

Prabuddha Bharata

Arise ! Awake ! and stop not till the goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

BHAKTI—VII

BE diluted in the Lord even as crude medicine is diluted in spirit.

NOTHING can be impressed on glass, but when its surface is coated with chemicals, pictures can be impressed upon it, as in photography. So on the human heart coated with the chemical of Bhakti, can be impressed the image of the Divinity.

Q. WHAT is the violent form of devotion?

A. It is becoming mad with the constant and fierce uttering of "Jai Kali" (victory to Kali) or dancing like a maniac with arms upraised and shouting praise to Hari (Hari-bol). In this iron age, violent devotion is more suited and brings quicker fruition than milder forms of contemplation. The citadel of God must be taken by storm.

AS there are shades of satva, rajas and tamas even in worldliness, so also Bhakti has its satva, rajas and tamas aspects. There is Bhakti partaking of the humility of satva, the noise of rajas and the brute force of tamas.

The satvic Bhakta goes on with his religious devotion in secret. Perchance he meditates in the night in his bed within the mosquito-curtain, and therefore comes out late in the morning, a fact explained by his friends as due to want of good sleep. Also his care for his body ends with having anything—a little rice and vegetable. Of luxury he has none, either in food or in dress, no show of fittings and furnitures in his house and he never seeks to rise in the world by flattery.

The rajasic Bhakta has perhaps the distinctive sectarian marks on his body and beads round his neck—with peradventure a few golden ones interspersed. He is particular about outward observances, as wearing silk at the time of worship, celebrating the *pujas* (religious ceremonies) with pomp and splendour and so on.

The tamasic Bhakta has a fiery faith. He exerts pressure upon God, like unto robbers seizing things by force. "What, I have uttered His name and yet I shall have sin! I am His son! I am duly entitled to the inheritance of His wealth"—such is his vehement ardour!

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE INDIAN PEOPLE

FROM the time when education and power spread among the poor, Europe began to rise. Innumerable indigent people, neglected in their own country as refuse, find room and shelter in America. These are the backbone of America. (It matters very little whether the aristocracy, the learned, the rich listen to you or not, understand you or not, abuse or praise you. These are mere ornaments, the figure-heads of the country, but millions of the poor, lower classes are its life.) Wealth, poverty or numbers do not count. With thought, speech and hands in unison, a handful of men can revolutionize the world; do not lose faith in this. The more the opposition, the better will it be. Can a river be strong if it meets no opposition? The newer and the more excellent a thing is, the greater is the opposition it meets in the beginning. Opposition is the augury of success. No opposition, no success.

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(Those depressed classes, the peasants, the artisans, the weavers, the fishermen etc., non-entities among Indian people, conquered by foreigners and hated by their own countrymen, have been working silently from time immemorial. And they do not even get the fruit of their toil.) But slowly, by process of Nature, what changes are taking place throughout the world, what reversions of continents, civilizations, supremacy! (Thou Indian labourer, the sovereignty and prosperity of how many nations have

been the product of thy silent, ceaseless but despised labour; but thou? Who cares for thee?) You high-born Indian, your ancestors wrote a few treatises on philosophy, some poetical works, erected some temples—you are rending the skies with your brag; but (who would sing their praise, to the drain of whose life-blood is due what prosperity has been attained in this land?) The victorious in the fields of religion, war and poetry are before all eyes, are admired by all. But (where no one cares to notice, where not a single cheer is given, where it is all the object of contempt, there dwell endless endurance, infinite love and unflinching work in the cottages of our poor, who are silently doing their duty day and night,—is there no heroism in it?) When called to great tasks, many become heroes. Before the applause of thousands, even a coward can easily lay down his life, even the most selfish become unselfish, but blessed is he who, unobserved by all, proves unselfish and dutiful even in little things. And (those blessed ones are you, the eternally down-trodden labouring classes of India. I salute you in all reverence.)

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Boast however you might of your Arya ancestors, proclaim however you might, day and night, the glory of ancient India, and seek howmuchsoever you might to cover with pretensions your hollowness, are you, the higher classes, still alive?

You are mummies of ten thousand years! Whatever of life remains in India is in those who were hated by your ancestors as "moving corpses." And the "moving corpses" are you. Your houses and homes are a museum; even your living habits, customs and manners do not dispel the idea that you are fossils, but suggest the characters of old we hear about from grandmothers. On returning home even after a personal greeting with you, one feels as if one has returned from an inspection of a picture gallery. In this world of *Maya*, the real riddle, the genuine mirage are you, the higher class Indians. You are the 'past tense,' (and its varieties) the *long*, the *loong*, the *lit*, all in one. The present perception that we see you is a bad dream due to imperfect digestion. You are the cyphers of the future, you are *ith*, *lope*, *loop* (terms of Sanskrit grammar denoting elision). You are inhabitants of the dream land, why delay your departure? You are the flesh-and-blood-less skeleton of the body of past India, why do you not quickly return to dust and melt into the air? Yes, on your skeleton fingers, are some priceless jewel rings collected by your forefathers; in the loathsome embrace of your corpses are held many a casket of gems of by-gone days. Till now, there has been no opportunity of parting with them; in these days of universal education under the British rule, let the inheritors have them, give as soon as you can. You vanish into nothingness. And let new India come out,—plough in hand, out of the farmer's cot; out of the huts of the fisherman, the boat-man, the cobbler, the sweeper;—come out of the small grocer's shop, from the side of the

baker's oven;—come out of the factory, out of shops and markets; come out of bushes, jungles, hills, mountains. These have borne oppression thousands of years, borne it silently,—and have thus gained unparalleled endurance. They have suffered eternal misery,—and have thus obtained undying vitality. Living on a handful of flour, they will be able to upset the world. They are endued with immortal life. And they have acquired the strength of excellent virtues, not found elsewhere. Such peacefulness, such good feeling, such love, such ceaseless, silent toil and at the moment of action, such leonine prowess! Skeletons of the past, here, before you, is your successor, the future India. That casket of gems, those jewel rings in your possession, fling them to these, the lower classes, fling them as soon as you can and you depart, dissolve into the air, disappear. Only be all ears, the moment you disappear, you will hear the world-shaking, million-thunder voice of the future India awakened.

