of the nosegay; so you too are not complete if taken out of the whole of which you are a member." "In your midst too," adds the *Midrash rabba*, "there are some who unite virtue with culture, some who practice virtue without culture, others who possess culture without virtue, and others again who have neither the one nor the other. These things however are only noticed in their incomplete fragmentary form, so long as they are disunited and separate, but as soon as they enter into the circle of the whole, all deficiencies are balanced and the one alleviates the other."

We are constantly admonished in the *Talmud* that the greatness of virtue and vice, the sanctity of love and friendship, the condemnation of hate and malice, ought to be measured and judged by the motive alone. "In the outward action," we read in *Sanhedrin* f. 38, "we often are all alike, but it is the motive alone that distinguishes men from one another." And in the *Midrash rabba* we find almost verbatim the wise precept of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, that we should abandon in our actions all selfish motives and perform them only as a sacrifice to God. Antigonus of Socho, who flourished in the third century before the common era, taught: "Be not like servants who serve the master with a view to receiving rewards; but like servants who serve their master without the view of being rewarded, and then you will be truly God-fearing." (Whom does this not remind of the injunction in the *Bhagavad-Gita*—"Do not be incited to action by the hope of receiving reward"?) The worship of God out of love is therefore given preference to that which is dictated by fear.

The above extracts are, we believe, sufficient to prove on the one hand Mousieur Renan's assertion that "concerning alms, piety, good works, gentleness, the desire of peace, complete disinterestedness of heart, Jesus had little to add to the doctrines of the synagogue," and that, on the other hand, the ethical doctrines of the Jews need not blush in the presence of any of later origin.

* * *

The two principal doctrines of Hinduism, *Karma* and Transmigration, are also taught in the *Talmud*. Thus we read Hillel once saw a skull floating on the surface of the water and he said to it: "Because thou didst drown others, thou wast drowned, and at the end will those who drowned thee also be drowned." Here we have in a nut-shell the essence of the Universal Law of Retribution. Rabbi Akiba said: "Man goes bail for himself for everything he receives and for all that he does; his life is always in a net of retribution that is spread out over all men."

* * *

Transmigration is known in the *Talmud* as the "*Din Gilgal Neshommes.*" The great Talmudist, Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel, in his previously mentioned work says on page 77 (Warsaw edition, 1876):—

"The doctrine of transmigration is an indisputable dogma, accepted as such by the whole congregation of our faith, and none is there found who dares contradict it except Soadja Tajjumi and Bardarschi, but all other Jewish authorities, especially those initiated in the Kaballa, place implicit faith in this doctrine. Without this doctrine how can we reconcile the many contradictions of life, *i.e.*, the suffering of the pious? This doctrine is plainly indicated in the Thora (Pentateuch), God pronouncing sentence on Adam for his disobedience says: 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,' which means that after he had sinned he had again to return to earth, working out his salvation (*Karma*). Likewise it is religiously maintained by our teachers and sages," says he, "that Adam, the name of the first man, is symbolic of Adam, David, and Moschiach (Messiah), which plainly tell us that the soul of Adam reincarnated in David, and David, because of his sin against Uriah, will have to come back again in the person of the Messiah."

* * *

From these few passages we might conclude that the Rabbis of the Talmud believed in the doctrine of transmigration. In the *Zohar* (Kabbala) however transmigration is boldly taught. There we are plainly told that the only remedy or salvation for the sinning or sinful soul is to purify itself through successive re-births. Nay, the *Zohar* maintains that transmigration is a punishment inflicted on the wicked who knowingly pervert the will of the Most High and stain their souls, which came alike pure and holy into this world.

* * *

Let us hope that this study will not only tend to remove existing prejudices against the *Talmud* but also awaken interest in and sympathy for the Jewish race and their rich literature. It is not by searching for the bad in other peoples' faiths, but for the good they contain, that we can approach truth and at the same time help to give birth to that "fellow-feeling" which ought to go to cement all religions in a bond of noble brotherhood.

THE MESSAGE OF MOHAMMED. *

I.—By Swami Ramakrishnananda.

MOHAMMED was a great devotee of God. He could not reconcile himself to the religion which was then in vogue in his country. He used to go to the Syrian markets with their images of gods, and he would reflect within himself, "How can these be God? He cannot be created by man." Later on when he was employed as a shepherd by Khodija, while his flocks were grazing, he used to medidate upon God and pray to Him for illumination in the cave of Mount Hara near Mecca. One day by the grace of God illumination came, when in a moment he went to the seventh heaven, led by the angel Gabriel. It is said that although he blindfolded himself with seven layers of cloth, still he could not get rid of the light of illumination. This story shows that Mohammed's light was that of inner illumination; that is, his inner mind was illuminated by wisdom. From that day forward, out of him came words of wisdom, which the wisest men of those days could not utter. When we study the Koran we cannot fail to hear the direct words of God pouring out of the heart of Mohammed, the illiterate prophet. He was not at all educated in books, still his words were so

* From the "Universe and Man."

impressive, so chaste and well chosen, that the idea of God using him as His mouthpiece is forced upon one. This is a very clear proof that real knowledge is to be found inside the Self, beyond the region of the Individual mind, as there alone can the universal mind of God sit supreme above all the minds of His Creatures.

II. By Swami Vivekananda *

AND then comes Mohammed, the Messenger of equality. You ask, "What good can there be in his religion?" If there were no good, how could it live? The good alone lives, that alone survives; because the good alone is strong, therefore it survives. How long is the life of an impure man, even in this life? Is not the life of the pure man much longer? Without doubt, for purity is strength, goodness is strength. How could Mohammedanism have lived, had there been nothing good in its teaching? There is much good. Mohammed was the prophet of equality, of the brotherhood of man, the brotherhood of all Mussalmans.

Mohammed by his life, showed, that amongst Mohammedans there should be perfect equality and brotherhood. There was no question of race, caste, creed, colour or sex. The Sultan of Turkey may buy a Negro from the mart of Africa, and bring him in chains to Turkey; but should he become a Mohammedan, and have sufficient merit and abilities, he

* From a lecture on "The Great Teachers of the World."

might even marry the daughter of the Sultan. Compare this with the way in which the Negroes and the American Indians are treated in this country! And what do Hindus do? If one of your missionaries chance to touch the food of an orthodox person, he would throw it away. Notwithstanding our grand philosophy you note our weakness in practice; but there you see the greatness of the Mohammedan beyond other races, showing itself in equality, perfect equality regardless of race or colour.

THE PRACTICE OF THE CHRIST-IDEAL.

BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA. *

GOD manifests in the form of a man that man may comprehend what God is. The Absolute is declared to be unknowable and unthinkable, hence He is beyond the reach of the human mind. But to make it possible for man to understand Him, He assumes personal aspects and comes as a Christ or a Buddha. This is what is meant by a Divine Incarnation. Such a manifestation serves as the connecting link between God and man. He is Divine enough to be in touch with God and human enough to be in touch with man, so that man may realize Divine things through Him.

To truly grasp what an Incarnation is, however, we must have like qualities and show them forth in our lives. The words and actions of a great teacher no one can wholly understand until he has risen to the same plane of spiritual consciousness. When we have the same thing in us that was in Christ or in Buddah, then it is possible for us to comprehend what they taught. Until then, what they say and do must remain a closed chapter. We can never draw the picture of a great Being either to satisfy ourselves or others until we have the same qualities. One who speaks of Christ must himself be Christ-like in his life,

* Extract from a lecture.

love and wisdom, else his words will carry but little weight. When our inner being becomes attuned with the Supreme, then alone can we express Him in our words and actions. That is why all the Divine Seers unanimously declare the absolute need of the practical application of Spiritual teaching. "Being and becoming" is the watchword of the sages. Let your light shine, that light within, the light of your living soul, let that shine forth, then all the clouds of doubt and ignorance will be dispelled and you will be able to comprehend the Divine. When your heart becomes pure you must see God. No one can prevent you. No church, no priest, nothing can keep you from seeing God.

To the majority the Christ-consciousness or the direct perception of Truth seems something unattainable. But that cannot be. What has happened once will happen again. What has been done can be done: that is the law. The purpose of a Divine Incarnation is not merely to manifest His super-human and miraculous powers, but to point out to mankind by His life and example the goal of existence and man's Divine birthright. Saviors do not come to proclaim things which are impossible for man to attain. No, we think them impossible because we do not try to practise them, so our religion degenerates into a blind and thoughtless acceptance of certain fixed forms and doctrines. When religion thus becomes a matter of mere belief and exists only as a theory, having lost its living quality, then God incarnates in human form to

re-establish spirituality and destroy materialism. As it is declared in the Bhagavad-Gita :—

"Though I am unborn and of unchangeable nature, and though I am Lord of all beings, yet by ruling over my Prakriti (Nature) I come into being by my own Maya (Mysterious power). Whenever there is decline of virtue and predominance of vice, then I embody Myself. For the protection of the good and for the destruction of evil-doers and for the re-establishment of Dharma (virtue and religion) I am born from age to age."

Thus God manifests Himself at different periods of history in order to give tangible knowledge of His Divine nature. To make things that are incomprehensible to the finite mind, comprehensible, He takes finite form. He comes not to display His own glory ; no, but to show man how as man he can manifest God ; or as St. Augustine puts it—"God was made man that man might become God."

The purpose of the life and teaching of a great Savior is to open man's eyes to his own higher Self, to awaken more love for God than for mundane things ; or in other words, to make a mortal feel conscious of his immortal nature. In order to gain this consciousness and make it a part of our being we must learn to practise the Christ-Ideal in our every-day life. We must picture it. We must make it living to our heart. We must feel its reality. As we cultivate this habit of feeling the living Presence within, our vision will become more and more open

to subtle spiritual facts, which otherwise remain vague and unreal. People's sight varies. Things which we may see plainly are not visible to the blind man; so in the days of our inner blindness, we cannot see God or understand His manifestations. This was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees, who although scholarly men possessing the full knowledge of the letter, yet failed to understand Christ because they lacked that inner light which comes only through practice of the spirit. With most people the spiritual life is a matter of theory. They have just a little intellectual grasp of it; that is quite enough for them. But practice is the whole of it and not having practical experience in religion, we can never penetrate the inner depths of anything.

One man may go to church, pray and sing hymns in the name of Jesus, appearing righteous, but this cannot make him spiritual or bring him blessing so long as he does not manifest the teaching in his life; and there may be another who may never go to a church or utter the name of Christ, but who through the practice of holiness and purity so embodies and radiates the Christ-spirit that he becomes a living symbol of the Christ-life. Such a soul alone truly honors Him and proves a worthy follower. As it is said in one of the Buddhist Sacred books: "Now it is not thus, Ananda, that the Tathagata (Incarnate One) is rightly honoured, reverenced, venerated, held sacred and revered. But the brother or the sister, the devout man or the devout woman, who continually

fulfils all the greater and the lesser duties, who is correct in life, walking according to the precepts, it is he who rightly honors, reverences, venerates, holds sacred and reveres the Incarnate One with the worthiest homage."

We do not honor our Savior by merely belonging to a creed founded in His name or by offering Him lip-praise. Only as we learn to shape our lives after the model of His own do we show ourselves worthy of Him; and this can be done only by living His teachings. Jesus the Christ Himself taught this lesson to His disciples, when He said to them: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream broke against the house and could not shake it; because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straight way it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great."

CHRISTIANITY AND VEDANTA.*

By S. E. Waldo.

IN endeavoring to enter briefly upon a comparative study of Vedanta and Christianity, I wish first to thoroughly make clear that such study in no way enters into a question of merits, but simply deals with the available facts in each case, setting them side by side and endeavoring to gain from an unbiased comparison such lessons of toleration and sympathy as they may be able to teach us. People are every day growing to understand the value of such study and nothing connected with the World's Fair at Chicago is likely to have a greater or more lasting effect upon mankind than the impetus given in this direction by the Parliament of Religions then held. Long, long ago, however, nearly three hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the famous Buddhist King Asoka, who then ruled India and was perhaps one of the greatest and noblest of her many great and noble rulers, called together a religious convention, where all the religious sects of those days could meet in harmony and love to set forth their respective views and learn from one another.

After that, King Asoka sent missionaries into all the then known world and the records show that these Buddhist monks reached as far West as Antioch

* From the "Vedanta Monthly."

and Alexandria. But the most beautiful thing about the sending of these missionaries was the advice given to them by the great king who sent them. The very words have been preserved to us all these centuries, having been cut into rocks in a language so old that only of late years have the inscriptions been deciphered. And they are models for every nation and every religion to copy, though we of the West have been accustomed to regard those good old Buddhists as "heathens," and have only in a few instances and very recently come to perceive that in many respects they were far our superiors. In all ages and under all circumstances the Hindus have stood for perfect tolerance in religion. Save by their various conquerors, there has never been any such thing as religious persecution in India. When, then, the noble King Asoka sent out his missionaries, he charged them to disturb no man's religion; but if they found any whom they could help, to do so; and to teach them with love and sympathy, but never with harshness. How different the methods of conversion often employed by the followers of Jesus!

When we study Christianity from the historical standpoint, what do we find? We find a book that teaches that over one thousand nine hundred years ago was born in Judea a child who grew up to be a great Teacher of His people, and whose name to-day is known all over the civilized world. Upon the sanction of His words as recorded in this book is founded the authority for all the doctrines and teachings of

the Christian religion. This is the reason why the church has always so vigorously opposed anything that could weaken the historical nature of the religion it teaches. Too much is made to rest on the question of the actual historical existence of Jesus, that is, upon a personality instead of upon a principle. And this is true of all the great religions that are built up around a particular person or founder. If the historical account of the life of such a person can be seriously shaken, the whole system of doctrines built on the personality is shaken too. This is one great advantage possessed by Vedanta. It rests on eternal principles, not on persons. All the great religious teachers that have come in India, even all those recognized there as Divine Incarnations, have been merely illustrations of these eternal principles, which exist quite independent of these living illustrations and which would continue to exist if these embodiments of their everlasting truths had never come before mankind. The Swami Vivekananda says:—

"Every one of the great religions in the world excepting our own is built upon such historical characters, but ours rests upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the Vedas. These are the embodiment of eternal principles; sages discovered them, and now and then the names of these sages are mentioned, just their names; we do not know who or what they were. But what cared they, these sages, for their names? They were the

preachers of principles; and they themselves, as far as they went, tried to become illustrations of the principles they preached. At the same time, just as our God is an impersonal and yet a personal God, so is our religion a most intensely impersonal one, a religion based upon principles, and yet it has an infinite scope for the play of persons; for what religion gives you more Incarnations, more Prophets and Seers, and still waits for infinitely more? The Bhagavad-Gita says that Incarnations are infinite, leaving ample scope for as many as you like to come. It is vain to try to gather together all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult even to bring them together around eternal and universal principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must always be through principles and not through persons."

The Hindus are, most of them, willing to accept Jesus as an Incarnation among other Incarnations, but not to regard Him as the only one the world has ever known. This is where Vedanta shows its marvellous breadth, in its full recognition of the actual unity of all religions. In fact, what Vedanta recognizes is religion itself, not any particular expression of it. It grasps the principle of religion, and leaves each special religion to work this principle out in the way best adapted to the needs of the people and the period that have produced that special religion. This universal toleration and acceptance in Vedanta is what

makes Hinduism appear diverse, even polytheistic, to superficial observers. To the Vedantin this diversity simply indicates that variations in external forms are necessary and inevitable among different grades of development. To assert that there is only one way of seeking the Infinite God seems to him an unwarrantable and somewhat arrogant assumption of wisdom.

Among the Hindus dates and names and other historical facts receive but little attention. The thing said is of so much vaster importance to them than the name and date of the speaker or even the place where it was said, that these details are frequently overlooked altogether. An utterance is valued for its intrinsic worth and gains but little additional weight or force from the name of him who uttered it. In the West, it is apt to be exactly the opposite way and an utterance is of importance just in proportion to the position of the person making it. We have already seen that Vedanta is not dependent upon the historical existence of any person or upon the teaching of any founder for its spiritual and ethical sanction. Neither is it bound to any book, nor to any special revelation. "With it revelation is a perpetual stream that never ceases to flow." Revealed knowledge does not crystallize into something final, but is expected to be eternally obtained by man and to be suited to his growing needs. Vedanta places the basis of religion in the nature of man himself. It recognizes that in reaching the ultimate goal of all thought and reason, a final unity must

be found ; that the Self, the Absolute, can be but One, and that therefore God and man are essentially one. Not only so, but this unity of existence must include all being. " That which exists is One, Sages call it variously " is a basic truth in Vedanta.

Surely here is to be found a common basis for all religions, and it is not unreasonable to hope that the time may come when harmony in religion may prevail all over the world—not harmony in modes of worship, but harmony in the great essentials that will lead to wise and loving toleration of the differences in external forms of expression. When once we have grasped this idea of the absolute oneness underlying all the variety to be found in the world, no more can there be hard feelings that another does not see life through just the same spectacles as ourselves. Then the name of the particular religion we profess will be of trifling importance. All the religions can then work in harmony for the spiritual uplifting of mankind, sure that each has the same end in view, and that creeds and doctrines and ceremonials and names are but the " outer crust," covering yet not hiding the Reality behind them all.

Because Vedanta is founded on principles and not on personality, it is the one religious philosophy of the world which has nothing to fear from science. It includes three stages as natural evolutionary steps. It has a copious mythology and a most extensive and varied ritual, but behind all these and supporting them is a wonderful philosophy, the real foundation

of the whole structure. No "higher criticism" will ever shake that to its foundations. There have been in our time grave discussions as to the validity in the Christian religion of the Eden myth and of Jonah and the whale. From the tenor of some of the views advanced by clergymen all over the country, one would suppose that the latter was one of the bulwarks of Christianity! Those more advanced thinkers in our pulpits who dare proclaim that Christianity rests upon a basis more substantial than the literal fact that a great fish swallowed a man and after three days was glad to part from him, are even looked upon with doubt and distrust by their brother preachers. The weakness of a merely historical religion could not be more forcibly shown. The grand truths contained in the teachings of Jesus would be none the less great even were the whole of the Old Testament swept away. They can afford to rest on their intrinsic worth without being bolstered up by any "authority" whatsoever; and it is owing to the fact that appeal to authority has been supposed to add to their weight and value, that the feeling is now so prevalent that whatever undermines the authority must of necessity undermine Christianity itself. God forbid that it should have to rest upon such a foundation as that!

We have to learn that "things are in the Bible because they are true, and not true because they are in the Bible." We must recognize that in our Scriptures too we have the three stages,—ceremonial, mythology, and a little philosophy. That there is any

of the latter at all is due to the influence of Greek thought. All the Aryan races are given to philosophical speculation, but not the Semitic ; and Christianity includes the Old Testament as well as the New. The former is really a record of how the Hebrews arrived at the concept of Monotheism ; how Yahveh or Jehovah developed from the God of a desert tribe into the One God of all the worlds, the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings. The very titles prove the fact that from being one among many Yahveh gradually grew to be the One and Only God. One by one, theology has had to let the old traditions slip ! It was hard to let the story of creation in six days out of nothing pass into the realm of mythology, and even yet many still cling to it as direct revelation. Slowly, slowly the theologians are learning that instead of weakening the tree of spiritual life, it grows stronger through having the dead branches lopped off ; that with the removal of bonds and fetters it makes a larger, freer growth ; and that really religion has nothing to fear from any source, if it will only be its own authority through the inherent truth of its essential facts, instead of trying to support itself on any extraneous authority whatsoever.

For some Christ-ideal is the highest ; and especially is this the case in the West, because it has been evolved here and it fits in with our aspirations and modes of thought. But surely we can love Jesus and strive to live a life in accordance with His teachings without any quarrel with our brother of the East,

who finds his aspirations realized in Buddha or Mohammed or some other great Teacher. If all those "who profess and call themselves Christians," would only devote themselves as faithfully and earnestly to the practice of their belief as do the Mohammedans and Hindus and Buddhists, they would undoubtedly develop a spirituality far in advance of anything that has ever been known in Christian lands and which would go far to make real the song of the angels, "Peace on earth, and good will to men." If we loved God more we should assuredly love our fellow creatures more, and that love would bring the recognition that all mankind are brothers, children of one God; and carried to the highest point, such love would lead to the realization that God and man are one.

GOD AND FREEDOM IN THE VEDANTA.

By J. J. Goodwin.

IF the succession of German thinkers who made the seventeenth, eighteenth and half the nineteenth centuries famous by the boldness with which they undertook to grapple with the mysteries of our being, failed to get within any measurable distance of an actual solution, their efforts, nevertheless, served an excellent purpose. They succeeded, for example, in establishing a logical and scientific necessity for a God, in Whom the world of sensation possessed whatever of reality it could claim. The object which all men seek either by philosophy, or by religion, or by science is a unity which was never created and which is therefore Infinite, but from or on account of which all that we see, feel and hear exists. That the search is not in vain and that such an Infinite is discoverable may very properly be taken for granted in that the idea is universal in all minds. So much the German School has conceded. But that the Infinite cannot be reached through the finite, if it needs proof at all, has once and for all been made abundantly clear, we should imagine, by the succession of failures of such trained intellects as went to make up the history of the German transcendental period. If there be any doubt on this point, let us briefly examine into some of the aspects of the question.

THREE GREAT ACHARYAS

SANKARA, RAMANUJA, AND MADHWA

AN attempt to bring under one cover critical sketches of the life and times of these great religious leaders and an exposition of their respective systems of thought and philosophy.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE VOLUME.

Pandit Tatvabushan, Dr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Prof. M. Rangacharya, Mr. C. N. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, Prof. Rajagopalachari, and Prof. Subba Rau.

Rupees Two. To Subs. of "I. R." Re. 1-8 as.

SANKARA'S SELECT WORKS

With Sanskrit Text and English Translation

By Mr. S. VENKATARAMANAN.

Contents.—Hymn to Hari; The Ten-Versed Hymn Hymn to Dakshinamurti; Direct Realization; The Century of Verses; Knowledge of Self; Commentary on the Text; Definition of one's own self.

The main object of this invaluable publication is to present, in simple English, some of the works of Sri Sankaracharya in which he tried to expound, in a popular style, the philosophy of the non-dualistic Vedanta of which he was the well-known founder.

Rs. 2. To Subs. of "I. R." Re. 1-8 as.

The Vaishnavite Reformers of India

SKETCHES OF THEIR LIVES AND WRITINGS

BY PROF. T. RAJAGOPALA CHARIAR.

CONTENTS:—Nathamuni; Pundarikaksha; Yamuna charya; Sri Ramanujacharya; Sri Vedanta Desika Manavala Maha Muni; and Chaitanya.

Re. One. To Subs. of "Indian Review," As. 12.

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

EMINENT INDIANS SERIES.

Biographical and critical sketches of Eminent Indians and friends of India; including those of Statesmen, Congress Presidents and Politicians, Brahmo Leaders and Social Reformers, Eminent Mussalmans and Parsees, Indian Judges, Scientists, and Poets.

Handy Uniform Volumes with Portraits

Dadabhai Naoroji	Sasipada Banerji
Surendranath Banerjee	Keshab Chundra Sen
Romesh C. Dutt	Pratap Ch. Muzumdar
Sir N. G. Chandavarkar	J. N. Tata
Sir Dinshaw Wacha	Prof. Karve
G. K. Gokhale	Ranade
Sir Rash Behari Ghose	Vidyasagar
Madan Mohan Malaviya	Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk
R. N. Mudholkar	Dewan C. Rangacharlu
Lord Sinha	R. Ragunatha Rao
Motilal Nehru	Ghalib
Lala Lajpat Rai	Rabindranath Tagore
Syed Hasan Imam	Bankim Chatterjee
Hakim Ajmal Khan	Toru Dutt
Chiplunker	Michael Madhusudan Dutt
M. K. Gandhi	Mrs. Sarojini Naidu
Aurobindo Ghose	Sir J. C. Bose
Bal Gangadhar Tilak	Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer
Rt. Hon. V. S. Sastri	Sir V. Bashyam Iyengar
The Ali Brothers	Sir Asutosh Mukerjee
Debendranath Tagore	

Price FOUR ANNAS EACH.

FRIENDS OF INDIA SERIES

Annie Besant	A. O. Hume
Lord Minto	Sir Henry Cotton
Bradlaugh	Nivedita
Rev. Dr. Miller	Henry Fawcett

Price FOUR ANNAS EACH.

THE SAINTS OF INDIA SERIES

THESE lives are all based on the original accounts and biographies in the several Indian languages. Each book also contains a special account of the peculiar religious doctrines which each saint taught.

Dayaneswar	Ekanath	Namdev
Vallabhacharya	Nanda	Vivekananda
Ram Tirath	Appar	Nammalwar

Price ANNAS FOUR EACH.

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, Gorge Town, Madras.

Mind is a part of time, space and causation and lies therefore within time, space and causation. To think, we have to think in time; it is impossible to conceive anything which did not begin in time, which is not preceded by previous time and which will not be succeeded by time. Our thoughts are also in space; the human mind fails to conceive anything which has not form, indeed the only idea of thought itself is this giving of shape. The mind is a store-house of information; and when it is required to bring any part of this information into consciousness, the mind selects the idea and makes a mental image of it. The mind also exists under the law of causation; so much all physical sciences concede,—that what is now is the effect of what has been. If the mind then is within these three laws, obviously it is impossible to bring even the whole of time, of space, or of causation within the knowledge of the mind. But each of these three laws precludes an Infinite; for an Infinite which has the limiting elements of time within it is a contradiction, so with space and causation. If it be impossible for the mind to grasp the whole truth of these laws, how then can it possibly hope to comprehend that which even goes beyond these?

Yet, as before stated, the Infinite exists, therefore it must be discoverable; but in confining ourselves to limited means, we are making that discovery an impossible undertaking. We can never know the Absolute. What then can we do? We can realize that

we are the Absolute. The very idea of an Infinite precludes a second. From this it must follow that this universe must also be that Absolute. Obviously it it so, but—and here the Vedanta is saved from degenerating into Pantheism—this universe is not as it appears to us. It exists, but not as we know it. The idea that there are differentiations and consequently imperfections is a super-imposition caused by ignorance; but there is still a reality upon which these mistaken notions appear. Hence we see that the Vedanta is neither pure realism nor pure idealism; and yet either of these is explicable in the light of Vedanta, in as much as it says there is a Reality which appears as material and yet is not material In that appearance is all that is true of realism. In the statement that, given an infinite, there cannot also be an independent finite lies all that is true of idealism. But above and beyond both of these is the Truth, the Reality, which is neither material nor immaterial, but which contains within itself all that is true of either. As it is declared in the Bhagavad-Gita: "There are two beings in the world—the perishable and the imperishable; all the creatures are the perishable and the Immutable Spirit abiding within them is called the imperishable. But another, the Highest Being, is designated the Supreme Spirit, who pervading the three worlds, supporteth them—the Eternal Lord."

In seeking to find an existence out of which phenomenal existence has sprung, we are all, no matter

in what direction our inquiries are turned, actuated, as I have already said, by the desire to discover an independent Being, which, while explaining all that we see, feel and hear, in no way relies upon either a previous existence or the present world of sensation for its establishment. In other words we who are subject to the bondages of matter seek something which is free. Descartes says that the proof that there is a God is the universal belief that there is, and he is merely expressing in different language the old Stoic idea that man is born with certain natural conceptions of good, by which he is able to distinguish positive good from good which is transient and dependent on surrounding circumstances. In the same way we are entitled to insist upon the existence of freedom because of the universal belief that freedom is possible, and of the universal attempt to obtain that freedom, either in the material world or by release from it. That the conception of what this freedom is, wherein it lies and how it is to be reached, varies, makes no difference to the belief that there *is* something which is free. For example, Vedantists of the *Advaita* or Monistic school will hold that this freedom is always existing within us, our own Soul; Dvaitists or dualistic Vedantists regard freedom as service of God without the restrictions which life in this world imposes; Schopenhaeur says it is the will which is free; the Stoics say that there are natural conceptions, born with every man, which, if allowed to guide us. will free us not only from unhappiness,

but from happiness tempered by evil; Buddhists say it is annihilation of the law of Karma.

Take away the idea of freedom, where shall we find the justification for ethics, apart from the motive power? If God is most expressed in man and the best life is that which is nearest to what we conceive to be the nature of God, then each man's conception of God becomes the thing to be obtained. But ethics teaches the renunciation of the ego—not we, but thou and all. Ethics tells us that we realize the greatest good in the greatest number. If, however, that good is expressed in each man's highest conception, in order that there may be life, since manifested life is based on variation, there must be difference of conception, and the question arises which is the greatest good, my conception or yours? Universality is then impossible on these lines; and with the dethronement of universality, ethics also must go and utilitarianism must take its place. Utilitarianism is the recognition and practice of that which appeals to each and every individual as most beneficial. Taking an extreme case, it may appear to me that I shall best obtain my own comfort by the removal of my neighbour. But that neighbour in his highest possible manifestation is also God, and we are face to face with an absurdity—God the enemy of God.

If we once recognize the necessity for relativity in matter—and no science, no stretch of imagination will permit us to deny it—we must necessarily there-

which we are all convinced is to be found; and the *Atman* of the Vedantin seems to meet every requirement. It is immaterial and therefore not dependent on limitation; and being beyond limitation, it must be One, without a second which can limit and condition it. If it is One only, it is consequently universal; and this universality establishes the necessity for ethics. Every "natural conception" of good finds explanation, the reason for law and order is made clear, the greatest good for the greatest number is established as an indisputable fact. "The sage is he who looks with an equal eye upon the Brahmin, the cow, the elephant, the dog, and the Chandala. Even in this life they have conquered heaven whose minds are firm fixed on this sameness. For *Brahman* (the Supreme) is one and the same to all; therefore such are said to be living in *Brahman*."

If we regard this as the truth, we can very well understand why the happiness of one is best obtained in the happiness of the many; because in hurting another the injury is equally mine, and because the greater the expansion of good, the more powerfully must it be felt not only by all, but by each one affected by the expansion. Freedom then must be possible by release from the bondages of matter, but can never be possible in matter. Neither can we afford to look lightly on another point. While we are still dependent on others, our strength, like everything else, is also limited and must always remain so. Good work requires strength and courage to perform it. For this

reason also the conclusion of the Vedanta is infinitely preferable. If there is only one expressing itself in these many, what occasion remains for fear? The Self cannot kill the Self, neither can It injure It in any way. Death and failure are impossible to me while you live and succeed, for your success is mine and my failure merely contributes to your success, the fruits of which I enjoy equally with you. Therefore the Vedanta not only disproves the possibility of abject weakness, but gives the best of all reasons for the struggle towards absolute strength, in which alone lies that Bliss which is but another name for freedom.

———:o:———

PART III.—SOCIAL.

SELFLESSNESS.*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

ONE cannot divide the rights of the universe. To talk of "right" implies limitation. It is not "right" but "responsibility." Each is responsible for the evil anywhere in the world. No one can separate himself from his brother. All that unites with the universal is virtue. All that separates is sin. You are a part of the Infinite. This is your nature. Hence you are your brother's keeper.

The first end of life is knowledge; the second end of life is happiness. Knowledge and happiness lead to freedom. But not one can attain liberty until every being (ant or dog) has liberty. Not one can be happy until all are happy. When you hurt anyone you hurt yourself, for you and your brother are one. He is indeed a Yogi (saint) who sees himself in the whole universe and the whole universe in himself. Self-sacrifice, not self-assertion, is the law of the highest universe. The world is so evil because Jesus' teaching "Resist not evil" has never been tried. Selflessness alone will solve the problem. Religion comes only with intense self-sacrifice. Desire nothing for yourself. Do all for others. This is to live and move and have your being in God.

