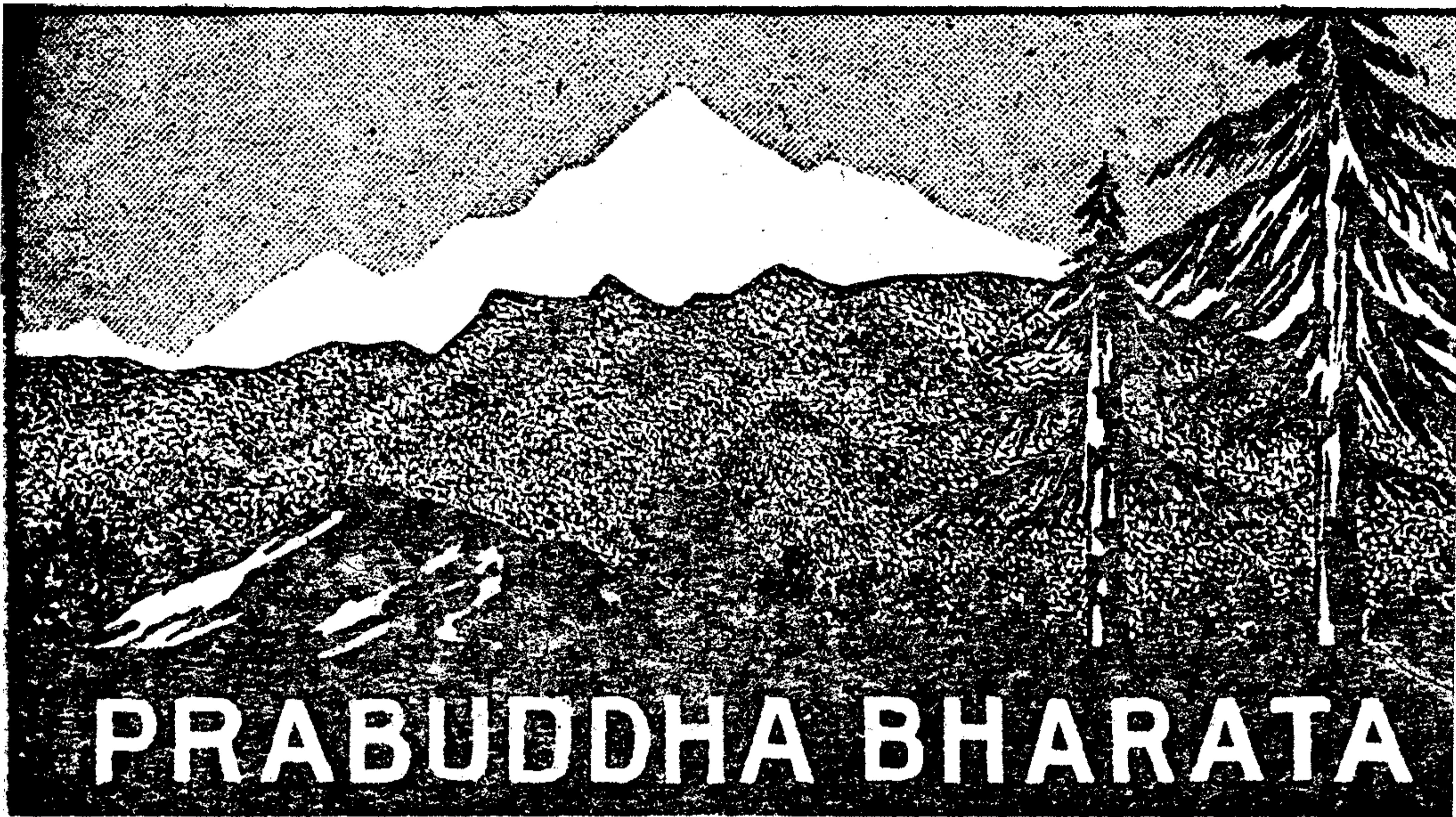


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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

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उत्तिष्ठतं जाग्रतं



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधतं

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOL. XXVIII]

APRIL 1923

[No. 321

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

3rd July, 1920—7 p. m.

The Swamiji was seated on a bench under the banyan tree on the maidan of the Home of Service. Two others were present.

The Swami—It is very hot.

S.—We have had some rain though.

The Swami—Well, it was not much. To-night I shall lie in the open. Last night up to 2 a. m. I slept outside. They had put a sheet on the mosquito-curtain. Then when the rain began to drip through the curtain I went indoors. What an amount of trouble people take for their physical comfort! Day and night they are after it. Still the body won't go all right.

S.—Sir, one of Elizabeth Hemans's poems has

the idea that given proper education and environment, two boys born under different circumstances will develop in the same way. They do not of course believe in impressions of past lives.

The Swami—Well, does it hold good always? Five boys living together present five different aspects of character. The Western people have got no idea of reincarnation, hence they do not understand past impressions and so on. Do you think any body comes to earth with a *tabula rasa*?

In this connection one referred to the Darwinian theory and out of fun called a Brahmin boy of very good habits a descendant of monkey, whereupon the Swami sharply said—“What nonsense! He is a Brahmin boy with a store of good Samskaras—why should he be a descendant of monkey! What a fine intelligence the Westerners exhibit! What does Science know? To-day it arrives at a conclusion, the greater part of which is exploded to-morrow. Let those who will, accept Darwinism. We have got two theories about human creation. One is that after going the round of 84 lacks of bodies one attains a human body. This is greatly akin to Darwinism. The other theory is that of descent from Godhead. Brahma, the Creator, first created beings like Sanatkumara and others whom He asked to lead a worldly life. Well, they had just descended from God, so they said, “What a proposal! We shall be no party to such a thing.” Brahma cursed them and created the Prajapatis (Patriarchs), who agreed to embrace a worldly life. It is a simple phenomenon, which we too observe in our everyday life. To

this day we find that many are averse to marriage and the worldly life from their very birth. These are the Kumaras. Kumaras are those who have not yet developed the power of propagation. One has but to continue this state. This second theory is excellent. We are the children of immortality, and why should we be the offspring of monkeys? यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति—“Desiring the Brahman they practise Brahmacharya.” Haven’t you heard of Sri Ramakrishna’s parable of the bird called Homa? It lays eggs in the sky. As the egg falls through space, the young bird comes out of it, and as in the course of its fall it finds it is about to touch the earth, it is reminded of its mother who is high up in the sky. At once it flies straight up. It has no more to fall down on the earth. Similarly there are many people who as soon as they grow up a little give up all attachment for the world and speed straight towards God. The former is an illustration and the latter is the theme sought to be explained. I remember, when I was ten years of age—even less, perhaps eight years—I told a friend of mine that I would not marry. That friend also became a Sadhu, and so did I.

(To the boy) “Tell me whether you wish to be a Sadhu or a householder.”

The boy—I will be a Sadhu.

The Swami—Certainly, why not? If you try from now you will indeed realise the Lord. There should be a firm resolve in the mind that one must realise Him. If you perfectly control your senses from now, you will be blessed with His realisation. And if you wish to be like ordinary

men, you will get something to eat, have children, get together a little money, and die—there will be an end of it. Do you want the prestige of a householder, or do you want to be a Sadhu?

The boy—Have Sadhus no prestige? They too have it.

The Swami—Certainly, Sadhus too have prestige. Look at the honour Swamiji received! How like a hero he conquered the world! What a heroic temperament! What a perfect mastery over the senses! If one is like him, one has indeed achieved everything. He was absolutely free from the sex-instinct. It was because he had his mind pitched on high things that it had no opportunity to come down to lower things. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that people's mind is generally confined to the three lower centres of the spinal column; while the mind of the spiritual aspirant rises to the centre of the heart, whence it ascends higher still to the centre in the neck, and when it finally reaches the centre in the head he attains to the state of Samadhi. Then the body falls within three weeks. Sri Ramakrishna also used to say that gold is gold whether it lies in a ditch or is kept in a room. If power is latent in anybody, it will manifest itself wherever you may put him.