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I observed in the West also that children of weaker nations, if born in England, do not call themselves Greek, Portugese, Spaniard etc., but English. All drift towards the strong;—the one desire of the weak is to shine in the borrowed light of the great. When I see Indians in European dress, it seems to me as if they are ashamed to own their kinship with the down-trodden, illiterate, poor Indians! Again, we have learnt from the West that the illiterate, ignorant, clad in a piece of loin cloth, lower classes are non-Aryans!! They are no more our kith and kin!!!

India, with this base imitation of others, this dependence on others, this slavish weakness, this hateful, detestable cruelty, —would you, with these preparations, climb to the top? Would you attain, by means of your disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave? India, do not forget that the model of your womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti; do not forget that the God you worship is the all-renouncing Shankara, Lord of Uma; do not forget that your marriage, your wealth, your life are not for sense-pleasure, not for your personal happiness; do not forget that you are born a sacrifice at the Mother's altar; do not forget that your social order is but the reflex of the Universal Motherhood; do not forget that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cob-

bler, the sweeper, are your flesh and blood, your brother. Brave one, be bold, proudly proclaim "I am Indian. The Indian is my brother." (Say "The ignorant Indian, the destitute Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother.") You too with but a rag on your loins proudly proclaim "The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, Indian gods and goddesses are my God, Indian society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure garden of my youth, the sacred haven of my old age." Say, brother, "The soil of India is my heaven, the good of India is my good," and repeat, day and night, "O Lord of Gauri, O Mother of the universe, vouchsafe to me manliness; Mother, remove my weakness, my cowardice, MAKE ME A MAN."—*Translated from the 'Udvodhana.'*

AN OPEN LETTER TO INDIANS

I

WE want to have a central body of the most learned and able men at the head of every caste or sub-caste; individual members selected out of each of these can join into committees of a higher grade to manage and discuss questions of common interest to groups of castes and sub-castes. Out of these again can be selected a committee forming a supreme permanent council representing the entire Hindu religion. These organisations would be useful in hundreds of ways: they could hold registers of births, deaths and marriages, and keep the supreme council constantly informed of the special needs of their own particular castes etc. They will also decide what castes or sub-castes are to follow the new callings such as of electricians, metallurgists, telegraphists,

typists, mechanists etc., instead of allowing them to go on in the present promiscuous haphazard fashion. Is it not possible to have some distinctive marks impressed on the body for the various castes? Something very simple of course and very small, nothing cruel in practice or barbarous in appearance; perhaps a little branded pattern on the arm as, I believe, they do at the Dwarika shrine or a quite small tattooed pattern, a number, a device, a letter or any such thing. The Japanese have invented methods of tattooing that are painless. This would immensely facilitate the work of registering births, marriages and deaths, would enable the committees and sub-committees of various castes to follow more easily the whereabouts of members under their charge. It would also constitute a useful check upon emigra-

tion. Simple-minded but respectable people are often induced by the emigration agents to conceal their caste. It would be very easy for the ruling committees of various castes to prohibit emigration amongst their members, and the caste mark would furnish a proof against which there could be no question. Whatever may be the material advantages of emigration, it is highly deplorable, for the present at least, that any Hindus should be allowed to emigrate, unless they are the very lowest of the low.

The notion may seem ludicrously comical, yet personally I have great faith in it. If we started, in earnest, labelling the nation in this manner, I believe it would be like a sudden ray of sunshine bursting from the edge of a dismal cloud. And it is just a sort of thing which once started would spread like wild fire. Every man, woman and child, the richest as well as the poorest, should get their caste mark, and if we combine the marking with a religious ceremony it would, in no time, grow popular. The registering and classification of castes would be done in no time, and henceforth it would be a rule that every new born child should be taken to the temple to get its caste mark and be registered.

A Japanese expert might instruct a number of select Brahmans (or whatever caste would be most acceptable) to perform this little operation and by adopting a variety of very simple patterns, instruments could be devised that would make the impress at one touch, practically painless.

This is a matter which the Congress might consider actively. Our national assembly have already earned our gratitude by their generous endeavours and the remarkable success which they have achieved in many matters of national importance, in spite of some sarcastic detractors who seem to think that they content themselves with words instead of deeds. Renewed vigour in tackling

other urgent problems will be the best means of silencing those idle critics.

(2) Readmission and admission to castes. This may sound startling and revolutionary, but I do not think it is so. Without in the slightest way breaking down the boundaries of caste, it seems to me that the castes require reorganising and redistributing.

There are lots of Brahmans who are no longer worthy to be Brahmans, but we can find other occupations for them, which, though not connected with learning or teaching, would not be derogatory. I shall give one instance. Almost all castes will eat food prepared by Brahmans: turn a crowd of "fallen" Brahmans into bakers; instead of each man (it nearly comes to that) laboriously preparing with his own hands his indigestible food, you could have the most perfect bread ready for distribution. Think of the gain in health and time! From that to another idea, it is to make it a rule that nothing should be eaten, no clothes worn, no implements used, but what have been prepared by Brahmans or other authorised castes or approved by them. We would soon put a stop to foreign importations.