* From Class Talks in America.

CASTE.

By Swami Vivekananda.

WHEN the Mahomedans first came to this country, there were, according to their historical statistics, sixty crores of Hindus in India. But to-day those Hindus have dwindled into twenty crores. Over and above that, with the advent of the Christian power about two crores of people have become Christians, and about a lakh of people are turning Christians every year. The advent of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the embodiment of mercy, has been specially for the preservation of this Hindu race and religion.

Our society is built upon the division into castes. All societies are built like that. But then, there is some difference between our society and other societies.

Two great forces are constantly working throughout nature. It is the struggle between these two mighty forces that brings about all the play of diversity and change in this world. In human society also these two forces are continually creating the diversity of caste and will continue to do so. Side by side with the diversity, the distinction of privilege is coming upon human society, like the shadow of death.

---

* First published in the "Prabhuddha Bharata."

Of these two forces, one makes for the distinction of privilege, while the other, rising in opposition to it, is trying to destroy it.

Diversity is the very life of the world, and this diversity of caste is never to be destroyed. In other words, according to difference in intelligence and power, there is bound to be a difference in work among individuals. For instance, one is skilled in ruling society, while another is capable of sweeping the dust of the street. But the principal cause of social evil is, if for this reason, it is claimed that the man who can rule society will have the exclusive right to all the enjoyments of the earth, while the sweeper of the street-dust dies of starvation. If there be a hundred thousand more castes than there are now in our country, it will lead to good rather than evil. For, the more castes there are in a country, the richer is it in crafts and industries. But the fight is going on against that form of caste which, like the shadow of death on society, consists in difference in privilege. The more is a race defeated in this struggle, the more does it come to misery; and the more is it victorious in this, the more does it rise in the scale of progress.

What is called politics in society is nothing but the struggle between the privileged and non-privileged classes, brought on by this difference in enjoyments.

Vanquished in this gigantic struggle of difference in privilege, India has fallen—almost lifeless.

Therefore it is a far cry for India to establish relations of equality with foreign nations,—until she succeeds in restoring equality within her own bounds, she has no hope for reviving.

In other words, the gist of the thing is, that the division into castes, such as the Brahmana and the Kshatriya, is not at fault, but it is the difference in privilege that has proved the great bane of our society.

Hence our object is not to destroy caste distinctions, but to equalise the distinction of privilege. Our chief vow of life is to see that everyone, down to the Chandala, is helped to attain the right to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Virtue, Wealth, Desire and Liberation).

India shall again awake, and the tidal wave that has emanated from this centre will, like a great inundation, overflood the whole of mankind and heave it forward to the gates of Mukti. * * *

The lustre of Western light is now illumining India to a certain extent. Slowly the report of the effort and life-struggle, among the great nations of the West, for abolishing the distinction and inequality of privillege, is finding its way into this sleeping nation and kindling a ray of hope in the depressed hearts of the people of our country even. The majesty of the Atman, the common right of mankind, is slowly entering into the arteries of this country through various channels, good or bad. The non-privileged classes are demanding back their forfeited rights. If at this

juncture, learning and religion, etc., remain confined to a particular class or classes, that learning and that religion will die.

Three dangers are confronting us; 1. the non-Brahmin classes will unite and create a new religion like Buddhism in the olden times: 2. They will embrace a foreign religion; or 3. all religious ideas will disappear from India for good.

In the first alternative, all the efforts for the realisation of its goal by this most ancient civilisation will be rendered fruitless. This India will be again reduced to puerile inanity, will forget all her past glories and advance towards progress at a snail's pace, after long periods. In the second alternative, Indian civilisation and the Aryan race will very soon be extinct. For, whenever anyone steps out of the fold of Hinduism, we not only lose him, but have an enemy the more. * * * In the third alternative, great danger lies in this, that whenever that special object on which rests the foundation of an individual's or a nation's life is destroyed, the individual or that nation is also destroyed. The life of the Aryan race is founded on religion, and when that is destroyed, the downfall of the Aryan race is inevitable.

A running stream chooses the line of least resistance, by itself. The current of social well-being also flows along the line of least resistance, of its own accord. Hence we must lead society also along that line.

India is full of many races and religions, indigenous and of foreign importation. The Aryan

religion and Aryan ideas have not yet found their way into most of them.

Therefore we shall avert this great danger by first Aryanising India and giving her Aryan rights, and by inviting all without distinction to the Aryan scriptures and modes of spiritual practice. For this reason, we must first accord full rights to the Aryan religion to those castes which have slightly fallen away from it for want of the necessary Samskaras, by giving them Samskaras again. A man feels interest in things to which he has a right. Otherwise the non-Brahmin castes will discard the Aryan religion, on the ground that it is the special monopoly of the Brahmins. Similarly, we must broaden Hindu society by giving Samskaras to all classes down to the Chandala, and alien races such as the Mlechchhas as well.

But we must proceed in this slowly. For the present, we should give Samskaras to those who, though qualified according to the Shastras, are devoid of the necessary Samskaras through their own ignorance.

In this way there shall be an extensive preaching of the scriptures and religion, and numerous preachers thereof.

The ideal of this world is that state when the whole world will again be Brahmana in nature. When there will be no necessity of the Sudra, Vaisya and Kshatriya powers; when man will be born with Yoga powers; when spiritual force will completely

triumph over material force; when disease and grief will no more overtake the human body, the sense-organs will no more be able to go against the mind; when the application of brute force will be completely effaced from men's memory, like a dream of primeval days; when love will be the only motive power in all actions on this earth;—then only the whole of mankind will be endowed with Brahminical qualities and attain Brahmanahood. Then only the distinction of caste will be at an end, ushering in the Satya-Yuga [Golden Age] visualised by the ancient Rishis. We must adopt only that kind of caste-division which gradually leads to this goal. That division into caste which is the best way to the abolition of caste should be most cordially welcomed.

WOMAN'S PLACE IN HINDU RELIGION*

BY SWAMI ABHADANANDA.

"Where women are honored, there the Devas (gods) are pleased; but where they are not honored no sacred rite yields rewards."

"Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes: but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers."—*Laws of Manu, III, 56, 57.*

WELL has it been said by Louis Jaccoliot, the celebrated French author of "The Bible in India," that "India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship; a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of woman and of having only made of her an instrument of pleasure and of passive obedience." He also said: "What! Here is a civilization which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man and gives her an equal place in the family and in society." As on the one hand, the dawn of civilization first broke on the social horizon of India, so on the other, India is a country where the highest ideals of religion were understood, the noblest philosophy was taught, and an unparalleled code of ethical

* A lecture delivered under the auspices of the Vedanta Society, New York, December 16, 1900.

laws had been handed down, from a time when the barbarous customs of savage tribes prevailed among the nations that surrounded the mother-land of the moral, spiritual and God-loving nation of the Aryans. Long before the civil laws of the Romans, which gave the foundation for the legislation of Europe and of America, were codified by Justinian, nay, many centuries before Moses appeared as the Law-giver of the Semitic tribes, the Hindu laws of Manu were closely observed, and strictly followed by the members of Hindu society in general. Many of the Oriental scholars, having compared the digest of Justinian and the Mosaic laws of the Old Testament with the Hindu laws, have arrived at the conclusion that the Code of Manu was related to them as a father is to his child. The Hindu law-givers repeated and codified only those ethical principles which were entertained by the Hindus of the Vedic period. Following the teachings of the Vedas, the Hindu legislator gives equal rights to men and women by saying, "Before the creation of this phenomenal universe, the first-born Lord of all creatures divided his own Self into two halves, so that one half should be male and the other half female." This illustration has established in the minds of the Hindus the fundamental equality of man and woman. Just as the equal halves of a fruit possess the same nature, the same attributes and the same properties in equal proportion, so man and woman, being the equal halves of the same substance, possess equal rights, equal privileges and equal

powers. This idea of the equality of man and woman was the corner-stone of that huge structure of religion and ethics among the Hindus which has stood for so many ages the ravages of time and change defying the onslaughts of the short-sighted critics of the world. Therefore in India whatever is claimed for the man may also be claimed for the woman; there should be no partiality shown for either man or woman, according to the ethical, moral and religious standard of the Hindus. The same idea of equality was most forcibly expressed in the Rig Veda (Book 5th, hymn 61, verse 8). The commentator explains this passage thus: "The wife and husband, being the equal halves of one substance, are equal in every respect; therefore both should join and take equal parts in all work, religious and secular." No other Scriptures of the world have ever given to the woman such equality with the man as the Vedas of the Hindus. The Old Testament, the Koran, and the Zend-Avesta have made woman the scapegoat for all the crimes committed by man. The Old Testament, in describing the creation of woman and fall of man, has established the idea that woman was created for man's pleasure, consequently her duty was to obey him implicitly. It makes her an instrument in the hands of Satan for the temptation and fall of the holy man with whom she was enjoying the felicity of paradise. Adam's first thought on that occasion was to shift the burden of guilt on to the shoulders of the woman. St. Paul,

in the New Testament, shows that, through Adam's fall, woman was the means of bringing sin, suffering and death into the world. Popular Christianity has been trying lately to take away this idea, but in spite of all the efforts of the preachers the same idea still lurks behind the eulogies that have been piled upon the conception of womanhood in Christian lands. How is it possible for one who believes the accounts given in Genesis to be literally true, to reject the idea there set forth that woman was the cause of the temptation and fall of man, thereby bringing sin and suffering and death into the world? For one who accepts the biblical account there is no other alternative left.

In India such ideas never arose in the minds of the Vedic seers, nor have kindred notions found expression in the writings of the law-givers of later days. The Hindu legislators realized that both sexes were equal, and said before the world that women had equal rights with men for freedom, for the acquirement of knowledge, education and spirituality. It is for this reason that we find in the Rig Veda the names of so many inspired women who attained to the realization of the highest spiritual truths. These inspired women are recognized by all classes as the Seers of Truth, as spiritual instructors, divine speakers and revealers equally with the inspired men of Vedic hymns. Those who believe that the Hindu religion debars women from studying the Vedas or from acquiring the religious ideas ought to correct

these erroneous notions by opening their eyes to the facts which are indelibly written on the pages of the religious history of India. The one hundred and twenty-sixth hymn of the first book of the Rig Veda was revealed by a Hindu woman whose name was Romasha; the one hundred and seventy-ninth hymn of the same book, by Lopamudra, another inspired Hindu woman. I can quote at least a dozen names of such women revealers of the Vedic wisdom, such as Aditi who instructed Indra, one of the Devas, in the higher knowledge of Brahman, the Universal Spirit, Visvavara, Shashvati, Gargi, Maitreyi, Apala, Ghosha, etc. All of these are the names of inspired women revealers of the spiritual wisdom. Every one of them lived the ideal life of spirituality, being untouched by the things of the world. They are called in Sanskrit Brahmavadinis, the speakers and revealers of Brahman—the Infinite Source of spirituality. They were devout performers of the religious rites, singers of holy hymns, and often discussed with great philosophers the most subtle problems of life and death, the nature of the soul and of God, and their inter-relation, and sometimes, in the course of these discussions, they defeated the most advanced thinkers among their opponents.

Those who have read the Upanishads, the philosophical portions of the Vedas, know that Gargi and Maitreyi, the two great women Seers of Truth, discoursed philosophical topics with Yajnavalka, who was one of the best authorities in the Vedic lore.

There are many instances of women acting as umpires on such occasions. When Sankaracharya, the great commentator of the Vedanta, was discussing this philosophy with another philosopher, a Hindu lady, well versed in all the scriptures, was requested to act as umpire.

If, in the face of such facts, the Christian missionaries say that the Hindu religion prevents women from studying the Vedas or denies them a place in religion, we can only console ourselves by thinking that the eyes of our missionary brothers and sisters are not open to truths which exist outside the boundary line of their own particular creed and religion. It is the especial injunction of the Vedas, however, that no married man shall perform any religious rite, ceremony, or sacrifice without being joined in it by his wife; should he do so, his work will be incomplete and half finished, and he will not get the full results; because the wife is considered to be a partaker and partner in the spiritual life of her husband; she is called in Sanskrit, *Sahadharmini*, "spiritual helpmate." This idea is very old, as old as the Hindu nation. It is true that there were certain prohibitions for some women against certain studies and ceremonies, which were prescribed for those only who were in a different stage of spiritual development, just as a certain class of men were proscribed from the studies of some portions of the Vedas or from performing certain ceremonies simply because they were not ready for them.

Coming down from the Vedic period to the time when the Puranas and Epics were written, we find that the same idea of equality between men and women was kept alive, and that the same laws were observed as during the time of the Vedas. Those who have read the Ramayana, one of the great Epics of India, will remember how exemplary was the character of *Sita*, the heroine. She was the ideal wife, the ideal mother and the ideal queen; she was the embodiment of purity, chastity and kindness, the personification of spirituality. She still stands as the perfect type of ideal womanhood in the hearts of Hindu woman of all castes and creeds. In the whole religious history of the world a second *Sita* will not be found. Her life was unique. She is worshipped as an Incarnation of God, as Christ is worshipped among the Christians. India is the only country where prevails a belief that God incarnates in the form of a woman as well as in that of a man.

In the Mahabharata we read the account of Sulabha, the great woman Yogi, who came to the court of King Janaka and showed wonderful powers and wisdom, which she acquired through the practice of Yoga. This shows that women were allowed to practise Yoga; even to-day there are many living *Yoginis* in India who are highly advanced in spirituality. Many of these *Yoginis* become spiritual teachers of men. Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest

Saint of the nineteenth century, was taught spiritual truths by a *Yogini*.

As in religion the Hindu woman of ancient times enjoyed equal rights and privileges with men, so in secular matters she had equal share and equal power with men. From ancient times, women in India have had the same right to possess property as men; they could go to the courts of justice, plead their own cases and ask for the protection of the law.

Those who have read the famous Hindu drama called Sakuntala, which stands as high as the best dramas of Shakspeare in tone and quality, know that Sakuntala pleaded her own case and claimed her rights in the court of King Dushyanta. Similar instances are mentioned iu the Rig Veda, the most ancient writing of the Hindus, in the one hundred and eighth hymn of the tenth book. As early as 2000 B.C. Hindu women were allowed to go to the battle-fields to fight against enemies. Sarama, one of the most powerful women of her day, was sent by her husband in search of robbers. She discovered their hiding-place and afterwards destroyed them.

In the fifth book of the Rig Veda we read that King Namuchi sent his wife to fight against his enemies. She fought and eventually conquered them. There have been many instances of women holding high political powers, governing States, making laws and administering justice to all. Throughout the history of India are to be found the names of many women who have governed their own territories.

Some women of later dates resisted foreign invaders. The history of India records the wonderful generalship of the *Rani* of Jhansi, who held a portion of the British army in check during the famous mutiny of 1857-58. She headed her troops against the British, dressed like a cavalry officer, and after a hard fight she fell in battle and died in June, 1858. Sir Hugh Rose declared that the best man on the enemy's side was the *Rani* of Jhansi, not knowing that the *Rani* was not a man, but the Queen herself.

Not long ago a Hindu lady, Aus Kour by name, was elevated by the Hindus, with the help of the British government, to the disputed throne of the disorganized and revolted State of Patiala, in the northwest of India. She has been described by English historians as the most competent person to govern that State. In less than a year she brought peace and security into all parts of her dominions.

Ahalya Bai, the Queen of Malwa, governed her kingdom with great success for twenty years, devoting herself to the rights and comforts of her people and the happiness of her subjects ; she was so great and popular that both the Mahomedans and the Hindus united in prayers for her long life ; so little did she care for name and fame that when a book was written in her honor she ordered it to be destroyed, and took no notice of the author.

America boasts of her civilization and the freedom of her women, but we know how little power and how few privileges have been given to women. The cause

of this is deeply rooted in the biblical conception of womanhood. It is claimed that Christianity has elevated the condition of women ; but, on the contrary, history tells us that it is Christianity that has stood for centuries in the way of the religious, social and political freedom of women. Think of the women's suffrage societies, and how hard they are struggling to win recognition of the rights of their sex. Roman law and Roman jurisprudence gave woman a place far more elevated than that given to her by Christianity. The Christians learned to honor the women from the pagans. The Teutonic tribes believed, like the Hindus, in the perfect equality of both sexes in all domestic and social relations, and held that a queen was as good as a king. Even to-day the Christain nations fail to see this equality between man and woman.

The Hindu law allows the women a much greater share in the management of property than most of the statutes of the Christian nations.

In family affairs, religious or secular, especially in business or trade, a husband in India cannot take any step without consulting the female members of the family.

It is often said that Hindu women are treated like slaves by their husbands but it is not a fact. On the contrary, the Hindu women get better treatment than the majority of the wives of Englishmen or of Americans endowed with the spirit of an English husband. Sir M. M. Williams says: "Indian wives often possess greater influence than the wives of

Europeans." The number of wife-beaters is considerably smaller in India than in Europe or America. He is not a true Hindu who does not regard a woman's body as sacred as the temple of God. He is an outcaste who touches a woman's body with irreverence, hatred or anger. "A woman's body," says Manu the law-giver, "must not be struck hard even with a flower, because it is sacred." It is for this reason that Hindus do not allow capital punishment for women. The treatment of woman, according to Hindu religion, will be better understood from some of the quotations which I will append from the laws of Manu and other law-givers. Manu says:—

1. "The mouth of a woman is always pure." V. 130.

2. "Women must be honored and adorned by their fathers, husbands, brothers, and brothers-in-law, who desire their own welfare." III, 55.

3. "Where women are honored, there the Devas (gods) are pleased; but where they are dishonoured, no sacred rite yields rewards." III, 56.

4. "Where female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that the family where they are not unhappy ever prospers." III, 57.

5. "In like manner, care must be taken of barren women, of those who have no sons, of those whose family is extinct, of wives and widows faithful to their lords, and of women afflicted with diseases." VIII, 28.

6. "A righteous king must punish like thieves those relatives who appropriate the property of such females during their lifetime." VIII, 29

7. "In order to protect women and Brahmins, he who kills in the cause of right, commits no sin." VIII, 349.

8. "One's daughter is the highest object of tenderness; hence, if one is offended by her, one must bear it without resentment." IV, 185. *

* Compare this with the statements of the missionaries that the Hindu religion sanctions the killing of girls.

9. "A maternal aunt, the wife of a maternal uncle, a mother-in-law, and paternal aunt, must be honored like the wife of one's spiritual teacher: they are equal to the wife of one's spiritual teacher." II, 131.*

10. "Towards the sister of one's father and of one's mother and towards one's elder sister, one must behave as towards one's mother; but the mother is more venerable than they:" II, 133.

11. "But the teacher is ten times more venerable than the sub-teacher, the father a hundred times more than the teacher, but the mother a thousand times more than the father." II, 145.

12. "A chaste wife, who after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste, reaches heaven though she have no son, just like those chaste men."

Compare this with the statements of the missionaries that the Hindu widows are cursed by their religion.

13. "In that family where the husband is pleased with his wife and the wife with her husband, happiness will assuredly be lasting." III, 60.

14. "Offspring, the due performance of religious rites, faithful service, highest conjugal happiness, and heavenly bliss for the ancestors and one's self, depend upon the wife alone." IX, 28.

15. "Let mutual fidelity continue till death; this may be considered as a summary of the highest law for husband and wife." IX, 101.

From other Hindu laws:—

"Women possess an unequalled means of purification; they never become (entirely) foul."

"Women are pure in all limbs."

1. "Man is strength, woman is beauty; he is the reason that governs and she is the wisdom that moderates."

2. "He who despises woman despises his mother."

3. "He who is cursed by a woman is cursed by God."

4. The tears of a woman call down the fire of heaven on those who make them flow."

* (In India, the wife of a spiritual teacher is regarded as a living goddess.)

5. "Evil to him who laughs at a woman's sufferings; God shall laugh at his prayers."

6. "The songs of women are sweet in the ears of the Lord; men should not, if they wish to be heard, sing the praises of God without women."

7. "There is no crime more odious than to persecute women, and to take advantage of their weakness to despoil them of their patrimony."

8. "The woman watches over the house, and the protecting divinities (Devas) of the domestic hearth are happy in her presence. The labors of the field should never be assigned to her."

9. "When relatives, by some subterfuge, take possession of the property of a woman, her carriages or her jewels, such evil doers shall descend into the infernal regions."

10. "The virtuous woman should have but one husband, as the right-minded man should have but one wife."

Here is the definition of a wife given in the Mahabharata:—

"A wife is half the man, his truest friend;
A loving wife is a perpetual spring
Of virtue, pleasure, wealth; a faithful wife
Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;
A sweetly speaking wife is a companion.
In solitude, a father in advice,
A mother in all seasons of distress,
A rest in passing through life's wilderness."

The Christian missionaries say that these laws are most horrible! To-day in some parts of Europe women are yoked together with horses and cattle in the field, and obliged to do the roughest labor.

The unmarried daughter, not the son, inherits the mother's estate. This is the Hindu law. The special property of the wife which she gets as dowry cannot be used by the husband. A wife in India is not responsible for the debts of her husband, or son. The mother in India owns her children as much as the father does.

Mrs. F. A Steele, who has written several novels on Indian life, and who resided in India for twenty-five years, writes of Indian women:

"In regard to the general position of women in India, I think it is rather better than our own. Women in India can hold property, and a widow always gets a fixed portion of her husband's estate."

Some American ladies who lived in India, not as missionaries but as impartial observers, have corroborated these statements. It is generally said that the Hindu law makes no provision for the Hindu widows. Let us see what an English historian says:

"In the absence of direct male heirs, widows succeed to a life-interest in real, and absolute interest in personal property. The daughters inherit absolutely. Where there are sons, mothers and daughters are entitled to shares, and wives hold peculiar property from a variety of sources over which a husband has no control during their lives, and which descend to their own heirs, with a preference to females."—Mill's History of India, vol. I, p. 248.

Much has been said against the marriage customs of the Hindus. I have heard a great deal of objection to them, in this country especially. It is true that marriage by courtship is not considered by the Hindus to be the highest and best system; they say this method generally proceeds from selfish desires, for the mere gratification of passion. Marriage according to the Hindu ideas must be based on the ideal of the spiritual union of the souls, and not on the lower desires for sense pleasures. It must be a sacred bond. The Hindus were the first to recognize marriage as an indissoluble holy bond between two souls. Even death does not dissolve it; and this idea prevails in the hearts of many Hindu wives, who do not care to

remarry after the death of their husbands, but prefer to devote their lives to fulfilling spiritual duties.

Mrs. Steele says: "I have seen many a virgin widow who gloried in her fate." Marriage is not considered to be the only aim of life. There are nobler and higher purposes, and they must be accomplished before death comes. The whole spirit of the marriage laws in India is in favor of the legal union between one man and one woman; but they allow a little latitude for the preservation of the race. It is said that a man may marry a second wife for progeny alone, with the consent of his first wife, in case she should be barren.

The aim of Hindu lawgivers was to build a society where the moral and spiritual evolution of the individual should be free from legal interference. Therefore they divided society into classes, and set forth laws for each class; the marriage laws in India have been many-sided in order to suit the different tendencies which prevailed among different classes. Hindu lawgivers understood that one law would not do for all people. The higher the class in society, the more restricted are their laws; for instance, the same lawgiver who allows the marriage of widows amongst the lower classes, sets forth arguments against its practice among women of a higher class. Nearly all Hindu widows of the lower classes can remarry after the death of their husbands; but it depends upon the choice both of the husband and the wife. The Hindu law provides for the remarriage of

widows and of divorced women in the same way as for the remarriage of widowers and divorced men. According to the law, a wife may abandon her husband (if she choose) if he be criminal, insane, impotent, outcast or afflicted with leprosy; also because of his long absence in foreign lands, and can take another husband. The Roman law gives no other causes of divorce than these. Similarly, a husband may abandon his wife if she be drunken or adulterous, afflicted with leprosy, or cruel towards husband and children, and can remarry. But the Hindu law does not allow a divorce simply for incompatibility of temper, nor because of the simple desire in either party to marry another.

It is said that the greatest curse is the child-marriage in India, and that it is sanctioned by religion; but this is not true. Religion distinctly forbids it, and in many parts of India the so-called child-marriage is nothing but a betrothal. The betrothal ceremony takes place some years before the real marriage ceremony; sufficient cause may prolong the period of betrothal for even three or four years. In Northern India the real marriage does not take place until the parties are of proper age; it is attended with music, feasting, and the presentation of gifts. A betrothed wife stays in her father's house until the time of her real marriage. In Southern India, customs are not the same; many abuses have crept in, and child-wives are often given to their husbands at too tender an age. The Hindu law does not prevent the remarriage of

the betrothed wife after the death of her betrothed husband; but it says that under such circumstances the parents of the betrothed wife commit a sin as of giving false witness before the court of justice.

According to the Hindu law it is better for a girl of a high caste to remain unmarried for life than to marry one who is not of noble birth or from a family of the same caste, or one who is unqualified and illiterate.

Eight different kinds of marriages are described and discussed by Hindu legislators, among which marriage with the consent of the parents of both parties, and not a sentimental love contract, is considered to be the highest. In ancient times, when the country was governed by Hindu kings, the *Svayambara* system of marriage was very common. It was the system of free choice of a husband by the maiden. Those who have read "The Light of Asia," by Sir Edwin Arnold, will remember how Buddha was married. But when the Hindus lost their political freedom they would have been unable to prevent the intermixture of races had such liberty been continued; so they abandoned that system of marriage and adopted that of betrothing their sons and daughters in their youth. The betrothal, however, is not practised in all parts of the country.

Christian missionaries have brought false charges against the moral character of Hindu women, and some of our own country-women, having enlisted

their names as Christian converts, have, I regret to say, joined these missionary detractors in bringing false charges against Hindu women. If you wish to know the true condition of the women in India, you will have to reject ninety-nine per cent. of the statements which you hear from the missionaries, or from Christian converts who come from India. There are immoral women in India, as there are in every other country, but it is more than wicked to make such sweeping statements as that there is no morality among Hindu women. "Pandita Ramabai said: I would not trust one of my girls in any Indian home. The immorality in that country is horrible!"—*Fitchburg Sentinel*, 18th April, 1898.

Self-burning of widows was not sanctioned by the Hindu religion, but was due to other causes, the fact being that when the Mahommedans conquered India they treated the widows of the soldiers so brutally that the women preferred death, and voluntarily sought it. It is often said that the "Christian Government" has suppressed *Sati*; but the truth is that the initiative in this direction was taken by that noble Hindu, Ram Mohan Roy, who was however, obliged to secure the aid of the British Government in enforcing his ideas, because India was a subject nation. The educated classes among the Hindus had strongly protested against the priests who supported this custom (which prevailed only in certain parts of India), and efforts had been made to suppress the evil by force; but as it could not be done without official

help, appeal was made to the Viceroy, Lord Bentinck, and a law against *Sati* was passed. Thus the evil was practically suppressed by the Hindus themselves, aided by the British Government.

Sir. M. M. Williams says:

"It was principally his (Raja Ram Mohan Roy's) vehement denunciation of this practice, and the agitation against it set on foot by him, which ultimately led to the abolition of *Sati* throughout British India in 1829."—"Brahmanism and Hinduism," p. 482.

The exclusion of women from the society of men, which we find in some parts of India, is not due to their religion but to other causes. It came into practice merely for self-defence against Mohammedan brutality. The *Purda* system, that is, the custom of not allowing women to appear in public without a veil, was not of Hindu origin, but was introduced into India by the Mohammedans. There are many parts of India where the *Purda* system does not exist at all, where men mix freely with women, travel in the same vehicle, and appear in public with the women unveiled. Sir Monier M. Williams writes:—

"Moreover, it must be noted that the seclusion and ignorance of women, which were once mainly due to the fear of the Mohammedan conquerors, do not exist in the same degree in provinces unaffected by those conquerors."

Every one has heard the old missionary tale of the Hindu mothers throwing their babies to the crocodiles in the Ganges. Touching pictures of a black mother with a white baby in her arms calmly awaiting the advent of a large crocodile have adorned many Sunday-school books. Perhaps this story arose from the fact that in certain places poor Hindu

mothers place the dead bodies of their little ones by the riverside because they cannot afford the expense of cremating them.

The zeal of the pious missionaries for Christianizing India was the cause of the story of the car of Jagannath. Sir M. M. Williams says :—

"It is usual for missionaries to speak with horror of the self-immolation alleged to take place under the car of Jagannath. But if deaths occur they must be accidental, as self-destruction is wholly opposed both to the letter and spirit of their religion."—"Brahmanism and Hinduism," p. 118.

As regards female infanticide, Pandita Ramabai herself wrote :—

"Female infanticide, *though not sanctioned by religion and never looked upon as right* by conscientious people, has nevertheless in those parts of India mentioned been silently passed over unpunished by society in general."—High-Caste Hindu Women," p. 26.

The Pandita does not perhaps know that numbers of dead bodies of illegitimate babies are picked up every year in the streets and vacant lots of New York and other large American cities. What does American society do about such criminals? Is it not equally reasonable to charge these evils to the Christian religion as to lay all the sins of India at the door of the Hindu religion ?

High-caste Hindu women generally learn to read and write in their own vernacular, but they do not pass public examinations. Hindu religion does not prevent any woman from receiving education ; on the contrary, it says that it is the duty of the parents, brothers, and husbands to educate their daughters, sisters, and wives. So if there be ignorance among

Hindu women it is not the fault of their religion, but rather of their poverty.

Malabar boasts of seven great poets, and four of them were women. The moral sentiments uttered by one of them (Avvayar) are taught in the schools as the golden rules of life. (The writings of Lilavati, a great woman mathematician,) still form the text-book in the native schools of the Hindus.

It is often said by Christian missionaries that Hindu religion teaches that women have no souls, and that they are not entitled to salvation. On the contrary, all the sacred books of the Hindus testify against such outrageous falsities. Those who have read the Bhagavad Gita or the Upanishads know that according to Hindu religion the soul is sexless, and that all men and women will sooner or later reach the highest goal of religion. It was in India that women were first allowed to be spiritual teachers and to enter into the monastic life. Those who have read the life of Buddha know that his wife became the leader of the Buddhist nuns. There are to-day hundreds of Hindu *Sannyasinis* [nuns who are recognized as spiritual teachers by the Hindus.] The wife of Sri Ramakrishna, the great Hindu saint of the nineteenth century, has become a living example of the great honor and reverence that are paid by Hindus to a woman of pure, spotless and spiritual life.

Lastly, the position of women in Hindu religion can be understood better by that unique idea of the

Motherhood of God which is nowhere so strongly expressed and recognized as in India. The mother is so highly honoured in India that the Hindus are not satisfied until they see divinity in the form of earthly mother. They say that one mother is greater than a thousand fathers, therefore the Hindus prefer to call the Supreme Being the Mother of the Universe. According to Hindu religion each woman, whether old or young, is the living representative of the Divine Mother on earth. The Divine Mother is greater than the "Creator" of other religions. She is the *Producer* of the Creator, or the First-born Lord of all creatures. There is no other country in the world where every living mother is venerated as an incarnation of the Divine Mother, where every village has a guardian mother who protects all as her own children.

Listen to the prayer that rises every day to the Almighty Mother of the universe from the hearts of Hindu worshippers:—

"O, Mother Divine, Thou art beyond the reach of our praises; Thou pervadest every particle of the universe; all knowledge proceeds from Thee, O, Infinite Source of wisdom! Thou dwellest in every feminine form, and all women are Thy living representatives upon earth."