Have faith in God and pray to Him for devotion.

(To S.) He wants to have the Pâsupata weapon* from Shiva.

*A mighty weapon which Arjuna got from Shiva, pleasing Him in a duel.

(To the boy) What will you do with the Pâsupata weapon? You are not a Kshatriya, you you are a Brahmin. You should please Him and ask for the knowledge of Brahman. A Brahmin has no mightier weapon than this. Do you know the story of Vasistha and Viswamitra? King Viswamitra armed with his bow and arrow one day killed the hundred sons of Vasistha and went his way, seizing the latter's sacrificial cow.* But Vasistha, though he witnessed all, said nothing and sat with his Brahmadaṇḍa (the staff of the Brahmana) in hand. Then Viswamitra with folded palms fell at the feet of Vasistha and begged his pardon saying, " Fie on Kshatriya valour! Real strength is that which a Brahmana possesses. "

The boy took his leave to attend to his evening prayers, when the Swami remarked—

The boy has inherited excellent past impressions. He is endowed with Sattva that has a touch of Rajas in it, while A— has got Sattva alone. If this boy leads a pure life, he will advance. Otherwise he will become like the generality of boys. There is nothing preordained. In a way everything depends on our personal exertion. The Yogavasista has highly extolled this. I do not mean to say that destiny is altogether a fiction. "देवं निहत्य कुरु पौरुषमात्मशक्त्या"—"Manifest thy manliness by ousting destiny through thy own power." To one who is endowed with personal exertion even destiny becomes favourable. God helps those who help themselves. Relying on destiny people

* The Kamadhenu which by the mere wish could produce whatever was desired of her.

often tend towards degradation. Free-will also comes under this personal exertion. People make mistakes through their own fault, and then lay the blame on destiny. Stumbling on the way is an accident—going along is the natural course. Making mistakes is an accident—rising higher and higher is the natural course.

S.—Between the two blades of a pair of scissors we do not know which is responsible for the cutting. So we cannot ascertain whether destiny or personal exertion is responsible for the accomplishment of an act, and in what measure. We however take it for granted that both are equally responsible. Our duty is to make personal exertion, which is within our control, instead of waiting for destiny to help us out.

The Swami—Quite so. That is the way. Unless one acts like that, nothing can be done. But then, there is such a thing as the devotee's resignation to the Lord. That is not weakness. It is to say—Thy will be done!



OCCASIONAL NOTES.

STRUGGLE for animal existence when it demands the whole attention of any community does not leave it any chance for expansion and progress. This has exactly been the case with Hindu society. For centuries the most vital question before it has been not one of progress but of life and death. Its chief task has been to defend itself in the midst of mighty political changes, social revolutions and onslaughts of antagonistic

faiths. To protect its members from alien influences it had to introduce rigid rules and injunctions in the place of wiser ways and older customs, which in the long run tended to limit their freedom, and ultimately to hamper their natural growth and evolution. These measures, at first adopted for self-preservation, managed in course of time to overpower the spirit. And later on the influences of modern civilisation with its denationalising education and cruel competition has changed altogether our ancient outlook on life and drifted us away from the moorings of our national ideals and traditions. The result is that we have become incapable of appreciating our own culture and institutions, of realising the great spiritual scheme which underlies the complex fabric of our socio-religious system. In the past all our national movements, social, political and religious, tended towards an ultimate goal. But from this great ideal and purpose of life we have miserably deviated in modern times.

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Self-realisation no longer calls forth from us the same enthusiasm as of old. Religious practices and spiritual strivings we now regard as useless and unnecessary. This world is all that concerns us although we would resent to be called atheists and materialists. Sense-life is apotheosised and teleological explanations are given in support of it. The ancient ideals of self-control and self-discipline that marked the life of the student, have become things of the past almost all over the country. The institution of Sannyasa, too, has not escaped

the havoc of degradation. Modern Sannyasins now cling more to the form than to the spirit, more to outward symbols and ceremonials than to the realisation of the Self and service of Man. The ideals of married life have been practically forgotten and the Hindu household is no longer an Ashrama where once the control of the senses and fulfilment of duty exerted a highly chastening influence on men and women. Few householders think now of living the life of non-attachment like the hermits of old. Almost all people want now to live in worldliness all their life, and this with an inordinate passion. Sannyasa—the life exclusively devoted to the realisation of the Self through perfect renunciation and chastity—in which all the previous Ashramas found their fulfilment, is dreaded as a monster threatening to destroy human society with all its sympathy, love and friendship. The life of perfect celibacy has ever been chosen by those bold and non-attached souls who realised in their heart of hearts that “neither by work, nor by progeny, nor by wealth but by renunciation alone can Immortality be attained”—by those who were competent to dedicate themselves solely to the attainment of Brahma-jnanam and to the service of God and Man. We have come to regard this glorious life as unnatural, if not inhuman, so great has been our love for the “fullness and varied experiences” of life ! This ancient ideal exerts at present little influence on the vast majority of us who still profess to follow the old faith, and claim to draw inspiration from the great Rishis of ancient India.

To stem this tide of degradation that has overtaken the land was the mission of Sri Ramakrishna. He was born at a most critical period of India's history—a time marked by a great conflict of ideals and cultures. A marvellous man that he was he fulfilled his mission in his own marvellous way. Uninterruptedly for long twelve years he plunged himself heart and soul into strenuous spiritual practice, and emerged out of it a transformed man, radiant with the resplendence of the Atman. The Divine knowledge that he realised after passing through his superhuman Sadhana shone in and through his whole being, and expressed itself in all his thoughts and actions. To him religion was realisation, and God more tangible and real than our empirical world. He realised that "the One Substance has taken the form of the cosmos with all living creatures, which resemble a house of wax with men, animals, gardens, roads, and the rest—all made of wax and nothing but wax." In this Divine realisation alone lies true peace and blessedness which we blinded by our ignorance and egoism seek in the outside world. The greatest achievement of Sri Ramakrishna's life was to vindicate the ancient faith and ideals, to realise them in his own life, and unfold before mankind their true significance and meaning, their achievement and glory.

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Sri Ramakrishna embodied in his life the spirit of true Sannyasa. To him it did not imply a negative virtue, but it meant the giving up of all that is passing and evanescent, and the acceptance of all that is abiding and permanent. He renounced

the world, and as the direct fruit of his renunciation, he saw God in everything and in every being. He gave up all idea of sex and it is, therefore, that he could realise in all women, including his own wife, the manifestation of the Divine Mother of the universe, and could never, even in a dream, look upon any woman in any relation other than that of the mother. 'Women', said Sri Ramakrishna, 'whether naturally good or bad, whether chaste or unchaste, should be regarded as images of the Blissful Mother', and he himself followed this precept to the very letter. Man to him was also an incarnation of the Divine. His heart bled to see the misery and suffering of those who forgot the Spirit within and remained sunk in ignorance and worldliness. He could, therefore, never "kick away and drive off in disgust" the depraved and the profligate, the drunkard and the prostitute, but out of the fullness of his compassionate heart he strove to transform them with the touch of his Divine love and Divine knowledge. Sri Ramakrishna has been charged with "other-worldliness". But let us not forget that this "other-worldliness" implying God-vision and universal love, that was his, has been the crowning glory of his life, and "in this respect", to quote the memorable words of Prof. Max Muller, "he does not stand quite alone among the founders of religion."

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Sri Ramakrishna was devoid of the least breath of sensuality. He could, therefore, wholeheartedly vindicate the honour of woman, which is hers by virtue of her inherent Divinity. He accepted a

woman as his Guru, and was initiated by her, who was an embodiment of vast learning and high spirituality, into various intricate Sadhanas which he practised until he attained true illumination and bliss. He was a worshipper of the Divine Mother, and She herself in her immanent aspect brought to him the light and knowledge which in later life he irradiated all around him wherever he went. May the Mother also inspire and guide us, and lead us on from darkness and death to Light and Immortality!