I come now to the subject of the paragraph. If some Brahmans have been lowered, men belonging to other castes may have risen. A doctor of science, a great poet, a public benefactor, any noble member of the community, even if he be of low origin, ought to be adopted into some Brahman caste. We should make an "aristocracy of brain" like in Germany and in America. That the whole body of Hindus should at once grasp this idea, even if carefully debated in a formal council, is more than one can expect. But the caste system has gradually evolved into so perfect an organisation that the system itself meets this difficulty. I refer to the extreme subdivision of castes which some theorists seem to look upon as something

to be deplored, but in which lies the plasticity and adaptability and hence the strength of the whole system. Amongst a hundred castes or sub-castes of Brahmans, perhaps ninety might reject the suggestion I have made, but the remainder might accept it and hence constitute an "open door," without endangering the stability of the institution or the susceptibilities of its members. The only thing to be avoided with the utmost care is that there should be only *one* sub-caste to adopt the innovation. It would then isolate itself and would be just like another Brahmo or Arya Samaj. In fact any innovation should be referred to the joint committee or committees mentioned in the opening paragraph so that not only should the innovating sub-castes regard one another as Brahmans, but that other castes too should do so, or the newly acquired status would deteriorate and neutralise the advantage of the innovation. Of course this introduction of new members into a Brahman caste could be advantageously copied by other castes. This would open the door of admittance into the fold of Hinduism of individual members of the Mahomedan or other communities desirous to enter it.

In fact this innovation is too radical to be yet much advertised, but no time should be lost in at once organising what I consider a preliminary step to it: this is to facilitate by every means the readmission of outcastes. I am sure this could be done very easily with the committee system without any need to wait for the formal general council. The scheme should be set afloat in some province where the caste organisation is a bit loosened, though not dissolved, and I feel sure that by working the thing carefully, one would find a number of sub-castes or castes ready to open their arms and their hearts to their unfortunate brethren who have drifted apart. Owing to that excellent system of

subdivision, there is no need that the whole community should approve of this. It is enough a certain number of sub-castes should agree to do so. When this has become a recognised institution, then the more ambitious step of admitting complete outsiders can be attempted. I wish it to be most emphatically understood that I am not aiming in any way at overthrowing the caste system. Allow the castes to dissolve and we shall become a mob of coolies. Strengthen the castes and we shall become a nation of Brahmans.

(3) The Congress might be prevailed upon to take in hand some of these questions, and many others of vital importance, in which they should obtain the assistance of every man in India. Instead of harassing the Government to do this or that work, why don't we do it ourselves? We are three hundred millions of people in India, each provided with a brain and ten fingers, are we all to sit in a row and watch the Government digging canals and making roads, building schools, repairing our temples, mosques and palaces, tilling the ground and growing wheat, teaching our children to read and write, manufacturing our *dhotis* and *pagris*, and, to wind up, giving each of us a good dinner when we are tired of watching the performance? Surely we may be thankful for our Government, and one of its great virtues is certainly that of patience, for what we expect it to perform is simply appalling. Not a day passes that we do not clamour for something or other, and, often the Government gives it to us, but, overburdened as it is with work, we should not be surprised if the result is not always adequate. There are many things that we might take in hand ourselves, and thus lighten the task of the Government and this is where our National Congress has already shown itself so useful. The future discussions of the Congress should all be framed for immediate action, and

amongst matters that might be immediately dealt with, I shall mention the following :

(a) A special committee for education. They would study the methods which men of genius in the States and in Germany are gradually evolving, and the extensive literature which is growing, in connection with that subject. Primary education is of course the great object, and we want to train a superior class of Indian, not European, teachers to deal with it.

(b) A committee of rich Indians to try and secure the mining rights which are being snatched away on their own land from under their nose by London and New York Syndicates.

(c) Some attempt at an organisation to buy the wheat so that it may be eaten in India, and the cotton, linen, and silk so that the same may be woven and worn in India. In a *civilised* state, people should not have to buy bread, which does not mean that they should do no work; this is no idle dream, if we have energy we can turn it into an immediate possibility.

In this connection provision should be made for the storing of an ever increasing amount of grain, which should gradually attain one year's food supply or more, so as to forestall famine; the quality of grain used as food would moreover be improved. We must not forget that even in the worst famine years, the exportation of grain has amounted to nine million sterling, enough to save the life of our starving brethren twice over.

We also want experimental farms in addition to the Government ones, one in each climatic region to experiment on different varieties of grain in different kinds of soil and the most suitable processes of agriculture and to increase the yield of the sugar-cane and other produce by artificial selection and other methods.

(d) A committee to deal with the subject

of roads and bridges, canals and drainage. The latter problem with the enormous advance made in Europe in the knowledge of dealing with septic tanks, purification of water etc., ought to be studied and taken in hand at once by the Indians themselves, considering how the country is subject to epidemic illnesses.

There is a foolish custom of hundreds of Rajas and Zemindars who think it very grand to feed fifty or a hundred or two hundred beggars every morning for no other object but the glorification of their own 'generosity' and only help to support a class of idle people, as this generosity soon becomes known to great distances. They could turn such centres of attraction to the most useful account if the distribution of food were not absolutely gratuitous: for instance, able-bodied applicants could be made to repair the cart roads joining the Zemindar's village with the surrounding ones, and in this way benefit the whole community. We are apt to look upon the railway plexus which is creeping over all parts of the land as something analogous to the arterial circulation of a healthy organism. It is not so: the railways are, at least for the present, much more like the hundred arms of a star-fish sucking the very blood of the nation. A system of fine cart roads from every village to every other one would be the means of true organic circulation leading to health and prosperity.

(e) A committee to cope with epidemic and endemic diseases. Malaria would soon be gone with a sound organisation.