THE IDEALS OF THE INDIAN WOMEN.*

By Sister Nivedita.

AS the light of dawn breaks on the long curving street of the Indian village, the chance passer-by may see at every door some kneeling woman busied with the ceremony of the Salutation of the Threshold. A pattern drawn on the ground in lines of white rice-floor with blossoms placed within it at central points remains for a few hours to mark the fact that cleansing and worship have been performed. The joy of home finds silent speech in the artistic zest of the design. Wealth or poverty is betrayed according as the flowers are a bright network of winter gourd blossoms, a stiff little row of two or three white daisies or some other offering, more or less humble as the case may be. But everywhere we read a habit of thought to which all things are symbolistic; the air upon the door-sill full of dim boding and suggestiveness as to the incomings and the outgoings which the day shall witness; and the morning opening and setting-wide the door, an act held to be no way safe unless done by one who will brood in doing it upon the divine security and benediction of her beloved.

Such thought was the fashion of a very ancient world—the world in which myths were born, out of

* From the *Prabhuddha Bharatha.*

which religions issued and wherein vague and mysterious ideas of "luck" originated. The custom bears its age upon its brow. For thousands of years must Indian women have risen at dawn to perform the Salutation of the Threshold. Thousands of years of simplicity and patience like the patience of the peasant, like that of the grass, speak in the beautiful rite. It is this patience of woman that makes civilizations. It is this patience of the Indian woman mingled with this large power of reverie, that has made and makes the Indian nationality.

For the habit of the country, in and by itself, is complete and organic. The steps by which it manifests its orderly unfolding are sequent and harmonious, and imply none of those violent digressions known as progress and reform. The women of Bengal worship their husbands and serve their children and their households, with the rapt idealism of the saints. The women of Maharashtra are as strong and determined as any in the West. The Rajputana queen prides herself on the unflinching courage of her race that would follow the husband even into the funeral fire, yet will not allow a king to include his wife amongst his subjects. The women of Madras struggle even with agony to reach the spiritual Pole-Star, and build up, again and again like some careful beaver, any fragment of their wall of custom that the resistless tides of the modern world may attempt to break away. And the daughters of Gujarat are, like the women of merchant peoples everywhere, soft and silken and

flower-like, dainty and clinging as a dream. Or we may penetrate into the Moslem zenana, to find the same graceful Indian womanhood, sometimes clad in the *Sari*, sometimes in the short Turkish jacket, but ever the self-same gentle and beautiful wifehood and motherhood, though here it beats its breast and cries upon Ali and Husain instead of prostrating itself before some image.

Nor is there any real monotony of type. Every order of woman finds its strong individual representation. Brunehild herself was not more heroic than thousands of whom the Rajput chronicles tell. Nay, in the supreme act of her life, the mystic death on the throne of flame beside the dead Siegfried, many a quiet little Bengalee woman has been her peer; Joan of Arc was not more a patriot than the wonderful Queen of Jhansi, who in the year 1857 fought in person against the British troops. The children of men who saw it talk to this day of the form of this woman's father, swinging on the gibbet high above the city walls, hanged there by his daughter's orders after she had killed him with her sword, for the crime of making a treaty with the English to deliver the keys into their hands. They talk, too, of her swift rush across the drowsy midday camp at the head of her troops, her lance poised to pierce, her mare Lakshmi straining every muscle, the whizz of the charge so unexpected that only here and there a dazed white soldier could gather presence of mind to fire a shot at the cavalcade already passed. And old

men still sing her glory with tears choking their voice.

The Rani of Jhansi was no purdah woman. She was a Maratha with a passion for her country, and practised, since girlhood, in the chase. She had been the real head of the kingdom ever since her marriage, for her husband was only a handsome figure-head, who spent in making feeble poetry the time he might have given to rule or to his wife. Her life had been in fact as solitary as that of a mediæval saint. And her ostensible reason for fighting was the right to adopt an heir. There has always indeed been a great development of the political faculty amongst Maratha women. It is well known that long before the time of Jhansi, the great Sivaji owed the inspiration that led to the national reawakening to his mother, rather than his father.

The custom of secluding women is thus not nearly so universal in India as is imagined by people who gather their ideas from unreliable accounts of the woes of high-caste women in Bengal. The lower classes move freely in all countries, for household work and the earning of their livelihood compel; and in the aristocratic closeness of her retreat, the Mohammedan woman ranks first, the Rajput second, and only thirdly the Bengali. The screen is always more easily lifted for the Hindu than for the Moslem. A thousand considerations intervene to mitigate its severity in the case of the former. And in the South and West it is actually non-existent. By this it is not to be understood that

any Hindu women meet men outside their kindred with the same freedom and frankness as their Western sisters. Very old adaptations of the Ramayana shew us the brother-in-law who has never looked higher than the heroine's feet, and the wife who blushes rather than mention her husband's name. But this power of the individual to isolate himself in the midst of apparently unrestrained social intercourse is necessary in all communities, and has its correspondences in Western society itself. Freedom is granted only to those who are self-disciplined. It might be added too that a true wife has as little occasion to realize the possible jealousy of her husband in the East as in the West and that an unreasonable fit of suspicion would be considered the same weakness and insult by the one society as by the other. Yet the liberty of Madras and Bombay for all its limitations is a reality and in the province of Malabar woman is actually in the ascendancy. The curious country of learned matriarchs and kings who rule as the regents of their sisters will have many disclosures to make to the world, when India shall have produced a sufficient number of competent sociologists of her own blood. It is commonly said to be characteristically polyandrous, but it is not so in the same sense as Tibet. For no woman regards herself as the wife of two men at once. The term matriarchal is more accurate in as much as the husband visits his wife in her own home and the right of inheritance is through

the mother.

Thus, far from India being the land of the uniform oppression of women, it represents the whole cycle of feminist institutions. There is literally no theory of feminine rights and position, that does not find illustration somewhere within its limits. If we ask for the dominion of individual beauty and charm, there is the queen to whom the Taj was built. Or the "four perfect women" of Islam—the fostermother of Moses, Mary the Madonna, Khadija and Fatima—offer a world in themselves including each of the main types of grave, sweet womanhood, according as her power is temporal or spiritual, individualistic or communal in its display.

But if we look for the unique dignity of ethical achievement for the translation of wifehood not into a novel, but into a religion, we must turn to the Hindu life, suffused as that is with the pursuit of the ideals of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas. Savitri, the Indian Alcestis; Sati, who gave up the body as one carelessly throws aside a mantle, because it had been guilty of hearing her father abuse her husband; Uma, who wooed the great God with penances; and Sita, the divine embodiment of steadfastness and strength; all these are held as the great Hindu exemplars from Malabar to Nepal.

Throughout Asia where social theory has never been confused by the existence of a privileged class regarded as the type, labour, rising into Government,

stands side by side with prayer and motherhood as the main opportunities of woman. The cow-house, the dairy, the kitchen, the granary, the chapel, with a hundred other offices, divide the attention of the ladies of the household. A rich family will have its large cooking room for the cooks, and in addition, not one, but a series of kitchens, for the use of wife and daughters. Old houses are built with their finest gardens and orchards accessible only from the zenana. Nothing is more noticeable in the lives of Indian women than the readiness and spontaneity with which work is sub-divided and the peaceable way in which it is carried out. This is most striking in regard to the preparation of food. Every Indian woman is a cook, often highly skilled, and some years ago there was no compliment so great as, an invitation from a neighbouring family, on the occasion of some important festivity, to come and help with the *cuisine*. Even Hindu society, however, is affected by the ideals of Western organization and emergency. Work nowadays tends more and more to be laid on the shoulders of Brahman servants, imported for the occasion.

Modern sociologists say that the theory of the equality of man and woman is essentially a phenomenon of coast life and fisher communities. It is interesting to note in this regard that in the fishing villages outside Calcutta, the wife buys his take from the husband and sells it in the market at her own risk. If on his way home her man has disposed of

his load to some merchant, she will follow the matter up and buy it back for her own trade. Possibly the same process of keeping an account against the husband is gone through in Madras, in Bombay also, for in all parts of India, it is the woman who brings the fish to the bazaar. In this class, there is no question of seclusion, and the fisher-wife in the matter of her freedom and responsibilities is a European woman.

A like liberty obtained, however, amongst the women of the Sanskrit drama. Whatever be the date of the play of Kalidasa, it is evident that that traditional story of Shakuntala round which it is constructed, must have pictured her as studying with the boy disciples of her father and receiving his guests during his absence in unquestioned propriety. It is to be inferred then that such a code of manners was not inconsonant with the memories and the general ideas of the race who transmitted the tale, and if this be so, it cannot be natural to the Hindus to cloister and veil their womankind.

But we cannot on the other hand admit that the seclusion of woman is a custom introduced into India by a kind of Mohammedan contamination. This thoughtless explanation, even if historical, would only drive the question a point further,—what induced the Mussalman to screen his women? It is unfortunate, for those who hold the theory, that Islam derives the religious sanction of its social institutions from Arabia and that the Arab woman is said

to enjoy considerable freedom and power. Hence it would seem that even the Mohammedan adopted the practice from Persia, from China or from Greece. If he, again, had been responsible for the custom in India, we might have expected that in the neighbourhood of Delhi and Agra, the capitals of the Mogul empire, Hindu *purdah* would have been the strictest. This however, is not the case, Rajputana and Bengal being far more deeply permeated by the habit. The degradation of attempting to explain away a reproach by fastening it on some one else is surely obvious. We must seek elsewhere for the reason of a convention that seems almost instinctive in certain parts of the Orient.

There is some degree of truth in the supposition that society in a military state tends to seclude its women. The mistake probably lies in thinking that this is the only factor in moral evolution that affects their position in this way. Rather it would appear that amongst the primary occupations of mankind,—hunting, fishing, tillage and what not,—there is a distinct tendency to promote different types of institutions. Other things being equal, those occupations that imply a sustained and arduous conquest of Nature tend to equality of rights and similarity of manners for men and women, whereas, under long-settled conditions from which anxiety is somewhat eliminated, there is a progressive inclination towards divergence of their lines of activity, accompanied by the more complete surrender of woman to the pro-

tection of man. Thus an important feature of the Hindu as of the Anglican wedding ceremony is the fact that her father " gives away " the bride into the keeping of her husband.

The tendency to divergence of function would be accelerated in Asia by the nature of the climate which makes stillness and passivity the highest luxury. This fact again combines with military prepossessions to make the custom of seclusion especially characteristic of royal households and having once achieved such social prestige, it speedily extends over wide areas. It may be pointed out that even in Europe, the freedom of woman differs widely with her nationality, and that in England and America the accumulation of fortune is often an influence towards restricting the social intercourse of the women of the wealthy family.

If this theory be correct, it would explain the freedom of woman in India during the first Aryan period as an outcome of the struggle with earth and forest. The early immigration of agricultural races across the Himalayas from Central Asia must have meant a combat with Nature of the severest kind. It was a combat in which the wife was the helpmate of the husband. If he cleared the jungle and hunted the game, she had to help in field and garden. The Aryan population was scanty and she must be ready to take his place. Vicissitudes were many. At a moment's notice she must be prepared to meet an emergency, brave, cheerful and self-helpful. In such

a life, woman must move as easily as man.

It was far otherwise however when the country was cleared, agriculture established on the Aryan scale and when the energy of the race was concentrated on the higher problem of conserving and extending its culture of the mind and spirit. It is doubtful whether Indian philosophy could ever have been completed on any other terms than those of the seclusion of woman. "This world is all a dream: God alone is real,"—such an ultimatum could hardly have been reached in a society like that of Judaism where love and beauty were avowed before all as the seal of divine approval on a successful life. Not that India despises these happy gifts. But they are the joys of the householder in her eyes, not of the spiritual seer. "The religion of the wife lies in serving her husband: the religion of the widow lies in serving God," say the women, and there is no doubt in their minds that the widow's call is higher.

But while we talk of the seclusion of woman as if it were a fact, we must be careful to guard against misconception. In society and in the streets of Indian cities, it is practically true that we see men alone. This fact makes it a possibility for the religious to pass his life without looking on the face of any woman save such as he may call "mother." Inside the home, if we penetrate so far, we shall probably meet with none but women. But if we live there, day after day, we shall find that every woman has familiar intercourse with some man or men in the

family. The relation between brothers and sisters-in-law is all gaiety and sweetness. Scarcely any children are so near to a woman as the sons of her husband's sisters. It is the proud prerogative of these, whatever be their age, to regard her as their absolute slave. There is a special delicacy of affection between the husband's father and the daughter-in-law. Cousins count as brothers and sisters. And from the fact that every woman has her rightful place in some family, it follows that there is more healthy human intercourse with men in almost every Hindu woman's life than in those of thousands of single women living alone or following professional career in the suburbs of London and other Western cities. It is a social intercourse, too, that is full of a refined and delicate sense of humour. Men who have been to Europe always declare that the zenana woman stands unrivalled in her power of repartee. English fun is apt to strike the Indian as a little loud. How charming is the Bengali version of the "bad penny that always turns up" in "I am the broken cowrie that has been to seven markets," that is, "I may be worthless, but I am knowing."

We are apt to think only of that towards which we aspire, as an ideal. We rarely think of those assimilated ideals that reveal themselves as custom. Yet if we analyse the conventions that dominate an Indian woman's life, we cannot fail to come upon a great ideal of self-control. The closeness and intimacy of the family life, and the number of the

interests that have to be considered, have no doubt made strict discipline necessary for the sake of peace. Hence a husband and wife may not address each other in the presence of others. A wife may not name her husband, much less praise him, and so on. Only little children are perfectly untrammelled and may bestow their affection when and where they will. All these things are for the protection of the community, lest it be outraged by the parading of a relationship of intimacy, or victimised by an enthusiasm which it could not be expected to share.

This constant and happy subordination of ourselves to others does not strike the observer only because it is so complete. It is not the characteristic of the specially developed individual alone, for it is recognised and required, in all degrees of delicacy, by society at large. Unselfishness and the desire to serve stand out in the Western personality against a background of individualistic institutions, and convey an impression of the eagerness and struggle of pity, without which the world would certainly be the poorer. But the Eastern woman is unaware of any defiance of institutions. Her charities are required of her. Her vows and penances are unknown, even to her husband, but were they told, they would excite no remark in a community where all make similar sacrifices. This is only to say that she is more deeply self-effacing and more effectively altruistic than any Western. The duty of tending the sick is so much a matter of course that it would not occur to her to

erect a hospital or to attempt to learn nursing. Here she misses something doubtless, for the modern organisation of skill has produced a concentration of attention on method that avails to save much suffering. Still, we must not too readily assume that our own habit of massing together all the sick and hungry and insane and isolating them in worlds visited throughout with like afflictions to their own proceeds entirely from a sense of humanity on our part, though it has not failed to secure some excellent results.

Much is sometimes made of the fact that Gautama Buddha, brought face to face with weariness, disease and death, went forth to find for man a new religion, whereas the Christ put out His hand to heal the leper and raise the dead. It would be cruel at such a juncture to point out that both these great personages were orientals, manifesting different phases of the Asiatic attitude towards pain. It is better, leaving to Europe her unaccountable assumption that she has some exclusive right in the Teacher of Galilee, to enter into the question as it appears to the Eastern mind, on its own merits. So viewed, it would be pointed out that the dead raised must still die again, that the leper healed was still in danger of disease, whereas Nirvana means release as it were into a new dimension, whereon no consciousness of either health or sickness can ever intrude. Again taking the story of Buddha as it stands, we must remember its background of the *Jataka* Birth—Stories. And here we see that the Great Renunciation is only accounted

for in the eyes of the Indian people by the inwrought power of the sacrifice of his own life repeated five hundred times for the immediate good of others. The establishment of hundreds of hospitals for men and beasts, nay, the filling of countless hearts with pity and with peace, are only some of the results of prince Siddhartha's choice.

Women are the guardians of humanity's ethical ideals. The boy would not volunteer to carry the dead to the burning ghat, if his mother had not brought him up from babyhood to admire the deed. The husband would not be so strenuous to return home at his best, if his wife did not understand and appreciate his noblest side. But more than this, they are themselves the perpetual illustrations of those ideals. The words, "He that will be chief among you, let him be your servant," fall on Western ears with a certain sense of sublime paradox. But the august speaker uttered the merest truism of that simple Eastern world in which He moved. He roused no thrill of surprise in the minds of His hearers. For to teach, his own mother was chief and yet servant of all.

Those who, knowing the East, read the list of the seven corporal works of mercy, may well start to imagine themselves back in the Hindu home, watching its laborious, pious women as they move about their daily tasks, never forgetting that the first necessity is to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to harbour the homeless, and the like, and that till these things are done, their own

wants must not be met. Truly the East is eternally the mother of religions, simply solely because she has assimilated as ordinary social functions, what the West holds to be only the duty of officialism, or the message of the Church. To those who deeply understand, it may well seem that Christianity in Europe is neither more nor less than a vast mission of the Asiatic Life.

MONASTIC LIFE IN INDIA.*

BY SISTER DEVAMATA.

IN India the religious life is not a distinct vocation taken up here and there by an isolated member of the community. It is the basis of all living. Every child born into a Hindu family may be said to be born into the religious life; every act thereafter is directly or indirectly a religious act; and each new step in the earthly career is marked off by a religious ceremony. The songs that lull him on his mother's lap are sacred songs; the stories that stimulate his awakening mind are of the great saints and spiritual heroes. Has he perchance a toy? It is a miniature sacred image. Does he play? It is at worship with bits of a broken earthen-pot as his sacramental vessels. The songs and games of his school-room are most often of the shepherd days of Sri Krishna at Vrindavan or of Lord Rama in his forest exile; and even the scavenger boy as he drives his ill-smelling cart along the country road sings gaily of Divine things.

The first lessons in literature or history are learned in a temple porch or on a school verandah in the cool stillness of the evening, when some itinerant *pandit* chants to the vibrant notes of the tambour the ringing metres of the great Epics, the

* From the *Message of the East*, America.

Mahabharatam or the *Ramayanam*. Or perhaps in the hushed hours before dawn, the father will rouse his little sleeping brood from their last slumber, and while the mother busies herself about the house, he will teach them of their saints and scriptures. As the boys pass out into active life, it is the monastery more often than the club which draws them at the close of their day's work; and busy doctors, lawyers and government officials will gather at the feet of some simple, holy man to hear him expound the Vedas or to chant together the praises of the Lord. With coming age more and more is the daily routine permeated with religious thought and practice; until the man or woman who began by bringing religion into every part of life, ends by taking the whole of life into religion.

Along the way, the Hindu declares, human existence falls naturally into four stages:—child-life, student life, the householder's life and forest life (or a life of religious retirement), each with its special duties and opportunities for spiritual development. Yet it is not believed that every soul must necessarily pass through all these stages in each birth. Since to the Hindu, life is not merely a stretch of seventy years, but a consecutive journey through many earth lives back to God, it is quite possible that a man may have learned all the lessons of the earlier stages and be born here with a natural tendency to the forest life. Whether it come at the beginning or at the end, however, to every Hindu this is the

highest point to be attained, the culmination of all human effort and achievement; and the man who has entered on the life of renunciation so far transcends all social and caste restrictions that even a king comes down from his throne to bow and touch his feet—though perhaps the beggar monk was once a pariah.

In India, however, taking up the monastic life means a very different thing from what it means in the West. It is not passing from a home into an institution, from a family into a larger household. It is going out into the open, the sky the only roof, the ground the only bed, and chance alms from door to door the only food. Caste, kinship, name, fortune, all are merged in a larger measure of things. The whole human race becomes the family of the *Sannyasi* or monk, every living being must be equally dear to his heart, every part of the world must be equally his home. Because he seeks to rise above body and ego and realize his soul, he must renounce all that is related to the body and little self,—comfort, ease, money, the special community and associations of his birth. He must transcend the physical, if he would reach the spiritual. Yet all this must be done with no sense of giving up. As a mountain climber reduces his luggage to a minimum and rejoices in the lightness of his kit, so must the *Sannyasi* feel. He is setting out on a journey and he must not weight himself with material possessions and concerns. The wrench of renunciation must be forgotten in the joy

of expanding spiritual consciousness. He must be like the man who, having found the pearl of great price, sells all he has to buy it. And when this call comes no Hindu dares gainsay it, for it is the voice of the Lord, before which every human voice must be silent.

Nor are these acts of sudden and complete renunciation rare in India. A religious play at the theatre, a chance word in the street, a vision of higher things in meditation, the touch of a holy man, are even to-day sending men out from offices, counting rooms and palaces to search for God. The story is told of a rich man in Bengal, who, while taking his evening bath after a day of pleasure in his garden house on the Ganges, overheard a *dhobi* or washerman chiding his wife, because "the day was nearly gone and she had not yet burned her banana stalk to ash." The word "banana stalk" and "desire" closely resemble each other in Bengalee, and Lala Babu, understanding, "The day has nearly gone and you have not yet burned your desires to ashes," started as if suddenly awakened from a sound sleep. Tearing his rich cloth into a narrow strip, he bound it about his loins, went out from his house, travelled to Vrindavan (the birthplace of Sri Krishna) as a beggar and from that day no money ever touched his hand. He lived on alms, gave himself up to prayer and earnest practice of that purity or singleness of heart which brings the vision of God, until he became a great saint, noted for his lowliness and spiritual wisdom.

Only a few years ago while I was in Calcutta, there came a married couple from the South. They were of the merchant caste, rich and still in their thirties, yet the husband was bringing his wife to take her first vows in religion. "I cannot give myself up to the forest life," he said, "because my brothers have been less successful than I and their families are dependent on me. But my wife has fulfilled her duties. Our two daughters are well married; and I should feel it a great sin to keep her from following out the deep religious longing she has always had. I have taken the first vows of *Brahmacharya* (godliness and continence) with her. Now we shall go home together and wait two years. Then I shall bring her back and leave her with the Order. I know that her life of spiritual consecration will bring blessing to the whole family."

In entering the monastic life, all initiation is given by the individual Guru, or spiritual teacher, who must himself be a *Sannyasi*, or monk. Is he a member of a special monastic Order? Then the neophyte may be regarded as a member of the same Order; but this is a secondary consideration. The initiation is primarily not into an institution but into a new life of selfless devotion to Truth; not into an association with a brotherhood or sisterhood, but into direct companionship with God. His daily prayer becomes: "O Supreme Lord! Thou art my Mother. Thou art my Father. Thou art my Friend and Companion. Thou art all my learning. Thou art all my wealth. Thou art my all in all."

The first initiation, into *Brahmacharya*, vows the disciple to a life of spotless purity, of absolute simplicity and above all of service. It is believed that only through constant service, perhaps the most menial, can body and mind be purified and prepared to receive the Truth. In the old days the disciple went to his Guru in some quiet hermitage hid away in the heart of the forest, and his daily duties were to bring firewood from the jungle, water from the stream, to cut fresh bamboo poles to rebuild the hut or collect dried palm leaves to mend the thatch. And when these simple tasks were finished the boy would sit at the feet of his Master and learn from him the Sacred Teachings of the Scriptures. The chief lessons, however, were given not in words but through hourly contact with an enlightened soul. It was the Kindergarten system applied to spiritual training. The disciple was taught what holiness was by watching a holy life. He learned of purity and unselfishness by living with a pure and selfless character; just as a little child growing up in daily association with a naturalist comes to know all the birds and flowers without apparent effort or study. Often days passed by in perfect silence, when the Guru was so wrapped in contemplation that none could approach him. The sincerity and earnestness of the neophyte were also tested in this way. It is on record that a disciple served the great Sankara eleven years before the Master even spoke to him; and in the Upanishads we read of this service stretching over

long periods of time before the ultimate Truth was revealed.

Outer conditions may have changed since then, but the fundamental principles, methods and ideals for the period of *Brahmacharya* remain the same to-day as in Vedic times. It is a life of humble, loving service near the Master, learning through obedience and devotion the lessons of the spirit. Throughout there is no violence of enforced discipline. There is as much of play and simple gaiety as there is of work and grave study. It is told of Sri Ramakrishna that one day a stranger, coming to the Temple to see him, was amazed to find the great Paramahamsa (enlightened soul) playing leap-frog with his disciples; and frequently was he heard to say: "I would not have anything to do with a religion that had not a laugh in it." Those who enter upon the life of *Vairagyam* (non-attachment) must feel the joy of the Lord, the freedom and light-heartedness that come through renunciation. It is believed that no one should renounce the world and take up the life of the spirit unless he feels that he is exchanging a baser thing for a greater, that his "loss" is literally "a gain," as Saint Paul declares. Does he feel this? Then he need not be driven to any rigid training, any more than an eager student has to be driven to his books. God, he is told, is most easily perceived where opposites meet hence the best hours for meditation are at dawn when night melts into day, or at sunset when day fades into night. Does the neophyte care too much

for his sleep or comfort to remember these hours—then what use to ring a bell to remind him? His ear is not yet open to the Divine call, so let him go home and serve God in the world. Does he heed more the hunger of his body than the hunger of his soul, so that of his own accord he does not curb his appetites—then of what avail to lock him in a cloister? Better for him to live a godly married life at his own fireside. Yet he is not made to feel any sense of failure or degradation in returning to the householder's life. It is equally honorable, he is told, and if properly lived, may lead to high spiritual attainment; but the ideal remains none the less clear in every Hindu mind that the highest state is, as Christ put it, not to keep all the commandments as a member of the social body, but to "sell all thou hast, give to the poor, take up thy cross and follow me." He who goes away sorrowing is not yet ready to pass on to higher things but he who hears the call, and with a heart aflame with eager longing follows it, for him all the discipline and denial which the vocation itself involves, become a blessed privilege, which, without need of coercion, he practises for himself.

When months or years of selfless service have subdued the ego and a first vision of the Divine has fortified the *Brahmacharin* in his life of detachment, then the Gurn bids him make ready to set out on the ruder way of the *Sannyasi*—one who renounces all. Mixing a special natural clay or powdered rock with water, he dyes his cloth the bright orange, typical of

the flame of wisdom and renunciation; he shaves his head; and receiving a begging bowl from his Master's hand, he sets out to beg food, which he cooks and offers to his Guru. He then receives the last solemn rites of *Sannyasa* (complete renunciation) and taking his begging bowl and staff, he goes forth alone, with the parting injunction from his Guru to follow his staff, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and never remaining more than three days in any one place, lest some new bondage of attachment seize upon him. Through this first period this staff becomes the symbol of renunciation; and since in shape it suggests the Christian bishop's crozier, one is tempted to ask whether it was not the cross or crozier of renunciation which Christ bade the man take up to follow Him.

The first thought of the young *Sannyasi*, or monk, thus thrown out upon himself, is to make a pilgrimage on foot to all the holy shrines of India. Fulfilling literally the injunction of Jesus to his disciples, he wanders under the burning heat of the sun or beaten by the storm, carrying "neither purse nor scrip." One such Swami known to me, while crossing the great desert of Gujarat in the dense darkness of a tropical night, was overtaken by a band of rude hill men who searched him in vain for money. Wishing to see what manner of man it could be thus alone in the vast waste of sand with not even a *pice* (one-sixth of a cent) on his person, they struck a light, and when they saw the youthful face under the

shorn head, the orange robe and the little Gita in his hand, they prostrated before him in humble apology and begged to carry him in safety across the desert. For even the worst criminal in India bows down before the *Sannyasi*, and no one commands so much respect as one who has renounced all for the sake of the Ideal. Still to-day, when many go clothed in the yellow cloth who do not wear it worthily, the Hindu welcomes, honors and feeds worthy and unworthy alike, saying: "It is the state of renunciation which I honor. If the monk is not a true *Sannyasi*, that lies between him and God. It is not for me to judge."

Nor are these wholly selfish days thus spent in humble pilgrimage. Through every village and hamlet unconsciously the *Sannyasi* carries the messsge of the Lord, and they are the God-appointed teachers of the people. As Swami Vivekananda declares, in his "Inspired Talks," "The beggar monk carries religion to every door." Has any one a doubt or question? At once he brings it to some *Sannyasi* resting under a tree by the road-side or in a shaded temple porch; and often a householder will beg such a holy man to live with him for months at a time and become the teacher of himself and his family. Not men only but women, too, thus wander, so safe that the most timid have gone on pilgrimages of two years' duration, or more, fearless and joyous in the companionship of the Lord. The married woman may go veiled, but the *Sannyasini*, who has

consecrated herself to God, walks freely with face uncovered, for no one looks upon her except with deepest reverence. Many of them, too, have been teachers. Some of the great Vedic Scriptures were indeed written by women, and it was from such a learned and pious *Sannyasini* that Sri Ramakrishna took his first lessons.

The early monastic system of India was free from the trammels of organization. It was Buddha who first created the fixed institution of the monastery; and nearly all the monastic systems of the West can be traced to Buddhism. Having broken the crystallization in which hereditary caste had imprisoned society, he laid the foundation of a new and equally dangerous social crystallization in making the cloister the one sure refuge from the ills of life. No one ever preached a loftier ethical ideal than he; but as time went on and thousands gathered within convent and monastery walls, the old ideal of *Vairagyam* was lost, corruptions crept in one by one, until India was sinking under the weight of them and a mighty reformer—Sankaracharya—sprang up, swept the degenerated remnants of Buddhism out of India and raised aloft once more the pure ideals of the Vedas. The monastery, however, remained, cleansed and purified, and still remains. Not a monastery, however, as in the West, with Gothic cloisters killed with hooded monks, but a simple, barren house, where the one fixed resident is God, while the other inmates go and come, scarcely a

handful there at any one time. It is the worship and service of God which determines the whole routine of the day and all is done for Him as if He were an actual Presence in the house. All food is prepared for Him and offered to Him first, all flowers grown in the garden are solely to be laid at His feet at the hours of worship. Is a new class to be begun? The text-book is first laid on the altar and the Lord's blessing asked. Is a new work to be undertaken? The plan is first told to God in the chapel. No one leaves the monastery without taking "the permission of God"; no one returns without coming to the shrine to tell Him of it. The monks live like children in the Mother's house—going off for long periods in solitary wandering or in loving service to others, then coming back at intervals to rest and pray at the Divine Mother's feet. It is a life of true freedom, in which renunciation and service are the watchwords and God-vision the goal.

THE ELEVATION OF THE MASSES.

By Swami Vivekananda.

SWAMI Vivekananda's epistles to his numerous friends and admirers contain many pathetic appeals for the elevation of the masses. The following extracts are scattered over a number of epistles published in the fifth volume of the Mayavati Edition of the Swamiji's complete works :—

I.

To what a ludicrous state are we brought ! If a *bhangi* comes to anybody, as a *bhangi*, he would be shunned as the plague ; but no sooner does he get a cupful of water poured upon his head with some mutterings of prayers by a *Padri*, and get a coat to his back, no matter now threadbare, and come into the room of the most orthodox Hindu—I don't see the man who then dare refuse him a chair and a hearty shake of the hands !! Irony can go no farther. And come and see what they, the *Padris*, are doing here in the Dakshin (Deccan). They are converting the lower classes by lakhs ; and in Travancore, the most priest-ridden country in India—where every bit of land is owned by the Brahmans, and the females, even of the *royal family*, hold it as high honour to

live in concubinage with the Brahmans—nearly one-fourth has become Christian ! And I cannot blame them; what part have they in David and what in Jesus ? When, when, O Lord, shall man be brother to man ?

II.