* * *

To Sri Ramakrishna woman was not only an object of honour but also of Divine worship. He recognised her equal right with man to lifelong Brahmacharya and to the highest knowledge. He accepted his own wife as his foremost disciple, and the sweet relation existing between the Brahmachari husband and his Brahmacharinī wife living a life of crystal purity as a partner of his immortal bliss—the fruit of the highest spiritual realisation—brings home to us the noblest ideal of marriage. “The husband is loved not for his own sake but for the sake of the Atman that dwells within him. The wife is loved not for her own sake but for the sake of the Atman that dwells within her.” The illustrious husband and his worthy wife looked upon each other as manifestations of the Eternal Spirit, and realised in their everyday life that the highest relation between man and woman is truly spiritual. The Universal Spirit is present equally in man as well as in woman. This great truth was proclaimed at the very dawn of human civilisation

by the Vedic sages offering their salutations to the One in all—

त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।

त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वंचसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः ॥

“Thou art woman, thou art man ; thou art youth, thou art maiden ; thou as an old man, totterest along on thy staff ; thou art born with thy face turned everywhere.”

* * *

Sri Ramakrishna not only vindicated the right of woman to devote herself exclusively to the attainment of Divine realisation and knowledge like the Brahmavadinis of old, but upheld her right to spiritual leadership as well. This he demonstrated in the life of the remarkable lady, at once wife and nun, who was the partner of his Divine love and Divine knowledge. The Holy Mother, as the high-souled lady was called by the followers of the Prophet of Dakshineshwar, “had long and arduous experience in administration, secular and religious. The stateliness of her courtesý and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood. I have never known her hesitate, in giving utterance to large and generous judgment, however new or complex might be the question put to her.”—Such was the high tribute paid to her by the late Sister Nivedita. And it is, therefore, no wonder that the Holy Mother was the supreme spiritual guide of thousands of men and women, who looked to her for inspiration and guidance in matters not only spiritual but secular as well. She was “Sri Ramakrishna’s final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood.” Little have we as yet realised the measure of Sri

Ramakrishna's contribution to the spiritual regeneration of women in India. But when the struggle for political franchise and social privileges now engaging the whole attention of the country will be over, and the question of woman's spiritual freedom and her right to spiritual leadership will arise, then only will we understand the true significance of all that Sri Ramakrishna did to defend and uphold the honour and glory of Indian womanhood.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS MISSION.*

BY PROF. J. N. MUKERJEE, M. A.

WE have met this evening to celebrate the anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the saintly soul that was born in a village of Bengal on the 17th of February, 1836, and renounced his earthly mould on the 16th of August 1886. Of the many items on the programme it has fallen on my humble self to discourse on Sri Ramakrishna and his Mission. Without making any apologies by way of a formal preliminary let us directly approach our subject and leave the rest to those who may consider themselves fit to sit on judgment.

When we speak of mission like Sri Ramakrishna's we do not certainly use the word 'mission' in that wider sense in which everything in this world has a mission, a function that brings it into existence. But we use it in a sense in which very few of us has missions but very many of us only form occasions for a mission. We create the need and there comes one that satisfies the need of a self or a tribe or a nation or even of humanity. Such a man only has a mission

* A lecture delivered on the 87th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna at Nagpur, C. P.

in the true sense of the word. The question therefore in the present connection is: Had Sri Ramakrishna any mission like that? If so, what was it?

It is a difficult task we have imposed on ourselves but we cannot shirk it. It is a highly controversial point on which eminent authorities differ most seriously. Great as, therefore, is the responsibility of deciding one way or the other we must speak out our honest conviction and the reasons therefor. There were men—and, we are afraid, there are some still—to whom this world-stirring phenomenon of all that is associated with the name of Sri Ramakrishna was nothing but a temporary ebullition of the old-world orthodox Hinduism, the symptom of a dying struggle, the last flicker of a dying civilisation. Against this we lodge the most vigorous protest we can command. But before we plunge into the thick of the contest it is necessary that we remind ourselves of some of the most prominent features of the evolution of religious thought in India. For we propose not to elucidate the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna but to study him in the perspective of the thought-life of this ancient land and find out his place in that intricately-woven system.

Following Dr. B. N. Seal we notice three different stages in the evolution we have spoken of. These are characterised as the age of (1) प्रवृत्तिमार्ग (the path of 'action' and enjoyment), (2) निवृत्तिमार्ग (the path of 'inaction' and renunciation) and (3) निष्कामकर्म (selfless-work). In this last is found the reconciliation of the contending claims of knowledge, devotion and action.

It was only natural for the youthful impulses of our ancient progenitors, dominated, as they were, by a consciousness of the ruling supernaturals or supernaturals to manifest themselves into a series of actions meant ultimately to serve some personal interest which included the interests of the dear and near. These actions took the form of sacrifices and offerings to that or those through whose grace, it was believed, the evils of life became rarer and rarer and the blessings came pouring in either here or hereafter. Religion

consisted in performing these sacrifices and the end of religion was to be sought outside itself. Different supernaturals were represented by fires constructed in different ways. Fire occupied a central place in the religious life of this period.

In due course these rituals became highly complicated and formal. They lost the last ounce of vitality that the rising spirit of the nation had infused into them. The manifold Gods lost the confidence of their worshippers. To the growing self-consciousness of the age, the futility of the pursuit of happiness, the inadequacy of Karma, that is, the performance of the Vedic rituals, the absurdity of making religion the means to an end outside itself became more and more obvious. Reflection, again, threw a new light on the more true interests of human existence. A different stream of thought flowed, which elevated knowledge above Karma not only in the sense that Karma was a means to knowledge but also in the sense that Karma was absolutely superfluous. Knowledge alone was considered competent to work out the salvation of man. "Know thyself" may be said to have been the watchword of this period.

A division was inevitable at this stage. There was an orthodox party that adhered to the old ways and there was an advancing party that advocated the new thought. The adherents of the old school, however, could not absolutely escape the influence of the new ideas. The rituals were no longer considered as means to the realisation of heavenly bliss in life after death or prosperity in this, but they were considered as possessing a disciplinary character as meant for चित्तशुद्धि or purification of the mind. So Karma for चित्तशुद्धि and श्रवन मनन निदिध्यासन "Hearing, cogitation and constant meditation of the Atman" for the same purpose rivalled with each other.

Civilisation had progressed in the mean time, and the social and the political condition of the people had become more complex. There was a tendency in the communal life to disintegration, greater differentiation and there was a need

for higher integration as well. The future all depended on how this higher integration was effected, whether the rightful claims of the different communities were duly and impartially considered or not. So far as those who were within the pale of the Brahminical culture were concerned there was less cause for anxiety at that time (though much later there were graver causes for anxiety) but the case was different as regards the non-Aryan children of the soil, whose rising spirit demanded more and more respectful recognition of their status as men, and also a more definite place in the social and political life of the country. The future lay entirely in the hands of the high priests of the Brahminic cult. They failed and did not fail to properly discharge the solemn responsibilities that were entrusted to them. While in the higher sphere of theory they were propounding the doctrine of सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म "All this is Brahman," the moulders of society could not rise equal to the occasion and give effect to the doctrine in the sphere of practice. There was followed the principle of exclusion which meant restriction and reservation of rights. However that be, we cannot perhaps condemn it downright. There is something to be said to its credit. The Brahminical culture had already assumed a definite shape and those who were entrusted with the charge of maintaining and propagating that culture in its intrinsic purity could not but hesitate to admit an alien people with different customs and traditions into the pale of its definitely conceived and developed cult. They should not be blamed if they wanted that people should have a certain mental constitution before they could be admitted into their own culture. If, however, the principle of exclusion be necessary, it is a dangerous principle too when it is not applied in the right spirit. So long as sympathy, nay, love works as the central spirit and the principle of exclusion is adopted as a provisional step there is little harm to be afraid of. But when hate takes the place of love and the principle of exclusion is made a paramount and absolute law and the distinction between community and community

is rigidly drawn there is no doubt that society is face to face with a severe crisis. There is no doubt again that there was such a crisis in an early period of the Hindu civilisation. We raise now the question that concerns us most. How was the crisis tided over? The chief remedy had already appeared to the conception of the nation. The theory of सर्वे खल्विदं ब्रह्म "All this is Brahman" was there. A stubborn soul was only necessary to remodel all customs and traditions in the light of that theory. The vitality of the nation stirred up spontaneously and there appeared on the stage that stubborn soul, the great reformer Sri Krishna, the renowned disciple of Rishi Ghorangirasa.