All these are things that the Government alone cannot do, but which the millions of people can with a little organisation. It is the villages in Europe that keep in repair most of the roads. There might be a sub-committee to deal with the destruction of dangerous and harmful animals such as tigers and poisonous snakes, white ants and mosquitoes, especially those that carry the

germs of malaria. We should also devise means to impress upon the people the inanity of setting the jungle on fire in spring and the terrible amount of mischief done thereby.

(f) A committee of art industries and manufactures. Here the caste question comes in its fullest force. It is generation after generation of men of special castes who gave us the brocades of Benares and Ahmedabad, the enamels of Jaipur and Pratapgarh, the jewellery of Orissa and Vizagapatam, the wood carving of Mysore and Travancore, and all those exquisite productions which are dying out so rapidly and whose extinction, alas, is further promoted by some of the Government schools of art where a tenth-rate little Italian or Scotch painter has the impudence to "teach" those people before whose works he ought to kneel down.† If those schools were only superfluous, but they are harmful! Let the craftsmen perfect themselves in their unrivalled arts from early childhood amongst their own folks. When they are thirteen or fifteen years old and have mastered every intricacy of technique, it is quite time for them to learn anatomy and perspective. In Europe where art is gradually being reduced to the daubing of realistic pictures, anatomy and perspective may be the very A. B. C. of the craft. Here the artist is still master of the vast field from which he has been mercilessly hunted away in Europe

† I do not intend this as a sweeping accusation. There are highly talented exceptions, such as the distinguished Principal of the Calcutta School of Art, who, in his eloquent writings, has never ceased to plead the cause of the Indian craftsman. In spite of those worthy exceptions, I maintain that it is thoroughly out of place to have art schools supervised by Europeans who can never identify themselves entirely with us in our ideals or aspirations, and will always fail to thoroughly understand our social system. It is many years ago that Sir George Birdwood foresaw that very little good and a great deal of mischief might result from these art schools.

by sordid mechanical manufactures and the spread of vulgarity. The realm of the artist in India is incomparably more extended and varied than in Europe and there are many branches in which anatomy and perspective are totally superfluous, while in others, they are but a useful but, by no means, necessary adjunct. The Japanese in their national pride may look upon their exquisite works as the *ne plus ultra* of the beautiful; still if we leave aside mere technical excellence, the Indians are the master artists of the world.

The Congress should not only revivify the manufactures in India, but they should take active steps for their sale and advertising in Europe and America. If people attack you with machine-guns, will you defend yourselves with bows and arrows, because it would be derogatory to use the new arm? The weapons in use nowadays are far more deadly than machine-guns: they are shop-keeping and "business." Machine-guns may kill the body; "trade" and "business" kill the soul. If you are attacked with the arms of "business", retaliate with the same. Surely there are many gentlemen and noblemen amongst us, who are wealthy enough to club together and start a shop in Regent Street and another in the Avenue de l' Opéra to sell the art fabrics of India and only the best ones, and thus save our dying industries. If the concern does not pay for ten years, they are rich enough to wait that time.

II

Before closing these lines, I wish to make a few remarks upon what may be regarded as the freedom with which I have alluded to the Government, for, although editors do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions of their contributors, still I do not wish my words to be misconstrued. Whether it would have been better for us to remain a free nation rather than become a subject one is a matter which may safely be relegated to

the care of speculative historians ; for steam and electricity have so completely modified the mutual relations of the different peoples of this globe that those deceptive ideas of national and racial rivalry, which have so long enslaved the human brotherhood, are in process of rapid dissolution and would have been a thing of the past, if their last remains did not survive in some high sounding words void of meaning but hallowed by tradition and supported by a certain force of habit and association, which political adventurers, unscrupulous journalists and self-advertising poet-novelists still dangle before the public, in their endeavours to try and prop up the decaying fetish of militarism. In spite of their efforts and though their power is still sufficient in some instances to prevail against the most sacred feelings and aspirations of mankind, it is getting more and more universally recognised that the divine laws of charity apply to groups just as much as to individuals, whether these groups be called municipalities, commercial companies, governments or nations. Indeed the dictates of divine love and compassion should be all the more imperative as the groups become larger and as their powers of doing good or evil increase in proportion. Politics, according to the old meaning of the term, embodying the degrading gospel of competition and rivalry, is daily sinking into insignificance, and instead of vain regrets and speculations as to what India might have been under different political conditions, our urgent duty is to grasp the present situation and frame our conduct in accordance with the present needs. We should in no way give up our veneration for the past ; its reverent study is fruitful of sound teachings, but we must equally study the present if we wish to conform ourselves to the present situation. Independence and subjection are words which are becoming very indefinite in their mean-

ing, although the social conditions implied by these words, the second especially, have by no means ceased to exist ; but the circumstances that govern those conditions have become very intricate, because they are gradually moving out of the grasp of the organisations that formerly controlled them,—the Governments. It will be a terrible blow to mankind if the rising power of private capital succeeds in wrenching from the established Governments their power. In the meanwhile, we in British India enjoy incomparably greater freedom than the citizens of many a country that is ruled by a foreign power ; and if we can still boast of such freedom, it is not, as some of us are apt to think, in spite of our rulers, but verily on account of them. When we gaze upon the disastrous methods and effects of European “colonisation” in many parts of the world, we may well congratulate ourselves that India has fallen to the lot of the noble nation that rules her at present. If we look upon ourselves as the first nation in Asia, let us be thankful that it has been given to us to join hands with the first nation of Europe ; and, with such a leader as the man of wonderful genius who is at present the representative of our Emperor in India, our hope for further blessings of the British rule is secure. May God spare to us for many a long year one who is entitled to our respect and gratitude. How fully the people of India appreciate the blessings of British rule, is plainly evidenced by the feelings of respect and loyalty evoked in the land whenever a fitting occasion arises,—a result of the confidence of the nation in the Government.