India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand other young men—men, mind, and not brutes. The English Government has been the instrument brought over here by the Lord, to break your crystallised civilisation, and Madras supplied the first men who helped in giving the English a footing. How many men, unselfish, thorough-going men, is Madras ready now to supply, to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor—and bread to their hungry mouths—enlightenment to the people at large—and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers ?

III.

And, oh, how my heart ached to think of what we think of the poor, the low in India. They have no chance, no escape, no way to climb up. The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help —they cannot rise, try however they may. They sink lower and lower every day, they feel the blow, showering upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. And the result is

slavery. Thoughtful people within the last few years have seen it, but unfortunately laid it at the door of the Hindu religion, and to them, the only way of bettering is by crushing this grandest religion of the world. Hear me, my friend, I have discovered the secret through the grace of the Lord. Religion is not at fault. On the other hand your religion is not at fault. On the other hand your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self-multiplied. But is was the want of practical application, the want of sympathy—the want of heart. The Lord once more came to you as Buddha and taught you how to feel, how to sympathise with the poor, the miserable, the sinner, but heard Him not. Your priests invented the horrible story that the Lord was here for deluding demons with false doctrines! True, indeed, but we are the demons, not those that believed. And just as the Jews denied the Lord Jesus and are since that day wandering over the world as homeless beggars, tyrannised over by everybody, so you are bond-slaves to any nation that thinks it worth while to rule over you. Ah, tyrants! you do not know that the obverse is tyranny, and the reverse, slavery. The slave and the tyrant are synonymous.

B——and G——may remember one evening at Pondicherry, we are discussing the matter of sea-voyage with a Pandit, and I shall always remember his brutal gestures and *Kadapina* never! They do not know that India is a very small part of the world, and the whole world looks down with contempt upon

the three hundred millions of earth-worms crawling upon the fair soil of India and trying to oppress each other. This state of things must be removed, not by destroying religion but by following the great teachings of the Hindu faith, and joining with it the wonderful sympathy of that logical development of Hinduism—Buddhism.

A hundred thousand men and women, fixed with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the down-trodden will go over the length and breadth of the land preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up—the gospel of equality.

No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the neck of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism. The Lord has shown me that religion is not at fault, but it is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of doctrines of Paramarthic and Vyavaharic.

Despair not, remember the Lord says in the Gita: "To work you have the right, but not to the result." Give up your loins, my boy. I am called by the Lord for this. I have been dragged through a whole life full of crosses and tortures, I have seen the nearest and dearest die, almost of starvation—I have been ridiculed, distrusted, and have suffered for my

sympathy for very men who scoff and scorn. Well, my boy, this the school of misery, which is also the school for great souls and prophets for the cultivation of sympathy, of patience, and above all, of an indomitable iron will which quakes not even if the universe be pulverised at our feet. I pity them. It is not their fault. They are children, yea, veritable children, though they be great and high in society. Their eyes see nothing beyond their little horizon of a few yards—the routine work, eating, drinking, earning and begetting, following each other in mathematical precision. They know nothing beyond, happy little souls! Their sleep is never disturbed. Their nice little brown studies of lives never rudely shocked by the wail of woe, of misery, of degradation and poverty that has filled the Indian atmosphere—the result of centuries of oppression. They little dream of the ages of tyranny, mental, moral and physical, that has reduced the image of God to a mere beast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother, to a slave to bear children; and life itself, a curse. But there are others who see, feel, and shed tears of blood in their hearts, who think that there is a remedy for it, and who are ready to apply this remedy at any costs, even to the giving up of life. And "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Is it not then natural, my friends, that they have no time to look down from their heights to the vagaries of these contemptible little insects, ready every moment to spit their little venoms?

Trust not to the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful. Have faith in the Lord; no policy, it is nothing. Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it *shall come*. I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the world to this strange land, seeking for help. The Lord is great. I know he will help me. I may perish of cold or hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Go now this minute to the temple of Parthasarathi, and before Him who was friend to the poor and lowly cowherds of Gocool, who never shrank to embrace the pariah Guhak, who accepted the invitation of a prostitute in preference to that of the nobles and saved her in His incarnation as Buddha—yea, down on your faces before Him, and make a great sacrifice; the sacrifice of a whole life for them, for whom He comes from time to time, whom He loves above all, the poor, the lowly, the oppressed. Vow then to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day.

It is not the work of a day, and the path is full of the most deadly thorns. But Parthasarathi is ready to be our Sarathi, we know that, and in His name and with eternal faith in Him, set fire to the

mountain of misery that has been heaped upon India for ages—and it shall be burned down. Come then, look it in the face, brethren, it is a grand task and we are so low. But we are the sons of Light and children of God. Glory unto the Lord, we will succeed. Hundreds will fall in the struggle—hundreds will be ready to take it up. I may die here unsuccessful, another will take up the task. You know the disease, you know the remedy, only have faith. Do not look up to the so-called rich and great; do not care for the heartless intellectual writers, and their cold-blooded newspaper articles. Faith—sympathy, fiery faith and fiery sympathy! Life is nothing, death is nothing—hunger nothing, cold nothing. Glory unto the Lord—march on, the Lord is our General. Do not look to see who falls—forward—onward! Thus and thus we shall go on, brethren. One falls, and another takes up the work.

IV.

See R—and others from time to time and urge them to sympathise with the masses of India. Tell them how they are standing on the neck of the poor, and that they are not fit to be called men if they do not try to raise them up. Be fearless, the Lord is with you, and He will yet raise the starving and ignorant millions of India.

V.

If any is born of a low caste in our country he is gone for ever, there is no hope for him. Why, what a tyranny it is! There are possibilities, opportunities

and hope for every individual in this country. To-day he is poor, to-morrow he may become rich and learned and respected. Here every one is anxious to help the poor. In India there is a howling cry that we are very poor, but how many charitable associations are there for the well-being of the poor? How many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of the millions of poor in India? Are we *men*? What are we doing for their livelihood, for their improvement? We do not touch them, we avoid their company! Are we men? Those thousands of Brahmans—what are they doing for the low, down-trodden masses of India? "Don't touch," "Don't touch," is the only phrase that plays upon their lips! How mean and degraded has our eternal religion become at their hands! Wherein does our religion lie now? In "Don't-touchism" alone, and nowhere else!

VI.

I have received K———'s letters. With the question whether caste shall go or come I have nothing to do. My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves. Whether there should be caste or not, whether women should be perfectly free or not, does not concern me, "Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, or growth and well-being." Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down.

Caste or no caste, creed or no creed, any man, or class, or caste, or nation, or institution which bars the power of free thought and the action of an individual—even so long as that power does not injure others—is devilish and must go down.

My whole ambition in life is, to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation will be done by Nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring the religion."

VII.

Preach the idea of elevating the masses by means of a central college, and bringing education as well as religion to the door of the poor by means of missionaries trained in this college. Try to interest everybody.

VIII.

I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. I see what they call the poor of this country, and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two

hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way. Him, I call a Mahatman, whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratman. Let us unite our wills in continued prayer for their good. We may die unknown, unpitied, unbewailed, without accomplishing anything—but not one thought will be lost. It will take effect sooner or later. My heart is too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men—who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor—wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now no better than hungry savages! We are poor, my brothers, we are nobodies, but such have been always the instruments of the Most High. The Lord bless you all.

IX.

When you have succeeded in this paper, start vernacular ones on the same lines in Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, etc. We must reach the masses. The Madrassis are good, energetic, and all that, but the

land of Sankaracharya has lost the spirit of renunciation, it seems.

X

A press representative asked the Swamiji :—

"What are your views with regard to the Indian masses ? "

" Oh, we are awfully poor, and our masses are very ignorant about secular things. Our masses are very good because poverty here is not a crime. Our masses are not violent. Many times I was near being mobbed in America and England, only on account of my dress. But I never heard of such a thing in India as a man being mobbed because of peculiar dress. In every other respect our masses are much more civilised than the European masses."

" What will you propose for the improvement of your masses ? "

" We have to give them secular education. We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion."

"But do you think, Swamiji, it is a task that can be easily accomplished ? "

" It will, of course, have gradually to be worked out. But if there are enough self-sacrificing young fellows, who I hope may work with me, it can be done to-morrow. It all depends upon the zeal and the self-sacrifice brought to the task."

"But if the present degraded condition is due to their past Karma, Swamiji, how do you think they could get out of it easily, and how do you propose to help them ? "

The Swamiji readily answered: "Karma is the eternal assertion of human freedom. If we can bring ourselves down by our Karma, surely it is in our power to raise ourselves by it. The masses besides have not brought themselves down altogether by their own Karma so that we should give them better environments to work in. I do not propose any levelling up of castes. Caste is a very good thing. Caste is the plan we want to follow. What caste really is, not one in a million understands. There is no country in the world without caste. In India, from caste we reach to the point where there is no caste. Caste is based throughout on that principle. The plan in India is to make everybody Brahman, the Brahmin being the ideal of humanity. If you read the history of India you will find that attempts have always been made to raise the lower classes. Many are the classes that have been raised. Many more will follow till the whole will become Brahman. That is the plan. We have only to raise them without bringing down anybody. And this has mostly to be done by the Brahmans themselves, because it is the duty of every aristocracy to dig its own grave; and the sooner it does so, the better for all. No time should be lost. Indian caste is better than the caste which prevails in Europe or America. I do not say

it is absolutely good. Where will you be if there were no caste? Where would be your learning and other things, if there were no caste? There would be nothing left for the Europeans to study if caste had never existed! The Mohamedans would have smashed everything to pieces. Where do you find the Indian Society standing still? It is always on the move. Sometimes, as in the times of foreign invasions, the movement has been slow, at other times quicker. This is what I say to my countrymen. I do not condemn them. I look into their past. I find that under the circumstances no nation could do more glorious work. I tell them that they have done well. I only ask them to do better."

THE HINDU IDEAL OF NATIONALISM.*

By Swami Sharvananda.

OF all the forces that work to build up the unity of a nation the most potent are—race, culture, religion, government and, country or geographical position. But besides these there is another force too subtle to be detected in the apparent aspect of a nation's life, yet its all-absorbing potent existence is perceived all the more when we go to understand the destiny of the nation as is deciphered in the concluding pages of its life-history. The Western sociologist is yet to understand this formative energy in the life of a nation; he is yet to detect this original force that collects other forces and binds fabric to fabric in building up the grand body of the nation. This force, in the language of the Indian Philosophers, is the collective Karma of the people.

No true social philosophy can accept the birth of a nation as a pure accident through chanced concourse of the formative forces ennumerated above. In this world of cause and effect, there is room neither for chance, nor for accident. So the birth of a nation is sequential to some purposiveness which guides the whole course of its life till its reaching the destiny. As the seed of a particular kind of tree assimilates all that its environments have to offer it and brings forth

* From the *Vedanta Kesari.*

only the particular kind of tree and thus fulfils the purpose of its being in the economy of Nature, just so a nation is ushered into existence to serve a particular purpose in the evolution of mankind. This ultimate purpose of a nation's life is what is called the collective Karma of the nation. It is the seed of the nation. All its members or earlier generations may not be quite conscious of the fact, yet all the same, every one has to conform to the general tendency of the life and fulfil its ultimate destiny. History reveals the fact that every one of the ancient nations, through all its life effort, gave birth to one or more ideas and unlocked a mass of gigantic energy which bore the whole of humanity onward on the path of evolution. Some of the modern social philosophers like Benjamin Kid and others have come to recognise this fact, but their recognition reflects at best a superficial pragmatic view and thus fails to comprehend the formative spiritual force in the creation of a nation.

History tells us that a nation is hewn out of a race, (or even races) chiselled by culture, religion and government and installed in a country. But close scrutiny reveals another fact; the shapes and destinies of nations vary according to the stress laid on one of these three chisels. Almost all the Western nations have been shaped with the hard chisel of government, and culture and religion have played only an auxiliary part. Modern America presents us the most glaring example of the truth. For the matter of that we find

all European and American nations basing themselves upon huge political organisations. With them it is the government that sustains the national unity, and politics is their life-blood. Culture, religion and everything else must come, through government. If a nation has to grow or expand, that too must come through the government. As President Wilson puts it, "Nation is the organism, government the organ, and the organism can work only through the organ." This is the typical view of the Western Nationalism.

This supersession of politics over culture and religion in the West has all its concomitant evils. It has made the Western nations arrogant, aggressive and imperial. We hear much of the Christian ethics from the theologians, but Ingersoll's verdict stands there ever unchallenged,—"Christ is never recognised in our legislature, Parliaments or Congress." The law of expediency rules them all.

Nietzsche, you are too true,—"true Christian was he who died on the cross."

But history presents a different spectacle when we come to the oriental nations, specially to India. Here through unnumbered ages the feeling of unity of the people was evolved, not with the help of government, but through the sweet and gentle persuasion of education, culture and religion,—through Dharma. Even in the prehistoric days of the Vedas when all the modern nations of Europe were yet unconceived in the womb of futurity, we mark the feeling of unity among the Indo-Aryans. Their common traditions,

and common culture created a communal consciousness in them the like of which is not found anywhere else even to-day. They called themselves Aryas and followed their Sanatana Dharma. This Arya-consciousness is the keynote of Indian Nationalism. As an Englishman is aglowed with national pride when he says, 'I am an Englishman,' just so an Indian evinced his national pride by saying "I am an Arya, I follow the rules of conduct of an Arya." And who is an Arya?—

"An Arya is he who performs what ought to be done and refrains from what ought not to be done and observes the proper rules of conduct."

Rig Veda tells us, "Those who are not Aryas are Dasyus."

From the above it becomes clear that the ancient Indo-Aryans tried to build up their nationalism on culture, imbued with deep ethical and spiritual fervour. In this nationalism government did play but little part; the people's communal feeling needed no ministration from politics.

The whole country might have been torn into innumerable shreds of principalities and governments, but that did not touch the compactness of the cultural communalism of the people. There was free brotherly intercourse all over the land,—the Aryavarta. Even the poorest of the Aryas would consider himself superior to the greatest of the *Mlechchas* and *Yavanas* in culture and yielded palm to none in religion. Their whole life was cast all over the land in one mould, the mould of Dharma.

Even to-day the soul of the Hindu is deeply wedded to the cultural communalism of his ancient forefathers. Just ask even the poorest Brahmin cringing in abject poverty to accept food from a non-Hindu, and you would mark the warm expression of his national pride rising within his heart. He would rather die than accept food from what he considers polluted hands! They may call it superstition. But is not all nationalism a superstition? Are not the colour bar and "white man's burden" offspring of worse, nay more heinous, superstition? A Hindu recognises at once his kinship with his brother-Hindu, wheresoever he may meet him. Is it not a true mark of nationalism?

Sometimes it is urged how there can exist any communal feeling among the people when there is so much of discordant elements like different castes, creeds, etc. But none save those who have no real knowledge of practical operations of social life can put such questions. As it actually obtains, we find castes and creeds existing in every Human Society. If we remember aright, it was the late Mr. W. T. Stead who once observed in reference to America, "I have never seen any country where people are so free as in America, and also so caste-ridden, again, as in America." Even European nations are not free from castes and creeds.

The next point may be urged that the ancient Hindu India might have been a nation, but modern India is not. India of to-day is not the abode of the

Hindus only. They form only sixty-eight per cent. of the whole population. The remaining thirty-two per cent. is filled up by other religionists. So Hindu culture and Hindu tradition are not and cannot be the cementing factor for the whole of the people. A little sifting of the question will expose the weakness of the argument. The Mohamedans and Christians who form the bulk of the non-Hindu population of India to-day, are chiefly native converts; and so the ancient Hindu culture is still coursing through their veins. Even a superficial observer can notice the similarity of temperaments among the children of this sacred soil though professing different religions. And again one would not fail to notice the dissimilarities between an Indian Mohamedan or Christian and, say, a Turkish Mohamedan or a European Christian. Sister Nivedita observes with her characteristic keenness of insight, "with all alike, love of home, pride of race, idealism of woman, is a passion. With every one, devotion to India as India, finds some characteristic expression. To the Hindu of all provinces, his Motherland is the seat of holiness, the chosen home of righteousness, the land of the seven sacred rivers, the place to which, sooner or later, must come all souls in the quest of God. To the son of Islam, her earth is the dust of his saints. She is the seal upon his greatest memories. Her villages are his home. In her future lies his hope." In another place she says, "when Egypt was building her Pyramids, India was putting a parallel energy into the memorising of the

Vedas, and the patient elaboration of the philosophy of the Upanishads. The culture begun so early, has proceeded to the present day without a break, holding its own on its own ground and saturating Indian Society with a standard of thought and feeling, far in advance of those common in another countries. *A profound emotional development and refinement is the most marked trait of Indian personality,* and it is common to all the races and creeds of the vast sub-continent, from those of the highest civilisation to those of the lowest and most primitive. Again, the keystone of the arch of family devotion, alike for Hindu and Mohamedan, lies in the feeling of the son for his mother. Whatever may change or fluctuate, here our feet are on a rock. There can be no variation in the tenderness and intensity of this relationship. In it, personal affection rises to the height of religious passion." Moreover, we find the existence of perfect amity between Hindus and Mohamedans where there is no interested party to sow the seed of disruption and cleavage, as is the case in H. H. Nizam's Dominions. There, the current saying, (One son-in-law is Raja, another son-in-law is Nabab), speaks eloquently of the social cordiality between the two classes."

Moreover, we may say in passing, that the religious differences are no index of want of nationalism. In that case, America, England, France, Japan, and even Germany should be no nations at all. In all these countries people profess various denominations of Christianity, Bahhaism, Mohamedanism, Atheism,

Buddhism, etc. Even among the Christian denominations, the differences are sometimes felt more bitterly than between Hindus and Mohamedans.

So, it spells only ignorance and self-interestedness to assert with a few shibboleths that 'India is not a nation in the true sense of the word.' India was, and still *is*, a nation in the true sense of the word. Only her nationalism neither was, nor is, political, but *cultural*. She never felt her communal unity in politics, but in the consciousness of common culture and Dharma.

This nationalism of culture and Dharma carries always within it the seed of internationalism and universal brotherhood. That is why we mark that unlike the nation-worshippers of the West, its votaries never developed, in the words of Ravindranath, "that political and commercial ambition which is but the ambition of cannibalism," and which always ends in the "carnival of suicide." It never made them think, as Swami Vivekananda puts it, that "the quickest way of becoming rich is to rob the neighbour and exploit the weak." This cultural nationalism of India alone has saved her from making the material prosperity as the be-all and-end-all of life. It alone has made it possible by giving them most congenial environment for innumerable godly-souls of unparalleled spiritual genius to be born in this country and to raise by their life-effort man the brute into man the divine. Will Modern India thoroughly comprehend this cultural nationalism of hers, and cry 'halt' to the headlong rush for imitating the ideal of the West?

PART IV.—PERSONAL.

MY MASTER.*

By Swami Vivekananda.

"WHENEVER virtue subsides and vice prevails, I come down to help mankind," declares Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Whenever this world of ours, on account of growth, on account of added circumstances, requires a new adjustment, a wave, of power comes, and as man is acting on two planes, the spiritual and the material, waves of adjustment come on both planes. On the one side of adjustment on the material plane, Europe has mainly been the basis during modern times, and of the adjustment on the other, the spiritual plane, Asia has been the basis throughout the history of the world. To-day, man requires one more adjustment on the spiritual plane; to-day when material ideas are at the height of their glory and power; to-day, when man is likely to forget his divine nature, through his growing dependence on matter, and is likely to be reduced to a mere money-making machine, an adjustment is necessary, and the power is coming, the voice has spoken, to drive away the clouds of gathering materialism. The power has

* Lecture delivered at New York under the auspices of the Vedanta Society.

been set in motion which, at no distant date, will bring unto mankind once more the memory of their real nature, and again the place from which this power will start will be Asia. This world of ours is on the plan of the division of labour. It is vain to say that one man shall possess everything. Yet how childish we are! The baby in his childishness thinks that his doll is the only possession that is to be coveted in this whole universe. So a nation which is great in the possession of material powers, thinks that that is all that is to be coveted, that that is all that is meant by progress, that that is all that is meant by civilization, and if there are other nations which do not care to possess, and do not possess these powers, they are not fit to live, their whole existence is useless. On the other hand, another nation may think that mere material civilization is utterly useless. From the Orient came the voice which once told the world that if a man possesses everything that is under the sun or above it, and does not possess spirituality, what matters it? This is the Oriental type, the other is the Occidental type.

Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonizing, the mingling of these two ideals. To the Oriental, the world of spirit is as real as to the Occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the Oriental finds everything he wants or hopes for; in it he finds all that makes life real to him. To the Occidental, he is a dreamer; to the Oriental, the Occidental is a

dreamer, playing with dolls of five minutes, and he laughs to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later. Each calls the other a dreamer. But the Oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the Occidental, and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind happy, and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe this, will claim that happiness is in the machine, but it is always in the mind. It is the man who is lord of his mind who alone can become happy, and none else. But what, after all, is this power of machinery? Why should a man who can send a current of electricity through a wire be called a very great man, and a very intelligent man? Does not Nature do a million times more than that every moment? Why not then fall down and worship Nature? What matters it if you have power over the whole of the world, if you have mastered every atom in the universe? That will not make you happy unless you have the power of happiness in yourself, until you have conquered yourself. Man is born to conquer Nature, it is true, but the Occidental means by "Nature" only the physical or external nature. It is true that external nature is majestic, with its mountains, and oceans, and rivers, and with its infinite powers and varieties. Yet there is a more majestic internal nature of man, higher than the sun, moon and stars, higher than this earth of ours, higher than the physical universe, transcending

these little lives of ours; and it affords another field of study. There the Orientals excel, just as the Occidentals excel in the other. Therefore it is fitting that, whenever there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is also fitting that, when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-making, he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from him. When the Occident wants to learn about the spirit, about God, about the soul, about the meaning and the mystery of this universe, she must sit at the feet of the Orient to learn.

I am going to present before you the life of one man who has been the mover of such a wave in India. But before going into the life of this man, I will try to present before you the secret of India, what India means. If those whose eyes have been blinded by the glamour of material things, whose whole dedication of life is to eating and drinking and enjoying, whose whole ideal of possession is lands and gold, whose whole ideal of pleasure is in the sensations, whose god is money, and whose goal is a life of ease and comfort in this world, and death after that, whose minds never look forward, and who rarely think of anything higher than the sense of objects in the midst of which they live, if such as these go to India, what do they see? Poverty, squalor, superstition, darkness, hideousness everywhere. Why? Because in their minds enlightenment means dress, education, social politeness. Whereas Occidental nations have used every effort to improve their material position, India has done

differently. There lives the only race in the world which, in the whole history of humanity, never went beyond their frontiers to conquer anyone, who never coveted that which belonged to anyone else, and whose only fault was that their lands were so fertile, and their wits so keen, that they accumulated wealth by the hard labour of their hands, and so tempted other nations to come and despoil them. They are contented to be despoiled, and to be called barbarians, and in return they want to send to this world visions of the Supreme, to lay bare for the world the secrets of human nature, to rend the veil that conceals the real man, because they know the dream, because they know that behind this materialism lives the real divine nature of man which no sin can tarnish, no crime can spoil, no lust can kill, which the fire cannot burn, nor the water wet, which heat cannot dry, nor death kill, and to them this true nature of man is as real as any material object to the senses of an Occidental. Just as you are brave to jump at the mouth of a cannon with a hurrah; just as you are brave in the name of patriotism to stand up and give up your lives for your country, so are they brave in the name of God. There it is that when a man declares that this is a world of ideas, that it is all a dream, he casts off clothes and property to demonstrate that what he believes and thinks is true. There it is that a man sits on the banks of a river, when he has known that life is eternal, and wants to give up his body just as nothing, just as you can give

up a bit of straw. Therein lies their heroism, ready to face death as a brother, because they are convinced that there is no death for them. Therein lies the strength that has made them invincible through hundreds of years of oppression and foreign invasions, and foreign tyranny. The nation lives to-day, and in that nation, even in the days of the direst disaster, spiritual giants have never failed to arise. Asia produces giants in spirituality just as the Occident produces giants in politics, giants in science. In the beginning of the present century, when Western influence began to pour into India, when Western conquerors, with sword in hand, came to demonstrate to the children of the sages that they were mere barbarians, a race of dreamers, that their religion was but mythology, and God and soul and everything they had been struggling for were mere words without meaning, that the thousands of years of struggle, the thousands of years of endless renunciation, had all been in vain, the question began to be agitated among young men at the universities whether the whole national existence up to this date had been a failure, if they must begin anew on the Occidental plan, tear up their old books, burn their philosophies, drive away their preachers and break down their temples.

Did not the Occidental conqueror, the man who demonstrated his religion with sword and gun, say that all the old ways were mere superstition and idolatry? Children brought up and educated in the

new schools started on the Occidental plan, drank in these ideas from their childhood and it is not to be wondered at that doubts arose. But instead of throwing any superstition and making a real search after truth, the test of truth became: "What does the West say?" The priest must go, the Vedas must be burned, because the West has said so. Out of the feeling of unrest thus produced, there arose a wave of so-called reform in India.

If you wish to be a true reformer, three things are necessary. The first is to feel: do you really feel for your brothers? Do you really feel that there is so much misery in the world, so much ignorance and superstition? Do you really feel that men are your brothers? Does this idea come into your whole being? Does it run in your blood? Does it tingle in your veins? Does it course through every nerve and filament of your body? Are you full of that idea of sympathy? If you are, that is only the first step. You must think next if you have found any remedy. The old ideas may be all superstition, but in and around these masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth. Have you discovered means by which to keep that gold alone, without any of the dross? If you have done that, that is only the second step, one more thing is necessary. What is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed for gold, by thirst for fame, or power? Are you really sure that you can stand to your ideals, and work on, even if the whole world wants to crush you down? Are

you sure you know what you want, and will perform your duty, and that alone, even if your life is at stake? Are you sure that you will persevere so long as life endures, so long as one pulsation in the heart will last? Then you are a real reformer, you are a teacher, a master, a blessing to mankind! But man is so impatient, so shortsighted! He has not the patience to wait, he has not the power to see. He wants to rule, he wants results immediately. Why? He wants to reap the fruits himself, and does not really care for others. Duty for duty's sake is not what he wants. "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof," says Krishna. Why cling to results? Ours are the duties. Let the fruits take care of themselves. But man has no patience, he takes up any scheme and the larger number of would-be reformers all over the world can be classed under this heading.

As I have said, the idea of reform came to India when it seemed as if the wave of materialism that had invaded her shores would sweep away the teachings of the sages. But the nation had borne the shocks of a thousand such waves of change. This one was mild in comparison. Wave after wave had flooded the land, breaking and crushing everything for hundreds of years; the sword had flashed, and "Victory unto Allah" had rent the skies of India, but these floods subsided, leaving the national ideals unchanged.

The Indian nation cannot be killed. Deathless it

stands and it will stand so long as that spirit shall remain as the background, so long as her people do not give up their spirituality. Beggars they may remain, poor and poverty-stricken, dirt and squalor may surround them perhaps throughout all time, but let them not give up their God, let them not forget that they are the children of the sages. Just as in the West even the man in the street wants to trace his descent from some robber-baron of the Middle Ages, so in India even an Emperor on the throne wants to trace his descent from some beggar-sage in the forest, from a man who wore the bark of a tree, lived upon the fruits of the forest and communed with God. That is the type of descent we want, and while holiness is thus supremely venerated, India cannot die.

It was while reforms of various kinds were being inaugurated in India, that a child was born of poor Brahmin parents on the 20th of February, 1835, in one of the remote villages of Bengal. The father and mother were very orthodox people. The life of a really orthodox Brahmin is one of continuous renunciation. Very few things can he do, and over and beyond them the orthodox Brahmin must not occupy himself with any secular business. At the same time he must not receive gifts from everybody. You may imagine how rigorous that life becomes. You have heard of the Brahmins and their priestcraft many times, but very few of you have ever stopped to ask what makes this wonderful band of men the

rulers of their fellows. They are the poorest of all the classes in the country, and the secret of their power lies in their renunciation. They never covet wealth. Theirs is the poorest priesthood in the world, and, therefore, the most powerful. Even in this poverty, a Brahmin's wife will never allow a poor man to pass through the village without giving him something to eat. That is considered the highest duty of the mother in India; and because she is the mother it is her duty to be served last; she must see that everyone is served before her turn comes. That is why the mother is regarded as God in India. This particular woman, the mother of our present subject, was the very type of a Hindu mother. The higher the caste, the greater the restrictions. The lowest caste people can eat and drink anything they like, but as men rise in the social scale more and more restrictions come, and when they reach the highest caste, the Brahmin, the hereditary priesthood of India, their lives, as I have said, are very much circumscribed. Compared to Western manners their lives are of continuous asceticism. But they have great steadiness; when they get hold of an idea they carry it out to its very conclusion, and they keep hold of it generation after generation until they make something out of it. Once give them an idea and it is not easy to take it back again, but it is hard to make them grasp a new idea.

The orthodox Hindus, therefore, are very exclusive, living entirely within their own horizon of

thought and feeling. Their lives are laid down in our old books in every little detail, and the least detail is grasped with almost adamantine firmness by them. They would starve rather than eat a meal cooked by the hands of a man not belonging to their own small section of caste. But withal they have intensity and tremendous earnestness. That force of intense faith and religious life occurs often among the orthodox Hindus because their very orthodoxy comes from the tremendous conviction that it is right. We may not all think that that to which they hold on with such perseverance is right, but to them it is. Now it is written in our books that a man should always be charitable even to the extreme. If a man starves himself to death to help another man, to save that man's life, it is all right; it is even held that a man ought to do that. And it is expected of a Brahmin to carry this idea out to the very extreme. Those who are acquainted with the literature of India will remember a beautiful old story about this extreme charity, how a whole family, as related in the Mahabharata, starved themselves to death and gave their last meal to a beggar. This is not an exaggeration, for such things still exist. The characters of the father and mother of my Master were very much like that. Very poor they were and yet many a time the mother would starve herself a whole day to help a poor man. Of them this child was born and he was a peculiar child from very babyhood. He remembered his past from his birth, and was conscious for what

purpose he came into the world, and every power was devoted to the fulfilment of that purpose. While he was quite young his father died and the boy was sent to school. A Brahmin's boy must go to school; the caste restricts him to a learned profession only. The old system of education in India, still prevalent in many parts of the country, especially in connection with Sannyasins, was very different from the modern system. The students had not to pay. It was thought that knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it. Knowledge must be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to take students without charge, and not only so, but most of them gave the students food and clothes. To support these teachers the wealthy families on certain occasions, such as marriage festival or at the ceremonies for the dead, made gifts to them. They were considered the first and foremost claimants to certain gifts, and they, in their turn, had to maintain their students. This boy about whom I am speaking had an elder brother, a learned professor, and went to study with him. After a short time the boy became convinced that the aim of all secular learning was mere material advancement, and he resolved to give up study and devote himself to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. The father being dead, the family was very poor, and this boy had to make his own living. He went to a place near Calcutta and became a temple priest. To become a temple priest he thought very degrading

to a Brahmin. Our temples are not churches in your sense of the word, they are not places for public worship; for, properly speaking, there is no such thing as public worship in India. Temples are erected mostly by rich persons as a meritorious religious act.