Sri Krishna struck at the root of the evils that had eaten into the very heart of the nation. He drew most rigidly all that necessarily followed from the theory of सर्वे खल्विदं ब्रह्म "All this is Brahman." He broke down all the barriers set up by customs and convention and preached the gospel of humanity, of expansion and inclusion, of equality and liberty, of Karma and devotion. His end was the establishment of Dharma-rajya. By Karma he did not mean the performance of the Vedic rituals but disinterested service to all without distinction. The highest Dharma and Karma was to realise Brahman and to help others to do that. See Brahman in every creature and serve Brahman in and through every being—that was what he taught. We cannot pass without noticing this important feature of what Sri Krishna preached. It was the recognition of the place of service in the religious life. The Vedic sacrifices were more or less personal affairs but in Sri Krishna's doctrine we find a recognition of the duties of man to man, a theological cosmopolitanism.

Sri Krishna was the first great reformer in India and the principles on which he carried on the work of reformation have not yet been improved upon.

Many centuries passed and there came another reformer, one who stirred the known world of that time. I refer to the great Buddha. Buddhism appears to be a heterogeneous

growth but in many of its principles it resembles Vaishnavism specially in its advocacy for expansion and equality.

So much of the early history of Indian religious life. But from the very sketchy account we can draw certain important conclusions :

First, that the Hindu religion is not unaltered and unalterable, though it must be admitted that the basic principles are not only eternal and undying but have not yet been surpassed.

Secondly, that the principle of exclusion and restriction had always been the cause of degeneration.

Thirdly, that we may reasonably distinguish between ritualistic Brahminism and the religion of the Vedanta. The latter had always shown a spirit of universalism and had comprehended and transcended Brahminism.

Fourthly, that reaction had always been an indigenous growth. At critical moments great men had always sprung up from within the nation—great men who were as much made by the circumstances as for them.

Fifthly, that these religious and social reformers were not only intellectual giants but persons who had fully realised in their life the doctrines they preached.

The field of Indian religious thought had been the battleground of Brahminism, Buddhism and Vaishnavism in some form or other. But we shall pass over centuries and try to understand the forces that were at work in the latter half of the 18th and the whole of the 19th century. We shall here confine ourselves to the conditions holding in Bengal. Our interest centres in Bengal mainly for three reasons.

(i) The great man whose mission we are trying to understand was born in Bengal.

(ii) Bengal showed in her all the features of the worst degradation—at least a worse picture was not to be found elsewhere.

(iii) The new age of the British rule in India produced no greater effect in any other Province and the vital resistance

of the nation did not so early and so effectively assert itself elsewhere.

If we turn to the Bengal of the latter half of the 18th century we see a land of soulless figures dragging on a mechanical form of existence. The intellectual life was confined to the interpretation, or better mis-interpretation, of the diverse injunctions of the Smritis. The moral life was given over to external show and internal depravity. Casuistry of the worst type was rampant everywhere. The religious needs were satisfied by a number of festive celebrations in which amusements of a very objectionable character were always prominent. The degenerated form of Tantric worship gave a sacred license to its votaries to drink and indulge in sensual excesses. Elsewhere Sri Chaitanya's Náma Máhátmya rolled like anything underneath the greatness of the name. There were not many sins that did not find a hiding place behind the counting of the name of Sri Hari. The religion of Love entertained almost every sentiment except that of Love. The so-called duties consisted in boycotting and oppressing the neighbours for reasons discovered by spite and malice. The political life exhibited itself in secret intrigues and abominable treacherousness. Manliness, culture, breadth of heart, purity of motive, in fact, all those virtues that characterised the best ages of India were almost banished from the land.

Such was the condition of Bengal and such was the condition with slight modifications here and there of the whole of the land of the Vedanta. It is worth while to remember that this is the land of the Vedanta. The dormant vitality of the nation was sure to wake up as it did on many occasions in the past. But the age in question had another unique feature which differentiated it from the past. The revivals in the past were necessitated by the internal downfall and were stimulated from within. But in the age in question the stimulation came to a great extent from without.

The British rule had almost established itself. The political conquest was an accomplished fact. But a graver problem was waxing in the dark. With the advent of the

Christian missionaries a conflict of ideals had set in and the problem was whether the nation must submit spiritually as well. It was a problem which in its nature was unprecedented in the history of India. It must be admitted, that the advent of Islam into India stimulated many religious revivals and there was also a conflict of Ideals during the Mohammedan rule. But the character of the struggle differed in each case on account of a fundamental difference in the nature of the two invading forces. The Mohammedans approached India with an amount of bigotry and fanaticism and it adopted the spirit of persecution. While Christianity embraced India with a broad humanitarian heart, with rational vigour and with the zeal of genuine Christian devotion. Obstinate conservatism can successfully resist heartless persecution but it is absolutely ineffectual in the face of a mission of sympathy and love maintained by a rational spirit only because the latter silently influences and wins the heart. This may account for the fact that the main religious revivals during the Mohammedan rule did not care so much for intellectual regeneration as for stimulating the emotions to enable men to persist in their faith. The problem, therefore, that faced India was unique in character and unprecedented in her history.

There were liberality, purity of motive, strength of character and force of thought on the one hand and exclusionism, narrowness, oppression and persecution on the other. Yield or assert, the nation must do one or the other. It was an intellectual warfare and orthodoxy could never succeed. There was a call for expansion in the air and exclusionism must retire. The power of real assertion was gathering strength and at last the vital resistance of the nation manifested itself in Raja Ram Mohon Roy.

Born in 1774 and attaining manhood in the age of the thickest contest, for him was reserved the honour of being the hero of the nation in its intellectual struggle with one of the greatest rationalistic religions of the world. With the truest insight he saw that the soul of India had in it the necessary remedy for destroying bigotry and arresting

degeneration and ruin and also that the remedy had been applied more than once to cure diseases of the sort that had affected the national organism. He turned over the pages of the past and found a wealth of glorious conceptions buried underneath the ugly crust. What was not there? It was this nation that conceived that there is one Being that is the source of all and that this Being is सत्, चित् and आनन्द (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute). It was this nation that saw everything in Brahman and Brahman in everything. It was this nation that found the true goal of life in self-knowledge, self-determination and self-realisation. It was this nation, again, that perceived that the individual self was only an appearance and that the true Self was universal. Here was preached the Gospel of Love not as a feeling that waxes and wanes but as a permanent disposition that makes contempt, hatred and oppression impossible. Indeed, this nation did not exhaust itself in noticing distinctions and in preaching exclusionism. If it did so, it never failed to emphasise with greater vigour and to expose with greater clearness the unity underlying and vitalising all these. All this wealth of thought was there and with this Raja Ram Mohon fought with wonderful might both the degraded nation and the superior stranger. He used all these conceptions to elevate his own society and to silence the Christian missionary, whose main fault was to estimate India in terms of her degradation. He would have the truth and allow no modification of the truth. Idolatry could not be true and he denounced it. Untouchability could not be true and he protested against it. All religions could not be true but they contained truth. So he gathered from all. As in all things and beings Brahman must be in women too. They were not the instruments of the Satanic Maya and he fought for the elevation of their status. He found ignorance to be at the root of all evils and worked for the spread of education. He found slavish following of authority to be the worst enemy of man and struggled for freedom in every sphere of life.

It may seem that no stone was left untouched by Raja

Ram Mohon Roy and that the future generation was only to work for the propagation of his teachings. But I beg to differ and here are the reasons.

Though Raja Ram Mohon took his stand on the loftiest conceptions of the Vedanta, though he came out victorious in that intellectual warfare, though he showed the nation the way in which its salvation lay, still there were some misconceptions and some deficiencies.