But now there is a danger of that confidence degenerating into apathy. We have become so confident that the Government can do everything that we no longer try to do anything ourselves. However admirable the intentions of the Government may be,

its efforts must ultimately become futile if it is reduced to deal with a people whose energy and initiative resemble those of a log of wood. The power of our Government to do good is immense. But after all it is human, and its power of arresting evil is limited. A provident farmer may provide a shelter for his produce against the storm, but he cannot prevent the storm itself; and if the men in his employ will not help him to gather the harvest, his granary will be of no avail. And his men will suffer from their indolence quite as much as their master. This it seems is a lesson that has still to be learned by the people of India. They would no longer, as they are sometimes inclined to do, speak lightly of the efficiency of the Government, if they took a little share of the work themselves; for they would soon realise how arduous is the task and their respect for the Government and their appreciation of the noble efforts that are so ungrudgingly performed would be greatly increased thereby. Such a conduct on our part would also greatly improve the feelings of our rulers towards us, and could not but tend to a far better mutual appreciation of the qualities of both nations.

If the various people of the world do not themselves lend a helping hand, their Governments may find themselves incapable of protecting them against the disasters which are now threatening humanity. The Governments are just beginning to realise that a terrible power has risen in their midst, and one cannot but shudder at the thought that the discovery has perhaps been made too late. This new power has become startlingly prominent in the "combines" and "corners" which latterly have terrified the world. But if it dares show itself so ostensibly, it is because its position is now terribly secure, stealthily consolidated as it has been by years of silent organisation, an organisation which

is superb in its way and is all the more secure for being invisible, deeply concealed in the innermost recesses of those gigantic Secret Societies that undermine all Europe and spread their nefarious ramifications over the whole world, masquerading before the public in the garb of charitable organisations, the all-powerful stock-exchange and journalistic press being amongst their most noticeable outward manifestations. The power of these associations is immense for they permeate all classes of society from labourers to kings, and their hierarchy is so cunningly devised that thousands and thousands of honourable men in all stages of life have unaware become mere tools in their hands

The present situation in India is of momentous seriousness, because we scarcely suspect the danger that threatens us. The big mercantile concerns are silently but busily taking a minute inventory of all our riches and finding the safest way of securing them, and when all is ready, they will act with lightning speed and absolute certainty: all will be snatched away at one swoop before the people or the Government have even realised the horror of the situation.

Every one of us has witnessed too often the painful sight of the laborious efforts of a pair of oxen to drag a heavily laden cart, while a number of great hulking lazy fellows, far less worthy of respect than the patient toiling creatures, is sprawling on the top of the load, and scarcely moves unless it be occasionally to illtreat the poor beasts, making use at the same time of some degrading language. A thunderstorm may be threatening on the horizon, which will destroy all their goods if they will not hurry to a shelter, but not one of them will stir to give the cart a shove.

If I might be forgiven making a comparison between men and animals, this is an admirable picture of the Indian Government. The Government officials make almost superhu-

man efforts to move the heavy cart to which they have yoked themselves. Naturally they can advance only very slowly ; the wonder is that they advance at all. The Indian people, quite regardless of the slow rate of advance, are only adding their own weight to the load. Most of them are fast asleep, the others are quarrelling amongst themselves, while, alas, there are even some who, in their ignorance, do not hesitate to address taunts to the team.

Already in the distance we hear the rolling of thunder ; huge black clouds are gathering, upon which the lightning traces in glowing letters the words, Materialism, Atheism, Vandalism, Vulgarity, Social Dissolution, Anarchy. To add to the horror, a confused and dismal rumour is heard, that of an approaching army intent on plunder and carnage, guided by mysterious veiled leaders wielding the deadly weapon called Foreign Capital. They are drawing nearer and nearer, ready to pounce on the cart, for they know how priceless a load it carries. A few daring horsemen have even detached themselves from the vanguard and galloped past the cart and have already snatched away some small portion of the load but the people on the cart take no heed and instead of defending their treasures, continue sleeping or quarrelling or cursing

Wake up ! Come down at once from that cart, ye slothful and garrulous idlers. Rescue your own fortune before it is too late. Let every one of you take some share of the load on your own shoulders. To help the tired oxen, put your hands to the wheels and drag and push till you are almost faint with exhaustion ; then perhaps you might reach a stronghold where you can save your treasures from the elements and defy the threatening marauders.

SIVAJI

MOTHER AND SON

“**L**OOK at that rose, mother. How lovely it is !”

“ Yes, our new gardener manures and waters the plants well ; that is why our roses this year are so beautiful and big,” answered the mother.

“ Why, mother, if the gardener did not manure and water them, would there not be such nice flowers ?” asked the little boy with a look of surprise.

“ No, manure and water are their food. If you fast, how weak you feel. Similarly, if plants do not get plenty of food, they cannot grow and bear good flowers.”

“ But no flowers are there,” interrupted the child, pointing to a poor-looking plant.

“ Because it is dying. It can no more take the food which is given to it. The sign of life is ‘ giving and taking.’ The plants and the trees take in heat, water and many other things from the air and the soil. They bear flowers delightful to see and smell and fruits which men, animals and birds eat. We feed our cows ; they give us milk.”

“ Have the plants life ?”

“ Yes, even the stones have life. Life is everywhere. In some places, we see it ; in others, we do not.”

“ The bulls do not give us anything.”

“ They carry our loads, draw our carts, plough our fields and render us service in many other ways.”

“ Then the things that do not give *us* anything have no life.”