If a man has much property, he wants to build a temple. In that he puts a symbol or an image of an Incarnation of God, and dedicates it to worship in the name of God. The worship is akin to that which is conducted in Roman Catholic Churches, very much like the Mass, reading certain sentences from the Sacred Books, waving a light before the image and treating the image in every respect as we treat a great man. This is all that is done in the temple. The man who goes to a temple is not considered thereby a better man than he who never goes. More properly the latter is considered the more religious man, for religion in India is to teach man his own private affair and all his worship is conducted in the privacy of his own home. It has been held from the most ancient times in our country that it is a degenerating occupation to become a temple priest. There is another idea behind it that, just as with education, but in a far more intense sense with religion, the fact that temple priests take fees for their work is making merchandise of sacred things. So you may imagine the feelings of that boy when he was forced through poverty to take up the only occupation open to him—that of a temple priest.

There have been various poets in Bengal whose songs have passed down to the people; they are sung in the streets of Calcutta and in every village. Most of these are religious songs, and their one central idea, which is perhaps peculiar to the religions of India, is the idea of realization. There is not a book in India on religion which does not breathe this idea. Man must realize God, feel God, see God, talk to God. That is religion. The Indian atmosphere is full of stories of saintly persons having visions of God. Such doctrines form the basis of their religion; and all these ancient books and scriptures are the writings of persons who came into direct contact with spiritual facts. These books were not written for the intellect, nor can any reasoning understand them because they were written by men who have seen things of which they write, and they can be understood only by men who have raised themselves to the same height. They say there is such a thing as realization even in this life, and it is open to everyone, and religion begins with the opening of this faculty, if I may call it so. This is the central idea in all religions and this is why we may find one man with the most finished oratorical powers, or the most convincing logic, preaching the highest doctrines and yet unable to get people to listen to him; and another, a poor man, who scarcely can speak the language of his own motherland, yet with half the nation worshipping him in his own life-time as God. The idea somehow or other has got abroad

that he has raised himself to the state of realization, that religion is no more a matter of conjecture to him that he is no more groping in the dark on such momentous questions as religion, the immortality of the soul, and God; and people come from all quarters to see him and gradually they begin to worship him as an Incarnation of God.

In the temple was an image of the "Blissful Mother." This boy had to conduct the worship morning and evening and this one idea filled his mind—"Is there anything behind this Image? Is it true that there is a Mother of Bliss in the universe? Is it true that she lives and guides this universe, or is it all a dream? Is there any reality in religion?" This scepticism comes to almost every Hindu child. It is the standing scepticism of our country—is this that we are doing real? And theories will not satisfy us, although there are ready at hand almost all the theories that have ever been made with regard to God and soul. Neither books nor theories can satisfy us, the one idea that gets hold of thousands of our people is this idea of realization. Is it true that there is a God? If it be true, can I see Him? Can I realize the truth? The Western mind may think all this very impracticable, but to us it is intensely practical. For this idea men will give up their lives. For this idea thousands of Hindus every year, give up their homes and many of them die through the hardships they have to undergo. To the Western mind this must seem most visionary, and I can see the reason for this

point of view. But after years of residence in the West, I still think this idea the most practical thing in life.

Life is but momentary whether you are a toiler in the streets, or an emperor ruling millions. Life is but momentary, whether you have the best of health or the worst. There is but one solution of life, says the Hindu, and that solution is what they call God and Religion. If these be true, life becomes explained, life becomes bearable, becomes enjoyable. Otherwise, life is but a useless burden. That is your idea, but no amount of reasoning can demonstrate it; can only make it probable, and there it rests. Facts are only in the senses and we have to sense Religion to demonstrate it to ourselves. We have to sense God to be convinced that there is a God. Nothing but our own perceptions can make these things real to us.

This idea took possession of the boy and his whole life became concentrated upon that. Day after day he would weep and say: "Mother, is it true that Thou existest, or is it all poetry? Is the Blissful Mother an imagination of poets and misguided people, or is there such a reality?" We have seen that of books, of education in our sense of the word, he had none and so much the more natural, so much the more healthy was his mind, so much the purer his thoughts, undiluted by drinking in the thoughts of others. This thought which was uppermost in his mind gained in strength every day until he could think of nothing else. He could no

more conduct the worship properly, could no more attend to the various details in all their minuteness. Often he would forget to place the food offering before the image, sometimes he would forget to wave the light, at other times he would wave the light a whole day, and forget everything else. At last it became impossible for him to serve in the temple. He left it and entered into a little wood that was near and lived there. About this part of his life he has told me many times that he could not tell when the sun rose or set, nor, how he lived. He lost all thoughts of himself and forgot to eat. During this period he was lovingly watched over by a relative who put into his mouth food which he mechanically swallowed.

Days and nights thus passed with the boy. When a whole day would pass towards evening, when the peals in the temples would reach the forest, the chimes, and the voices of the persons singing, it would make the boy very sad, and he would cry: "One day is gone in vain, Mother, and Thou does not come. One day of this short life has gone and I have not known the Truth." In the agony of his soul, sometimes he would rub his face against the ground and weep.

This is the tremendous thirst that seizes the human heart. Later on, this very man said to me: "My child, suppose there is a bag of gold in one room, and a robber in the room next to it, do you think that robber can sleep? He cannot. His mind

will be always thinking how to get into that room and get possession of that gold. Do you think then that a man firmly persuaded that there is a reality behind all these sensations, that there is a God, that there is One who never dies, One that is the infinite amount of all bliss, a bliss compared to which these pleasures of the senses are simply playthings, can rest contented without struggling to attain it? Can he cease his efforts for a moment? No. He will become mad with longing." This divine madness seized this boy. At that time he had no teacher; nobody to tell him anything except that everyone thought that he was out of his mind. This is the ordinary condition of things. If a man throws aside the vanities of the world we hear him called mad but such men are the salt of the earth. Out of such madness have come the powers that have moved this world of ours, and out of such madness alone will come the powers of the future, that are going to be in the world. So days, weeks, months passed in continuous struggle of the soul to arrive at Truth. The boy began to see visions, to see wonderful things, the secrets of his nature were beginning to open to him. Veil after veil was, as it were, being taken off. Mother Herself became the teacher, and initiated the boy into the truths he sought. At this time there came to this place a woman, beautiful to look at, learned beyond compare. Later on this Saint used to say about her that she was not learned, but was the embodiment of learning; she was learning itself in

human form. There, too, you find the peculiarity of the Indian nation. In the midst of the ignorance in which the average Hindu woman lives, in the midst of what is called in Western countries her lack of freedom, there could arise a woman of this supreme spirituality. She was a Sannyasini, for women also give up the world, throw away their property, do not marry, and devote themselves to the worship of the Lord. She came, and when she heard of this boy in the forest she offered to go to see him, and here was the first help he received. At once she recognized what his trouble was, and she said to him: "My son, blessed is the man upon whom such madness comes. The whole of this universe is mad; some for wealth, some for pleasure, some for fame, some for a hundred other things. Blessed is the man who is mad after God. Such men are very few." This woman remained near the boy for years, taught him the forms of the religions of India, initiated him in the different practices of Yoga, and, as it were, guided and brought into harmony this tremendous river of spirituality.

Later there came to the same forest, a Sannyasin, one of the beggar-friars of India, a learned man, a philosopher. He was a peculiar man, he was an idealist. He did not believe that this world existed in reality, and to demonstrate that he would never go under a roof, he would always live out of doors, in storm and sunshine alike. This man began to teach the boy the philosophy of the Vedas, and

he found very soon, to his astonishment, that the pupil was in some respects wiser than the master. He spent several months there with the boy, after which he initiated him into the order of Sannyasins and took his departure.

The relatives of this boy thought that his madness could be cured if they could get him married. Sometimes in India young childern are married by their parents and relatives without giving their own consent in the matter. This boy had been married at the age of about eighteen to a little girl of five. Of course, such a marriage is but a betrothal. The real marriage takes place when the wife grows older, when it is customary for the husband to go and bring his bride to his own home. In this case, however, the husband had entirely forgotten he had a wife. In her far-off home the girl had heard that her husband had become a religious enthusiast and that he was even considered insane by many. She resolved to learn the truth for herself, so she set out and walked to the place where her husband was. When at last she stood in her husband's presence, he at once admitted her right to his life : althougth in India any person, man or woman, who embraces a religious life is thereby freed from all other obligations. The young man fell at the feet of his wife and said: "I have learned to took upon every woman as mother, but I am at your service."

The maiden was a pure and noble soul, and was able to understand her husband's aspirations

and sympathize with them. She quickly told him that she had no wish to drag him down to a life of worldliness; but that all she desired was to remain near him, to serve him, and to learn of him. She became one of his most devoted disciples, always revereing him as a divine being. Thus through his wife's consent the last barrier was removed and he was free to lead the life he had chosen.

The next desire that seized upon the soul of this man was to know the truth about the various religions. Up to that time he had not known any regligion but his own. He wanted to understand what other religions were like. So he sought teachers of other religions. By teachers you must always remember what we mean in India—not a bookworm, but a man of realization, one who knows truth at first-hand and not centuries after. He found a Mohammedan saint and went to live with him; he underwent the disciplines prescribed by him, and, to his astonishment, found that when faithfully carried out, these devotional methods led him to the same goal he had already attained. He gathered similar experience from following the true religion of Jesus Christ. He went to the various sects existing in our country that were available to him, and whatever he took up he went into it with his whole heart. He did exactly as he was told, and in every instance he arrived at the same result. Thus from actual experience he came to know that the goal of every religion is the same, that each is trying to teach the same thing, the

difference being largely in method, and still more in language. At the core, all sects and all religions have the same aim.

Then came to him the conviction that to be perfect, the sex idea must go, because soul has no sex, soul is neither male nor female. It is only in the body that sex exists, and the man who desires to reach the spirit cannot, at the same time, hold to sex distinctions. Having been born in a masculine body, this man now wanted to bring the feminine idea into everything. He began to think that he was a woman, he dressed like a woman, spoke like a woman, gave up the occupations of men, and lived among the women of his own family, until, after years of this discipline, his mind, became changed and he entirely forgot the idea of sex; all thought of that vanished and the whole view of life became changed to him.

We hear in the West about worshipping woman, but this is usually for her youth and beauty. This man meant by worshipping woman, that to him every woman's face was that of the Blissful Mother, and nothing but that. I myself have seen this man standing before those women whom society would not touch, and falling at their feet bathed in tears, saying: "Mother, in one form Thou art in the street, and in another form Thou art the Universe. I salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee." Think of the blessdness of that life from which all carnality has vanished, when every woman's face has become transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful

One, the Protectress of the human race shines upon the man who can look upon every woman with that love and reverence! That is what we want. Do you mean to say that the divinity behind every woman can ever be cheated? It never was and never will be. Unconsciously it asserts itself. Unfailingly it detects fraud, it detects hypocrisy, unerringly it feels the warmth of truth, the light of spirituality, the holiness of purity. Such purity is absolutely necessary if real spirituality is to be attained.

This rigorous, unsullied purity came into the life of that man; all the struggles which we have in our lives were past for him. His hard-earned jewels of spirituality, for which he had given three-quarters of his life, were now ready to be given to humanity, and then began his mission. His teaching and preaching were peculiar, he would never take the position of a teacher. In our country a teacher is a most highly venerated person, he is regarded as God Himself. We have not even the same respect for our father and mother. Father and mother give us our body, but the teacher shows us the way to salvation. We are his childern, we are born in the spiritual line of the teacher. All Hindus come to pay respect to an extraordinary teacher, they crowd around him. And here was such a teacher, but the teacher had no thought whether he was to be respected or not, he had not the least idea that he was a great teacher, he thought that it was

Mother who was doing everything and not he. He always said: "If any good comes from my lips, it is the Mother who speaks; what have I to do with it?" That was his one idea about his work, and to the day of his death he never gave it up. This man sought no one. His principle was, first form character, first earn spirituality, and results will come of themselves. His favourite illustration was: "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey, so let the lotus of your character be full-blown and the results will follow." This is a great lesson to learn. My Master taught me this lesson hundreds of times; yet I often forget it. Few understand the power of thought. If a man goes into a cave, shuts himself in, and thinks one really great thought and dies, that thought will penetrate the adamantine walls of that cave, vibrate through space, and at last penetrate the whole human race. Such is the power of thought; be in no hurry, therefore, to give your thoughts to others. First have something to give. He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating. Spirituality can be communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true in the most literal sense. This idea is very old in India and finds illustration in the West in the belief in the theory of apostolic succession. Therefore, first make character—that is the highest duty you can perform. Know Truth for yourself, and there will be many to whom you can

teach it afterwards; they will all come. This was the attitude of my Master—he criticised no one.

For years I lived with that man, but never did I hear those lips utter one word of condemnation for any sect. He had the same sympathy for all of them; he had found the harmony between them. A man may be intellectual, or devotional, or mystic, or active, and the various religions represent one or the other of these types. Yet it is possible to combine all the four in one man, and this is what future humanity is going to do. That was his idea. He condemned no one, but saw the good in all.

People came by thousands to see this wonderful man, to hear him speak in a patois, every word of which was forceful and instinct with light. For it is not what is spoken, much less the language in which it is spoken, it is the personality of the speaker which dwells in every thing he says that carries weight. Every one of us feels this at times. We hear most splendid orations, most wonderfully reasoned out discourses, and we go home and forget it all. All other times we hear a few words in the simplest of language, and they accompany us all our lives, become part and parcel of ourselves and produce lasting results. The words of a man who can put his personality into them take effect, but he must have tremendous personality. All teaching is giving and taking, the teacher gives and the taught receives, but the one must have something to give and the other must be open to receive.

This man came to live near Calcutta, the capital of India, the most important University town in our country which was sending out sceptics and materialists by the hundreds every year, yet the great men from the different Universities used to come and listen to him. I heard of this man, and I went to hear him. He looked just like an ordinary man with nothing remarkable about him. He used the most simple language, and I thought: "Can this man be a great teacher?" I crept near to him and asked him the question which I had been asking others all my life: "Do you believe in God, Sir?" "Yes," he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir? "Yes." "How?" "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense." That impressed me at once. For the first time I had found a man who dared to say that he saw God, that religion was a reality, to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world. I began to come near that man, day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance, can make a whole life change. I had read about Buddha and Christ and Mahommed, about all those different luminaries of ancient times, how they would stand up and say: "Be thou whole," and the man became whole. I now found it to be true, and when I myself saw this man, all scepticism was brushed aside. It would be done, and my Master used to say: "Religion can be given and taken more tangibly, more really than anything else in the world." Be, therefore,

spiritual first; have something to love, and then stand before the world and give it. Religion is not talk, nor doctrines nor theories, nor is it sectarianism. Religion cannot live in sects and societies. It is the relation between the soul and God: how can it be made into a society? It would then degenerate into a business, and wherever there is business, or business principles in religion, spirituality dies. Religion does not consist in erecting temples, or building churches, or attending public worship. It is not to be found in books, nor in words, nor in lectures, nor in organizations. Religion consists in realization. As a fact, we all know that nothing will satisfy us until we know the truth for ourselves. However we may argue, however much we may hear, but one thing will satisfy us, and that is our own realization, and such an experience is possible for every one of us, if we will only try. The first ideal of this attempt to realize religion is that of renunciation. As far as we can, we must give up. Light and darkness, enjoyment of the world and enjoyment of God will never go together. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

The second idea that I learned from my Master, and which is perhaps the most vital, is the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory nor antagonistic; they are but various phases of One Eternal Religion. One Infinite Religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this Religion is expressing itself in various countries, in various ways. Therefore, we must respect all

religions and we must try to accept them all as far as we can. Religions manifest themselves not only according to race and geographical position, but according to individual powers. In one man religion is manifesting itself as intense activity, as work. In another it is manifesting itself as intense devotion; in yet another as mysticism, in others as philosophy, and so forth. It is wrong when we say to others: "Your methods are not right." To learn this central secret that the Truth may be one and yet many at the same time, that we may have different visions of the same Truth from different standpoints, is exactly what must be done. Then, instead of antagonism to anyone, we shall have infinite sympathy with all. Knowing that as long as there are different natures born into this world, they will require different applications of the same religious truths, we shall understand that we are bound to have forbearance with each other. Just as Nature is unity in variety, an infinite variation in the phenomenal, and behind all these variations, the Infinite, the Unchangeable, the Absolute, so it is with every man; the microcosm is but a miniature repetition of the macrocosm, in spite of all these variations, in and through them all runs this eternal harmony, and we have to recognise this. This idea, above all other ideas, I find to be the crying necessity of the day. Coming from a country which is a hotbed of religious sects—through good fortune or ill fortune, everyone who has a religious idea wants to send an advance guard there—from my chilhood I

have been acquainted with the various sects of the world; even the Mormons came to preach in India. Welcome them all! That is the soil on which to preach religion. There it takes root more than in any other country. If you come and teach politics to the Hindus they do not understand, but if you come to preach religion however curious it may be, you will have hundreds and thousands of followers in no time, and you have every chance of becoming a living god in your lifetime. I am glad it is so, it is the one thing we want in India. The sects among the Hindus are various, almost infinite in number, and some of them apparently hopelessly contradictory. Yet they all tell you they are but different manifestations of Religion. "As different rivers, taking their start from different mountains, running crooked or straight, all come and mingle their waters in the ocean, so the different sects, with their different points of view, at last all come unto Thee." This is not a theory, it has to be recognized, but not in that patronizing way which we see with some. "Oh, yes, there are some very good things." (Some even have the most wonderfully liberal idea that other religions are all little bits of a prehistoric evolution, but "ours is the fulfilment of things.") One man says because his is the oldest religion it is the best; another makes the same claim because his is the latest. We have to recognize that each one of them has the same saving power as every other. It is a mass of superstition that you have heard everywhere, either in the temple

or the church, that there is any difference. The same God answers all, and it is not you, nor I, nor any body of men, that is responsible for the safety and salvation of the least little bit of the soul; the same Almighty God is responsible for all of them. I do not understand how people declare themselves to be believers in God, and, at the same time, think that God has handed over to a little body of men all truth, and that they are the guardians of the rest of humanity. Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can give him something better, if you can get hold of a man where he stands and give him a push upwards, do so, but do not destroy what he has. The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice. The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else. All these negative, breaking down, destructive teachers that are in the world can never do any good.

In the presence of my Master I found out that man could be perfect, even in this body. Those lips never cursed anyone, never even criticised anyone. Those eyes were beyond the possibility of seeing evil, that mind had lost the power of thinking evil. He saw nothing but good. That tremendous purity, that

tremendous renunciation is the one secret of spirituality. "Neither through wealth, nor through progeny, but through renunciation alone, is immortality to be reached," say the Vedas. "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and follow me," says Christ.

So all great saints and prophets have expressed it, and have carried it out in their lives. How can great spirituality come without that renunciation? Renunciation is the background of all religious thought wherever it be, and you will always find that as this idea of renunciation lessens, the more will the senses creep into the field of religion, and spirituality will decrease in the same ratio. That man was the embodiment of renunciation. In our country it is necessary for a man who becomes a Sannyasin to give up all worldly wealth and position, and this my Master carried out literally. There were many who would have felt themselves blest, if he would only have accepted a present from their hands, who would gladly have given him thousands if he would have taken them, but these were the only men from whom he would turn away. He was a triumphant example, a living realization of the complete conquest of lust and desire for money. He was beyond all ideas of either, and such men are necessary for this century. Such renunciation is necessary in these days when men have begun to think that they cannot live a month without what they call their "necessities," and which they are increasing in geometrical ratio. It is necessary in a time like this that a man shall

arise to demonstrate to the sceptics of the world that there yet breathes a man who does not care a straw for all the gold or all the fame that is in the universe. Yet there are such men.

The first part of my Master's life was spent in acquiring spirituality, and the remaining years in distributing it. Men came in crowds to hear him and he would talk twenty hours in the twenty-four, and that not for one day but for months and months, until at last the body broke down under the pressure of this tremendous strain. His intense love for mankind would not let him refuse to help even the humblest of the thousands who sought his aid. Gradually there developed a vital throat disorder and yet he could not be persuaded to refrain from these exertions. As soon as he heard that people were asking to see him he would insist upon having them admitted and would answer all their questions. There was no rest for him. Once a man asked him: "Sir, you are a great Yogi, why do you not put your mind a little on your body and cure your disease?" At first he did not answer, but when the question had been repeated he gently said: "My friend, I have thought you were a sage, but you talk like other men of the world. This mind has been given to the Lord, do you mean to say that I should take it back and put it upon the body which is but a mere cage of the soul?"

So he went on preaching to the people, and the news spread that his body was about to pass away, and

the people began to flock to him in greater crowds than ever. You cannot imagine the way they come to these great religious teachers in India, crowd around them and make gods of them while they are yet living. Thousands are ready to touch simply the hem of their garments. It is through this appreciation of spirituality in others that spirituality is produced. Whatever any man wants and appreciates, that he will get, and it is the same with nations. If you go to India and deliver a political lecture, however grand it may be, you will scarcely find people to listen to you, but just go and teach religion, *live* it, not merely talk it, and hundred will crowd just to look at you, to touch your feet. When the people heard that this holy man was likely to go from them soon, they began to come around him more than ever before, and my Master went on teaching them without the least regard for his health. We could not prevent this. Many of the people came from long distances, and he would not rest until he had answerd their questions. "While I can speak I must teach them," he would say, and he was as good as his word. One day he told us that he would lay down the body that day, and repeating the most sacred word of the Vedas he entered into *Samadhi* and so passed away.

His thoughts and his message were known to very few who were capable of teaching them. Among others, he left a few young boys who had renounced the world, and were ready to carry on his work.

Attempts were made to crush them. But they stood firm, having the inspiration of that great life before them. Having had the contact of that blessed life for years, they stood their ground. These young men were living as Sannyasins, begging through the streets of the city where they were born, although some of them came from first-class families. At first they met with great antagonism, but they persevered and went on from day to day spreading all over India the message of that great man, until the whole country was filled with the ideas he had preached. This man from a remote village of Bengal, without education, simply by the sheer force of his own determination, realized the truth and gave it to others, leaving only a few young boys to keep it alive.

To-day the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is known all over India with its millions of people. Nay, the power of that man has spread beyond India, and if there has ever been a word of truth, a word of spirituality that I have spoken anywhere in the world, I owe it to my Master; only the mistakes are mine.

This is the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world: "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man which is spirituality, and the more that this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that, first acquire

that, and criticise no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, nor names, nor sects, but that it means spiritual realization. Only those can understand who have felt. Only those that have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others, can be great teachers of mankind. They alone are the powers of light."

The more such men are produced in a country, the more that country will be raised; and that country where such men absolutely do not exist is simply doomed, nothing can save it. Therefore, my Master's message to mankind is: "Be spiritual and realize truth for yourself." He would have you give up for the sake of your fellow-beings. He would have you cease talking about love for your brother, and set to work to prove your words. The time has come for renunciation, for realization, and then you will see the harmony in all the religions of the world. You will know that there is no need of any quarrel, and then only will you be ready to help humanity. To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions was the mission of my Master. Other teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but this great Teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself, he left every religion undisturbed because he had realized that, in reality, they are all part and parcel of one Eternal Religion.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND HIS WORK.*

By Swami Abhedananda.

THE subject of the present lecture is one who made himself famous in this country as a great spiritual hero before he was hardly known to the public in India, the land of his birth. From Canada to Texas, from California to New York, there is no state in this vast American Commonwealth where the name of our illustrious hero is not remembered with profound respect, and where the charm and spiritual strength of his forceful utterances are not felt by the educated and thoughtful minds of its citizens. During the last decade there have been few pulpits in the United States which have not held preachers who have had something to say either for or against the teachings of the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu Sannyasin monk, who belonged to the order of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. For the first time in the annals of the history of modern India as also in the religious history of America, it has been recorded that a wise man of the East, unaided by government, uninvited and unsupported by religious organization, crossing the unfathomable waters of the deep that separate India from her antipodes, could carry the message of peace and harmony into the heart of religious strife and rivalry of sectarian doctrines

* From a lecture in New York.

and creeds that were exhibited in the Parliament of Religions, held at the World's Fair Congress in Chicago in 1893.

The message of truth requires neither the protection of the sword nor the support of gunpowder for its propagation. The preachers of truth are very few, but their powers are felt by those who happen to come within the atmosphere of their divine personality. Such a preacher of truth occasionally appears like a gigantic comet above the horizon, dazzling the eyes and filling the hearts of ordinary mortals with wonder and admiration, and silently passess away into the invisible and unknown realms of the universe. The late Swami Vivekananda was one of those great comets who appeared in the spiritual firmanent once perhaps after several centuries. A well-known writer of this city wrote the other day: "The passing of Swami Vivekananda was like the flashing of a mighty star upon our wondering eyes. For in truth no greater, wiser, truer, holier soul has ever dwelt among us than this marvellous man who has recently gone into spirit life."

Those who have met him and heard him speak, will remember his fascinating personality, his fine intelligent face beaming with celestial radiance mingled with the innocent smile of a child, his deep musical voice, his uncommon eloquence, and, above all, his wonderful oratorical powers which drew from the hearts of his appreciative listeners the exclamation that he was an orator by Divine right.

That memorable address which placed the philosophy and religion of Vedanta on a level with the highest philosophical, spiritual and religious ideals of the world's celebrities who assembled in the Parliament of Religions, was the first attempt of our great Swami to deliver before the world the message of his blessed master which he had been carrying in his soul for nearly twelve years before he appeared in public. During that period he had travelled over India from place to place on foot, like a Hindu Sannyasin monk, living up to the vows which he had taken in his youth, of poverty, purity, chastity and unselfishness, and setting a living example of a *Jivan-mukta*—one who is emancipated from the fetters of the world.

We must not forget that before his appearance in the Parliament of Religions as a speaker, he did not know himself that he could speak in public; yet those who have read his World's Fair Addresses, I am sure, have realized the logical force, the intellectual strength and the spiritual depth of which every sentence bears testimony. That opening address made Swami Vivekananda the most popular of all the delegates and representatives of different religions who gathered at that gigantic Fair; and he was invited to speak before the meetings of the scientific and other sections of the Congress. Here allow me to read what the President of the Scientific Section, Mr. Merwin Marie Snell, wrote about the glorious success achieved by this humble

young Sannyasin who represented the religion and philosophy of India.

"But by far the most important and typical representative of Hinduism was Swami Vivekananda, who, in fact, was beyond question the most popular and influential man in the Parliament. He frequently spoke: both on the floor of the Parliament itself and in the meeting of the Scientific Section over which I had the honor to preside and on all occasions he was received with greater enthusiasm than any other speaker Christian or "Pagan." The people thronged about him wherever he went and hung with eagerness on his every word. Since the Parliament he has been lecturing before large audiences in the principal cities of the United States and has received an ovation wherever he has gone. He has often been invited to preach in Christian pulpits and has, by all those who have heard him on any occasion and still more by those who have made his personal acquaintance, been always spoken of in terms of the highest admiration. The most rigid orthodox Christians say of him, 'He is, indeed, a prince among men.' America thanks India for sending him and begs her to send many more like him, if such there are, to teach by their example those of her own children who have not yet learned the lesson of universal fraternity and openness of mind and heart; and by their precepts those who have not come to see Divinity in all things and a Oneness transcending all."

After the Congress was over, the popular Swami was invited in almost all of the large cities of the Eastern and middle Western States to give adresses before public clubs, societies and universities. Before he came to New York he visited Boston and Cambridge and delivered public addresses and class lectures, expounding the philosophy and religion of Vedanta, which were highly appreciated by the educated men and intelligent women of the New England States.

When he lectured before the Philosophical Society of the Harvard University, his address produced such a profound impression upon the minds of the professors that they offered him a chair of Eastern philosophy in that University; but being a Sannyasin, he could not accept this offer. A Sannyasin never sells his wisdom for name, position or material return. This address was afterwards published and the late Rev. C. C. Everett, D. D., LLD., of Harvard University, wrote the preface, in which he introduced to America the Vedanta philosophy and its most worthy representative, Swami Vivekananda. The words of Mr. Everett will give you an idea of the impression which Swami Vivekananda made upon his mind:

"The Swami Vivekananda was sent by his friends and co-religionists to present their belief at the Congress of Religions that was held in connection with the World's Fair in Chicago. This he did in a way to win general interest and admiration. Since

then he has lectured on the same theme in different parts of our country. He has been in fact a missionary from India to America. Everywhere he has made warm personal friends; and his expositions of Hindu philosophy have been listened to with delight. It is very pleasant to observe the eager interest with which his own people in India follow his course, and the joy that they take in his success. I have seen a pamhlet filled with speeches made at a large and influential meeting in Calcutta, which was called together to express enthusiastic approval of the manner in which he has fulfilled his mission; and satisfaction at this invasion of the West by Oriental thought. This satisfaction is well grounded. We may not be so near to actual conversion as some of these speakers seem to believe; but Vivekananda has created a high degree of interest in himself and his work. There are, indeed, few departments of study more attractive than the Hindu thought. It is a rare pleasure to see a form of belief that to most seems so far away and unreal as the Vedanta system, represented by an actually living and extremely intelligent believer. This system is not to be regarded merely as a curiosity, as a speculative vagary. Hegel said that Spinozism is the necessary beginning of all philosophizing. This can be said even more emphatically of the Vedanta system. We occidentals busy ourselves with the manifold. We can, however, have no understanding of the manifold, if we have no sense of the One in which the manifold

exists. The reality of the One is the truth which the East may well teach us; and we owe a debt of gratitude to Vivekananda that he has taught this lesson so effectively."

In 1894 the Swami Vivekananda came to New York to deliver his message before the public. He spoke in public halls in the city on different subjects, held classes, instructing earnest and sincere students in the various branches of the Science of Yoga and the philosophy of Vedanta, and eventually succeeded in laying the foundation of the Vedanta Society, which is now in a most flourishing condition. Most of his public addresses and class lectures have been published in pamphlet or book form by the Vedanta Society. The "Raja Yoga," "Karma Yoga," "Bhakti Yoga", "The Ideal of a Universal Religion, "My Master," are the principal works of the Swami.

I have met many people in this country during my six years stay who regard the "Raja Yoga" in the same light as the most devout Christian regards his own Scriptures. It has been a revelation to many agnostic and sceptical minds; it has transformed the characters of many. Every passage of this wonderful book is charged, as it were, with the soul stirring spiritual power generated by the gigantic battery of the pure soul of our great Yogi. This wonderful book, which has been translated into several languages and published in three different countries, has commanded

respect among the intelligent, educated classes and the sincere seekers of truth of the three continents of America, Europe and Asia.

During his three years stay in America Swami Vivekananda was most hospitably received and kindly entertained by his admirers, students and disciples. Invitations came from various quarters, and he accepted them all. Sometimes he would be invited by people living in different cities hundreds of miles apart to give public addresses on the same day and he would accept in every case, travelling for hours by train or by any available conveyance.

Thus working day after day for three long years, Swami Vivekananda had to fight against many obstacles; sometimes he would have summer clothes in winter, and he would go through unimaginable hardships regarding food and clothes, facing the sudden changes and severities of the American climate; sometimes he would deny himself to help others caring nothing for his personal comforts; while at other times he would depend entirely upon the spontaneous sympathy and voluntary help of his hosts and hostesses. In the midst of all these disadvantages our indefatigable hero did not fail to sow the seed of the sublime truths of the Vedanta philosophy in the hearts of hundreds and thousands of American citizens. No one except those who have heard the Swami describe his own experiences in this Christian country can realize what tremendous struggles he had to make to push his way against the volleys of unfair and unjust

remarks and spiteful criticisms which were fired at him by the orthodox Christians, foreign missionaries, the Theosophists and their worthy adherents.