The misconception is to be found in the absence of the recognition of relativity. The formless is the sole truth no doubt but the forms are not false. Diverse forms have existence in the sphere of relativity. Man must get over this relativity, realise his universal essence before he can conceive the formless. Nations as a whole are much more imaginative than reflective, much more emotional than rational. It is necessary therefore to recognise relativity while you lay all the emphasis on the loftiest conception of the Vedanta. The worship of the formless cannot be grafted on the whole nation. Minds will differ in spite of the identity of their essence. So long as Jivatmans are Jivatmans they have the necessary limitations. They will differ in their mental constitution, in their capacities, intellectual, moral and religious. Whatever we may say against the caste-system we cannot omit to mention that this caste-system is based on the recognition of these psychological differences—differences that enter into the very constitution of the Jivatman. But nothing can be more erroneous than to draw a rigid line of distinction between one man and another simply on the ground of his birth. Nothing again can be more erroneous than to suppose that these differences can be absolutely ignored. We must not make too much of these differences but we must not make too little of them at the same time. No nation can be a whole of homogeneous units. Humanity can never be free from differences within it. The differences must be recognised in any scheme that is meant for the salvation of a whole nation.

If we recognise relativity then there is not only one religion that is true but many religions that are relatively

true—true only in relation to the mental constitution of the diverse Jivatmans. Raja Ram Mohon in his eagerness to uphold the true religion neglected this aspect of the truth. He stimulated this nation to think. But it is very probable that he had only the intelligent section of the people in his mind. This brings us into the closest touch with two questions—the one of Universal Religion and the other of Idolatry.

In the significance of the word “Idolatry” there seems to be some confusion between Idol worship as such and worship of Ideas in images. The former is certainly a degenerated form of the latter, and the latter has certainly a relative truth. In the history of Indian religious thought symbols gradually gave place to images. In the Vedic Age fire constructed in different ways represented different Gods. But in the Buddhistic Age perhaps with the development of sculpture the symbols were replaced by images. The natural cause is not far to seek. In man imagination precedes reflection and in many reflection is very much less developed than imagination. On the average man Ideas that cannot be pictorially represented have little or no hold. They want something more tangible than a Nirâkâra (formless) Brahman. They want a God with whom they can enter into a personal relationship. Akâra (form) or no Akâra God must be a personal God. A personal God is very easily particularised. When particularised there come at once many Gods according as different minds modify the conception of this particularised personal God. It is only one step from this to the pictorial representation of this particularised God. All these are very natural processes and they have a relative necessity too. It follows therefore that even when Idolatry is done away with worship of Ideas in images will always remain in some stratum or other of this region of relativity.

As regards Universal Religion it requires to be pointed out at the outset that a collection of the monotheistic utterances from the sacred books of different religions does not make a universal religion. Universal religion is more intensive than extensive. It cannot be a religion for all unless all have a

certain definite nature. But so far as we know instead of all having a definite nature the mental condition differs from man to man. It is not meant to deny a community of essence but when we take into consideration the actual state of affairs, we cannot ignore this difference that exists between man and man. The conception of God and the mode of worship will be determined by the mental constitution and the environment of the individual. His God will be made out of his own stuff—all that makes him what he actually is. Universal religion can exist only for those that have transcended their limitation and have realised their universality. It is impossible to make one religion for all, for it is impossible to nullify relativity. But nothing is more true than that, in diverse ways the same Being is worshipped.

For all these reasons the national problem was not solved. To solve that was necessary the manifestation of the long sleeping genius of the nation in all its fullness, vivacity, naturalness and universality. The spirit must spring from the soil as it were and develop and blossom forth as the flower in the nursery of nature. He is not to discuss and decide and convince but to attract as the flower does, and to stimulate and remould and liberate. He is not to fight but to conquer by his mere presence to the great benefit of the conquered. He is not to be educated but all education must emanate from him. Such a manifestation was not delayed to the great good fortune of the nation.

Raja Ram Mohon Roy died in 1833 and in 1836 was born Sri Ramakrishna, that divine personality that was to stir the whole world and bring together the past of India and the future of the world. He is the true manifestation of the genius of the nation. He demonstrated to the world that India did not indulge in idle reveries and that India was not the home of a half savage and superstitious people. He showed, further, that the spirit of India could transcend all the limitations of nationality and all considerations of individuality, take her stand in a sphere where there is no relativity, no distinction and embrace all. He showed that

true religion consisted in self-purification and self-realisation and in being men worth the name. He showed that there was no room for contempt and hatred and untouchability in Religion. His life is a momentous revelation of the eternal Spirit. Born in a village, receiving no education but that which nature gave him he blossomed forth into what he was—a realised spirit free from all the weaknesses and imperfections of man, free from all that convention breeds in him. He stands in the line of the great seers of old. He is the lineal descendant of Sri Krishna, Buddha, Sri Chaitanya and others. To illustrate in his own life the gems of Indian thought, principles of universal application, to demonstrate to the world what true spirituality is was the mission of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE HINDUISM.

BY SUBRAMANYA SARGIA.

(Concluded from page 106.)

THE mere defending of our religion and sinking again into passivity does no good. "Those to whom religion is a trade, are forced to become narrow and mischievous by their introduction into religion of the competition, fighting and selfish methods of the world." And Christendom has been intolerantly aggressive. In this land of Christians (N. America) any other influence is fought as an enemy. When Swami Vivekananda was here the orthodox clergy and their flocks carried on an organised campaign against him. And yet what was his mission? He did not go there to proselyte but to present to the people the truths of spiritual endeavour. In his own words: "I am here among the children of the Son of Mary, and the Lord Jesus will help me. They like much the broad views of Hinduism and my love for the prophet of Nazareth. I tell them that I preach nothing

against the great one of Galilee, I only ask the Christians to take in the great Ones of Ind along with the Lord Jesus, and they appreciate it."

On the contrary how do most of the missionaries who come to India behave? They carry on a relentless campaign against Sri Krishna and everything that is sacred to Hindu mind. They speak in contemptuous terms of our beliefs and ideals, write volumes on the inadequacy of our faith and try to lay the axe at the very roots of our religion and culture. They are knocking at the very foundation of Hinduism. If women have been the custodians of any faith it is in India. Those Christian missionaries who are determined to evangelise the whole of India in this generation have realised that by shaking the faith of womanhood in India they can conquer the land for Christ. This talk of uplifting Indian women is mere camouflage, an ostensible purpose. But the real intent is different. "The missionary must ever keep the Hindu woman in his thought and in his plans as the best channel for bringing in the speedy redemption of the land. Woman is the brightest feature of Indian life at the present time. She incarnates the piety, the devotion, and the sweetness and purity of character which render life in India tolerable, and in some respects worthy. When she has been won for Christ, the complete triumph of Christianity in India will be at hand."

It must be obvious from the history of Christendom that religion in many cases is nothing but an ally of imperialism and an advance-guard of capitalism. This religion, when it is pushed to so-called patriotic channels with a view to advance material prosperity, has two functions: one to open out vast continents to civilisation, to commerce, and to the benefits of Christian enterprise (?), and the other to perpetuate Christian civilisation, in other words exploitation, in civilised lands. It is the latter process that many of the missionaries are helping, and the sooner we realise the gravity of the situation the better for us. It must incite us to work. We must vindicate our culture, civilisation and faith. Retaliatory campaigns might help a little, but the sure weapon is a

unification of the apparently conflicting elements in our society. The lower classes who are exploited and converted into an hostile camp in our midst must be forthwith taken into the folds of Hinduism and the lofty teachings of the Vedas and the Vedanta reached to them. "No religion in the world preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism" and we are to blame not to prove it to the world.

Most of the missionary organisations have been carrying on a campaign of calumny and misrepresentation not only amidst us but also outside, and are estranging from us the human sympathy of Western peoples by appealing to their religious bigotry and ignorance. There is a campaign in America to increase the missionary strength as much as possible for they want to evangelise the whole world. This is a wild dream. But any how the result for us may not be pleasant. Indifference or resignation when the aggressor is at the door is no virtue. We have to safeguard our religion, if not by offence, at least by defensive manœuvres.