“ They may not give anything to us, human beings. But besides human beings there are animals, birds, plants, trees and millions of other living things. To

live, they must give something to one or other of these. Where there is life, there is giving and taking, though we cannot see it in many cases. That which cannot give and take, is dead."

"Mother, I do not give others anything, yet I live."

She took him up in her arms and implanted a kiss on his sunny brow. "Why, dearest, you are such a good boy and love your father and me so much. You are our joy. You do not know how unhappy we were before we had you. And what happiness you are to us now!"

"How can I make you more happy?"

"Why, my darling, by making all happy, the villagers, your country and everybody you have to do with. To give and take—that is the end of life, that is the way to make yourself and others happy.

Know that consciously or unconsciously every one has to give and take. Will you not therefore try to carry this out in the best manner you can, so that your life may be a blessing to yourself as well as to others?"

"Surely, how shall I do so?"

"Listen. Now you are a boy. In ten or twelve years, you will be a man and begin to work and earn. Never think the things you possess are yours. Be always ready to help the poor and the needy with them. Draw to yourself with great zeal the best things of the world, enjoy them yourself and give them freely to others. Do you see that small tunnel through which the water is running from the tank to the garden? Bear in mind that you should be like it so that the best things of the world may pass through you to other people." X.

AN APPRECIATION AND A PROTEST

OF the many excellent periodicals we are favoured with in exchange of our humble monthly, the *London Light* is one of the most valued. Notwithstanding the technical character of the greater part of its reading matter, its "Notes By The Way" and its editorials breathe the atmosphere of unsectarianism and reveal a lofty broadness of view, which is truly spiritual. Indeed if we are permitted to say so, its spiritism is not the end but the means to spirituality. We often come across in its columns glimpses of that fire a touch of which expands the human heart to embrace the universe as its own self. And its keen insight and bright humour, not to say anything of the beautiful language in which they find expression, make its perusal a treat.

Nor should we be understood as sneering at or deprecating spiritism or investigation of the after-life by means of communication with the spirits of the departed. We consider it as the empirical way of studying the science of religion—the real Religion which is not divorced from philosophy. To us it is the inductive method of proving the immortality of the soul, the gaining of exact knowledge of the living spirits of the so-called dead with a view to pave the path of the realisation of the Infinite and Immortal Source of Being. A considerable portion of practical Hinduism is based upon spiritism: the doctrine of reincarnation, the practice of ascetic isolation by its members in the

event of a birth or death in a family, the performance of *shràddha* for the spirits of the dead—what do these show but a living faith in direct contact with the inhabitants of the spirit world? True we do not find in Hinduism the practices of modern spiritism, but that is because it has outgrown the stage. To Hinduism the spirit world long long ago passed beyond the region of scepticism and became a reality, after which alone it could be the important factor in the religious and social life of the people, which it is.

To come back to *Light*: in its issue of 18th July last, there is one of its fine luminous editorials throbbing with brotherly sympathy and appreciation, the subject being an article on 'Universal Brotherhood' by an Indian, Mr. H. Prasad, published in the June *Theosophist* (Madras). But it concludes with a stricture on Theosophy, one which we can well understand.

Fain would we stop here and spare ourselves unpleasantness, were silence not construed into sanction. But for the harm done by Theosophical self-complacency in annexing unto itself whatever it considers suitable for its purpose, no matter whether it has any claim to the same or not, we would gladly have refrained from mentioning what we are going to say. We are not blind to the good the Theosophical Society has been doing in many ways but should that prevent us from realising that *its* theosophy and *theosophy* are two very different things? Are they not the wilfully blind only, who do not see that under the many good deeds and amiable professions of the T. S., under its pseudo-scientific rehabilitation of superstitions,

its *réchauffé* of ancient philosophies, its jumble of mysticism from many lands, all served out as 'teachings of the Masters,' shines the *Mahatma* hook? How is one to characterise the bait contained in the lines, "After the Parliament of Religions adjourned, Vivekananda, Dharmapala and other eastern speakers travelled about the country, giving lectures and creating that wide-spread interest in theosophical ideas which has never since been extinguished" (August *Theosophist*, Old Diary Leaves, p. 645.)?

Swami Vivekananda's teachings may be called 'theosophical' according to the root meaning of the word but certainly not in the sense of being related to the body about which he wrote as recently as February 1901 as follows:

"Nobody has a right now to say that the Hindus are not liberal to a fault. A coterie of young Hindus has been found to welcome even this graft of American Spiritualism, with its panoply of taps and raps and hitting back and forth with mahatmic pellets.

The Theosophists claim to possess the Original Divine Knowledge of the Universe. We are glad to learn of it, and gladder still that they mean to keep it rigorously a secret. Woe unto us, poor mortals, and Hindus at that—if all this is at once let out on us!

There are of course carping critics. We on our part see nothing but good in Theosophy: good in what is directly beneficial, good in what is pernicious, as they say—indirectly as we say: the intimate geographical knowledge of various heavens, and other places, and the denizens thereof; and the dexterous finger work on the visible plane accom-

panying ghostly communications to live Theosophists—all told. For Theosophy is the best serum we know of, whose injection never fails to develop the queer moths finding lodgment in some brains attempting to pass muster as sound."

We have another illustration of how Swami Vivekananda's thoughts are quietly absorbed and served out as "theosophy." It occurs in the paper of Mr. Prasad noticed by *Light*. Of the 135 lines which constitute the essay, 57 (Paras. 4 and 5) have been reproduced from the Swami's lecture on "The Ideal of a Universal Religion" (published in his *Jnana Yoga*) with slight alterations, without any acknowledgment!