These storms of opposition instead of quenching the fire of the spiritual truth of Vedanta that was burning upon the altar of the God-inspired soul of this Hindu preacher, fanned it into a blaze of light, the glory of which was visible from shore to shore, nay from across the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. By his marvellous presence of mind, indomitable courage, and stainless purity of character, he succeeded in overcoming the obstacles that stood in the path of his success and fought his battle well, like a brave soldier, being guided and directed by the command of his Divine Master, through whose power and grace he conquered and subdued his opponents.

Swami Vivekananda's success was due to his unbounded faith in the words of his spiritual Master, who is now regarded, honored, revered, respected and worshipped in India and other countries as the Incarnation of Divinity. The great Master, seeing the future grandeur and greatness of soul of Swami Vivekananda, inspired him several times in the presence of his other disciples by saying, "Thou hast a great work to perform; thy mission in life is to spread the truth of the universal religion."

Thus having established in America the glory of his master, Bhagavan Ramakrishna, through his own success and reputation, and having shown to the world by his unselfish work his disinterested love for

humanity, and having opened the spiritual eyes of hundreds of admirers, followers, students, friends, and disciples, Swami Vivekananda obeyed his Master's call and carried his message to England in 1896. There he first made the acquaintance of the Venerable Prof. Max Muller, accepted his invitation and visited him at his home in Oxford. By his magnetic personality he inspired in him the desire to publish the life and sayings of his Blessed Master. He then delivered his message to the public, and created a profound impression upon the minds of the spiritually inclined men and women and of the advanced thinkers of England. These lectures were printed at first in England and were afterwards published by the Vedanta Society of New York under the title of "Jnana Yoga." The present speaker was an eye witness to the effect which were produced upon the majority of his vast audience. For the first time their eyes were opened to the grandeur of the philosophy as also to the universality of the religion of Vedanta. I shall never forget the grand farewell reception that was given to him by his enthusiastic English friends on the thirteenth of December 1896 in a public meeting at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, London.

Having finished his work in England and having given the charge of his classes to the present speaker, Swami Vivekananda sailed for India on the sixteenth of December with a handful of English disciples who were so devoted to him that they would not leave his company.

The news of his return to India was announced in all parts of the country. The Hindus of all castes and creeds who had heard of his success in the West as the greatest exponent of the philosophy and religion of the Motherland, were eagerly waiting to show their appreciation of his great work, and to pay homage to the victorious soldier of God in the form of Swami Vivekananda.

On the fifteenth of January 1897 the North German Loyd Steamer, *Prince Regent Leopold*, which carried on board our illustrious hero, reached the harbour of Colombo in Ceylon. A large crowd of people and admirers gathered near the landing-place to receive the great Swami Vivekananda. At the entrance to the city of Colombo triumphal arches had been erected and the streets were decorated with continuous festoons of greens and garlands of flowers. The Swami drove in a carriage along the decorated streets through cheering crowds to a bungalow where the official reception was held and the following sympathetic address of welcome was read:

"In pursuance of a resolution passed at a public meeting, of the Hindus of the City of Colombo, we beg to offer you a hearty welcome to this Island. We deem it a privilege to be the first to welcome you on your return home from your great mission in the West.

We have watched with joy and thankfulness the success with which the mission has, under God's

blessing, been crowned. You have proclaimed to the nations of Europe and America the Hindu ideal of a universal religion, harmonizing all creeds, providing spiritual food for each soul according to its needs, and lovingly drawing it unto God. You have preached the Truth and the Way taught from remote ages by a succession of Masters whose blessed feet have walked and sanctified the soil of India, and whose gracious presence and inspiration have made her through all her vicissitudes the Light of the World.

To the inspiration of such a master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva, and to your self-sacrificing zeal, Western nations owe the priceless boon of being placed in living contact with the spiritual genius of India, while to many of our own countrymen, delivered from the glamour of Western civilization, the value of our glorious heritage has been brought home.

By your noble work and example you have laid humanity under an obligation difficult to repay, and you have shed fresh lustre upon our Motherland. We pray that the grace of God may continue to prosper you and your work, and

We remain, Revered Sir,

Yours faithfully,

for and on behalf of the Hindus of Colombo.'

In reply the Swami delivered the most eloquent address, showing his appreciation and expressing his gratitude for the kindness and sympathy shown him for

the humble service that he had done in the Western countries for the cause of India.

Invitations from different quarters began to pour in and he accepted as many of them as his short stay in the Island of Ceylon allowed. Having received the respect, honor and loving sympathy of the inhabitants of that great island, the Swami sailed for India. Near the southernmost point there is a small town called Pamban where he landed. His Highness the Raja of Ramnad went in person to meet the great Swami and greet him with a most cordial welcome. A formal address of welcome was read and Swami Vivekananda's reply was heard with great interest by hundreds of people who crowded round him. After this reception he was invited by His Highness to be his guest of honor in his palace. He accepted the invitation and was seated in the carriage when, at the instance of His Highness, the horses were removed and the carriage was drawn by the Raja himself aided by his devoted attendants. It will be interesting to you to know that this Raja, desiring to commemorate the first spot where the Swami landed, erected there a monument, the inscription on which reads thus:

Satyameva Jayati. This monument erected by Bhaskara Sethupathy, the Raja of Ramnad, marks the sacred spot where His Holiness Swami Vivekananda's feet first trod on Indian soil together with the English disciple of His Holiness, returned from

the Western Hemisphere where glorious and unprecedented success attended His Holiness'es philanthropic labours to spread the religion of the Vedanta."

All the Hindus of all castes came to see the Swami and treated him with the greatest respect, kindness and hospitality. After staying there for three days as the guest of honor of His Highness, the Swami proceeded North towards Calcutta, the place of his birth, a distance of about four thousand miles—as far as San Francisco is from New York—stopping on his way in the principal cities of the different states and presidencies. Everywhere he was most cordially received and entertained. In fact, the receptions and ovations given to Swami Vivekananda were unique in the annals of the history of India. No prince, no Maharaja, nor even the Viceroy of India, has ever received such a hearty welcome and such spontaneous expressions of love; reverence, gratitude and respect as were showered upon the blessed head of this great patriot-saint of modern India. Time will not permit me to describe the great ovations and receptions which were bestowed upon him in Madras and Calcutta, the capital of the vast British Empire in Asia. Those who have read the book named—" From Colombo to Almora " will remember what national pathos, enthusiasm and spiritual zeal were aroused in the hearts of the people by the return of the most worthy disciple of the Blessed Lord Sri-Ramakrishna, our Master and Spiritual Guide.

India, indeed, knows how to honor a spiritual hero. As Europe and America know how to honor their political or their military heroes when they return from the battle-field with their faces smeared with the life-blood of their innocent victims, so India on the contrary is the only country in the world where a spiritual hero receives similar honor when he returns from the spiritual battlefield after gaining victories of peace and love over inharmony and sectarian fight. The interest of the Hindu lies in religion; the Hindus do not care so much for politics or commercialism as for religion. Even the most illiterate peasant knew what Swami Vivekananda was doing here; and he was eagerly waiting to hear the reports of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and to greet the hero who had achieved glorious success in expounding the religion of Vedanta.

Now let us see in what way the Swami's mind was affected by these grand ovations. We all know how few people can digest the honors bestowed upon them by a whole nation. We have witnessed how the minds of Hobson and Dewey were turned when eulogies were poured upon their heads by the American nation. But with Swami Vivekananda the effect was different. After receiving the highest honors from three great nations, Swami Vivekananda's mind was neither elated with pride or self-conceit, nor was his head turned for half a second from the blessed feet of his beloved Master. With the same child-like simplicity, with the same humility of character

which he had possessed before he came to America, and keeping the same fire of renunciation alive in his soul, he realized the transitoriness of all the triumphal honors which were showered upon him.

He dressed himself once more in rags, took up his begging bowl and staff and began to wander like an ordinary Sannyasin from place to place. But this sudden change produced a great shock in his whole system and completely broke down his health. He would not take care of his body and would not listen to the advice and good counsels of his friends. Even in this state of health Swami Vivekananda showed that his spirit was infinitely greater than his physical form, and that his body was no longer capable of holding the soul which was constantly expanding and reaching out to the Infinite by transcending all limitations.

On account of his poor health, he was obliged to give up the platform work for the time being. He wanted to take rest, but the indefatigable energy which was poured into his soul by some unseen hand would not allow him to take rest. It pushed him from inside to do more work. From this time, however, he succeeded in directing that tremendous force in another channel. With the help of his American and English friends, he established two great monasteries for training the students of Vedanta of all castes, creeds and nationalities, one about six miles north of Calcutta and the other in the Himalayas, over six thousand feet above the sea level. These

two monasteries are for the training of the Brahmacharins. In the second there are at present some English and American students who have gone there to study the religion and philosophy of Vedanta.

During the time of the terrible plague and famine in 1897, Swami Vivekananda also started the Ramakrishna Mission work with the help of his fellow disciples and co-workers, and established relief stations in different parts of the country to help the poor and suffering people and to distribute food, clothes, medicines. They have been doing splendid work in the way of relieving the distress of the sufferers. At the same time he opened three orphan asylums with educational schools in Bengal, Rajputana and in the Punjab. These have since been growing rapidly with great success. The two great magazines in English,—the "Brahmavadin" and the "Awakened India", which have their subscribers in all parts of the world, as also a monthly journal in Bengali (Udbodhana) were started through the help of this great worker.

But the mental strain was too much for his poor health; he needed rest. At the request of his American and English friends, he revisited America in 1899 to have a complete change and to be away for a season from the field of his work. The doctors and physicians of New York advised him to spend the winter in California, so he went to California and within a few months recovered his strength and again took up the platform work. He gave addresses and courses of lectures in San Francisco and Los Angeles,

established the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, which is now in a very flourishing condition under the leadership of Swami Trigunatita who has recently come from India.

At that time his worthy disciple, an English lady known as Sister Nivedita, who has renounced her family and voluntarily taken up the life of poverty, chastity and unselfishness, visited New York and gave courses of lectures describing the educational needs of Hindu women and the Swami's plans for establishing something like University Settlement work in Calcutta.

Swami Vivekananda came to New York and stayed in the Vedanta Society House for nearly three months, where he delivered lectures and conducted classes, then he went to see the Paris Exposition where he was invited to speak. Thus paying his last visit to his American and English friends, students and disciples, the Swami returned to India.

At this time he began to feel that he had finished his public work and had delivered before the world the message which had been entrusted to him by his Blessed Master. His health became poorer every day, but the inexhaustible energy and power that were working through the form would not let him remain quiet. He returned that force now in another direction,—in training the disciples and moulding the character of those gathered around him, by his living example as well as by his soul-stirring spiritual instructions. Silently ignoring the world-wide fame

that had shone upon his name, he lived unostentatiously in the quiet house of the monastery on the bank of the Ganges, sometimes playing the part of a Guru or spiritual teacher, sometimes that of a father, sometimes even of a school-master. Man-making was now the ideal of our revered Swami. With a heart weeping at the sight of the suffering and degradation of the illiterate masses of India, with a soul glowing with the fire of disinterested love for humanity and true patriotism, Swami Vivekananda solved the problem concerning the future of his Motherland by holding before the nation's eyes the ideal of character-building through the light and spirit of Vedanta.

He told his disciples to live up to the mark of the teaching of Vedanta, as that was what the world needed. He gave his lessons and instructions and day after day he set himself to build the characters of his disciples and followers for the regeneration of India, until the fourth of July 1902, when he liberated his soul from the bondage of the mortal form, and like a great Yogi he threw away the garment of his physical body by entering into Samadhi or the state of super-consciousness, from which he never returned. Thus he fulfilled to the very letter the prediction of his Blessed Master: "That when his mission would be finished he would realize his divine nature and would give up his body."

Swami Vivekananda did not die of any disease like an ordinary mortal; for during two months

before his departure he was in perfect health and even on the last day he walked two miles and gave lessons to his disciples for nearly two hours in the afternoon, and in the evening before dinner he told the disciple who attended on him to wait outside until he was called for. In the meantime he went into super-consciousness through the path of meditation. He foretold several times that his work was finished and that he was passing away. The great soul thus passed away when his fame as a great Yogi, as a spiritual teacher, a religious leader, a patriot-saint, as a writer and an orator, and, above all, as the most disinterested worker for humanity had reached its climax and when new calls for greater work were ringing in his ears. As a lover of freedom, he could not have chosen a more auspicious day than the fourth of July, when the atmosphere around our planet was reverberating with the thoughts of freedom that were arising from the free souls of the American nation.

The loss of Swami Vivekananda has been a national calamity for India and has been felt with profound sorrow by his admirers, followers and friends all over the world. Memorial services were held in all parts of India and Ceylon, in New York and California and in other States of America. No country has ever produced such a many-sided character harmoniously combined in one form as we have seen in the late Swami Vivekananda.

Was he the same graduate of the Calcutta University, the son of a lawyer and attorney of the High Court of Calcutta? No, he was different. Swami Vivekananda was different from him who was known as Narendra Nath Dutt before he came to his Blessed Master.

Did he belong to any caste? No, Swami Vivekananda had no caste; he had no earthly parents, but was the child of Ramakrishna. He renounced everything, severed his family relations and was born again of his spiritual father. He never claimed for himself any caste distinction. It was his Blessed Master who by the magic of his Divine touch brought into play the latent greatness of his soul. Being the most worthy disciple of his Master, he followed the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna, holding in his heart that he was the lowest of the low, lower even than a Pariah, so far as caste distinction and social position were concerned. He lived an unmarried life as simple and pure as that of a child: always regarding women as the representatives of the Divine Mother. Poverty, self-abnegation, self-renunciation and disinterested love for humanity were the ornaments of this exemplary character.

To-day Swami Vivekananda has become the great ideal of the Hindu nation. Narrow-minded sectarians may not acknowledge it, but the fault is not to be found with the sun because the owls do not see his glorious rising. In the name of Swami Vivekananda, the whole of India is weeping with

profound sympathy and sorrow; he is regarded as the patriot-saint of modern India. Hundreds of societies, clubs, schools and colleges have been started in the name of Swami Vivekananda by the respectable Hindus of all castes and creeds to show their appreciation of his greatness and to carry on his work for the cause of India. The other day I received a letter from a friend from Colombo in Ceylon who said:

"In Ceylon I see there is an English Magazine published under the name of 'Vivekananda.' A public hall has been erected here and named 'Vivekananda Hall.' A society has been started under the name of 'Vivekananda Society.' At Conjeevaram, in Southern India, there is a medal in a college named 'Vivekananda Medal.' In Trichinopoly there is a 'Vivekananda College.' In Calcutta the University graduates have started a Vivekananda Society. In almost every city in India there is a Vivekananda society or club; the object of these Societies is to continue the work left by this glorious patriot-saint and to fulfil his desires and ideas."

I have just received a letter from India saying that on the twenty-fifth of last January the fortieth birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in the monastery near Calcutta where his body was cremated, and three thousand people were sumptuously entertained and over five hundred from among the educated and respectable communities came to honor and show reverence to the holy spirit of the departed Swami.

Before I close, I must tell you that I had the honor of living with this great Swami in India, in England, and in this country. I lived and travelled with this great spiritual brother of mine, saw him day after day and night after night and watched his character for nearly twenty years, and I stand here to assure you that I have not found another like him in these three continents, and that no one can take the place of this wonderful personage. As a man, his character was pure and spotless; as a philosopher, he was the greatest of all Eastern and Western philosophers. In him I found the ideal of Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga; he was like the living example of Vedanta in all its different branches.

In conclusion, allow me to read an open letter sent to me by the late President of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, M. H. Logan, M.D., A.M., Ph.G. He was a personal friend of Swami Vivekananda, as you will see from his letter; he says:

"Many are the moments of sadness since the Swamijee has gone away. It seems that all the gods had left us, for his Divine presence spread peace and tranquillity wherever he went; the tumult of uncertainty departed from my soul at the sound of his magic voice. His very form and every mood were those of tender compassion and sympathy. None knew him but to love him; those of us who have had the royal good fortune to have met him in the flesh

will some day realize that we have met the true Incarnation of the Divine One.

To me he is "The Christ," than whom a greater one has never come; his great and liberal soul outshines all other things; his mighty spirit was as free and liberal as the great sun, or the air of heaven.

No being lived so mean or low, be it man or beast, that he would not salute. His was not only an appeal to the poor and lowly but to kings and princes and mighty rulers of the earth; to grand masters of learning, of finances, of art and of the sciences, to leaders of thought and of creeds, to mighty intellects, philosophers and poets. Vivekananda shook the world of thought on all its higher lines. Great teachers bowed reverently at his feet, the humble followed reverently to kiss the hem of his garments; no other single human being was reverenced more during his life than was Vivekananda.

In the few short weeks that I was with him few could know him better than I. At first I attended him through a severe spell of sickness, then he sat with me partly through a paralytic stroke; he would charm me to sleep and enchant me awake. So passed the sublimest part of my life, and now that sweet memory lingers and sustains me ever and always.

Many have asked me why so great and good a man must die? I have said, Why should he not die? His task was finished: One ordinary human body

was not enough, nor twenty, nor a hundred for such tremendous energy. Such an intense intellect and spirituality would soon dissolve the granite foundation stones.

Vivekananda is not dead, he is with us, now and forever. He is my comfort and solace. He is the Senior Brother to the whole world.

THE MASTER AS I SAW HIM.

BY SISTER NIVEDITA.

IN the West, the Swami had revealed himself to us as a religious teacher only.....It is true that in a flash or two one had seen a great patriot...It was as the apostle of Hinduism, not as a worker for India, that we saw the Swami in the West...

"From the moment of my landing in India, however, I found something quite unexpected underlying all this...It was the personality of the Master himself, in all the fruitless torture and struggle of a lion caught in a net...But wherein lay the struggle? Whence came the frequent sense of being baffled and thwarted? Was it a growing consciousness of bodily weakness, conflicting with the growing clearness of a great purpose?...Banished to the Himalayas with shattered health, at the very moment when his power had reached its height, he had written a letter to an English friend which was a cry of despair.

"To what was the struggle actually due? Was it the terrible effort of translating what he had called the 'super-conscious' into the common life? Undoubtedly he had been born to a task which was in this respect of heroic difficulty. Nothing in this world is so terrible as to abandon the safe paths of accepted ideals, in order to work out some new realisation, by methods apparently in conflict with the old...

Certainly in years to come, in the last five and-a-half years, particularly, which were his crowning gift to his own people, he stood for work without attachment, or work for impersonal ends, as one of the highest expressions of the religious life. And for the first time in the history of India an order of monks found themselves banded together, with their faces set primarily towards the evolution of new forms of civil duty. In Europe...such labour ranks as devotional in the common acceptance. But in India, the head and front of the demand made on a monastic order is that it produce saints...

"In the Swami's scheme of things, however, it would almost seem as if such tasks were to take that place in the spiritual education which had previously been occupied by systems of devotion.....Worship is thus regarded as the school, or preparation, for higher stages of spiritual development. But the self-same sequence would seem to have held good in the eyes of the Swami, with regard to work, or the service to man.....Thus he hallowed the act of aid, and hallowed, too, the name of man.....The nursing of the sick and the feeding of the poor, had indeed from the first been natural activities of the Children of Ramakrishna. But when the Swami returned from the West, these things took on a larger aspect. They were considered from a national point of view. Men would be sent out from the monastery to give relief in famine-stricken areas, to direct the sanitation of a town, or to nurse the sick and the dying at a pilgrim

centre.....These (workers) were, said the Swami, the 'sappers and miners' of the army of religion. His schemes, however, went much further. He was consumed with a desire for the education of Indian women, and for the scientific and technical education of the country. How the impersonal motive multiples the power to suffer, only those who have seen can judge.....

"His view was penetrative as well as comprehensive. He had analysed the elements of the development to be brought about. India must learn a new ideal of obedience. The Math was placed, therefore, on a basis of organisation which was contrary to all the current ideas of religious freedom..... The energy which had hitherto gone into the mortification of the body, might rightly, in his opinion, under modern conditions, be directed to the training of the muscles.

"..... Long ago, he had defined the mission of the Order of Ramakrishna as that of realising and exchanging the highest ideals of the East and of the West. And assuredly he here proved his own power to engage in such an undertaking as much by his gift of learning as by that of teaching. But it was inevitable that he himself should from time to time go through the anguish of revolt. The Hindu ideal of the religious life, as a reflection on earth of that of the Great God in the Divine Empyrean,—the Unmoving, the Untouched, 'pure, free, ever the Witness'—is so clear and so deeply established that only at great cost to himself could

a man carry it into a fresh channel.....Occasionally to one who was much with him, a word, let fall unconsciously, would betray the inner conflict.....'—I have become entangled,' he said simply, to one who protested that to his mind the wandering Sadhu of earlier years who had scattered his knowledge and changed his name as he went, had been greater than the Abbot of Belur, burdened with much work and many cares. 'I have become entangled.' And I remember the story told by an American woman, who said she could not bear to remember his face, at that moment when her husband explained to this strange guest that he must make his way from their home to Chicago with money which would be paid gladly to hear him speak of religion. 'It was,' she said, 'as if something had just broken within him, that could never again be made whole'.....

"And so, side by side with that sun-lit serenity and child-like peace which enwrapped the Swami as a religious teacher, I found in his own country another point of view, from which he was very, very human. And here, though the results of his efforts may have been choicer, or more enduring, than those of most of us, yet they were wrought at the self-same cost of having to toil on in darkness and uncertainty, and only now and then emerging into light. Often dogged by the sense of failure, often overtaken by a loathing of the limitations imposed alike by the instrument and the material, he dared less and less, as years went on, to make determinate plans, or to

dogmatise about the unknown. 'After all, what do we know?' he said once, 'Mother uses it all. But we are only fumbling about.'

"This has not perhaps been an element in the lives of the great teachers on which their narrators have cared to dwell much. Yet one catches a hint of it in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, when we are told how he turned on God with the reproach, 'Oh, Mother! What is this You have brought me to? All my heart is centred in these lads!' And in the eleventh chapter of the Dhammapada one can see still, though twenty-four centuries have passed since then, the wave-marks of similar storms on the shores of the consciousness of another Teacher.

"There was one thing, however, deep in the Master's nature, that he himself never knew how to adjust. This was the love of his country and his resentment of her suffering. Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was, to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He neither used the word 'nationality', nor proclaimed an era of 'nation-making.' 'Man-making,' he said, was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his Motherland. Like some delicately-poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo. There was no cry of fear,

no tremor of weakness, no shrinking from mortification, that he had not known or understood. He was hard on her sins, unsparing of her want of worldly wisdom, but only because he felt these faults to be his own. And none, on the contrary, was ever so possessed by the vision of her greatness. To him, she appeared as the giver of English civilisation. For what, he would ask, had been the England of Elizabeth in comparison with the India of Akbar? Nay, what would the England of Victoria have been, without the wealth of India behind her? Where would have been her refinement? Where would have been her experience? His country's religion, history, geography, ethnology, poured from his lips in an unbroken stream.....One might note the unwearied stream of analysis of the laws regarding female inheritance, or the details of caste customs in different provinces, or some abstruse systems of metaphysics or theology, proceeding on and on for a couple of hours longer.

"In these talks of his, the heroism of the Rajput, the faith of the Sikh, the courage of the Mahratta, the devotion of the saints, and the purity and the steadfastness of noble women, all lived again. Nor would he permit that the Mohammedan should be passed over. Humayoon, Sher Shah, Akbar, Shah Jehan, each of these, and a hundred more, found a day and a place in his bead-roll of glistening names.....

"Like some great spiral of emotion, its lowest

circles held fast in love of soil and love of nature; its next embracing every possible association of race, experience, history, and thought; and the whole converging and centring upon a single definite point, was thus the Swami's worship of his own land. And the point in which it was focussed was the conviction that India was not old and effete, as her critics had supposed, but young, ripe with potentiality, and standing, at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the threshold of even greater developments than she had known in the past. Only once, however, do I remember him to have given utterance to this thought. 'I feel myself,' he said in a moment of great quiet, 'to be the man born after many centuries. *I see that India is young.*' But in truth this vision was implied in every word he ever spoke. It throbbed in every story he told. And when he would lose himself, in splendid scorn of apology for anything Indian, in fiery repudiation of false change or contemptuous criticism, or in laying down for others the elements of a faith and love that could never be more than a pale reflection of his own, how often did the habit of the monk seem to slip away from, him, and the armour of the warrior stand revealed!

"But it is not to be supposed that he was unaware of the temptation which all this implied...As one who has forsworn them will struggle against thoughts of home and family, he would endeavour, time and again, to restrain and suppress these thoughts

of country and history, and to make of himself only that poor, religious wonderer, to whom all countries and all races should be alike...

"He was always striving to be faithful to the banner of Ramakrishna, and the utterance of a message of his own seemed often to strike him as a lapse. Besides, he believed that force spent in mere emotion was dissipated, only force restrained being conserved for expression in work. Yet again the impulse to give all he had would overtake him, and before he knew it, he would once more be scattering those thoughts of hope and love for his race and for his country, which, apparently without his knowledge, fell in so many cases like seed upon soil prepared for it and have sprung up already, in widely distant parts of India, into hearts and lives of devotion to the Motherland. Just as Sri Ramakrishna, in fact, without knowing any books, had been a living epitome of the Vedanta, so was Vivekananda of the national life. But of the theory of this he was unconscious. In his own words, applied to his Master, 'He was contented simply to live that great life, and to leave it to others to find the explanation.'"

PART—V.

THE MISSION AND SOCIAL WORK.

THERE are many who seem to think that Swami Vivekananda and his band of co-workers were confining themselves to mere philosophical discourses and there could be no greater mistake than that. The Ramkrishna Mission has always taken a lead in works of practical benevolence.

Swami Vivekananda was the moving spirit and inspirer of the ideal of service to fellowmen—an ideal which was carried out into practice by the energy, patience and disinterested devotion of a Brotherhood whose acts of charity "recall the benign deeds of St. Francis of Assisi." The cry of distressed humanity pierced the heart of the Swami. It is said that at a time when he was sorely perplexed by the ravages of famine a Pandit of the Upper Provinces came to argue with him on the Vedanta philosophy. The Swami is reported to have addressed the learned scholar in these words, which may fitly be the motto of the Mission's social work. "Panditji," said the Swami, "first of all you try to ameliorate the terrible distress that is prevailing everywhere, the heart-rending cry of your hungry

countrymen for a morsel of food, and after that come to have a debate on Vedanta. To stake one's whole life and soul to save the thousands who are dying of starvation—this is the essence of the religion of the Vedanta."

I. THE ADVAITA ASHRAMA.*

By Swami Virajananda.

The Advaita Ashrama was started on the 19th of March 1899 on the Himalayan heights, the land of its first expiration, with the fullest approval and under the guidance of the Swami Vivekananda. The Ashrama was founded by Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Sevier with the co-operation of Swami Swarupananda, its first President, and has ever since been conducted by the Brotherhood founded by the Swami Vivekananda.

Here it is hoped to keep Advaita free from all superstitions and weakening contaminations. Here is taught and practised nothing but the Doctrine of Unity, pure and simple, as taught by the Swami Vivekananda; and though in entire sympathy with all other systems, this Ashrama is dedicated to Advaita and Advaita alone.

In furtherance of the above objects of the Ashrama, its activities are directed to three general heads: Propaganda, Educational and Charitable Works.

I. Propaganda Work.

(*a*) *By the training of members as workers and teachers*:—Those who, giving up all private concerns, desire to devote themselves exclusively to self-improvement and the furtherance of the objects of the Ashrama are admitted as inmates and trained to be workers and teachers. The inmates are allotted such works at the Ashrama, manual and intellectual, as they are fitted to do, or capable of doing.

This helping in the general work of the Ashrama, practised in the spirit of Karma Yoga, takes up five or six hours daily. For the rest of the day the members are free to practise self-improvement by private and class study, meditation and Japam. Classes are held on Western and Eastern philosophy, the former in English, and the latter in English, Sanskrit or Bengali, as is convenient. Manual labour includes press work, agriculture

---

* From "A Brief History and Report of Work" from 1899 to 1913.

and gardening, and the supervision of other outdoor works. No external worship of images, pictures, etc., or any religious ceremony or ritual except Viraja Homa, is allowed. Since the time of the inception of the Ashrama up to the end of 1910, 32 workers were admitted in all; out of which 12 were unsuccessful in continuing the life of renunciation or were unsuitable and thus left. Out of the remainder, 6 are at present workers at the Ashrama, 3 died in harness and 11 are now useful members at other centres of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad. For the last three years it has been the rule not to admit any Brahmacharin except through the Belur Math, and such an one is expected to work here for three years at the least.

(*b*) *By lectures and conversational or epistolary intercourse*:—Swami Swarupananda, the first President of the Ashrama, went every year or so to many places in the United Provinces and Rajputana where he invariably succeeded in creating a deep interest in Advaita Vedanta by his life and teachings, through conversations and lectures among the higher and middle classes. In this capacity he visited Almora, Naini Tal, Bilbhit, Delhi, Allahabad, and Kishangarh. He died at Naini Tal of pneumonia at the age of 38, on 27th June, 1906, when he was there on such a mission He delivered two public lectures in Allahabad in February 1903, as also did the Swami Vimalananda, which made such an impression upon the local gentry that they came forward with an earnest request to them to open a centre there assuring them of their full support. Swami Vimalananda also did good work in Naini Tal for two months in 1902, and at Bangalore during 1905 and 1906. Both these Swamis were greatly loved and esteemed by all among whom they worked. The present writer also visited most of the towns in the United Provinces, Punjab, Sind, Kathiawar and also some in the Bombay Presidency and Rajputana, during his tour from November 1901 to August 1902 in the interest of the *Prabuddha Bharata Magazine*, and had thus much opportunity of coming in to touch with educated men in every sphere of life, and making them feel interested in the life, work and mission of the Swami Vivekananda.

(*c*) *By literature*:—Swami Vivekananda intended to make the Advaita Ashrama the centre, among other things, of the Ramakrishna Mission, for diffusing Vedanta teachings by means of a monthly journal and other publications in English, and it is gratifying to note that the Ashrama has been discharging this function with admirable and ever-growing success, notwithstanding all the difficulties in conducting a Press in the midst of the Himalayan jungles, 63 miles from the nearest railway station, and at a height of 6800 feet above the sea-level When the Swamiji was living at Almora in June 1898, with some of his Western and Indian disciples and Gurubhais, the

news reached him of the sudden demise of the gifted Editor of the monthly journal, *Prabuddha Bharata*, which had been started two years before at Madras under his auspices. He at once made up his mind to revive the discontinued paper as the organ of the Ramakrishna Mission, with Swami Swarupananda as its editor (he having had a wide experience in this line as the Editor of *Dawn*, Calcutta, for some time), and Mr. J. H. Sevier as its Manager. A hand-press with other printing requisites was brought up from Calcutta to Almora and the paper made its appearance in the following August in a new garb. The idea and the necessity of starting a monastery in a cool, secluded hilly region where the East and the West could meet and practise the Advaita philosophy was discussed and decided upon, and it was also thought desirable to have a permanent home for the paper. Thus the Mayavati tea estate of extensive acreage and jungles and with two commodious houses situated 50 miles from Almora, was fixed upon and bought, the Press was removed thither and Mr. and Mrs. Sevier with Swami Swarupananda took up their residence here on the 19th of March 1899. *Prabuddha Bharata* was edited and conducted with remarkable ability by the Swami Swarupananda, aided by his Brother-Sannyasins, till his death in June 1906, when it was taken over by the present writer, who succeeded him as President of the Ashrama. The steady increase of subscribers ever since shows that the paper has maintained its high standard of excellence. During Swami Swarupananda's term of office, eight books and pamphlets were issued under the title of the "Himalayan Series," and the resolution was formed to popularise the Swamiji's ideas by bringing out in a collected form, all his lectures, writings, letters and discourses, etc, so far as they were available, after careful revision and editing. In 1905 Swami Swarupananda started upon this gigantic task with all his usual vigour and earnestness and continued his work until his last illness when a portion of the first part of "The Complete Works of the Swami Vivekananda, Mayavati Memorial Edition," had already gone through the Press and a further considerable portion was also ready for printing.