The collapse of Europe has helped us in a way by making missionary activities of European nations economically impossible and by creating a thirst for a purer and abiding spiritual message. While we should take advantage of this situation to carry the messages of the Vedas and the Vedanta, to the thirsty souls of the West, we should not allow any aggressive nation to undermine our own faith and culture in our native land.

The world is in need of India's spiritual message more than ever. Are we going to meet the challenge? There is no better field for Vedanta and the teachings of Ramakrishna than central Europe, the cradle of European culture and civilisation. Start the work there and the triumph for India is sure. Are we going to save the world for the spiritual and human ideals or are we going to let ourselves be swallowed up by the present wave of dehumanised materialism and rank aggression? In the answer lies the justification or otherwise of our fear. Are we going to let the same old pastoral Shepherd play for us the music of the eternal on His eternal flute or are we going to let a godless civilisation overrun our land? It is for the reader to answer.

VEDANTA AND EINSTEIN.

RECENT European philosophy has centred round four doctrines which have grown up out of scientific research. The first of these is the doctrine of Evolution, the second of what is generally called Pragmatism, the third of 'Activism,' and the fourth, which only appeared a few years ago, that of Relativity. Each of these theories has been hailed as new, and so in their special context and scientific form they are, yet there is not one of them of which the general idea is not to be found in Hindu thought. "What is Parinama," asks Professor Max Muller, "if not evolution, the evolution advocated by Ramanuja, but rejected by Sankara?" Of course Sankara did not actually reject the doctrine, but only confined it to Maya; the point is, however, that the Indian mind was accustomed to the idea of evolution, as opposed to that of special creation, from remote times. Pragmatism, the philosophy of William James, which emphasised the subjectivity in religion and gave rise to a new toleration and synthetic view of creeds, is nothing but the Vedanta doctrine of Ishtam, stressed by Swami Vivekananda. The 'Activism' of Bergson and Eucken, which substitutes a dynamic for a static conception of life, has been aptly compared by Mrs. Rhys Davids to the Buddhist Dharma, which she translates 'Norm' and is likewise latent in the Vedantist idea of Sakti. Finally the new teaching of the German mathematician, Einstein, goes far to bear out the great central Vedanta doctrine of Maya.

In the philosophy of Western Materialism, which was supposed to be in full harmony both with Science and "Common sense," time and space were regarded as a sort of framework of the universe existing independently. The theory of relativity, by breaking the absolutism of time and space, has broken up the foundations of Materialism, and not only of the old Materialism, now generally discredited, but of all the

newer semi-materialist beliefs which assume that the workings of phenomena are ultimately real. Vedanta asserts that only the Atman is ultimately real and that all else is Maya, even though it may have qualified or relative truth for the mind not yet illumined by Jnana. "From now onward," said Minkowski, in 1908; "time and space will cease to have independent existence, and only a sort of union of the two will be allowed to remain."

Equally significant is the bearing of the Theory of Relativity on the current concept of eternity. The Western idea of everlasting 'clock-time' as the meaning of 'eternal,' has made the Western mind unable to appreciate the Hindu-Buddhist ideal of Mukti or Nirvána, which is timeless and beyond all duality. But the popular view of time in the West has been undermined first by William James' demonstration of the 'specious present' of definite but variable duration as a psychological fact; secondly by Bergson with his 'Duration' as opposed to 'clock-time,' and now finally by Einstein, who has shown that physical bodies have 'their own time,'

Viscount Haldane's recent book: "The reign of Relativity," shows the response of European Idealism to the stimulus of Einstein's theory and a decided approach towards the Advaita position. "Knowledge," says Haldane, "is the final fact," beyond all the relativity of subject and object. What is this but the Atman, the true subject (Vishayin) which is pure intelligence (Chit), but is involved in dualism by an illegitimate transfer (Adhyasa) of qualities? Elsewhere Viscount Haldane says that "a person is not conscious; he is consciousness." Such utterances as these indicate the extent to which physics and psychology are driving Western thought towards a metaphysic substantially identical with that of the great Sankara.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 113.)

मल्लिङ्गमङ्गलजनदर्शनस्पर्शनार्चनम् ।

परिचर्या स्तुतिः प्रह्वगुणकर्मानुकीर्तनम् ॥३४॥

34. Seeing, touching, worshipping, serving, praising and saluting My images as well as My devotees and reciting the glories and deeds of both ;

[Some characteristics of devotion are pointed out in verses 34—41.]

मत्कथाश्रवणो श्रद्धा मदनुध्यानमुद्धव ।

सर्वलाभोपहरणं दास्येनात्मनिवेदनम् ॥३५॥

35. Faith in listening to tales about Me, O Uddhava, meditating on Me, offering everything received unto Me, and surrendering oneself in service to Me ;

मज्जन्मकर्मकथनं मम पर्वानुमोदनम् ।

गीतताण्डववादित्रगोष्ठीभिर्मद्गृहोत्सवः ॥३६॥

36. The recounting of My lives and deeds, observance of My special days, festivities in My temples with songs, dance, instrumental music, in company ;

यात्रा बलिविधानं च सर्ववार्षिकपर्वसु ।

वैदिकी तान्त्रिकी दीक्षा मदीयव्रतधारणम् ॥३७॥

37. Processions to sacred sites and making offerings of worship on all special days of the year, initiation according to Vedic and other scriptural rites, and taking up vows in My honour ;

ममार्चास्थापने श्रद्धा स्वतः संहत्य चोद्यमः ।

उद्यानोपवनाक्रीडपुरमन्दिरकर्मणि ॥३८॥

38. Eagerness to instal My images, and endeavour, either single-handed or joint, to construct gardens, orchards, play-grounds, compound walls and temples dedicated to Me ;

संमार्जनोपलेपाभ्यां सेकमण्डलवर्तनैः ।

गृहशुश्रूषणां मह्यं दासवद्यदमायया ॥३६॥

39. Taking care of My temples without deceit, like a servant, through sweeping, plastering, watering, and drawing¹ sacred designs ;

[¹ *Drawing &c.*—The word in the text may also mean 'circumambulating.']

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वं कृतस्यापरिकीर्तनम् ।

अपि दीपावलोकं मे नोपयुञ्ज्यान्निवेदितम् ॥४०॥

40. Disregard for fame, want of haughtiness, and not trumpeting one's good deeds, not using for selfish ends the light of the lamp¹ offered to Me ;

[¹ *The lamp*: Suggesting that other things offered are also to be held sacred. Commentators have explained the passage variously.]

यद्यदिष्टतमं लोके यच्चातिप्रियमात्मनः ।

तत्तन्निवेदयेन्मह्यं तदानन्त्याय कल्पते ॥४१॥

41. What is most covetable to people in general and whatever is specially dear to oneself should be offered unto Me. That offering produces infinite results.

सुर्योऽग्निर्ब्राह्मणो गावो वैष्णवः खं मरुज्जलम् ।

भूरात्मा सर्वभूतानि भद्र पूजापदानि मे ॥४२॥

42. The sun, fire, a Brahmana, cows, a devotee, the sky, air, water, earth, the body, and all beings, —these, O friend, are the objects wherein to worship Me.

[Eleven symbols of worship are mentioned in this Sloka, the details being given in the next few Slokas.]

सूर्ये तु विद्यया त्रय्या हविषाम्नौ यजेत माम् ।
आतिथ्येन तु विप्राग्र्ये गोष्वङ्ग यवसादिना ॥४३॥

43. One should worship Me in the sun through Vedic hymns, in the fire through oblations of ghee, in the best of Brahmanas through hospitality, and in cows with grass etc., My friend.

वैष्णवे बन्धुसत्कृत्या हृदि खे ध्याननिष्ठया ।
वायौ मुख्यधिया तोये द्रव्यैस्तोयपुरस्कृतैः ॥४४॥

44. In the devotee through cordial reception, in the sky of the heart through regular meditation, in the air by looking upon it as Prana, in water with things such as water etc.