Since writing the above we read an illuminated address was privately presented to Mr. E. Dawson Rogers, Editor of *Light* and President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, on the 80th anniversary of his birthday. We find the names of Dr. Wallace, F. R. S., Sir W. Crookes, F. R. S., Prof. Camille Flammarion, Mr. W. T. Stead, General Turner, K. C. B., Mr. C. C. Massey, Mr. Arthur Lillie and Rev. J. Page Hopps, among a host of signatories of both sexes, many of them belonging to the first rank in their walks of life. We are highly pleased to see this recognition of the excellent services of Mr. Rogers and the appreciation, among other things, of his "search for truth in relation to.....the laws and activities of the spiritual world," "broad and impartial spirit of hospitality... displayed in his columns" and "the elevated, cultured tone and general excellence of *Light*" and cordially join in the hope expressed by his friends and admirers "that he may be spared to us

to continue his valuable services, and that his remaining years on earth may be made bright and happy with the memories of good work accomplished, and enriched with the affectionate regard of his many friends."

A NEW CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY WEAPON

WE quote the following from the editorial notes of our contemporary *The Indian Social Reformer* (August 16, 1903), a journal more pro-Christian than otherwise:—

"It is pleasant to see veteran workers like the Rev. Dr. Miller endorsing the protest against arrogant denunciation of the people of India by Christian Missionaries. We are specially glad to see that the *Harvest Field* is "happy to think that it is becoming more rare for the missionary to paint the life of India in unrelieved black." We are afraid, however, that it is not so rare as it is alleged to be, as is shown by the following passage from a book called "Things as they are," by a Miss Carmichael, which the *Christian Patriot* has "very great pleasure in quoting by kind permission."

Here is the passage:—"What is to hinder high-caste women from being baptised, and living as Christians in their own homes? The question was asked by an Englishman, a winter visitor, who, being interested in Missions, was gathering impressions. We told him no high-caste woman would be allowed to live as an open Christian in her own home; and we told him of some who, only because they were suspected of inclining towards

Christianity, had been caused to disappear. "What do you suppose happened to them?" he asked, and we told him. We were talking in the pleasant drawing-room of an Indian hotel. Our friend smiled, and assured us we must be mistaken. We were under the English Government; such things could not be possible."

A more contemptible species of insinuation we have scarcely ever come across. It reminds one of Byron's lines about the "reptile crew,"

The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

The lady's reticences are more significant than her words. If the passage means anything, it means that high-caste Hindus secretly murder their women if they are suspected of Christian leanings. If the high-caste man does not become a Christian, it is because of his selfishness and moral cowardice. If high-caste women are not found in the Christian fold, they are murdered by their kinsmen. It has been no easy thing for us to write with courtesy of such a writer, but India can be patient even in the face of such a vile calumny, and—the lady must live, poor pious soul!"

We also smile.

WE are farthest away from God when we cannot perceive Him in our fellow-beings. The mirror of human nature is sadly blurred; but in the meanest and wickedest there are tokens of the divine childhood, occasional flashes of the Father's image through innumerable distortions. It is for us to show a clear reflection of His life in our own lives before we judge others.—*Lucy Larcom.*

REVIEW

DIVINE HERITAGE OF MAN. By *Swami Abhedananda.* The Vedanta Society, New York. Price \$. 1.00.*

This work attempts to explain in the light of modern science and logic the subtle and contentious problems of religion such as, among others, "Has God any form?," "What is an incarnation of God?," "The relation of soul to God," and has a peculiar value and interest of its own. The writer exposes the fallacy of many arguments pretending to establish an extra-cosmic God as creator, ruler and moral law-giver of the universe. "Every finite perception or conception of an object brings with it a sense of beyond, a perception of the infinite." "That infinite substance is the support of the universe," it matters not how we call it. "Religion is being and becoming one with the Infinite by entering into the state of superconsciousness." Then follow, in chapter second, philosophical explanations of God's attributes, infinite, one, unchangeable, eternal, spirit, true, omniscient and omnipresent, and of the Vedanta conceptions, Brahman, Maya and Ishwara. These understood, the significance of divine forms and incarnations which are the subjects of the third and the sixth chapters and their relation to the Infinite like that of waves to the ocean become evident. Conceptions of the individual soul and its relation to God, according to dualism (both Eastern and Western), qualified non-dualism and non-dualism, are set forth in the fifth chapter. The fourth chapter is a luminous exposition of

*Vide advertisement on cover page ii.

the Fatherhood and the Motherhood of God. The writer traces the conception of God as Father and Mother to the Vedic times and wonders how the Christian missionaries and preachers are "eager to impress upon the minds of their co-religionists that the Hindus in particular had no conception of a Heavenly Father." The philosophy of Logos as "the ideal creation which existed in the Divine Mind before the actual creation" and its bearing on the Christian conception of "the only begotten son," in the chapter on "Son of God," will be found exceedingly interesting. The concluding chapter is "Divine Principle in man." Swami Abhedananda has succeeded in bringing together and happily presenting in the small compass of the present work a great mass of fundamental spiritual thought. Students of religion and the higher thought will find it an invaluable companion.

BENARES RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITA ASHRAMA

DURING Swami Vivekananda's visit to Benares in 1902, a benevolent gentleman placed a sum of money at the hands of the Swami to start a centre in that holy city. Swami Sivananda was sent and the Ashrama was started on the 2nd July, 1902. The object of the Ashrama is to train young men in Brahmacharya and mould their character after the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Special care will be taken to teach them Sanskrit, English and Hindi to fit them to carry on the Vedanta work in and outside India. Serving and nursing the patients

of the Benares Ramakrishna Home of Service will be an item of the training of the Brahmacharis. Occasionally there will be class and public lectures in the Ashrama. After the period of training, Brahmacharis will be at liberty to adopt life-long Brahmacharya or become householders. Arrangements may be made for the residence in the Ashrama of householders desirous of availing themselves of the facilities afforded by the Ashrama for their spiritual culture.