The Western and Eastern disciples of Swamiji at the Advaita Ashrama undertook the work and devoted the whole of their time and energy for four years to bring it to completion. They have been successful in bringing out five volumes of the works, of about 250 pages each, and of the size of 9½ by 7¼ inches. This great work is expected to be completed in another volume containing the rest of the Swamiji's speeches, writings, letters and conversations, with a glossary and index. Besides these five parts, the Advaita Ashrama has since 1907 published the following works:—*Works by the Swami Vivekananda.*—(1) Jnana Yoga. (2) Bhakti Yoga. (3) Two lectures on Karma

Yoga. (4) Modern India. (5) Epistles of the Swami Vivekananda 1st Series, 2nd Edition. (6) Ditto 2nd Series. (7) Lectures from Colombo to Almora. *Other Works*:—(8). The Swami Abhedananda's Lectures and Addresses in India. (9) Srimad Bhagavad-Gita by Swami Swarupananda.

2. EDUCATIONAL WORK.

In its early days the Ashrama had the intention of starting a free boarding school for boys of the surrounding villages and for this purpose provided several of them with free board, lodging and education for about two years. As soon as the boys learned to read and write in Hindi and English, they were, however, taken away by their guardians to be put to some employment, and so the school had to be broken up. But it is gratifying to learn that all of them are now earning respectable wages in various occupations. Since then, the Ashrama has from time to time opened daily classes, Sunday classes and evening classes to teach the boys of the villagers and the men employed in the Ashrama, Hindi, English and Arithmetic.

3. CHARITABLE WORK.

The Mayavati Charitable Dispensary:— Moved by the extreme helplessness and suffering of the poor and ignorant villagers in times of illness, the Swamis distributed medicines to those who came from long distances, and themselves went out to succour such as were too ill to come for help. As their numbers increased, the Ashrama felt the need of opening a regular dispensary, under a competent physician; the services of a retired Indian doctor were secured for two years at the monthly salary of Rs. 30, free board and lodging, and the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary was started in November 1903 at the Ashrama. Before appealing to the public for funds, the Ashrama bore the entire cost of its maintenance for nearly two years amounting to Rs. 1,030-11-0.

II. THE PRACTICAL WORK OF THE MISSION.

[This leads us to a consideration of the three main features of the Mission's Work *viz.*,—famine relief, medical relief and propaganda work. The following account of the practical work of the Mission is taken from the Memorial Edition of the life of Swami Vivekananda by his Eastern and Western disciples.]

In the latter part of 1899, India was under the throes of a famine which was admitted as the severest that the country had seen in the last century, if not for some centuries past. With the modest and limited means at the disposal of the Brotherhood, the work accomplished by the Mission was, perhaps, not very much when we consider the extent and depth of the prevailing distress, but the record was admitted on all hands as certainly the most creditable. Besides, the example of such altruistic undertakings was bound to have its wholesome influence on the public generally. The Mission chose for its scene of labours the State of Kishangarh in Rajputana, which was hard hit in common with other places. Swami Kalyanananda was sent there on November, to open a famine-relief centre and an orphanage, and thanks to the generous support he received from the Durbar, he was instrumental in snatching from an untimely death as many as 55 boys and 30 girls, who were housed in two separate buildings kindly lent by the Durbar. Later the number rose to 141. On the average 400 persons received help daily. Ten of the orphan boys were found employment at the Carpet Factory, and 6 boys and 7 girls at the Cotton Mills. Major J. R. Dunlop Smith, the Famine Commissioner, who visited the orphanage at the end of February 1900, wrote in his report ; ".....The children are in excellent condition and appear to receive every attention. They were all very happy....." Mr. G. R. Erwin, the Resident at Jeypore, being pleased with the work contributed Rs. 1,000 to the orphanage. Swamis Nirmalananda, Swarupananda and Atmananda also joined later and greatly helped the work in various ways. "Their Orphanage," wrote *The Advocate* of Lucknow, " is a wonder of economy along with efficiency."

Again, seeing the urgency of opening a famine-relief centre in the Central Provinces, the Mission sent the Swami Sureshwrananda to Khandwa, who started work there in May 1900. The funds at his command being limited, the Swami determined to work along the line of supplementing the activities of the local authorities, as had been done at Kishangarh, and at the kind suggestion of the Deputy Commissioner of the Province, went in search of respectable families reduced to destitution, who would not come out to beg even though they might be at the point of death, and supplied them with food. And hundreds of people who were starving, being physically incapable of doing any work at the Government centres, were also inspected by the Swami and given sufficient quantities of rice, thus saving their lives. In nearly four months of work, the total number of persons relieved was 13,837, of whom 3,343 belonged to high-caste poor families.

On 24th September 1899 some parts of the Bhagalpur District in Behar were inundated by a devastating flood. Whole villages were swept away, entire families perished, and hundreds of people became quite destitute. Swami Akhandananda went from his Murshidabad orphanage to the stricken area, opened a relief centre at Ghoga and worked from 15th October to 20th December. Swami Sadananda was deputed from the Belur Math to help him. They succoured 45 villages, and nursed many helpless Cholera patients day and night. In one place the Swami Akhandananda taught the inhabitants how to disinfect, and distributed camphor, sulphur and incense for the purpose. By this means he made a village of *Chandals* free of cholera. He also distributed pieces of cloth to 540 people, who had almost nothing on them. Of these 408 were destitute widows. Mr. J. G. Cumming, the Magistrate and Collector of the district, helped him with nearly half the money and took great interest in the work. When the work was closed he thanked the Swamis and the Ramakrishna Mission for the good work done by them.

When the terrible landslip occurred at Darjeeling in 1899, Swami Shivananda rendered necessary help to many persons made homeless and miserable by the catastrophe.

A medical relief work was also carried on by the Ramakrishna Mission in a rented house in Calcutta from 22nd June to 23rd October 1899.

As in the previous year, when plague and cholera broke out in Calcutta in the summer of 1900, but in a more virulent form, the workers of the Ramakrishna Mission in order to prevent the spread of the frightful epidemics did much sanitary work under the direction of the Swami Sadananda, which exacted the admiration and gratitude of the public. The work was directed to the insanitary *bustees* of wards 1, 2 and 3, and

extended through a period of five weeks. It was confined mostly to the poorest classes who were unable to pay for cleansing and disinfecting their huts, drains and closets which were kept in the most filthy condition. The kind and amount of work done will be realised when it is stated that within that short period no less than 1,300 *bustee* huts and 64 *pucca* houses were cleansed and disinfected including drains and closets connected therewith, open spaces and surroundings of most of them in which heaps of refuse had accumulated for months were swept, and 160 cart loads of refuse were removed. The thorough manner in which everything was done was testified to by the Sanitary Inspectors of the wards, the Divisional Superintendent, the Health Officer of Calcutta and the District Medical Officer, Plague Department, who inspected the work on several occasions and heartily thanked the Mission for the disinterested help it had rendered to improve the sanitation of the city. *The Indian Mirror*, in its leader of 29th April, wrote :—"* * * The Ramakrishna Mission has its plague volunteers likewise. They are to be met within Calcutta in the dirtiest streets and filthiest *bustees*, helping to clear plague-spots, encouraging the people, consoling them in their affliction and teaching them to live clean lives. And this is done without the expenditure of much money.* * * " The work was stopped only when the epidemic had so far subsided as to make its continuance unnecessary.

A plague camp was also opened at Vaniyambadi in the Madras Presidency in the name of Ramakrishna by the local devotees of the Bhagavan and of Swamiji in March 1902 for treating helpless Hindu patients suffering from the dread disease.

Besides taking in hand temporary relief measures demanded by sudden emergencies caused by famine, flood, plague and other visitations of widespread misery, the Swami's idea was to cover the land with permanent centres of relief for giving all possible aid to the diseased, the poor, and the helpless people of his land. The idea of making worship and Sadhana of such service by seeing Narayana in them was a new innovation which augurs well for the country, in that it creates the national Sraddha or devotion to the people in the hearts of the young generation. In his private talks to young men and in some of his lectures in India, as is well-known, he earnestly sought to infuse this spirit into them. Though he had not the satisfaction of seeing how the seeds of his dearly-cherished desire have grown up into vigorous institutions since his passing, he was glad at heart to have started two Homes of Service, one at Benares and the other at Kankhal, under the charge of a few of his Sannyasin disciples, besides the orphanage at Murshidabad conducted by Swami Akhandananda. In Benares, the most ancient and living centre of Hinduism, considered the holiest city in India, besides thousands of Sadhus who pass their days in study and meditation,

depending upon *bhiksha* from the *Chhatrams*, there come large numbers of men and women, old and decrepit, awaiting to enter into Eternal Freedom after death. In spite of the charitable dispensaries and *Annasatras*, when these people and other poor pilgrims fall victims to disease or starvation, they are practically found lying in the streets helpless and uncared-for. The sight of such misery touched the hearts of two Brahmacharins of the Mission, who formed the Poor Men's Relief Association and set to work from 13th June 1900, to mitigate the distress of the sick and the helpless who were placed outside the reach of the existing conventional forms of charity. Up to 12th September, for want of accommodation, assistance was given to them in the streets and *ghats*, or in the houses of the invalids. Subsequently a small house was rented in order to give them the full benefit of the care and attention of the workers. Out of this small beginning, the huge proportions which the present Home of Service has gradually attained with its large outdoor dispensary, and its hospital with numerous wards and other necessary quarters constructed after the best sanitary standards, in its spacious grounds, are a monument of the untiring zeal and the constant self-sacrificing labours of the workers, supported by the handsome donations and the continued pecuniary help received from the public. Up to the end of 1912, the Home relieved no less than 43,753 indoor and outdoor patients and sufferers from other sources, and the work has gone on increasing ever since in an exceptional degree.

Early in 1901 Swami Kalyananda, a disciple of Swamiji's, during a pilgrimage to Hardwar, was deeply affected by the helpless condition of Sadhus in time of their illness, and felt an irresistible impulse to serve the afflicted with medical help and nursing. He communicated his resolve to his brother-disciple, the Swami Swarupananda of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, who fully shared in it, and both set to work begging for funds to start a Sevashrama, which they succeeded in doing in June 1901. A few phials of medicines were secured and a room was rented at Kankhal, with Swami Kalyananda as doctor, nurse, accountant and all. The work steadily prospered and early in 1902 during the *Kumbha mela* at Hardwar a branch centre was worked with great success at Hrishikesh, where a large number of Sadhus congregate to pass the winter months. With growing appreciation and support from the pious public, the scope of work gradually widened, permanent quarters for a hospital and outdoor dispensary were constructed with several wards and the relief, which was at the outset confined to the indoor treatment of Sadhus only, was extended to all helpless pilgrims and poor people who sought the aid of the Home. The record of work done during thirteen and

a half years up to December 1914, is striking evidence of its utility and importance, as within that period it has relieved 66,362 indoor and outdoor patients.

The Sevashramas of Brindaban and Allahabad being established several years after Swamiji's passing, do not come within the scope of this chapter. Mention may only be made that during the six years ending in 1912, the former treated 66,450 indoor and outdoor patients, and the latter treated 5,856 patients in 1912. The work of relief is carried on in all the centres mentioned above in a purely non-sectarian spirit, and Hindus from the highest to the lowest caste, as well as Mahommedans, Christians and people of other religious persuasions are served with equal care and attention. In considering the works accomplished by all these Sevashramas it must be remembered that, if they had not had to encounter a keen day-to-day struggle between the increasing demands for Seva and the inadequate supply of funds to meet them, they could have accomplished an incalculably greater amount of work with a more proper degree of efficiency.

These four permanent charitable institutions of the Mission, it will be noticed, have sprung up in the four holy places of pilgrimage, which hold undisturbed sway over the minds of millions of all classes of Hindus. "The Hindu standpoint," as has been remarked in the First General Report issued by the Ramakrishna Mission, "is that the most fundamental concern of man is religion and all social and civic activities must grow out of and revolve round that centre. In India, for example, the national characteristic is to develop cities round the temples, while in Europe cities evolve round centres of commercial and political activity. The Hindu Shastras also specially extol in one voice, charity in places of pilgrimage. In fact, it is a part of national economy in India to direct the liberality of the people towards those who devote their lives more or less to the cause of spirituality. This important principle together with the universal impulse of charity in the presence of distress, underlies the noteworthy fact of the Sevashramas springing up in the holy places....." Moreover, as says *The Brahmavadin*: "The Ramakrishna Homes of Service represent a spontaneous effort of the higher federation of Hinduism to come to the assistance of the local, or communal, or purely civic consciousness, in an age of crisis and transition. Its birth is in religion, but its goal, as befits the modern world, is civic. Religion inspires, but does not limit its activities. The brotherhood seeks to serve the city. In the fact that such service arises, and arises spontaneously, we find a proof of the undying strength of the Motherland. In the aim it proposes to itself, we read the adequacy of the Sanatana Dharma to every

phase of the development of civilisation." * * * "The Ramakrishna Mission is now the centre of vast spiritual influence, and all that is good and all that is holy, in this and many other lands in the East and the West, is certain to respond to that influence."

As is well-known, Swamiji had well-defined schemes for the education of Hindu boys and girls on truly national lines. Though the Ramakrishna Mission was not in a position to take it up on an adequate scale, some humble beginnings were made in the direction of a practical solution of the problem before and after his passing. The notable of these were the Sister Nivedita's Girls' School at Calcutta, and the Ramakrishna Orphanage at Sargachi in Murshidabad District. The Swami Akhandananda instructed by the Swami Vivekananda himself as how to proceed in the proper lines in regard to the education and uplifting of the masses, has been ever since laying down his life by slow degrees trying to solve this most important problem, though constantly handicapped for want of means and resources. His scheme in general is well worth reproducing here from the First General Report of the Ramakrishna Mission :—

"His idea is to start model institutions on a scale calculated to illustrate to educated men the methods by which the rural classes are to be approached and the light of knowledge is to be diffused among them. These institutions will provide respectively for the following items of work : 1st, orphanage work,—taking parental care of rural children having none to look after them ; 2nd, relief work,—combating disease, misery in any form, and sudden scourges of nature, 3rd. general education, 4th, training in useful industries and arts ; 5th, training in modern agricultural methods, 6th, separate provision for giving medical aid, nursing, refuge and useful education to girls, and 7th., organising of all these classes of work in the district centre and its rural branches with a spiritual outlook on life and its activities. Thus, with a central workers' Ashrama conducted on a religious basis, there will be six separate institutions set up side by side in this district centre where the whole work of the uplifting of the masses will be continued. From this district centre as the headquarters will be spread a network of village organisations specialising technical training and relief according as the needs of the local area dictate. The district Ashrama and the Orphanage will also make it a point to initiate trained young men from the proper classes into a life consecrated to all this work and scatter them throughout the rural areas with or without some professional pursuit for their own livelihood as the case may demand, the idea being to make rural people fully participate in all the nobler ideals of life for which the Ramakrishna

Mission stands, not simply as passive recipients but also as their active promulgators.....Evidently it is proper to make our help reach the rural people who live in the villages and not to make them come to us in the towns for that help. The nation, we should remember.

Passing on to a brief survey of the Maths and Ashramas established during the latter part of Swamiji's lifetime, mention must be made of the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama of Benares. A small beginning in the direction of a religious institution for inculcating the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna was made there in 1900 by Swami Achalananda, then a Brahmacharin. In June 1902, Swami Shivananda was sent by Swamiji from the Belur Math to start an Ashrama on a permanent and wider basis to carry on the missionary and monastic work at Benares The objects of the Ashrama are, (1) to train young men in Brahmacharyam and mould their character after the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the Swami Vivekananda; (2) to train spiritual and secular educators by encouraging arts and industries, and popularising the study of Vedanta and other systems of religious thought as interpreted by the above great teachers; (3) to carry on the work inaugurated by them, of fraternising with the various creeds of the world knowing them to be so many phases of the one Eternal Universal Religion; (4) to give primary education to boys by opening a school in the Ashrama; (5) to translate the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and of Swamiji in Hindi. By dint of perseverance and devotion of the Swami Shivananda, and, later on, of Brahmachari Chandra, the Ashrama has gradually risen to eminence and become a permanent and useful institution in the holy city.

From the year 1900, the Swami Vijnanananda commenced work at Allahabad with the Brahmavadin Club, which had been started by some earnest followers of Swamiji for the study and discussion of religious subjects. Later on, the Swami considered it proper to invest his work with a public character and founded a Math in the city, dedicated to purely monastic purposes, with a Sevashrama connected with it.

III.—THE MISSION'S WORK IN FOREIGN LANDS.

Vol. IV of the Himalayan Edition of the Swami Vivekananda's life contains a narrative of the work of the Ramakrishna Mission in England and America. The following account, though by no means up-to-date, gives an idea of the elaborate propaganda work carried on by the Mission in foreign countries.

Turning to the propaganda work carried on in foreign lands, we find the Sister Nivedita working in England and Scotland for nearly a year from the latter part of 1900, as she had done in America prior to this, educating the public opinion on the life and ideals of Indian womanhood, dispelling many of the false notions that were current, and presenting an altogether new light, with regard to them. Wherever she lectured she set forth with her usual vehemence her scheme of educating the Indian women on true national lines. All such work done by Western women, she insisted, must be based upon a patient and reverent study and a thorough knowledge of their lives, their philosophy and their customs. They should not ride rough-shod over their prejudices, but thoroughly Hinduise themselves, and educate and develop their particular inborn characteristics. She pointed out that Hinduism with all its faults was the most magnificent system of civilisation and supplied the finest educational instrument that the world had ever seen. The great ideal of Indian womanhood, she pointed out, was not romance but renunciation. and that this ideal should be strengthened and not impaired in giving the Hindu women education on modern practicality.

In the period under review, besides the work carried on by the Swami Vivekananda in the West. and especially in California as already described, striking progress was achieved through the untiring exertions of the Swami Abhedananda in the United States of America. Through the generous subscriptions and co-operation of students and friends, the headquarters of the Vedanta Society of New York was established on a suitable site with its class-rooms, office and library, on 15th October 1899, and the Swami Abhedananda resumed his public

lectures from the next week in the Tuxedo Hall and in Madison Avenue, and continued them throughout the winter and spring on Sunday afternoons. He also lectured and held classes in the Vedanta Society during the week days. On June 1st, he addressed the New England Cremation Society of Boston at their anniversary meeting, and on the next day spoke before an audience of 1,000 persons at the anniversary of the Free Religious Association of America on "The Conception of Immortality." Both the lectures were most favourably received. After visiting Waltham, Concord and Walden Pond, he went to Newport and gave an address on 20th June in the parlour of Ladd Villa on the "Religious Ideas of the Hindus." Rev. Dr. Cutter, a Unitarian Minister who introduced the Swami, greeted him at the close of the meeting saying, "Swami, I do not know whether I have made you a better Hindu, but surely you have made me a better Christian." On the next day, the Swami gave another parlour talk in the city. On July 1st, he went to the White Mountains in New Hampshire as the guest of Mr. Herschel C. Parker of the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston, and on the 8th, spoke before it on the "Philosophy of the Hindus." He then went to Worcester, Mass, to attend the summer school for teachers in Clark University. He attended courses on Child-Study, Physiology, Mineralogy, Anatomy, Philosophy, Anthropology with laboratory appliances, and delivered a lecture before the students on the Philosophy of the Hindus, which was highly appreciated. Then he made a journey of 500 miles to Lily Dale, the summer home of the Spiritualists, and on invitation from them attended their seances and meetings and spoke on Spiritualism as understood by the Indian sages. So favourable and profound was the impression made for the Vedanta philosophy that a permanent body of students was formed to continue the study of the Vedanta. After visiting the summer school that was being held at Chautauqua, the Swami went in the middle of August to Greenacre, Maine, another journey of several hundred miles, and lectured thrice before the Monsalvat School for the Study of Comparative Religions, which used to be held annually under the overspreading branches of an ancient tree known as "The Swami's Pine," since the Swami Vivekananda taught there. The subjects were: "Is Hinduism Pantheistic?" "Reincarnation", and "The Spiritual Influence of India in the West." Receiving there a wire from the Swami Vivekananda on his arrival in America in company with the Swami Turiyananda he hastened to his home in the Catskill Mountains. After spending ten happy days with them he returned to New York on October 1st to resume the work of the Vedanta Society. During these travels of 2,000 miles or more, the Swami met and spoke to several thousands of people, many of whom were highly educated, prominent in the

professions, or engaged in higher education and in religious work.

The work of the Vedanta Society of New York for the season 1899—1900 began from the middle of October with Swami Abhedananda delivering a series of ten Sunday public lectures at the Tuxedo Hall up to December, which were very largely attended. Week-day meetings were regularly held at the head-quarters, where the Swami gave a course of lectures on Karma Yoga on Tuesday evenings, interviews and personal instructions by appointment on Wednesday afternoons, class-instruction followed by meditation on Thursday evenings, and readings from the Upanishads with comments on Saturday mornings. Questions and answers followed all the lectures and classes, and there was a daily meditation hour from 4 to 5 P.M The Sunday public lectures at the Tuxedo Hall ended on 1st April, and the Swami Abhedananda after a long and successful season of hard work left New York on April 6th to fulfil some engagements to lecture in other cities such as, Cambridge and Worcester, Massachussetts, and other places in the vicinity of Boston.

After visiting Worcester, Mass., the Swami Abhedananda lectured at Lynn on the "Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus" before the Outlook Club to an audience of 300 women, it being a women's Club. In Waltham, Mass., he spoke before the Psychomath Society on the "Motherhood of God" On 22nd April he addressed the Conferences for the Comparative Study of Religions in Cambridge, Mass., his topic being, "Ramakrishna, A Real Mahatman." Prof. Lanman and Prof. Fay of the Harvard University listened with interest to the lecture, the former, the celebrated Professor of Sanskrit in the Harvard University, addressing the audience on the "Spirituality of the Hindus" The Swami was the honoured guest of the Charming Club of Boston on the 23rd at a reception given in the Vendome Hotel, and was invited to speak after dinner On the 26th he addressed an audience of 800 persons on the "Religious Ideas of the Hindus" at the Liberal Congress of Religions that was being held at Boston at the time. The lecture proved to be most engrossing. Dr. R. Heber Newton of New York, one of America's most eminent clergymen, spoke in appreciative terms of Hindu thinkers and spiritual leaders. After the lecture Swami Abhedananda said to him, "You have paid us a great tribute." "You deserved it," was the emphatic reply. That same evening he was invited to dine with Prof. Lanman. He expressed great sympathy and interest in the Vedanta work which the Swamis were conducting in that country. The Swami made him and Dr. Newton honorary members of the Vedanta Society. The Swami also met and interested by his talks some of the distinguished professors of the Harvard University, such as, President Eliot, Prof. Lyons, and Prof. Fay, and

also C. C. Everett of Divinity School. On 29th he attended a lecture by Prof. Royce on Nietzsche, the great German philosopher. After the lecture he was asked by the chairman to make some remarks on the subject. In his address the Swami showed the difference between Nietzsches philosophy and the principles of the Vedanta. The next day he returned to New York.

All these activities created an ever-growing interest in the Vedanta, which was evidenced in many ways,—in loving and reverent attitude to the Swamis, in attendance at the meetings, in financial support, in the sale of Vedanta literature, in application to the Swamis to lecture in various places and to write articles for periodicals, etc., and in the notices in the newspapers showing respectful consideration of the Vedanta philosophy and religion. The Swami proved himself not only an able and efficient teacher, but furthered the success of the work in every other way, by his remarkable organising power, sound judgment and consideration, careful attention to the needs of the Society to the minutest details, and by his power of adaptability to Western methods of work and teaching.

The Vedanta Society had recently removed to a choicer locality and more commodious quarters at 58th Street, occupying an entire house of four floors. This gave a new impetus to the work. During the summer the Sunday afternoon lectures were delivered in the Society rooms, and the classes and other meetings were continued as mentioned before. During the course of the season 1899—1900 Swami Abhedananda formed a Yoga class and gave practical lessons in breathing exercises, concentration, meditation and self-control to such earnest students and members as applied for instructions.

During June and most part of July Swami Vivekananda stayed in the Vedanta Society rooms and helped his Brother-Swamis by holding classes and delivering lectures. The Sister Nivedita also lectured twice on "The Ideals of Hindu Women." and "The Ancient Arts of India." Her talks and lectures were most entertaining and instructive to the audience. The Vedanta classes and lectures in New York were closed in the middle of July and Swami Abhedananda after taking a little rest of nearly two weeks in the Adirondack Mountains went to Chesterfield, Indiana, and lectured on 5th August before the Indiana Association of Spiritualists. The audience numbering about 7,000 people were enthusiastic. On the 7th, he spoke on "Immortality," and on the 7th on "Reincarnation." Then he went to Greenacre *via* Massachussets and gave two lectures on Bhagavadgita and held meditation meetings under the "Swami's Pine." The closing lecture of the Greenacre season was the lecture of the Swami Vivekananda on "My Master," which was read by Swami Abhedananda, and greatly enjoyed by all. On 23rd September, Swami Abhedananda lectured before

the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston at a beautiful summer resort called Minnewasca. He then returned to New York and spoke before the Metaphysical Convention on the "Universality of the Vedanta." He was kindly invited to represent the Hindu and Sanskrit scholars of India at a public meeting held in the Columbia University as a tribute to the memory of the late Prof. Max Muller, and spoke on behalf of India acknowledging her indebtedness to him for the great services done by him in the cause of her philosophy and religion.

Swami Abhedananda resumed his public lectures on Sunday afternoons at Carnegie Lyceum, New York, from November for the season of 1900—1901. He also gave a special course of lectures at the Vedanta library on Tuesday evenings and held Yoga classes on Thursday evenings. The Children's class, which had been started by the Swami Turiyananda, was also reopened On December 13th, the Swami was invited to speak before the Council of Jewish women, at Temple Israil, in the city, and gave an interesting talk on the Festivals of the ancient Jews. His broad and liberal views regarding Judaism were highly appreciated. On the first Sunday of the New Year, it was most *apropos* that he should speak on the "Religious Need of the Twentieth Century," in the Carnegie Lyceum. The lecture was favourably noticed in the prominent papers. His lectures on "How to be a Yogi" drew large audiences, many of whom were so impressed that they flocked in numbers to him afterwards to receive instructions on Yoga practices. The Swami discreetly chose from amongst them only those who were really earnest, and opened another Yoga class for these new students. On February 19th he spoke on "My Master," which made a profound impression on everyone. Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday anniversary was fittingly celebrated on the next day, as was the Christmas Day before.

Swami Abhedananda left New York at the end of June and after a few days at the Buffalo Fair and a visit to Cleveland went to California. On his way he met friends on all sides who considered it a privilege to render him every service in their power. Invitations to talk and lecture were everywhere pressed upon him. He reached San Francisco on the 29th of July. During his stay there he met the class of the Vedanta Society at its regular meetings and gave a public lecture at the Union Square Hall on September 1st on "What is Vedanta?" On the urgent soliciation of Prof. Howisson, professor of philosophy in the University of California, Berkeley, he delivered a lecture on the 6th before the faculty and students of that institution. After staying for a few days at the Shanti Ashrama and the Vedanta centre at Los Angeles he returned to New York at the beginning of October, 1901, and was highly pleased with the encouraging state of affairs that met him on his arrival.

He resumed the Vedanta work for the season of 1901—1902 with unusual strength and vitality gained during his restful vacation spent in his journey to the Pacific coast. He began his Sunday public lectures at the Carnegie Lyceum and conducted the classes and other meetings in the Vedanta Society as in the past year. We need not recount his varied activities here in detail any more. Suffice it to say that it was greatly due to his untiring perseverance and faithfulness that the message of Vedanta steadily spread into broader fields and gained a firmer foothold in the lives of many American students. Each succeeding lecture found him making a larger application and attracting greater numbers, who became earnest students of the philosophy he taught with such impressive eloquence, simplicity, and directness. Under his able control and management, the work of organisation was fully accomplished, and the Society came to be accepted and recognised as an established fact by prominent persons and even by many ministers of the Christian Church. Everything seemed to point to an awakening on the part of the public to the fact that the Vedanta was a power to be reckoned with in the United States.

The Swami Turiyananda began work in Montclair, near New York, holding a class on Tuesday afternoons, and soon won the love and veneration of all who came in contact with him. A new feature of work in New York was in his charge, this being the Children's class on Saturday afternoons, in which moral instructions were given by him through stories from the Hitopadesha and other Indian books in a most interesting and helpful manner. He also conducted a meditation class with an increasing number of students. The lectures and classes in the Vedanta Society of New York were conducted by him during April, May and part of June of the year 1900, in the absence of the Swami Abhedananda, and his presence was of great advantage and help to the students. Later he went to Cambridge as the guest of Mrs. Ole Bull and delivered an address before the Cambridge Conference on Sankaracharya. After returning to New York he left for California to work there and to establish a Shanti Ashrama in a beautiful and secluded place in the mountains in the San Antone Valley, Santa Clara County, about 12 miles from the Lick Observatory. The large tract of land there was the gift of Miss Minnie C. Boock. On the 8th of July, the Swami Turiyananda arrived at Alhambra, near Los Angeles. Thence he went to Los Angeles and worked there for a couple of weeks. On the 26th of July he arrived at San Francisco and took charge of the work of the Vedanta Society there. On 29th he gave an address on the Gita at the Home of Truth, He held meditation classes in the Society until August 3rd, when accompanied by twelve students he went to establish the Shanti Ashrama, and moulded the lives of the students who

lived with him, in a remarkably spiritual way. On the 24th of January 1901, the Swami resumed his work in the city and, as he laid greater emphasis on meditation and other practical spiritual exercises, he daily held meditation classes from 31st January to March 26th at the hall of the Vedanta Society, with regular lectures alternately on the Gita and Raja Yoga on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. On March 26th the Swami left for Los Angeles where he taught and lectured for several weeks, returning later to the Ashrama. In September, in the company of a few students he made a trip to Lake Donner and thence returned to San Francisco and continued his work there until December 31st. Then he again went to Los Angeles and later to the Shanti Ashrama, where he trained the students who accompanied him, in the practices of meditation Unfortunately under the severe strain to which he put himself in the work of training his pupils his health broke down, and according to the request of the Swami Vivekananda he returned to India for rest and recuperation, sailing on the 6th of June, 1902. A farewell reception was given to him by his devoted students, who were too loath to part from their beloved teacher who literally sacrificed himself to initiate them in the joys and mysteries of higher life.

First Edition. 2,000 Copies. January 1921.
G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras.