स्थण्डिले मन्त्रहृदयैर्भोगैरात्मानमात्मनि ।
क्षेत्रज्ञं सर्वभूतेषु समत्वेन यजेत माम् ॥४५॥

45. In the consecrated ground through secret¹ Mantrams; in the body one should worship the Atman with eatables² etc., and in all beings one should worship Me, the Kshetrajna,³ with an evenness of vision.

[¹ *Secret*—because sacred.

² *Eatables*—Considering them as offerings to the Lord, not for satisfying the palate.

³ *Kshetrajna*—The Lord as the indwelling Spirit of the universe—the Eternal Subject.]

धिष्ण्येष्वेष्विति मद्रूपं शङ्खचक्रगदाम्बुजैः ।
युक्तं चतुर्भुजं शान्तं ध्यायन्नर्चेत्समाहितः ॥४६॥

46. In all these abodes one should meditate on My benign form with four hands, in which are the conch, disc, mace and lotus, and should worship it with concentration.

इष्टापूर्तेन मामेवं यो यजेत समाहितः ।
लभते मयि सद्भक्तिं मत्स्मृतिः साधुसेवया ॥४७॥

47. He who thus worships Me through *Ishtâ*¹ and *Purta*² with concentration, remembers Me through the service of sages attains to perfect devotion for Me.

[¹ *Ishtâ*—making sacrifices.

² *Purta*—constructing tanks, gardens, temples etc.

Some of the forms of devotion mentioned in Slokas 34—41 may come under these heads.]

प्रायेण भक्तियोगेन सत्सङ्गेन विनोद्धव ।

नीपायो विद्यते सङ्घञ्ज् प्रायणं हि सतामहम् ॥४८॥

48. O Uddhava, there is almost no other efficient way¹ except the Bhakti-yoga due to the association of sages, for I am the goal of the sages:

[¹ *Way*—out of this world.]

अथैतत्परमं गुह्यं शृण्वतो यदुनन्दन ।

सुगोप्यमपि वक्ष्यामि त्वं मे भृत्यः सुहृत्सखा ॥४९॥

49. Now I am going to tell thee this profound secret, even though most confidential, for thou art My servant, companion and friend.

(To be continued.)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Sikh Gurus (Bengali).—By Kartik Chandra Mitra, B. A.
Published by Sulabh Granthamala Karyalaya, 13 Shanker Ghose Lane, Calcutta. Pp. vi + 90. Price 12 As.

This admirable little volume contains short lives of the Sikh Gurus from Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, to Gobind, the builder of the Sikh power. It is a short but connected and authentic account of Sikhism. It describes in a fascinating style the transformation of a purely spiritual

movement founded on Guru Nanak's simple faith and gospel of brotherhood and love into a mighty military power, which even to-day inspires its followers to defend in a most heroic manner the honour of their faith and embrace for its sake suffering and death with a smiling face. The book depicts in a charming language how strength and courage can be combined with humility and devotion, how heroism may have the inspiration of religion, how patriotism can be founded on the bed-rock of faith, how struggle for freedom may be hallowed by sacrifice and discipline.

It speaks in glowing terms of the noble message of the Sikh Gurus and of their great achievement and glory. It is a valuable contribution to Bengali literature at once religious and historical. We have read the book with great pleasure and profit and heartily recommend it to our readers. The get-up leaves nothing to be desired.

Young India (1919-1922). Published by S. Ganesan, Publisher, Triplicane, Madras. Pp. Lxix + 1199. Price Rs. 4.

This beautifully got up volume contains the valuable and illuminating articles and notes contributed by Mahatma Gandhi to the *Young India*. The topics are arranged in a logical as well as chronological order. The book is equipped with an elaborate table of contents and index, which increases its value as a reference book.

THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Belur Math

The eighty-eighth birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with due solemnity and eclat at the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur (Howrah). The *tithi* fell on the 17th February. Elaborate Puja, Bhajan, Homa and other ceremonials formed the special features of the celebration. At noon devotees numbering more

than one thousand heartily partook of the Prasad. In the afternoon a meeting was arranged in the open lawn in front of the main building overlooking the Ganges. Srimat Swami Shivananda, President of the Mission, graced the occasion by his presence. Srimat Swamis Abhedananda and Prakashananda spoke feelingly on the significance of the life and teachings of the Master. Srijut Satyendra Nath Majumdar read a nice little paper suitable to the occasion. A Homa was performed towards the end of the night, and before the sacrificial fire four young men took the vows of Brahmacharya and thirteen Brahmacharins were initiated into Sannyasa.

The public celebration came off on Sunday, the 25th February. There was constant downpour of rain alternating with drizzling on the previous night and on the early morning of the day. But through the grace of the Lord and fervent prayers of the devotees the sky cleared up as the day advanced and the celebration was a grand success. Since the early morning people began to flock from all quarters and towards the afternoon the whole Math compound was packed to overflowing. It was a grand sight to see a number of steamers that plied constantly between Calcutta and Belur, carrying thousands of pilgrims to this universal fair.

A life-size oil-painting of Sri Ramakrishna was placed in a pandal decorated with beautiful settings of moss, foliages and flowers and fragrant with incense constantly burning. Several thousands of people partook of the Prasad, all sitting together without any distinction of caste or creed.

Kirtan and concert parties greatly entertained the audience with their sweet music and concerts. The day of festivity came to a close with a charming display of fireworks.

Benares

The anniversary was celebrated with the usual ceremony at the Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Luxa, Benares, on the 17th February. Feeding of Sadhus formed a part of the ceremony. On that auspicious day His Holiness Swami Saradanandaji Maharaj initiated six young men into the order of the Brahmacharins and gave Sannyasa to eleven members of the Ramakrishna Mission. The public celebration came off on the 25th February. The Central Hall of the Advaita Ashrama was decorated with flowers, garlands and evergreens. A big picture of the Master was most picturesquely decorated. Srijut Rama Kamal Bhattacharya, the celebrated Kirtan singer, kept the audience, numbering nearly one thousand, spell-bound for about three hours with his soul-enthralling songs. A huge meeting was held in the

evening in the Advaita Ashrama compound which was packed to its utmost capacity. Many had to go back for want of space. His Holiness Swami Saradanandaji Maharaj occupied the chair. Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Pramatha Nath Tarkabhushan and Pandit Kumud Bandhu Tattvanidhi spoke in Bengali on the life of Sri Ramakrishna Deva. Swami Dayananda of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal delivered an interesting lecture in Hindi and spoke about the Ideal of Service as preached by the Ramakrishna Mission. The President closed up the proceedings with a nice speech in Bengali.

Bangalore

The birthday anniversary was celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavangudi, on Sunday, the 25th February, 1923.

Bhajana processions came to the Ashrama from various parts of the city. At noon over a thousand poor Narayanas were fed at the Anjeneya temple, Basavangudi. At about 4 p. m. commenced a Harikatha Kalakshepam by Brahma Sri Venkatacharya, which was listened to by all with rapt attention. It was followed by a highly impressive lecture in Kannada on "Harmony of Religions" by Mr. N. Venkatesa Iyengar, B. A., Retired Meteorological Reporter to the Government of Mysore. Mr. A. R. Nageswar Iyer, B. A., B. L., Advocate of the Chief Court of Mysore, next read a very interesting paper in English on "The Religion of Sri Ramakrishna." He pointed out that Sri Ramakrishna was a world-teacher whose religion was one of strength, tolerance and hope for all.

The function terminated with Arati and distribution of Prasad

Patna

The birthday was celebrated with due honour and observance on the 4th March at Gardanibagh, Patna. It was enlivened by the presence of Srimat Swami Prakashananda, Head of the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, California. There was a feeding of the poor at midday. A public meeting was held at 4-30 p. m. in the compound of the Gait Public Library, Swami Prakashananda presiding. Babu Mathuranath Sinha, Vakil, who was the principal speaker, observed in the course of his interesting lecture that Sri Ramakrishna did not attempt merely to present an eclectic creed by taking the good parts of every religion, and then weaving them into a fanciful or ideal texture. He tried to synthesise the conflicting religions by personally undergoing in turn the religious disciplines enjoined by each one of them. In one word, by self-realisation he came to know that all religions were true

and were sent by the same Lord to suit the different capacities, tastes and developments of the peoples to whom they were given.