Particulars will be furnished on enquiry and contributions towards the maintenance of the Ashrama thankfully received by Swami Sivananda, Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Khachanji's Garden, Laksha, Benares City, U. P.

NEWS AND NOTES

CHAMPION the oppressed and the needy. Teach the poor to hope and the rich to help.

SELF-mastery has in itself the element of loyalty to the highest principle and the highest being.—*C. F. Thwing.*

THE union of the soul to God is the only means by which we acquire a knowledge of Truth.—*Malebranche.*

AN Indian blacksmith in Karachi has just manufactured a motor car. He is said to possess skill equal to a British artisan.

INTELLECT may give keenness of discernment. Love alone gives largeness to the nature, some share in the comprehensiveness of God.—*J. H. Thom.*

DR. WESTFALL, Assistant Surgeon at the Homœopathic Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan, successfully grafted frogs' skin on to the arm of a patient who lost twenty-five square inches of skin through blood-poisoning. After ninety-six hours the frogs' skin took hold, forming a red, healthy epidermis.

IN answer to the appeal issued by the State of Kansas for 28,000 men to reap the harvests, many College Under-Graduates have gone to that State to work, their pay being fixed at 2-1/2 dollars a day. Twenty-six students from Princeton and several from Cornell, Harvard and Columbia have made a contract for 100 days' farm work.

WHEN a balloon passes over a forest it descends, and ballast must be thrown out to keep it up. This is explained by Professor Mouillefert, of the French National Agricultural College of Girgenon, as being due to the existence above every forest of a prism of cool, moist air, produced by the abundant transpiration of the trees, and extending to a height of from 3000 to 5000 feet above the tree-tops.

THE Cochin report mentions that the industry of collecting lemon grass has extended to that State. This industry is well established in Travancore. From the lemon grass a fragrant oil is extracted, and this is shipped at British Cochin for Europe where it commands a high price, being used in the manufacture of scented soap. As this lemon grass grows freely on all the hills of Southern India, the Resident considers this trade capable of expansion.

AN inspection of all the babies in New York is the Herculean humanitarian task which was begun on the 1st July by the newly organised Infant Corps of the Department of Health. The corps includes forty-three physicians and seventeen nurses, who will visit the parents or guardians of all babies born since last August. They will instruct the mothers as to the use of artificial foods, the general care of infants, and especially the treatment of summer troubles.

THE following Resolution has been passed by the Humane Diet Committee of the Humanitarian League, London:—

That this Committee desires to record its protest against a certain class of pictorial advertisement, in which a jest is made of the terror and suffering of animals, and to express the opinion that the increasingly wide-spread exhibition of such revolting placards—offensive alike to the eye and the moral sense—is a matter which demands the attention of the public authorities.

A BANGALORE City Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has been established in Bangalore. The place where the Mission work would be carried on is called "The Vivekananda Ashrama." Dr. Sreenivasa Rao, M.A., M.D., State Bacteriologist, has been appointed its President. Messrs. Ramaswami Iyengar and P. B. Pillanna are appointed joint secretaries. Mr. M. Kallappa is appointed treasurer. An orphanage will be attached to the *Ashrama*. The orphans will be educated in English, Sanskrit and Kanarese. We wish the Mission every success.—*Mysore Herald*.

THERE is one peculiar property of water with which every one should be acquainted, and that is its capacity for absorbing impurities, which increases proportionately as it gets colder. Hence water that has stood in an insufficiently ventilated sleeping chamber all night is not only unpleasant but positively injurious to drink, since it readily absorbs the poisonous gases given off by respiration and the action of the skin. Ice water is an objectionable drink at all times, but, if it is indulged in, the vessel containing it should never be left uncovered in sleeping or sitting rooms, because at freezing-point its capacity for absorbing deleterious substances is nearly doubled.

THE Godavary Hindu Samaj has arranged to give away four prizes of the values of Rs. 75, Rs. 50, Rs. 30 and Rs. 20 to the first four successful students in a competitive examination. There will be two papers of three hours each. The first will be in Telugu on the first six chapters and the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavat Gita. The second paper will be in English on (1) Swami Vivekananda's paper on "Hinduism as a religion," read before the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, (2) The reply of Swami Vivekananda to the Madras address, and (3) The following Madras lectures of the Swami: Vedanta and its application to the Indian life; The sages of India; The work before us; and The future of India.

A NOVEL remedy for broken limbs—but limbs of trees—is reported from America. Two large trees, the one being

a maple and the other an apple tree, were recently much damaged by a storm, each having a limb broken and only hanging on as it were by a mere shred. These broken limbs were carefully supported on struts and bandaged up much as a damaged human limb would be secured by splints. Then melted paraffin wax was applied so as to stop all cracks, and in this way the sap was prevented from escaping, the intrusion of insects was also prevented, and rain and moisture were excluded. The broken limb so treated gradually became once more firmly attached to the trunk and the cure was complete.

A GREAT and unexpected joy for the advocates of female education will be the news that H. H. the Begum of Bhopal is a sincere believer in female education and has large ideas for its spread among the Mahomedan community. In the course of an interview with a Mahomedan gentleman in the service of H. H. the Nizam, Her Highness is reported to have said: "The women of India are for the most part unlettered and superstitious, and it is high time that an effort be made to impart to them a healthy and sound education, for the truism that ignorant and superstitious mothers must beget sons with the same unfortunate predilections presents itself with stronger force than ever in the case of India and especially the Mahomedan India of today." Her Highness intends to found an institution for the education of Mahomedan girls in Bhopal, which she hopes will some day become the centre of female educational activity in the land.