184

INDIAN TALES

OF

FUN, FOLLY AND FOLK-LORE

A COLLECTION OF THE

TALES OF TENNAL RAMAN
TALES OF MARIADA RAMAN
TALES OF RAJA BIRBAL
KOMATI WIT AND WISDOM
THE SON-IN-LAW ABROAD
NEW INDIAN TALES
TALES OF RAYA AND APPAJI
FOLKLORE OF THE TELUGUS

The publishers hope that their venture in presenting under one cover all the 184 tales scattered in eight different booklets and in offering this handy volume for almost half the original price will be appreciated by the reading public. The book, as it is, is an epitome of the wit and wisdom of the various peoples of India

PRESS OPINIONS

Civil and Military Gazette.—The tales are amusing and to the folklorist may be of special interest.

The Madras Mail.—Distinctly amusing and illustrative of some phase or other of the complex character of Hindu Society.

☞ Eight Booklets in One Volume. ☜

Price Re. 1-4.

To Subscribers of the "Indian Review" Re. One.

☞ *The Annual Subscription to the "REVIEW" is Rs. 5. (five). Subscription can commence from any month. Any one who wishes to buy books at the reduced rates must remit Rs. 5, one year's subscription to the "Review" in advance.*

G.A. Natesan & Co., Sunkurama Chetti Street, Madras.

GANDHI'S

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY MR. C. F. ANDREWS

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN STRUGGLE

BY MR. H. S. L. POLAK.

Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged

With numerous portraits, Illustrations & cartoons.

Cloth Bound over 500 pages. Indexed.

Rs. 3. To Subscribers of the "*Indian Review*," Rs. 2-8.

M. K. GANDHI: An Indian Patriot in S. Africa

BY THE REV. J. DOKE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY LORD AMPTHILL.

A cheap, popular edition of this inspiring book written by a great Christian friend and admirer of Mr. Gandhi and his work in South Africa is now for the first time published in India in a handy form.

Price Re. 1. To Subscribers of the "Review" As. 12.

☞ *The Annual Subscription to the "INDIAN REVIEW" is Rs. Five. The price of a single copy is Re. One. Those who want books at concession rates must remit Rs. 5, a year's subscription in advance.*

G.A. Natesan & Co., Sunkurama Chetti Street, Madras.

THE FIRST INDIAN GOVERNOR

LORD SINHA

HIS SPEECHES & WRITINGS

With a Biographical Sketch and a Frontispiece.

Book Post, London.—We are exceedingly glad to have it because the little volume (price, rupees 3) is not only a monument to a wise and patriotic statesman of the Empire, but also a revelation of the fine material which the Empire has at its disposal for the co-operative governance of the great and wondrous land of Hind.

Every page reveals a man who is neither extremist nor reactionary; a man filled with an unquenchable ardour for the betterment of his people, who sees, nevertheless, that the law of life ordains that, whether in individuals or in states, progress must be gradual; a man who is proud of his own race, and believes in it and its destiny; a man with independence in his soul, who therefore never squeals "oppression."

Cloth Bound and Indexed.

Price Rs. 3.

To Subscribers of the "Indian Review" Rs. 2-8.

☞ *The annual subscription to the "INDIAN REVIEW" is Rs. Five only. The price of a single copy is Re. One. Those who want books at concession rates must remit Rs. 5, one years subscription in advance.*

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

22 Uniform Cloth-Bound Volumes

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS OF

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. 7th (New) Edition.
RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY.
RT. HON. SRINIVASA SASTRI.
SAROJINI NAIDU.
SIR J. C. BOSE.
DR. P. C. RAY.
DR. ANNIE BESANT.
THE RT. HON. LORD SINHA.
SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN.
MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA.
M. K. GANDHI. 3rd Edition.
SURENDRANATH BANERJEA.
SIR DINSHAW WACHA.
DADABHAI NAOROJI.

Price of each Vol. Rs. 3. Three.
To Subs. of "Indian Review," Rs. 2-8 as.

SPEECHES OF GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE.
Price Rs. 4. To Subs. of "I. R." Rs. 3-8.

UNIFORM WITH THE ABOVE.

Indian Christians: Biographical Sketches of poets, publicists, Ministers of the Church etc. With 13 illustrations. Price Rs. Three. To Subs. of *I.R.* Rs. 2-8.

Indian Statesmen. Biographical sketches of famous Dewans and Prime Ministers of Indian States. With 17 portraits. Price Rs. 3. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

Eminent Mussalmans. Biographical sketches of Muslim Statesmen, Poets, Reformers, Jurists, Educationists and Politicians. Rs. 3. To Subs. of "I.R." 2-8.

The Mission of Our Master. Essays and Discourses. By the Eastern and Western Disciples of Ramakrishna—Vivekananda. Price Rs. 3. To Subscribers of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

Hinduism. By Babu Govinda Das. Cloth bound. 450 pages. Price Rs. 3, To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

Indian National Evolution. By Ambika Charan Mazumdar. Rs. 3. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

The Governance of India. By Babu Govinda Das Rs. 3. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras

INDIAN CHRISTIANS

SKETCHES OF POETS, PUBLICISTS, REFORMERS. MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA.

THIS is a companion volume to the Publishers' recent book of Sketches of EMINENT MUSSALMANS. An attempt is here made to record the lives and achievements of some Indian Christians who have contributed their bit to the making of Modern India * * * Once a negligible community both socially and numerically, Indian Christians have now attained a position of considerable influence and conscious strength. And the pick of them have shed lustre on the country in their several avocations. For poets like Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Narayan Vaman Tilak, educationists like Krishna Mohan Banerji and Principal Rudra, scholars like Prof. Ramachandra and Mr. Swamikannu Pillai, Ministers of the Church like Lal Behari Dey, Nehemiah Goreh, Satthianathan, and the Bishop of Dornakal, publicists like Kali Charan Banerjee, mystics like Sadhu Sundar Singh, social servants like Pandita Ramabhai, and public workers like Dr. Datta and Mr. K. T. Paul—to mention only a few names from different parts of India—are ornaments to any community, nay to any country, to which they may belong. Indeed, the days are long gone by when to be a Christian was to be outlandish in spirit and in mode of life. Indian Christians now, happily feel the country to be their own, quite as much as members of other communities; and in fact, some of their leaders have been in the vanguard of our struggle for political emancipation. * * * * It is hoped that this attempt to chronicle the lives and achievements of some noted Indian Christians will meet with the recognition it deserves.

CONTENTS:—Krishna Mohan Banerji, Rev. Lal Behari Dey, Prof. Ramachandra, Michael Madusudan Datta, Rev. W. T. Satthianathan, Dr. Imad-ud-Din, Nehemiah Goreh, Kali Charan Banerjea, Pandita Ramabai, Rajah Sir Harnam Singh, Dewan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai, Narayan Vaman Tilak, Principal Susil Kumar Rudra, and Sadhu Sundar Singh. With illustrations.

Price Rs. Three only. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

☞ **Books are given at concession rates only to subscribers of "The Indian Review." Any one who wishes to buy books at concession rates must remit Rs. Five one years's subscription, to the Review in advance.**

CHAITANYA TO VIVEKANANDA

SKETCHES OF THE LIVES & TEACHINGS OF THE SAINTS OF BENGAL

IN this book are presented the sketches of six saints, five Bengali and one Assamese. Both in their individual character and teaching and in their historic setting, they differ widely one from the other..... Yet it is the ancient philosophy of the Hindus that finds varied utterance in the discourses of Chaitanya, the poems of Ramprasad, the sayings of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and the missionary speeches of Vivekananda. We have in these sketches tried to give not only a detailed biography of the saints and teachers but also a succint account of the Philosophy and religion which each of them taught or propounded. * * * These lives are full of interest for the student of religion.

Price Rs. 1-8. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 1-4.

RAMANAND TO RAM TIRATH.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS OF NORTHERN INDIA INCLUDING THE SIKH GURUS.

THIS new book, as its title suggests, recounts the lives and teachings of the Saints of Northern India from Ramanand to Ram Tirath. It includes sketches of Ramanand and Kabir, Nanak and the Sikh Gurus, of Ravi Das the Chamar Saint, of Mira Bai the ascetic queen of Chitor, Vallabhacharya, Tulasidas, Virajanand, Dayanand the founder of the Arya Samaj and Swami Rama Tirath. * * * * Some of the rapturous songs and hymns of the Vernaculars are to be found in the ecstatic utterances of Mira Bai, of Nanak and Kabir. These sketches contain ample quotations from the hymns as well as from the sayings and teachings of Dayananda and Ram Tirath.

Price Re. 1-8. To Subs. of "I.R." Re. 1-4as.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

HINDU ETHICS

PRINCIPLES OF HINDU RELIGIO-SOCIAL REGENERATION

BY BABU GOVINDA DAS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY BABU BHAGAVAN DAS
AND A FOREWORD BY
DR GANGANATHA JHA, M.A., D. LITT.
Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University.

A MELANCHOLY interest attaches to the publication of this work which was intended by the author to be a companion volume to his well-known book on Hinduism. Mr. Govinda Das was busy preparing the copy for the press soon after the publication of the other book, but death intervening, the new volume could not see the light of day. Happily his literary remains were entrusted to the care of his great friend and admirer, Dr. Ganganatha Jha, whose learning and scholarship entitle him to deal with the copy in a manner worthy of his lamented friend.

Price Rs. Two. To Subs. of I. R. Rs. 1-8 as.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

HINDUISM

The book deals with the sources of Hinduism, its fundamental teachings, its rites and customs, and it will be found invaluable to students of comparative religion, social reformers and legislators.

450 pages. Cloth bound Rs. 3. To Subs. I. R. Rs. 2-8.

GOVERNANCE OF INDIA

As it is and as it may be. It is a Handbook of progressive politics and a *vede mecum* for active politicians.

Cloth bound Rs. Three. To Subs of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS
OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

A COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION
WITH A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS

THIS publication is the first of its kind. It is the most exhaustive and comprehensive collection of the works of Swami Vivekananda hitherto published. It contains, among others, his eloquent character-sketch of "My Master"; his celebrated lecture at the great Parliament of Religions at Chicago; all the important and valuable speeches, addresses and discourses delivered in England, America and India on Gnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Vedanta, and Hinduism; selections from the eloquent stirring and inspiring speeches he gave in reply to addresses of welcome that were presented to him at different towns and cities in India during his historic journey from Colombo to Almora, on his return from America; a choice collection of the contributions of the Swami to various papers and periodicals hitherto not available in book-form; some of his private letters to friends; and a selection from the beautiful poetry that he wrote in the true spirit of the seer. Six editions of Swami Vivekananda's Speeches and Writings have already run out of stock and in this, the seventh edition, no effort has been spared to include a number of contributions in prose and verse, since discovered and an appendix containing appreciations of the Swami and his work by his celebrated disciple Sister Nivedita.

Seventh Edition.

With Two Portraits and Appreciations.

Price Rs. 3. To Subscribers of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

☞ *Books are given at concession rates only to subscribers of "The Indian Review." Any one who wishes to buy books at concession rates must remit Rs. 5. one year's subscription to the Review in advance.*

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

WITH THE TEXT IN DEVANAGARI AND AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

BY ANNIE BESANT

AMONG the priceless teachings that may be found in the great Hindu Epic of the Mahabharata there is none so rare and precious as this—The Bhagavad Gita. Innumerable translations of this great classic have appeared since the days of Warren Hastings, but Dr. Besant's rendering is designed to preserve the spirit of the original, especially its deeply devotional tone, while at the same time it gives an accurate translation reflecting the strength and terseness of the Sanskrit. Nearly a lakh of copies of this sacred Scripture of the Hindus have already been sold and now another ten thousand copies of this astonishingly cheap edition are issued for the benefit of the public. The text of the slokas is printed in Devanagari.

Price Per copy, Annas Four. (Foreign 6 d.)
Price of a single copy by V. P. P. is 7 (Seven) as.
Two copies, 12 as. Three copies, Re. 1-1 as.
Four copies. Rs 1-6.

184 INDIAN TALES

OF

FUN, FOLLY AND FOLK-LORE

A COLLECTION OF

Tales of Tenali Raman, Mariada Raman, Raja-Birbal, and of Komati Wit and Wisdom, The Son-in-law Abroad, New Indian Tales, Tales of Raya and Appaji, and Folklore of the Telugus. 184 Tales in all.

☞ Eight booklets in one volume. ☜

Price Re. 1-4. as. To Subs. of the *I. R* Re. One.

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

RAJA RAM MOHUN ROY

HIS LIFE, WRITINGS AND SPEECHES

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

THIS is the first attempt to collect under one cover the voluminous writings of Ram Mohun Roy. They deal with religion, social reform, politics, education, law and administration—to the discussion of which he brought a mind trained in the best cultures of the East and West. The Volume opens with a lengthy biographical sketch recounting the story of his life and achievements and in particular the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj of which he was the founder. It ends with his own modest autobiography which he wrote at the request of an English friend.

Contents:—Biographical Sketch; Suttee—The Burning of Widows; The Character of Hindu Women: Suttee and the Shastras; Address to Lord William Bentinck; Petition to the House of Commons; The Rights of Women; Freedom of the Press; Memorial to the Supreme Court; Appeal to the King-in-Council; English Education in India; Religious Toleration; Prospects of Christianity in India; Rights of a Hindu over Ancestral Property according to Law; The Revenue System of India; The Indian Peasantry; The Judicial System of India; Settlement in India by Europeans; Regulations III of 1820. Address to British Unitarians; Autobiographical Sketch.

Cloth Bound. Rs. 3. To Subs. of "I. R." Rs. 2-8.

LEADERS OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

BEING A RECORD OF THE LIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PIONEERS OF THE BRAHMO MOVEMENT

CONTENTS:—Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Kesav Chandra Sen, Pratapchandra Mazumdar, Sasipada Banerji, Ananda Mohan Bose and Pundit Sivanath Sastri.

With Seven Portraits.

First Edn. Price Re. 1-8. To Subs. of "I.R." Re.1-4.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

EMINENT MUSSALMANS

THIS book is a welcome addition to the biographical literature now extant in India touching the lives and achievements of many Mussalman patriots who have in recent years contributed to the intellectual and social advancement of their countrymen. Among such leaders have been reformers, statesmen, judges, educationists, lawyers and politicians. Commencing from Sir Syed Ahmed, the story is brought down to this day.

CONTENTS

Among the sketches in this volume are;—Sir Syed Ahmed, Sir Salar Jung, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Badruddin Tyabji, Rahimtulla Mahomed Sayani, Syed Mahmood, Syed Amir Ali, The Aga Khan, Sir Muhammad Shafi, Sir Ali Imam, Syed Hasan Imam, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, Syed Husain Bilgrami, Justice Shah Din, Sir Mahomed Iqbal, Sir Muhammad Habibullah, Sir Abbas Ali Baig, Mahomed Ali Jinnah, Sir Abdur Rahim, Mr. Hydari, and The Ali Brothers.

With the Portraits of all

Rs. 3. To Subs. of "Indian Review." Rs. 2-8 as.

Temples, Churches and Mosques.

By Mr. YAKUB HASAN

IN this remarkable volume Mr. Yakub Hasan has attempted to give a kaleidoscopic view of the world's architecture. Every style of Temple, Church or Mosque architecture is described at length to the accompaniment of no less than 68 illustrations, the masterpieces of the world's architecture. A valuable study in comparative Religion.

Swarajya: A useful companion to the lay reader.
New India A very remarkable production.
Telegraph: Highly interesting and richly informing.
Price Re. 1-8. To Subs. of "I. R." Re. 1-4.

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

INDIAN STATESMEN

DEWANS AND PRIME MINISTERS.

NOW that the question of the future of Indian States and their place in the Constitution of the Country are being widely discussed, this volume of Indian Statesmen is of more than ordinary interest to politicians and laymen alike. In this new publication we have sketches of Eminent Indian Statesmen, notably those who have been Dewans or Prime Ministers of well-known Indian States. Besides being a record of the lives and achievements of these statesmen and administrators who have distinguished themselves both in British India and in the territories of the Ruling Princes and Chiefs, the book offers an instructive study in the evolution of Indian States.

CONTENTS

Sir Salar Jung, Maharajah Jang Bahadur, Rajah Sir Dinkar Rao, Dewan C. Rangacharlu, Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao, Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao, Kazi Shahabuddin, Lakshman Jagannath, Romesh Chunder Dutt, Sir Seshiah Sastri, Sir M. Visveswaraya, Mr. Samaldas Parmanandas, Dewan Raghoonath Rao, Gourishanker Oodeshanker, Maharajah Sir Pratap Singh, and Maharajah Sir Kishen Pershad.

With 17 Portraits.

Price Rs. Three. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 2-8-0.

☞Books are given at concession rates only to subscribers of the "Indian Review." Any one who wishes to buy books at concession rates must remit Rs. 5, (Five inland), Rs. 7-8 (foreign) one year's subscription to the Review in advance. If you have not already seen "The Indian Review" send postage stamps for annas four only for a free specimen copy.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

HINDU RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.

Chaitanya to Vivekananda. Sketches of the Lives & Teachings of the Saints of Bengal. With 5 Portraits. Price. Rs. 1-8. To Subs. "I.R." Re. 1-4.

Ramanand to Ram Tirath. Recounts the lives and teachings af the Saints of Northern India including the Sikh Gurus. Re. 1-8. To Subs. "I.R." Re.1-4.

Hindu Ethics. Principles of Hindu Religio-Social Regeneration. By Babu Govinda Das. With an Introduction by Babu Bhagavan Das and a foreword by Dr. Ganganath Jha. Rs. Two. To Subs. "I.R." Rs. 1-8.

Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda. An exhaustive and comprehensive collection. Seventh edition. Price Rs. 3. To Subs. "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

The Mission of Our Master. Essays and Discourses by the Eastern and Western disciples of Ramakrishna—Vivekananda. Price Rs. 3. To Subs. of the "I.R.." Rs. 2-8.

The Bhagavad-Gita with text in Devanagari and an English Translation by Annie Besant. Price 4 as.

Hinduism by Babu Govinda Das, Cloth bound 450 pages, Price Rs. 3. To Subs. "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

Temples, Churches and Mosques. By Mr. Yakub Hasan. With 68 illustrations. Re. 1-8 To Subs. of "I.R." Re. 1-4.

Leaders of the Brahmo Samaj. With Seven Portraits and Sketches. Re. 1-8. To Subs. of "I.R." Re. 1-4.

Sri Krishna's Messages and Revelations. By Baba Bharati 8 As To Subs. of "Indian Review," As. 6.

Light on Life. By the same author. Second Edition. Price Re One. To Subs. of "I R." As. 12.

The Three Great Acharyas. Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa. A study of their lives and their Philosophy. In one volume Rs 2. To Subs. of "I.R." Re. 1-8.

Aspects of the Vedanta. By various writers. 4th Edition. Re. 1. To Subs. "Indian Review," As. 12.

Sri Sankaracharya's Select Works. With the text in Sanskrit and an English Translation. By S. Venkatramanan, B A. Rs. 2. To Subs, "I.R." Re. 1-8.

My Indian Reminiscences. By Dr. Paul Deussen. Re. 1-4. To Subscribers of "I.R." Re. 1.

Essential of Hinduism. A symposium by leading Hindus. Price As. 12. To Subs. of "I,R." As. 10.

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers George Town, Madras.

THE MISSION OF OUR MASTER

ESSAYS AND DISCOURSES

BY THE EASTERN AND WESTERN DISCIPLES

OF RAMAKRISHNA—VIVEKANANDA.

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

VIVEKANANDA	RAMAKRISHNANANDA	BRAHMANANDA
ABHEDANANDA		SARADANANDA
TRIGUNATITA		TURYANANDA
BODHANANDA		KRIPANANDA
VIRAJANANDA		SHARVANANDA
NIVEDITA		DEVAMATA
MISS WALDO		PARAMANANDA

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

Historical Evolution of India; The Common Basis of All Religions: Pre-Existence and Immortality; Self-Mastery of a Saint; Poetry of the Vedas; Missionaries in India; Christian and Hindu; The Indian Epics; Guru; Sankaracharya; The Ethical Ideas of the Hindus; The Great World-Teachers; Zoroaster; Did Christ Teach a new Religion; Synthesis of Hinduism: Confucius and his Philosophy; Lord Buddha; Relation of Buddhism to Hinduism; etc. etc.

Price Rs. 3. To Subs. of "I.R. Rs. 2-8 as.

Eminent Orientalists.

INDIAN, ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN AND AMERICAN

Among the Orientalists Studied are: Sir William Jones, Sir Charles Wilkins, Colebrooke, Horace Wilson, George Tournour, Fergusson, Rajendralal Mitra, Telang, Bhau Daji and Indraji, Dr. Buhler, Monier Williams, Max-Muller, Sir John Fleet, Edwin Arnold, Nivedita, Griffith, Whitney, Vincent Smith, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Anundoram Barooah, Bhandarkar, Macdonnel, R.B. Keith, Paul Deussen and Sylvain Levi.

Among the contributors to the Volume are: Prof. P. Seshadri, Prof Radhakrishnan, Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, Prof. P. P. S. Sastri, Mr. Shumbu Chunder Dey, Prof. Suryanarayana, Mr. Vasant Naik, Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, Prof. M. S. Ramaswami Iyengar, Prof. Surva Kumar Bhuyan, Prof. Srinivasachari, and Mr. D. W. Wickramarachi.

Price Rs. 2. (Two). To Subs. of "I. R." Re. 1-8.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

Sri Krishna's

MESSAGES AND REVELATIONS

BY BABA BHARATI

THIS book of "Messages and Revelations" is published at the request of an American disciple of the Baba. In the words of the Baba, "This is the purest Nectar of Spiritual Love. Let the reader open his heart to it and I am sure it will fill it with ecstasy. The soulful reader will thrill with joyous vibrations of every sentence of the "Messages and Revelations."

Price Eight Annas.

To Subscribers of the *Indian Review*, As. 6

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Light on Life

SIX Spiritual Discourses with an autobiographical sketch. Contents: The Real Real Life: Have you Loved? Do We Love? Thought Force; Sages, Saints and Sons of God.—"An inspiring book."

Price Re. One. To Subs. of "*I. R.*" 12 as.

MY INDIAN REMINISCENCES.

BY DR. PAUL DEUSSEN.

The language in which Dr. Deussen describes the customs, ceremonies, manners, traits and traditions of the Indian people—notwithstanding the shortness of his stay in India—shows his profound admiration and love for the land which, to use his own words, "had for years become a kind of spiritual mother-country" to him. A book of surpassing interest to all readers.

Price Re. 1-4. To Subs. of "I. R." Re. One.

Books are given at concession rates only to subscribers of "The Indian Review." Any one who wishes to buy books at concession rates must remit Rs. Five, one year's subscription to the Review in advance.

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

Hind Swaraj

OR INDIAN HOME RULE

BY

MAHATMA GANDHI.

"In my opinion it is a book which can be put into the hands of a child. It teaches the gospel of love in the place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force. It has gone through several editions and I commend it to those who would care to read it."—Mr. Gandhi.

A New Popular Edition. Price As. 8. (Eight.)

To Subscribers of the "Indian Review," As. 6.

THE INDIAN PROBLEM

By C. F. ANDREWS.

CONTENTS:—Indian Independence. India and the Empire. Non-Co-operation. Swadeshi Movement. National Education. Drink and Opium Evil. etc. etc.

Modern Review:—"It has a handsome frontispiece, and gives, in a handy form, and at a cheap price, the writer's views on the many questions now engaging the attention of the country. Of all Mr. Andrews' views, those on Independence deserve the first place, as they are the most outspoken and sincere expression of a magnanimous soul saturated with sympathy."

Re. One. To Subs. of "I.R." As. 12.

BUREAUCRATIC GOVERNMENT

A STUDY IN INDIAN POLITY

By BERNARD HOUGHTON, I.C.S. (Retd).

This is a book of great topical interest.

Price Re 1-8 as. To Subs. of "I. R" Re. 1-4 as

G.A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

INDIAN CHRISTIANS

SKETCHES OF POETS, PUBLICISTS, REFORMERS, MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA.

THIS is a companion volume to the Publishers' recent book of Sketches of EMINENT MUSSALMANS. An attempt is here made to record the lives and achievements of some Indian Christians who have contributed their bit to the making of Modern India * * * Once a negligible community both socially and numerically, Indian Christians have now attained a position of considerable influence and conscious strength. And the pick of them have shed lustre on the country in their several avocations. For poets like Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Narayan Vaman Tilak, educationists like Krishna Mohan Banerji and Principal Rudra, scholars like Prof. Ramachandra and Mr. Swamikannu Pillai, Ministers of the Church like Lal Behari Dey, Nehemiah Goreh, Satthianathan, and the Bishop of Dornakal, publicists like Kali Charan Banerjee, mystics like Sadhu Sundar Singh, social servants like Pandita Ramabhai, and public workers like Dr. Datta and Mr. K. T. Paul—to mention only a few names from different parts of India—are ornaments to any community, nay to any country, to which they may belong. Indeed, the days are long gone by when to be a Christian was to be outlandish in spirit and in mode of life. Indian Christians now, happily feel the country to be their own, quite as much as members of other communities; and in fact, some of their leaders have been in the vanguard of our struggle for political emancipation. * * * * It is hoped that this attempt to chronicle the lives and achievements of some noted Indian Christians will meet with the recognition it deserves.

CONTENTS:—Krishna Mohan Banerji, Rev. Lal Behari Dey, Prof. Ramachandra, Michael Madusudan Datta, Rev. W. T. Satthianathan, Dr. Imad-ud-Din, Nehemiah Goreh, Kali Charan Banerjea, Pandita Ramabai, Rajah Sir Harnam Singh, Dewan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai, Narayan Vaman Tilak, Principal Susil Kumar Rudra, and Sadhu Sundar Singh. With illustrations.

Price Rs. Three only. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

☞ Books are given at concession rates only to subscribers of "The Indian Review." Any one who wishes to buy books at concession rates must remit Rs. Five one years's subscription, to the Review in advance.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

CHAITANYA TO VIVEKANANDA

SKETCHES OF THE LIVES & TEACHINGS OF THE SAINTS OF BENGAL

IN this book are presented the sketches of six saints, five Bengali and one Assamese. Both in their individual character and teaching and in their historic setting, they differ widely one from the other..... Yet it is the ancient philosophy of the Hindus that finds varied utterance in the discourses of Chaitanya, the poems of Ramprasad, the sayings of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and the missionary speeches of Vivekananda. We have in these sketches tried to give not only a detailed biography of the saints and teachers but also a succint account of the Philosophy and religion which each of them taught or propounded. * * * These lives are full of interest for the student of religion.

Price Rs. 1-8. To Subs. of "I.R." Rs. 1-4.

RAMANAND TO RAM TIRATH.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS OF NORTHERN INDIA INCLUDING THE SIKH GURUS.

THIS new book, as its title suggests, recounts the lives and teachings of the Saints of Northern India from Ramanand to Ram Tirath. It includes sketches of Ramanand and Kabir, Nanak and the Sikh Gurus, of Ravi Das the Chamar Saint, of Mira Bai the ascetic queen of Chitor, Vallabhacharya, Tulasidas, Virajanand, Dayanand the founder of the Arya Samaj and Swami Rama Tirath. * * * * Some of the rapturous songs and hymns of the Vernaculars are to be found in the ecstatic utterances of Mira Bai, of Nanak and Kabir. These sketches contain ample quotations from the hymns as well as from the sayings and teachings of Dayananda and Ram Tirath.

Price Re. 1-8. To Subs. of "I.R." Re. 1-4 as.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

HINDU ETHICS

PRINCIPLES OF HINDU RELIGIO-SOCIAL REGENERATION

BY BABU GOVINDA DAS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY BABU BHAGAVAN DAS
AND A FOREWORD BY
DR GANGANATHA JHA, M.A., D. LITT.
Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University.

A MELANCHOLY interest attaches to the publication of this work which was intended by the author to be a companion volume to his well-known book on Hinduism. Mr. Govinda Das was busy preparing the copy for the press soon after the publication of the other book, but death intervening, the new volume could not see the light of day. Happily his literary remains were entrusted to the care of his great friend and admirer, Dr. Ganganatha Jha, whose learning and scholarship entitle him to deal with the copy in a manner worthy of his lamented friend.

Price Rs. Two. To Subs. of I. R. Rs. 1-8 as.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

HINDUISM

The book deals with the sources of Hinduism, its fundamental teachings, its rites and customs, and it will be found invaluable to students of comparative religion, social reformers and legislators.

450 pages. Cloth bound Rs. 3. To Subs. I. R. Rs. 2-8.

GOVERNANCE OF INDIA

As it is and as it may be. It is a Handbook of progressive politics and a *vede mecum* for active politicians.

Cloth bound Rs. Three. To Subs of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS
OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

A COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION
WITH A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS

THIS publication is the first of its kind. It is the most exhaustive and comprehensive collection of the works of Swami Vivekananda hitherto published. It contains, among others, his eloquent character-sketch of "My Master"; his celebrated lecture at the great Parliament of Religions at Chicago; all the important and valuable speeches, addresses and discourses delivered in England, America and India on Gnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Vedanta, and Hinduism; selections from the eloquent stirring and inspiring speeches he gave in reply to addresses of welcome that were presented to him at different towns and cities in India during his historic journey from Colombo to Almora, on his return from America; a choice collection of the contributions of the Swami to various papers and periodicals hitherto not available in book-form; some of his private letters to friends; and a selection from the beautiful poetry that he wrote in the true spirit of the seer. Six editions of Swami Vivekananda's Speeches and Writings have already run out of stock and in this, the seventh edition, no effort has been spared to include a number of contributions in prose and verse, since discovered and an appendix containing appreciations of the Swami and his work by his celebrated disciple Sister Nivedita.

Seventh Edition.

With Two Portraits and Appreciations.

Price Rs. 3. To Subscribers of "I.R." Rs. 2-8.

☞ *Books are given at concession rates only to subscribers of "The Indian Review." Any one who wishes to buy books at concession rates must remit Rs. 5. one year's subscription to the Review in advance.*

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.

Dr. BESANT'S SPEECHES & WRITINGS.

This is the first attempt to publish in one volume a comprehensive and exhaustive collection of Dr. Besant's speeches and writings on Indian Questions. The subjects dealt with cover a wide field—education, religion, social reform and politics. Her lectures on Theosophy, the Depressed Classes, her Congress Presidential Address and those on Self-Government in India are also included in this volume.

With a Sketch of her life & Portrait.

Price Rs. Three. 6 (six) Shillings post free.

SAROJINI NAIDU

HER LIFE, SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

IN this volume an attempt is made to present under one cover an exhaustive collection of the Speeches and writings of Mrs Sarojini Naidu. This (the third) edition practically brings the collection up-to-date, including as it does, her speeches in East and South Africa and in the Congress at Belgaum. The subjects treated cover a wide field—politics, education, social reform, Hindu-Muslim Unity, Non-Co-operation, and the position of Indians abroad.

Third Edition. Cloth Bound. Rs. Three only.

To Subscribers of "I. R.," Rs. 2-8-0.

MISS MAYO'S

MOTHER INDIA

A REJOINDER

BY MR. K. NATARAJAN

Editor, Indian Social Reformer.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE HON. MR. G. A. NATESAN.

Editor of the "Indian Review."

THIS is scathing exposure of the many mendacious allegations of Miss Mayo against the character and aspirations of the Indian people, and their social institution. The criticisms of Miss Mayo's book by Dr. Margaret Balfour, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sir C. P. Ramaswmi Aiyer, Rev. Popley, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Dr. Annie Besant, and Mahatma Gandhi from valuable appendices to this useful book.

Price As. 12. To Subs of "I. R". As. 10.

1 sh. 6 d. post free.

G. A. Natesan & Co., Publishers, George Town, Madras.