Babu Laldhar Prasad spoke very feelingly in Hindi giving the details of Paramahansa Deva's teachings.

Swami Jnaneswarananda of the Patna Ramakrishna Ashrama spoke in Bengali and charmed the audience by his brilliant exposition of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, illustrating them by some of the incidents of the Prophet's life. Srimat Swami Prakashananda next delivered an illuminating address on the significance of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Kankhal

The anniversary was celebrated with great success at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Dt. Saharanpur. The Tithi was observed on Saturday, the 17th February, with special Puja, Homa, Bhajana and distribution of Prasad. The public celebration came off on Monday, the 26th February. The whole Ashrama wore a gala appearance. A large portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was placed in the Hall of the Ashrama, tastefully decorated with garlands and flowers. Special Puja was performed at 10 o'clock in the morning. At about midday the Hall was packed with Sadhus and gentlemen of the locality. Ramanama Kirtan was sung by the members of the Ashrama. Next followed lectures on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Swamis Sarveswarananda and Nishkalananda of the Ramakrishna Order spoke in Sanskrit and Hindi respectively. Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Dutta of the Gurukul University, Kangri, delivered an interesting lecture in English. The Sadhus assembled were sumptuously fed after the lectures were over.

Other Places

The birthday was observed also at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Ramna, Dacca; The Ramakrishna Brahmavadin Ashrama, Cawnpore; Sri Vivekananda Reading Room, Shiyali; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Najarganj, Midnapore; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Ramakrishnapur, Dehra Dun; Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Jharia; Sri Satchidananda Sangha, Mount Road, Madras; S. B. S. Lodge, Mangalore; Sri Santi Ashrama, Totapalli Hills, Godavari Dt., and also at Sitabaldi (Nagpur), Malda, Chandpur, and various other places too numerous to mention. We very much regret that for want of space it is not possible for us to publish all the reports we have been favoured with.



NEWS AND NOTES.

Reclamation of Malkana Rajputs.

In the past Hinduism had all along opened its hospitable doors to all peoples irrespective of their race and religion. It always stood for universalism and expansion. The present spirit of exclusion is decidedly of a later origin, it being adopted as a defensive measure to resist the onslaughts of antagonistic faiths sometimes propagated by means of heartless persecutions backed by mighty political powers. One of the most redeeming features of modern Hindu Renaissance is that meaningless conservatism is gradually yielding place to the old spirit of assimilation and expansion. This is evidenced by the noble reclamation work that has been taken up by the Bharatiya Hindu Suddhi Sabha, Agra. We are very glad to learn that through the very praiseworthy efforts of the Sabha already thousands of Malkana Rajputs whose ancestors were converted into Mohammedanism have already been reclaimed and received into the fold of Hinduism. These Rajputs reluctantly call themselves Mussalmans, sometimes frequent mosques and even follow some of the Mohammedan customs. But "their names are Hindu;" says the Agra District Gazetteer, "they mostly worship at Hindu temples; they use the salutation 'Ram, Ram'; they scrupulously preserve the top-knot of their hair; they intermarry with their own caste only." Evidently they were forced to remain outside the pale of Hinduism owing to the suicidal policy of exclusiveness adopted by Hindu society. We hope they will now be freely admitted into its fold and given the same rights and privileges as are enjoyed by the other sections of the great Rajput community. Hindu Society is highly grateful to Swami Shraddhananda and those Arya Samaj and Sanatanist workers who have heartily joined hands with one another in this most laudable work of reclamation.

Swami Prakashananda at Deoghar

Swami Prakashananda visited the Sri Ramakrishna Vidyapith, Deoghar, on the 8th March last at the earnest prayer of the pupils and the workers. He closely observed every detail of the Vidyapith and prophesied that the institution was destined to be an ideal educational centre.

An address of welcome was presented to him by the inmates in reply to which he said, "Education is not the loading

of a mass of information to run riot into the brain,—the real aim of education is the manifestation of practical aptitude and sterling character.”

The Deoghar public also gave him a grand reception and the Swamiji also delivered an eloquent speech in Bengali on the basic principles of Hinduism and the spiritual message of India to the world. He said, “Vedanta is non-sectarian in principles and Pratika worship is an essential need for the spiritual uplift of the common run of men.” He made bold to declare that the turn of India had come to deluge the whole world with her spirituality and bring peace and goodwill to mankind.

Swami Sharvananda in Bombay

During his recent visit to Bombay, Srimat Swami Sharvananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, delivered a series of public lectures which were highly appreciated by the audience. He spoke on the 2nd March on “The Aims and Work of the Ramakrishna Mission” at the Marwadi Vidyalaya Hall, Mr. M. R. Jayakar presiding. The next lecture on “Vedantic View of Indian History” was delivered on the 3rd March under the presidency of Mr. K. Natarajan at the Vanita Vishram Hall. Under the presidency of Sir Narayan Chandravarkar, the Swami gave another address on the 4th March on “The Message of Sri Ramakrishna” at the anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, held under the auspices of the Western India Vivekananda Society. He also delivered an address on “The Teachings of Bhagavan Buddha” on the 6th March under the auspices of the Buddha Society, Mr. G. K. Nariman presiding.

The Western India Vivekananda Society, with which are connected some of the most prominent of the Hindu leaders of Bombay, proposes to start a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, where the study and culture of Vedanta can be carried on permanently. We earnestly hope that the efforts of the Society will be crowned with great success.

Birthday Celebration of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda’s birthday anniversary was fittingly celebrated on Sunday, January 14, 1923, at the Hindu Temple in San Francisco, California, by the Vedanta Society of that city. Members and friends joyfully united in a service tendered to the memory of the great Swami, who was a beloved personal teacher to some of those present and the source of spiritual awakening to others. The auditorium was tastefully decorated for the occasion with flowers and foliage.

During the absence of Swami Prakashananda in India, the Sunday services have been conducted by certain members of the Society. On this date the lecturer was Mr. Thomas J. Allan, who spoke on the subject, "Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda."

Mr. Allan devoted his remarks mainly to personal recollections of Swami Vivekananda's delightful and unforgettable manner, emphasising his tolerance, deep sympathy, and ready wit. All those who joined in this service to do reverence to the memory of Swamiji, felt gladdened in heart and much enriched through a deeper knowledge of that great soul.

The Anniversary was celebrated in the Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur on Sunday, the 14th January, 1923.

At 4 a. m. Bhajana parties from different localities, carrying with them the Swami's photo splendidly decorated and mounted on cars and palanquins, marched in procession through the streets of the town singing the glory of the Lord. These parties next arrived at the Ashrama where they were received by Swami Videhananda, the Head of the Ashrama.

The feeding of about 5,000 poor Narayanas, which formed the most important item of the celebration, began at 12 noon and lasted till 4 p. m. Shortly after the feeding was over, clothes were distributed to about 600 deserving poor.

At 3-30 p. m. Brahma Sri Sailanatha Bhagavathar began his edifying Harikatha Kalakshepam on Dhruva.

The public meeting was held under the presidentship of Mr. P. A. Subramania Iyer. All the prominent gentlemen of the State were among the audience. Mr. T. S. Natesan delivered a lecture in Tamil on the Message of Swami Vivekananda. He was followed by Dr. Vaitilingam who spoke in English on the life and teachings of the great Swami.

Through the kindness of Mr. Wong Kim Chuan, Chief Station Master, Prai, some select sayings of Swami Vivekananda were translated and printed in Chinese and were distributed free among the Chinese on this memorable occasion. This publication is perhaps the first of its kind in Chinese, and it is hoped that by such means the universal teachings of Swami Vivekananda will be brought within the easy reach of peoples of all races and religions.